Dublin City University

2025

Annual Quality Report:

Reporting Period2023-2024

Dublin City University

2025

Annual Quality Report

PART A: INTERNAL QA

Reporting Period 2023-2024

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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](#)

---

[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*			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 – *Monitoring and Periodic Review*				
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
8.0 – *Monitoring and Periodic Review*	**2.10**	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
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 Dublin City University (DCU) for the reporting period 1 September 2023 – 31 August 2024.

It is to be submitted by Friday, 28 February 2025.

The AQR has been approved by Deputy President, Prof Anne Sinnott and is submitted by Director of Quality and Institutional Research, Dr Rachel Keegan.

Dublin City University (DCU) was first established as the National Institute for Higher Education, Dublin (NIHED) and took in its first cohort of students in 1980. NIHE Dublin was set up to fulfil the national requirement for a highly trained workforce with skills in business, science and electronics, computer technology, communications and languages and as an agent for change in its local community. In September 1987, an international study group established by the Minister of Education recommended that the NIHE be established as an independent university having the title Dublin City University. The Dublin City University Act came into force on 25 May 1989.

Since its inception, DCU has developed a national and international reputation for distinctiveness and innovation in its teaching, research and its engagement with society.   DCU was the first Irish university to implement structured, paid internships as part of the undergraduate learning experience.

DCU leads the Irish university sector in its commitment to addressing educational disadvantage, with over 1,000 students enrolled currently in the University through its Access programme to address socio-economic disadvantage in higher education. In 2013, DCU established the concept of the Age-Friendly University and became the world's first university to adopt this brand. This model, and the associated generic principles, has subsequently been adopted by over 60 universities, across four continents. In December 2016, DCU became Ireland's first University of Sanctuary in recognition of the range of supports it has established to aid the refugee and immigrant community in Ireland. More recently, DCU is the first university globally to be designated as an "Autism-Friendly University".

In 2013, DCU along with St Patrick's College of Education, Mater Dei Institute of Education and Church of Ireland College of Education initiated a process, which resulted in a significant development in Irish higher education and marked a milestone moment in DCU's history. Together, the four institutions developed an Incorporation Programme, with the goal of coming together as a single institution to form part of the 'new DCU'. The completion of this project has brought many positive changes to DCU. Most notably, the completion of the Incorporation Programme in 2017 enabled the creation of the DCU Institute of Education, the first Faculty of Education in an Irish university, positioning DCU as the leading national provider of accredited education programmes in Ireland.

DCU is frequently ranked among the world's top young universities by ranking agencies such as Times Higher, which places DCU 59th in 2024, making it the top-ranked young university in Ireland. A number of subject areas at DCU are ranked within the top 200 globally, according to the QS subject Rankings, including Education and Training, Sports Science, and Communications and Media Studies with English ranked in the top 150. The University is ranked 11th in the world in the Greenmetric University Rankings and 2nd nationally, making it a leading Irish university in energy management and climate change mitigation. DCU is ranked 24th globally for

reducing poverty and is in the top 100 universities globally for reducing inequalities according to Times Higher Impact Rankings, which measures university contributions to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy Statement

DCU's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy has been developed in compliance with the provisions of the Universities Act 1997 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012. It also aligns with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and relevant QQI QA Guidelines.

DCU Quality Framework

The DCU Quality Framework provides a cohesive model through which the University can demonstrate quality assurance and enhancement processes are embedded, integrated and ongoing with a combination of regular monitoring and periodic review of programmes.
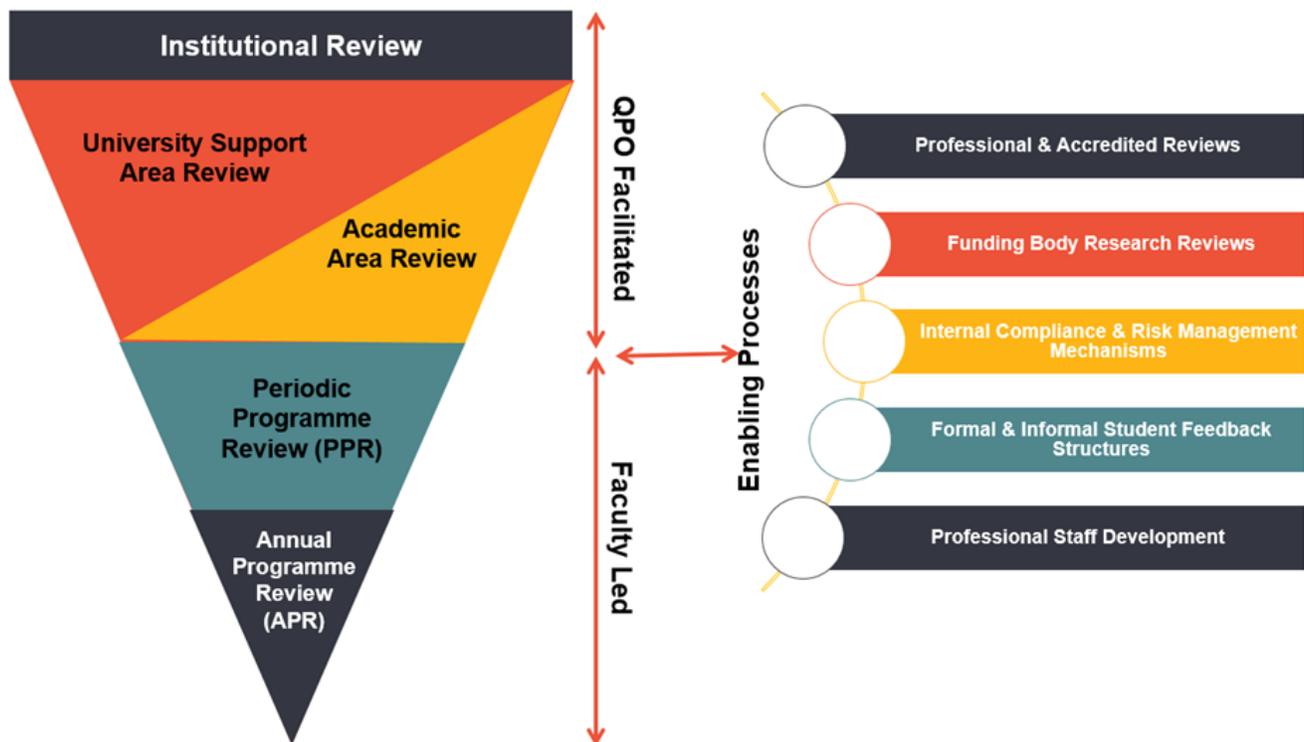
Quality Promotion Committee

The Quality Promotion Committee (QPC) is a subcommittee of University Executive and is chaired by the President or President's nominee. QPC has an oversight and advisory role in relation to the discharging of specific aspects of the University's statutory obligations for quality assurance. It draws its membership from across the DCU academic and professional support departments. More information on the terms of reference of QPC is available at the following link.

Quality and Institutional Insights Office

DCU's Quality and Institutional Insights Office (QIO) was initially established to promote, support and facilitate continuous quality improvement activities across academic and administrative units throughout the University. This is undertaken principally through the management of the University's Quality Review process for Faculties and Units.

In 2016, the QIO was restructured to include the Institutional Research and Analysis function of the University. As a result of this restructuring, the QIO now has an expanded remit to include:

- Regular analysis on behalf of DCU for student-based performance metrics, including the identification and analysis of students at risk of academic non-progression
- Provision of analysis and reporting to inform and support evidence-based planning, decision- making and quality assurance and enhancement
- Coordination of institutional-wide student surveys, including StudentSurvey.ie
- Completion of statutory returns to several state agencies
- Submission of data and analysis of performance in university rankings

DCU Governing Authority

DCU Governing Authority is responsible for the management of the corporate and secretarial functions of the University and for the oversight of legal functions and activities for both the University and its associated campus companies. The Governing Authority has a formal schedule of matters specifically reserved to it for decisions to ensure the proper management and control of the University.   The schedule includes the various statutory functions as set out in the Universities Act, 1997:

- Section 18 - Functions of a Governing Authority
- Section 25 - Staff
- Section 27 - Academic Council
- Section 34 - Strategic Development Plan
- Section 35 - Quality Assurance
- Section 36 - Equality Policy

The membership of the DCU Governing Authority is available here.

DCU Governing Authority has an identified member with responsibility for leading the Authority's approach to discussion and approval of Faculty and Unit-level quality reviews at DCU. This member also acts as a liaison between Governing Authority and QPC.

DCU Executive Committee

A primary function of the DCU's Executive Committee is to contribute to the future direction of DCU by advising the President on issues of major strategic and operational importance. DCU's Executive Committee has primary responsibility for reviewing and monitoring the Strategic Plan, has financial oversight of the University and provides advice to Governing Authority on matters referred to it by the Authority.

Membership is drawn from University senior leadership and includes elected student representatives and elected memberships from academic professional staff. The Terms of Reference are available here.

DCU Academic Council

DCU Academic Council has responsibility for the academic affairs of the University, as defined by statute. Academic Council plays a critical role in setting the academic direction of the University. Its functions include oversight of the design and development of new programmes, development of structures, policies and regulations relating to the academic affairs of the University and advising the University on sectoral and national strategic priorities and initiatives.

Academic Council has three main subcommittees, namely Education Committee, University Standards Committee and the Graduate Research Studies Board. The Terms of Reference of Academic Council and its subcommittees are available here.

DCU Education Committee

Chaired by the Vice-President for Academic Affairs/Registrar, DCU's Education Committee has responsibility for strategic planning in relation to academic affairs. It is responsible for maintaining strategic oversight of the University's portfolio of taught programmes, making recommendations as to proposed changes and evaluating the strategic importance and viability of proposals for new programmes. The terms of reference for Education Committee can be found here.

University Standards Committee

The University Standards Committee is responsible to Academic Council for the development, maintenance and review of University Academic Regulations and Guidelines including Marks and Standards and Programme Regulations. Chaired by the Dean of Teaching and Learning, it approves the appointment of all external examiners for taught programmes, which is an important part of the University's quality assurance system. It also formulates policy in a wide range of areas related to Teaching and Learning and considers a range of student-related matters. The terms of reference of University Standards Committee can be found here.

Graduate Research Studies Board

The Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) is responsible for the development and oversight of guidelines, policies and regulations pertaining to postgraduate research education. Chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies, the GRSB also considers and makes recommendations on matters relating to individual research students including external examiner nominations and transfer examinations. The terms of reference of GRSB can be found here.

HEA-DCU System Performance Agreement

The role of quality assurance as a tool for ensuring excellence in teaching, learning and engagement is further reflected in the development of agreed goals with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in the System Performance Framework 2023-2028.

The new Performance Agreement template provides significant institutional freedom in aligning the University Strategy to national strategic objectives. DCU has identified those objectives which advance the University's mission and vision as well as national priorities, especially those in the overarching areas of Sustainable Development and Inclusion (EDI) while ensuring that can make the best use of scarce resources in keeping with our guiding principles of 'focus' and 'impact'.

DCU Strategy 2023-2028: Transformation for an Unscripted Future

Officially launched in October 2023, DCU's Strategy 2023-2028 sees the University continue its mission to transform lives and societies in the context of an increasingly unscripted future for our graduates, our stakeholders and the University. Unique in Irish HE, the Strategy is entirely digital, which, as well as being more sustainable, allows for a dynamic Strategy which facilitates the agility required for modern strategies to adapt to changing circumstances and still achieve their overarching strategic objectives.

The strategic vision of DCU is to be a leading innovative European University distinguished by the quality of the DCU experience and the impact of its teaching and research on stakeholders and issues of global concern. The University's commitment to quality is embedded in the Strategy and evidenced in each of the five strategic pillars, namely:

- Pioneer a transformative student experience
- Value and develop our staff and community
- Advance our research reputation and impact
- Enhance local and international engagement
- Optimise organisational resilience and readiness

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

DCU has many forms of relationships with different types of organisations, for a variety of reasons that may include the recruitment of students, the joint development, delivery and/or awarding of programmes of study, research collaborations and other strategic initiatives and objectives.

DCU is responsible for the quality and standards of all provision leading to an award of credit or qualification(s) made in its name, wherever the delivery takes place. As such, DCU has established approval protocols, which define each type of collaborative provision arrangement and indicate who is authorised to approve the formal agreement underpinning each type of arrangement. The level of approval required for each type of collaborative provision is appropriate to the associated risk and the level of due diligence required relative to the standing and reputation of the proposed partner institution(s). The establishment and ongoing academic quality assurance of collaborative programmes of study is managed by the Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. More information can be found at https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/collaborative-provision. University partnerships and external engagement are coordinated through DCU Global. EU Erasmus+ staff and student mobility programmes are coordinated through DCU Placement.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

As a designated awarding body, DCU is responsible for the accreditation of its programmes and awards. Every proposed new programme must undergo the DCU's approval process which involves:

- Validation: the internal approval process that involves Education Committee assessing programme proposals to ascertain both the proposed programme's relationship to DCU's Strategy and its likely viability, and
- Accreditation: involving review by a board of external discipline and professional experts who assess that the programme proposal meets the nationally and internationally accepted requirements for the award to which it is designed to lead.

Validation proposals are evaluated on the following criteria:

- Evidence of alignment with the University strategic plan and its component strategies
- Evidence of alignment with the strategic plans of the relevant Faculty/Faculties and School(s), as outlined in the validation proposal
- Evidence of a place for the proposal within higher education in Ireland generally, taking into account programmes offered in other institutions
- Evidence of the likely demand for the proposed programme, and the likelihood of achieving the appropriate student intake
- Coherence of the statement of programme purpose and underpinning educational philosophy
- Appropriateness of the programme learning outcomes, and coherence of their relationship to the programme's purpose and educational philosophy
- Reasonableness of the estimate of the resources needed to offer the programme
- Reasonableness of the proposed launch date
- Appropriateness of the proposed development team
- Appropriateness of the proposed members of the Accreditation Board in light of the regulations for the appointment of such members.

Validation proposals are subject to consideration by Education Committee and Academic Council completes the final ratification of the validation process. Before a programme can proceed to accreditation, the Executive Dean of the Faculty must confirm that all the recommendations of the Education Committee and any recommendations from Academic Council have been implemented.

The appointed Accreditation Board evaluates the proposed programme on the following criteria:

- Likelihood that the proposed programme will meet the needs which the proposal indicates it is intended to meet
- Appropriateness of the entry requirements and exit routes
- Validity of the purpose and underpinning educational philosophy of the proposed programme
- Linkage of the programme learning outcomes with the purpose and the underpinning educational philosophy of the programme
- Consistency and coherence of the proposed modules in the context of the underpinning educational philosophy and the programme learning outcomes
- Reasonableness of achieving the programme learning outcomes, in the time specified, by the majority of students
- Appropriateness and mix of learning and assessment methodologies
- Coherence between assessment methodologies, per module, and the module learning outcomes
- Coherence of the group of skills and competencies that the student would be expected to have at the end of the programme
- Appropriateness of the quality assurance procedures to be used in relation to the programme

The Accreditation Board submits an accreditation report containing its recommendations to the Academic Council for approval. Once all recommendations have been addressed, Academic Council is informed of the completion of the process.

Full Information on academic programme validation and approval regulations can be found at the following link.

Online and blended delivery

DCU, in common with higher education institutions across the globe, saw a rapid pivot to online and blended learning delivery due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These developments have created new challenges and opportunities, while also foregrounding the critical importance of maintaining, ensuring and enhancing QA standards.

In December 2021, DCU approved Principles for Quality Assurance of DCU E-learning and Blended Provision. The principles align closely with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015). Drawing on Considerations for Quality Assurance of E-Learning Provision, published by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), DCU has adopted principles relating to internal quality assurance for blended and online delivery, collated under the thematic categories of learning design, scaffolded interaction, and evidence-based continuous improvement.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

DCU Admissions Principles, Policies and Guidelines

DCU has developed several guidelines and policies to ensure that admission to the University is determined based on fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices. These include:

- [DCU Admissions Principles](#)
- [DCU Admissions Appeal Policy](#)
- [Undergraduate Admissions Guidelines](#)
- [Postgraduate Admissions Guidelines](#)
- [International Admissions Guidelines](#)
- [Research Admissions Guidelines](#)

Transfer Guidelines

DCU has developed a number of guidelines and procedures relating to students wishing to transfer programme. This relates both to registered DCU students wishing to transfer to another DCU programme (internal transfer process) and students in other institutions wishing to apply to transfer to DCU programmes (advanced entry process). The guidelines related to these processes can be found at the following link.

DCU Legacy Re-Admissions Procedure

Procedures are in place for programme chairs to request readmission to a programme made on behalf of a candidate who falls outside the maximum registration period. The process allows for a Programme Chair to request legacy readmission following agreement by the relevant Programme Board. If subsequently approved by the Faculty Teaching and Learning/Education Committee, the request is submitted for consideration by University Standards Committee. More information on this process can be found at the following link.

Repeating an Academic Year at DCU

Processes are in place within Student Support and Development, Registry and Finance to provide students with advice and information on the process for repeating or registering for deferred modules. More information on this process can be found at the following link.

Analysis of Examination Results and Progression Rates at DCU

At the institutional level, DCU student performance in taught modules is analysed by the QIO and monitored by Education Committee after every diet of examinations. Further, module and programme-level pass rates are reviewed and discussed at Programme Boards each year.

Progression of Postgraduate Research Students

Procedures are in place for overseeing the annual progression of students studying for postgraduate research qualifications. Research students undergo an Annual Progress Review that is carried out at the school level. The review reports are completed by the principal supervisor(s), approved by the supervisory panel and endorsed by the Head of School or nominee. Reports are submitted electronically to the Registry each year on or before the date published in the Academic Calendar.

More information on the process of annual progress reviews for graduate students can be found in Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

Progression and Award Boards

Module results are considered first by an Examination Review Committee (ERC) that reviews the distribution of module results for each Programme. External Examiners are consulted following the ERC and are required to provide feedback and observations on DCU's processes including assessment methodology and review of results and make recommendations to the Progression and Award Board (PAB).

External Examiners may advise the Board on the general standard of student performance in relation to those elements of assessment that they have scrutinised. They should be satisfied that all decisions are appropriate and consistent and that the management of the assessment and the decision-making process is appropriate and consistent. External Examiners will comment on the academic quality of the cohort examined relative to the learning outcomes of the programme. Results remain provisional and credits are not applied until reviewed by the PAB.

Each PAB comprises the Programme Chair, the Faculty Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning, teaching convenors, subject leaders and Registry and Faculty administrative staff. The PAB meets at the end of each academic year to collate and review grades in the various modules, considering all information when approving final results.

The functions of PABs are to:
a. Approve student progression as appropriate
b. Approve the award and classification of students
c. Consider applications for extenuating circumstances which have been referred to the PAB

Further information on the Conduct of PABs can be found here.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

DCU Marks and Standards

Marks and Standards are approved by Academic Council. They are applied consistently at all times and to all taught programmes and modules, including taught modules on research programmes. The Registrar of the University, in the context of his/her wider remit, has ultimate responsibility for the integrity and implementation of Marks and Standards. University Standards Committee reviews Marks and Standards annually and makes recommendations as appropriate to Academic Council on any changes to DCU Marks and Standards.

The DCU Marks and Standards can be found at the following link.

Programme Specific Regulations

Information for Programme Specific Regulations is contained within a single area within the Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs website. Programme regulations complement Marks and Standards and make provision for specific issues or circumstances pertaining to particular programmes or discipline areas.

Examination Regulations

The examination regulations for Dublin City University are published on the University website.

Regulations and Guidelines for External Examiners

The appointment of external examiners is an important part of the University's quality assurance system. The University ensures that in approving all external examiner appointments (through the University Standards Committee for taught programmes and Graduate Research Studies Board for research programmes) there is a consistency of standards across the University and adherence to all relevant University policies. More information on Regulations and Guidelines for External Examiners can be found at the following link.

Examination Appeals

Students on taught programmes have the right to appeal against decisions of a PAB. Such appeals are processed in accordance with the Examination Appeals Board Terms of Reference, Composition and Standing Orders, as approved by Academic Council. Students may also apply in certain circumstances to have the recording and collation of marks which determined a module result rechecked, and/or to have a section of their assessment reviewed by an independent assessor. Further information on examination appeals and related procedures can be found at the following link.

Research Students also have the right to appeal decisions taken at defined points of their research programme. Further details are available at this link.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

DCU Teaching and Learning Strategy

The student academic journey is at the heart of the mission of DCU. Our expertise, our approaches to teaching and assessment and the environment and culture which support these activities, as well as the quality of our academic services, collectively define the academic experience of our students.

The academic journey is prominent in DCU's new Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028, with Pioneering a Transformative Student Experience as the first of five strategic pillars. Through this Strategy, DCU is committed to providing students with a world-class education by continuing to innovate its approaches to curriculum development, expanding provision and pathways to address the needs of a diverse range of learners and providing an outstanding student experience in a vibrant and supportive environment, all of which will be underpinned by an enhanced range of resources, supports and opportunities and facilities.

The Strategy considers the increased diversity and complexity of the student body and their associated needs. It provides a framework for agility and innovation, ensuring that the student voice is central to all developments and that the services provided are relevant to the individual needs of the students.

DCU Student Charter

Developed in collaboration with the DCU Students' Union, the charter is designed to provide a framework which will help steer students along their DCU journey and make the most of their university experience. The DCU Student Charter can be found at the following link. The Charter will be updated in 2024.

3.1 Learner Supports

DCU's Online Learning Platform: Loop

DCU's online learning platform is called Loop. Loop allows students to connect with course content, their teachers and fellow learners. It's where students access their notes, participate in discussion forums, construct their ePortfolio and participate in webinars. Loop also recognises how staff and students can draw on cutting-edge technologies to support their teaching, learning and assessment. In this respect, Loop as a metaphor and overarching brand for the VLE, incorporating a number of related technologies to enhance and assure the learning experience at DCU with a focus on the pedagogical uses of each technology. These include,

- Moodle, the learning management system that manages the creation, delivery and management of all of our modules and programmes and associated assignments, discussion forums and learning content.
- DCU Reflect Platform online tool that allows students to create a 'virtual portfolio' of their academic, professional and personal achievements. Its functions include the capacity for students to curate their coursework and assignments, reflect on their learning, create shareable online CVs, upload certificates

of achievement and maintain monthly journals of internship experience that can be used to create personal blogs.

- Urkund text-matching service, which analyses all Loop submitted assignments for text that is available on the internet. This tool helps students to ensure the academic integrity and appropriate referencing of their work.
- Unicam has been used to support the video creation for all DCU students and staff, facilitating video capture to support and demonstrate learning.
- All DCU staff and students have access to a licensed Zoom account, which allows users to hold an unlimited number of Zoom sessions with unlimited duration.
- A range of additional VLE+ offerings providing specific tools to support a range of learning activities

Student Supports

A broad range of dedicated services are available to DCU students to support their personal development for the duration of their learning experience. These supports include healthcare services, counselling, disability support, autism-specific support, spiritual guidance, financial assistance and clubs & societies activities.

Staff in the Student Advice and Learning Skills Centre dedicate a large proportion of their time to dealing with 'ASK' queries (online chat), emails and walk-in appointments from students on a broad range of issues. All staff work to a model of triage, dealing with relevant issues and ensuring a smooth referral to a different service, should this be required. A further enhancement of these support mechanisms is available through the Skills Development Centre, located in the U building, which focuses on developing each individual student to reach their full potential by increasing their life skills along with professional and leadership potential.

The delivery of academic supports across a range of mediums include student workshops, online courses, and online resources. Professional development supports are available for students to develop skills that will enhance their readiness for future career success. Some examples of activities that can assist students in their professional development include careers advice, volunteering, integrated work placements and life coaching. The IITD award-winning Mentorship Programme, which links students with alumni, provides a unique platform to learn about the professional world of work and explore their chosen area of interest.

Further information on the range of professional support services for students is available below:

First-Year Entrant Support Services

DCU has developed supports specifically to address issues relevant to new entrants to higher education. These include:

MyDCU - Online Pre-Orientation and Orientation Programme
MyDCU is a flexible, hybrid orientation programme within a new Student Experience Hub. MyDCU provides incoming students with an immersive, holistic, fully online 'DCU experience'. Early access and phased release of modules ensure that students receive a 'just in time' experience, balancing 'need to know' with overload and maximising continuous engagement and confidence building. A carefully designed balance between live online

sessions and asynchronous, self-learning resources keep students motivated and engaged and facilitate the development of digital learning skills and knowledge of the university.

The programme also consists of a series of short interactive books and related activities and is designed to help students become familiar with the VLE and get to know the campus environment.

High-quality digital, interactive resources (videos, quizzes, scavenger hunt, virtual neighbourhood and wellbeing/trauma-informed activities), digital badges and engagement awards were made, and a number of 'gamification' tools were used, such as 'freedom to fail', 'completion points', leader boards and rewards.

The programme is regularly reviewed and enhanced based on student feedback. It has been recognised for its originality and excellence through the President's Award for Innovation (2020) and through national conference presentations, training for other Irish HEIs, internationally (European First Year Experience 2019), and in Quality Reviews.

Within this orientation experience, students receive programme-specific orientation from their particular programme. This provides relevant opportunities for students to meet with their peers and the lecturers on their programmes and is offered on-site.

Orientation for International Students
A detailed orientation schedule is also extended to all international students to help them settle into their new living and learning environment. University staff engage with students in advance of their arrival to outline supports and services available. Further information outlining the extent of supports is available at the following links – International Student Orientation, Pre Arrival Support, and Post Arrival Support. A recent addition to the pre-arrival supports is the introduction of a Webinar on Cultural Norms, which has been very well received.

Widening Participation

In 2019, DCU employed a Widening Participation officer charged with promoting inclusion and diversity by encouraging, advising and supporting individuals from under-represented communities to access and complete a course of study in DCU. This work is largely carried out through the management of the College Connect programme (see below). The work also has a strategic focus as the role encompasses overseeing and monitoring a range of widening participation actions ensuring that DCU continues to promote educational opportunities to marginalised communities. DCU Widening Participation also administers the 1916 Bursary Fund in DCU.

Access for Under-Represented Groups in Higher Education
DCU has a long commitment to addressing educational disadvantage among groups currently under-represented in higher education. DCU's Access programme targets students who come from socio-economically disadvantaged areas, including students from ethnic minorities and students from the Irish Traveller community. DCU's Access Programme, is the largest programme of its kind in Ireland, supporting over 1,000 undergraduate students each academic year. It makes third-level education attainable to talented students from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds and provides a range of personal, financial and academic support to enable students to thrive and excel in their studies in DCU. Further information on post-entry supports for students studying at DCU through the DCU Access Programme is available here.

DCU was the first university in Ireland to be designated both as a University of Sanctuary and an Age Friendly University. Furthermore, as the first university globally to be designated as an Autism Friendly University, DCU provides significant support for students with autism throughout their student life journey. The first ever Neuro-

Divergent Society, which was founded in DCU and is heavily supported through Student Support and Development, ensures that students with autism have a social network on campus.

In recent times, DCU has invested heavily in Quiet Spaces and appropriate spaces for reflection and prayer. A new Hindu Prayer Room was opened last year and is very well received by our Hindu students; the Quiet Spaces and Pods across the campuses provides a welcome respite for our neurodivergent students who need time alone from the busy university environment.

In 2021 and 2022, DCU received funding under the Dormant Accounts Irish Traveller and Roma fund and worked with local agencies and other higher education institutions across the country to provide targeted support to Traveller communities. The supports for under-represented groups prior to and during their time at DCU are coordinated by a number of dedicated offices within the Student Support and Development function.

DCU Access to the Workplace is a collaborative programme that was established by DCU Access Service and the DCU Educational Trust in 2019 to enhance the employability and career prospects of socio-economically disadvantaged students. Since its inception, the programme has provided 318 students with summer internships in over 100 companies across Ireland. The programme has received widespread recognition for its excellence and innovation, winning the best Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative at the Times Higher Education Awards 2022 (UK & Ireland). With a vision to support equal access to employment and support the social mobility of underrepresented groups, ATTW has since expanded to include neurodivergent students. To find out more about the programme visit the [website](#).

Mature Students at DCU receive assistance with their academic, personal and professional development. DCU has designed a range of supports, including one-to-one meetings, access to a range of learning support workshops and online tutorials as well as careers advice tailored to meet their specific needs. Designed using the Knowles (1968) adult learning theory, our Head Start Programme focuses on identifying strengths and transferable skills, academic writing, learning at university, technology for learning, maths refresher and goal setting for semester 1. Further information on supports for mature entry and support is available at the following [link](#).

Students with Disabilities are supported by the Disability & Learning Support Office. The unit provides a dedicated orientation and needs assessment for students entering through the DARE programme and for students who register at any point during their academic careers. The services available include drop-in support, examination accommodations, assistive technology, Occupational Therapists and mental health supports. DCU has a range of policies relating to the provision of appropriate support services for over 1000 students with a disability. Examples of which are available below:

- [Provision of Academic Tuition to Students Policy](#)
- [Allocation of on-campus accommodation for students with disabilities Policy](#)
- [Assessment and Examination Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy](#)
- [Provision of Note Taking Policy](#)
- [Disability and Learning Support Service - Code of Practice for Students](#)
- [Recording of Lectures Policy](#)

University of Sanctuary

In 2016, DCU was named as Ireland's first University of Sanctuary (UoS). In December 2021, DCU was re-accredited as a University of Sanctuary. The re-accreditation was a recognition of DCU's continuing commitment to welcoming protection applicants and refugees into the university community, and to fostering a culture of inclusion. DCU delivers a range of positive initiatives and inclusive activities under the UoS banner. In 2021, the University moved from offering undergraduate to offering postgraduate on-campus scholarship to international protection applicants and refugees who are unable to access state support. In addition, the range of initiatives include DCU Refugee Week, aimed at raising awareness among students and staff; the Migrant English Language Literacy and Intercultural Education (MELLIE) project, which connects DCU staff and students with residents of Direct Provision centres; the University of Sanctuary Lecture, which gives a platform to prominent human rights figures working in the field; and DCU research outputs including peer-reviewed articles, conference keynotes and workshops.

College Connect (funded under PATH 3)

DCU is an active member of the Regional Steering Group established under the College Connect project. College Connect is a collaborative initiative between four higher education institutions in the Midlands and North Dublin Region (MEND), namely, DCU, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Maynooth University and Technological University of Shannon.

College Connect aims to enhance educational aspirations for the most socio-economically disadvantaged people in the MEND region through a participative and sustainable suite of activities and resources to illuminate pathways and provide opportunities into, through and beyond higher education. In September 2021, College Connect published a Community Needs Analysis with Refugees and People Seeking Asylum, which focused on access and barriers to higher education in Ireland. As a follow-on to the research report, College Connect developed the We Are Here, HEAR open-air exhibition showcasing the voices and experiences of people seeking refuge in Ireland through a collection of powerful photographs and stories. Over a two-week period in March 2022, DCU hosted the exhibition on campus.

With an increased focus on travellers and Roma, DCU employed an Irish Traveller & Roma Education Officer who is liaising with these communities and developing strong connections. The number of Irish Travellers has significantly increased as a result of the work.

Academic Skills and Related Supports

DCU provides a host of support services to learners across three academic campuses and online. Specifically, learners have access to resources from first to final year and up to PhD level to enhance their skills and overall learning experience through a variety of supports. Resources are tailored to meet the needs of a diverse and growing student population.

DCU Placement

DCU Placement is a newly formed unit in DCU, one of the organisational changes made in light of the new Operating Framework for academic services and an ambition to reposition Placement as a core value proposition for DCU students, staff, and programmes. The intent is that it becomes typical for a DCU student to undertake an enterprise placement, professional placement and/or an international mobility as a credit-bearing aspect of their programme. DCU Placement comprises two teams, INTRA and International Mobility. DCU Placement is responsible for strategic oversight of all placement activities in DCU, development of quality assurance frameworks for placement activities (irrespective of context), and for operations relating to accredited work

experience/internships (INTRA), academic placements of DCU students in partner institutions worldwide, and our hosting of international mobility students (International Mobility Team). Staff mobility is also supported by the International Mobility Team. Both teams have recently been co-located in new offices, specifically designed to support how they work with students, industry, and academic partners. The Unit is also replacing the current Enterprise INTRA Placement Portal with a modern, fit-for-purpose system as part of Release 2 of the SIS Programme (September 2024).

The Maths Learning Centre's role is to provide free extra informal support in a welcoming environment to all undergraduate DCU students taking a mathematics module as part of their degree programme. The Centre is located on the ground floor of the O'Reilly Library on the Glasnevin campus. Students can receive one-to-one tuition support during our drop-in service hours where they can work at their own pace with a tutor on hand if they have any questions. Outside of the access hours, the Centre is open as a group study space for mathematics in line with the Library's general opening hours. Further information about the Maths Learning Centre can be found [here](#).

DCU Writing Centre offers assistance with academic writing to all undergraduate and postgraduate students. Students can attend on their own or in groups to receive expert guidance from a peer tutor. The DCU Writing Centre is located in the Glasnevin Library, Cregan Library and online. The addition of evening slots has been particularly welcomed in recent years. Further information is available [here](#).

SensusAccess is an automated document conversion service provided by the Library enabling students to convert readings into formats that are more useful or easier to work with such as MP3 files, E-books and Digital Braille books. Further information is available [here](#).

Library Support Services are available to enhance their learning experience in both the O'Reilly Library on the Glasnevin Campus and the Cregan Library on our St Patrick's Campus. Support in developing their citing and referencing skills, access to independent and group study space and access to e-books and in-print publications are some of the resources available. Further information on the full suite of services is available [here](#).

IT Infrastructure supports students with new technologies and guidance to ensure every student is enabled to effectively participate in all aspects of their learning through the digital infrastructures in place. The full extent of services and supports available to student is accessible [here](#) along with [policies and procedures](#) relating to the IT function.

Student Health, Wellbeing and Personal Development

Student Health Centre: The Centre provides medical care to registered students of DCU and operates a walk-in service for emergencies, with GP appointments available throughout the week. It provides updates for students on vaccinations required, information about infectious diseases and liaises with relevant schools about required vaccinations for lab work. Recently, a mental health nurse has been recruited to provide on-going support, outside of counselling, to students with mental health challenges. Further information on the extent of services provided is available [here](#).

Counselling & Personal Development offers an appointment-based service for students in need of psychological or emotional support throughout their time at university. Students register with the service and are triaged using the internationally recognised CORE triage scoring system – hence ensuring that students who may be 'at risk' are identified early in the process. In recent years, the addition of an out-of-hours service by a third party provider has provided additional capacity and flexibility. The service has recently introduced a variety of

new initiatives to ensure students are provided with earlier interventions, in order to address issues before they escalate. These interventions include outreach workshops on reducing stress, dealing with procrastination, life balance, sleep hygiene etc. – offered by our occupational therapists in the Disability & Learning Support Unit. This information is also available through DEVELOP which is accessible to all students via the student VLE. Launched in 2020, Silver Cloud is a CBT online programme designed to provide students with the tools and skills to support their well-being and mental health.

Chaplaincy offers a crucial confidential walk-in service for students of all religions and none. This is a vibrant service which plays a key role in offering a gathering space for students, a confidential ear should the student require advice or guidance, Muslim prayer spaces, a Hindu prayer space and Christian gatherings. The Chaplaincy team is composed of ordained priests and lay chaplains and focuses on providing a communal space for students to gather. This can often be a place of refuge for first-year students who find the large new learning environment daunting.

Health Promotion Office
The Health Promotion Officer offers support and guidance to maintain the health and well-being of all staff and students. This Office is also responsible for DCU's Healthy Campus Initiative, Care & Connect. The Office has developed a number of outreach activities, pulling on existing and new activities around the areas of physical health, mental health, sexual health, smoking cessation and healthy eating. As a multicultural community, DCU aims to embed health and well-being within the university to foster an atmosphere of happy, healthy students.

The model of cross-unit referrals and ensuring that the student has ready access to the relevant service at the time that they require it is at the heart of the work of DCU. DCU Staff are provided with a 'Guide to Support Services' and a briefing each year, to inform them of the developments in service offerings in order to ensure that they have up-to-date information. They also receive a graphical representation of 'Dealing with Students in Crisis', which is a brief overview of the referral process if a student presents in crisis. More recently, the Counselling & Personal Development Service has been offering a series of workshops on *Identifying and Responding to Students in Distress or At Risk*.

Pathways to Success is a 4-week series of workshops introduced to DCU students in 2015, which continues to focus on helping first-year students settle in and set goals for their time at university. This programme, facilitated through DCU staff who qualified as Life Coaches, offers First Years and all students an opportunity to take part in a group- based activity in a safe environment and develop a personalised strategy for 'success'.

The DCU Engagement Award is an opportunity for students to receive formal recognition for engagement with university life and civic society. It provides a clear and structured approach to self-development and achievement outside the formal curriculum and will develop participants' personal and professional skills, gain confidence, boost overall career prospects and enhance the student experience.

With 3 levels of the DCU Engagement Award Bronze, Silver and Gold (Uaneen), students can participate and develop personal, professional and academic skills at every level, enabling a deep reflection on university life. Further information is available https://www.dcu.ie/students/about-dcu-engage-student-award.

DCU Uaneen Module forms part of the Student Experience Strategy, DCU formally recognises and rewards the achievement of holistic education by accrediting a module in extra-curricular activities – the Uaneen Module. This module is a unique scheme that formally recognises student achievements and learning acquired in areas of clubs, societies, community work and extra-curricular activity in general and is the final level of the DCU Engagement Award. Depending on your degree programme, the Uaneen Module can be either a contributing five-credit elective or a non-contributing optional additional five-credit module. In both cases, successful completion means that students will receive an awarded credit included in the degree parchment. Further information is available here.

Development workshops that students can attend to support both academic success and personal and professional development are coordinated by Student Support and Development. These workshops are hosted across the campuses and online on a regular basis. More information on types of workshops delivered and a schedule for upcoming events can be found here.

DEVELOP is a central digital repository of resources developed to assist students throughout their learning experience. The hub contains information about opportunities and supports to help students make the most of their university experience, irrespective of the students starting point or prior educational experience. The diversity of these services reflects a truly enhanced student experience filled with new learning, skills development, personal fulfilment and new opportunities. This online hub of resources provides access to a variety of life and digital skills to provide a truly transformative student experience and is accessible via the student VLE.

DCU Careers Service provides an important role in students' personal and professional development supporting students in career decision-making and career planning by working through DCU's career development framework. The unit's guidance and coaching work is underpinned by industry experience gained from employer engagement and from a strong careers education framework. The unit's service delivery includes career planning and decision making, career transitions, mentoring scheme, identifying and evidencing skills and strengths, career and job research skills, networking and employer engagement, recruitment and selection, career resilience and well-being.

The recent addition of a CV-Checker and Interview Platform has allowed us to leverage the power of AI while offering personal support to refine the students' skills.

Policies

Policies relating to supporting students at DCU include but are not limited to:

- Confidentiality & Disclosure Policy
- Death of a Student Protocol
- Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Student Alcohol Policy
- Student Code of Conduct and Code of Discipline
- Student Charter
- Student Fitness to Study Policy
- Student Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy
- Student Policy on Drug Misuse
- Support for Pregnant Students Policy

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

Policies relating to Postgraduate Research Study at DCU

Policies and procedures relating to quality assurance and enhancement of postgraduate research and doctoral education are led by the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Studies Office. Graduate Studies Office has three principal areas of responsibility which include: (1) leading the development of all aspects of DCU's postgraduate research education, (2) acting as a champion for the needs of DCU's postgraduate student community and (3) driving the development of DCU's postgraduate policy and planning. Graduate Studies Office also engages in a diverse range of activities under these areas of responsibility, such as policy development and implementation for best practices in graduate research; orientation and induction programme for new research students; an annual calendar of skills development events; seminars and workshops for students; scholarship and industry internship programmes; internal and external collaborative projects; funding proposals and consortium activities at national, European and international level.

The Graduate Research Studies Board (referred to above) is responsible for the development of guidelines, policy and regulations pertaining to postgraduate research (PGR) education and considers individual student matters including external examiner appointments and transfer examinations.

The following links provide further information in relation to regulations relating to postgraduate research at DCU:

- Academic Roles and Responsibilities in Graduate Research
- Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis
- Higher Doctorate Provisions and Regulations
- Deferral Guidelines for Research Students
- Format of 'PhD/MA by Artefact' – Guidelines for Candidates, Supervisors and Examiners
- Format of 'PhD/ MA through Creative or Performance Practice' - Guidelines for Candidates, Supervisors and Examiners
- Format of 'PhD by Publication' - Guidelines for Candidates, Supervisors and Examiners
- Graduate Research Guide 2022-23
- Independent Panel Member - Appointment and Remit
- Orientation Guide for Research Students 2022-23
- Examiner Guidelines for the Examination of a master's Thesis (where no viva voce takes place)
- Quality Assurance of Graduate Training Elements (GTEs) Guidelines
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Policy for Research Degrees
- Remote Supervision of Research Students - guidance document
- Joint Research Supervision and Awards in Collaboration with Other Institutions Policy
- Resolving Difficulties Informally – Guidance for Research Students and Supervisors
- Thesis Submission and Oral Examination – A DCU Doctoral Student Guide
- Guidance for students and supervisors in respect of withdrawing, or early exit from research programmes

In addition, the Graduate Studies Office also provides detailed information to further assist and support postgraduate research students throughout their studies. Examples of these supports are detailed below:

- Graduate Training at DCU
- Workshops and Events
- Research Integrity Training Programme
- Research Integrity at DCU

A further number of policies exist in relation to wider issues of academic quality and integrity at DCU. Relevant policies can be found at the following links:

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Data Privacy Policy

The DCU Graduate Research Guide provides students with support in understanding the administration and policies and procedures relating to postgraduate research study.

Other Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures Supporting Research Activity

DCU have a range of policies, codes and guidelines that have been developed to help facilitate a positive institutional research environment in DCU. All Policies, Codes of Conduct and Codes of Practice relevant for research are collated in a Policy Starter Pack for new research staff. These policies and procedures advise researchers on good practice or establish a framework (which may be derived from external regulatory or compliance requirements) for researchers to operate within.

Examples include:

- Code of Good Research Practice
- Code of Practice on Authorship
- Research Integrity Policy
- DCU Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct
- Research Integrity Training
- Export Control Policy
- Lone / Out of Hours Working Policy
- Ethics Guidance for Researchers
- Research Data Management Guidelines for Researchers
- Open Research Resources
- DCU Position Statement on Open Access to Research Publications
- Statement on the Responsible Use of Research Metrics at DCU

To further support researchers in managing their research activities to the highest standards of professionalism, DCU has developed the Research Lifecycle resource. This maps the seven stages of an externally funded research project and the supports available in DCU to assist researchers through the research lifecycle - from defining the project idea and applying for funding, through to running and finishing the project.

There are several policies in place to structure the University's Innovation activity that aim to ensure the highest-quality outcome. These are briefly described below:

Intellectual Property Policy

DCU's Intellectual Property Policy is publicly accessible on the DCU website. The University's role in the discovery and transmission of knowledge, and the provision of public service creates an environment which is highly conducive to the conception and development of many forms of intellectual property. There is always the possibility that such developments may have commercial value and DCU therefore remain committed to exploit such opportunities to the benefit of the Irish economy, the inventors, collaborative partners, and the university.

Conflicts of Interest Policy

DCU's Conflict of Interest Policy helps ensure the highest standards of practice in its educational, research and commercialization mission. DCU gives a great deal of freedom to its staff, but in so doing needs to put in place a mechanism to protect its staff, and itself, from reputational damage and other liabilities.

DCU Consultancy Policy

DCU's Consultancy Policy is internally accessible to DCU staff members only and provides clarity around procedures and processes for the management of consultancy carried out on behalf of the university. The policy ensures that the distinction between private consultancy and university consultancy is well documented. The policy is currently under review.

Research Committee

The University Research Committee is responsible for the organisational structure of research at DCU and discusses matters that aim to maximise research potential across the university. As per its Terms of Reference, the Committee:

- Advises the Vice President for Research on the strategic direction of research and innovation activities across the University.
- Advises the Vice President for Research on the development, promotion and review of research and innovation policies, ensuring the quality and impact of the University's research and innovation activities is maximised.
- Advises on matters related to the structures, systems and support services concerned with the management of research and innovation in the University.
- Manages and oversees a range of internal university research-related initiatives, especially those related to University Designated Research Centres.
- Receives and considers recommendations from Faculties, Research Centres and research-related advisory bodies concerning research and innovation matters of institutional importance and take forward these as appropriate.

- Informs and responds to Senior Management Group and University Executive on policy, initiatives and resources to support and enhance research and innovation activities.

DCU INVENT

DCU Invent DAC is a wholly owned subsidiary of DCU and is the University's commercialisation and technology transfer unit. It engages with companies and organisations to bring university research to the marketplace and to create opportunities for collaborative research. Further information is available here.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

The University asserts that its staff is its greatest asset and that it holds all the various categories in equal esteem. The University is dependent on its staff to fulfill its mission and its success depends on the recruitment and retention of staff of the highest calibre.

The University has adopted polices for Recruitment and Selection and Promotions which aim to ensure that, by using its procedures and accompanying guidelines the most suitable person is appointed or promoted. These policies and associated procedures provide for the application of best human resources practice with a careful application of the principles of equity, fairness and flexibility.

The following links provide further information on appointments and promotion policies at DCU:

- DCU Recruitment and Selection Policies and Procedures
- Promotion to Associate Professor
- Promotion to Professor and Full Professor
- Assistant Professor Progression Policy

Other relevant policies include:

- Dignity and Respect at Work and Study Policy
- Equality and Access Policy
- Equal Opportunities Statement for Job Advertisements
- Code of Practice for the Employment of People with Disabilities

Staff Learning & Development

The University is deeply committed to supporting the learning and development needs of its employees, fostering an environment conducive to lifelong learning. This dedication to staff development is essential for realising our ambitious goals outlined in the University's Strategic Plan. For more details on DCU's approach to HR Learning & Organisational Development (L&OD), please visit the Learning & Organisational Development homepage.

Given the significant growth in our scale and complexity, HR L&OD now has a broader scope. The team actively engages with key stakeholders across the University to continually assess learning needs and strategic priorities. This process is guided by the Academic Development and Promotion Framework, alongside the recently introduced DCU Professional Development Framework. We design and implement appropriate interventions to address skill, capability, and competency requirements identified through these consultations. Colleagues are encouraged to discuss their Learning and Development objectives and plans through the university's Probation Assessment process and the newly launched Performance Review & Development (PRD) Scheme.

The resulting staff development opportunities are available through various channels:

- Our course schedule offers a comprehensive array of development opportunities tailored to individual staff needs.
- We provide a range of self-directed options, including access to platforms like LinkedIn Learning, our Essential eLearning programme (for compliance-based learning), and our Learning Spotlight catalogue, supporting ongoing professional growth.
- Our Learning Campaigns & Programmes target specific groups of staff, such as the DCU Orientation Programme, Mentoring Programme, Professional Skills for Research Leaders (PSRL), and the Explore Leadership and Management Programme. Additionally, we've recently introduced Emerge, a professional development initiative for DCU colleagues in Professional 3 (P3) and Professional 4 (P4) roles, aimed at fostering personal and professional growth.

The PSRL, Emerge, and Explore Leadership programmes are comprehensive, year-long initiatives focusing on key behavioural and leadership competencies. The Orientation Programmes provide crucial information on the resources and support available to new colleagues joining DCU.

L&OD also offers tailored Change Management services for the University, including coaching, communications support, facilitation, and other resources to ensure strategic and professional change management across all University units. We collaborate closely with faculties, schools, and departments to identify, design, and deliver these interventions as needed.

Furthermore, several other units across the University contribute to the professional development of staff, including the Teaching Enhancement Unit, the Library, Research and Innovation Support (RIS), and Information Systems Services (ISS).

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The remit of the Learning & Organisational Development team now includes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) for DCU employees. The team manages a range of policies, training and initiatives, including the Athena Swan framework to raise awareness around equality and make DCU a more inclusive workplace for colleagues. A key pillar of our EDI strategy is the DCU Women in Leadership Initiative. The vision for this initiative is that DCU will become a university that explicitly values women as leaders. A wide range of formal and informal initiatives, existing and new, support the achievement of this ambitious vision. Other areas of work include accessibility, anti-racism, consent and LGBTQ+ inclusion.

In addition to the above, we are deeply committed to fostering a culture of dignity, respect, and consent within its community. DCU recognises the critical importance of creating a safe and supportive environment for all staff and students. With a proactive approach to addressing issues of sexual violence and harassment, DCU prioritises comprehensive education, awareness-raising, and prevention initiatives. The university's remit extends beyond mere compliance with policies; it actively promotes a culture of mutual respect, understanding, and consent, empowering individuals to uphold these values in all aspects of campus life. Through collaborative efforts and ongoing dialogue, DCU strives to ensure that every member of its community feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to a positive and inclusive campus environment. In demonstration of this commitment in 2023 DCU launched a Sexual Misconduct Policy with the goal of ensuring that all students and staff maintain the

right to enjoy their work and or study in a safe environment free from sexual misconduct and to be treated with fairness, respect and dignity at all times.

DCU Mentoring & Coaching Programme

DCU offers staff members the opportunity to engage with an active mentorship programme. Mentors are senior academic and research staff including professors and retired members of staff and senior administrative staff. The University also runs a successful Reverse Mentoring scheme, where senior colleagues are mentored by DCU students. The HR Learning & Organisational Development team also manage a Coaching panel where senior colleagues can access coaching from a range of trained and accredited Coaches. More information regarding DCU Mentoring and Coaching can be found on DCU's Mentoring, Buddying and Coaching page.

DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit

The DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit's mission is to *foster excellence in practice through leadership in teaching, the provision of professional development opportunities for staff, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.* The Unit has core functions relating to strengthening staff capabilities to develop innovation, teaching excellence, and flexibility in delivering on the University's commitment to a transformative student learning experience. Additionally, it develops, manages, and promotes good practice with DCU's digital learning environment (known as Loop) and related learning technologies, and provides end user and application support in respect of that system.

The Unit leads a number of professional development opportunities designed to support the professional development of academic staff.   The Teaching Enhancement Unit further delivers a series of workshops for programme teams and schools covering a wide variety of areas related to teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in key areas of innovative pedagogy such as Challenge Based Learning and Interactive Oral Assessment. More information on these workshops can be found on the Teaching Enhancement Unit website. Another initiative undertaken by the TEU is the AdvanceHE Fellowship scheme. This initiative is to recognise excellence in teaching and learning. An AdvanceHE Fellowship demonstrates a personal and institutional commitment to professionalism in learning and teaching in higher education. Across four categories, from Associate to Principal, Fellowship provides individuals with recognition of their practice, impact and leadership of teaching and learning.

Research Career Framework

The DCU Research Career Framework (RCF), designed to attract and retain Postdoctoral researchers, provides significant professional development opportunities. The Framework aims to ensure that DCU remains a university of choice for top-class research and researchers in the future. Further information on the Framework and initiatives underpinning the Framework is available here.

Research Development Programme

The Research Development Programme is developed by HR Learning & Organisational Development in collaboration with DCU Research Innovation and Support in consultation with researchers. The programme aims to support the career and professional development of researchers and academics as they undertake the Research Career Framework. This programme provides skills-based learning and development opportunities, which encourage both the personal and professional growth of researchers. Launched in 2022, the Research Development Guide assists postdocs in navigating the supports and career development opportunities that DCU provides. Information on the full range of research courses, the Researcher Development Programme and information on the DCU Research Career Framework are located on the Researcher Development Hub.

6.0 Information and Data Management

Information is an asset and if well managed can contribute significantly to the smooth operation of the University.

The University is transforming the way in which its students and staff interact with each other, using student information to achieve excellence in service, and to ensure its future needs can be met.

The University uses a wide variety of systems to manage its data resources. All DCU systems and data are subject to university policies and cyber security controls, to ensure that they are secure, robust and fit for use by university stakeholders.

6.1 Information Systems (IS) Governance at DCU

IS Governance Committee is a sub-group of Executive and is responsible for advising on the strategic direction of all information resources within the University, and for ensuring that this is consistent with the overall University strategy.

The IS Governance Committee is responsible for:

- The development and implementation of an Information Systems Strategy that is consistent with the overall University Strategy and for proposing this to Executive to ensure consistency with the wider strategic investment framework;
- The strategic oversight and formal prioritisation of information needs and proposing these to Executive for approval;
- Define technical architecture and standards for the university;
- Establishing best practices and tools for IS systems across the campus;
- Considering and, where appropriate, investing in information developments aligned to the Information Systems Strategy and for monitoring their implementation and progress;
- Communications and consulting with other areas within the University to ensure the most effective use of information resources and facilities across the University;
- Ensuring compliance with any legislative or professional requirements relating to information resources and their use;
- Engaging with sector-wide initiatives in relation to information resources and benchmarking the University's IS strategy, policies and practices nationally and internationally;
- Regularly reviewing the IS strategy to ensure that it remains relevant and sustainable;
- Monitoring the University IT Risk Register;
- IS Security Systems. ICT Security Implementation Group to be a sub-group of the IS Governance Committee.

6.2 Data Governance at DCU

Data Governance at DCU reflects a university commitment to the active and ongoing development of institutional capability through the coordination of people, processes, and technology to manage institutional data as a critical university resource. Data governance is underpinned by robust policies, guidelines, and practices to ensure data is protected, managed, and used responsibly and effectively throughout the data lifecycle.

DCU is currently developing a Data Governance Framework that will support the oversight, accessibility, and protection of institutional data. It is designed to promote consistency, accountability, and collaboration across all functions of the university, ensuring that data is managed as a shared resource that benefits the entire academic community. Institutional-level oversight for the implementation of data governance shall be driven by two university-level committees, both with distinct remits and responsibilities. At a strategic level, the Data Governance Steering Group develops and approves data governance policies and approaches, ensuring their alignment with the strategic priorities of the university. The Data Stewardship Council focuses on the cross-institutional implementation of policy and good practice in data governance and data management.

In June 2024, DCU approved the ToR of a Data Governance Steering Group to lead the development and implementation of Data Governance at DCU. The DCU Data Governance Steering Group is responsible for,

Policy Development and Oversight of Data Governance

- Approving the underlying principles and values that underpin data governance at DCU
- Leading the development of and oversight for the implementation of a DCU Data Governance Framework.
- Leading on policy development to ensure that the university's data assets are created, stored, and used appropriately by our business processes, technologies, and reporting tools.
- Regularly evaluating the effectiveness of policies, procedures, and processes for data management, data quality, and data use at DCU
- Approving and reviewing the roles relating to Data Stewardship at DCU, including maintaining a register of DCU Data Stewards
- Reviewing annually the university's data governance maturity level and making recommendations to mitigate identified risks or deficiencies.
- Receiving regular reports of data issues highlighted at the Data Stewardship Council and the status of these, escalating issues that are not resolved satisfactorily in a timely manner.

Promoting the Effective and Responsible Use of Data

- Identifying and managing risks associated with the use of DCU data assets.
- Ensuring, in co-operation with IS Governance structures, that data management at DCU is compliant with security policies and GDPR responsibilities.
- Ensuring that data governance considerations and good practice are appropriately incorporated into strategic information systems projects.

Building Reporting and Data Insights Capabilities

- Ensuring the university has capabilities and processes to meet its regulatory and statutory reporting obligations.
- Identifying priorities to support the use of the university's data assets to support decision-making through reporting and analysis.
- Working in cooperation with IS Governance, identify gaps in the university's capacity to deliver strategic reporting and analysis at DCU, and make recommendations to address these gaps

Additional Policies for the Management of Data and Information at DCU

- Data Privacy Policy. This Data Privacy Policy provides details of the way in which we Process Personal Data in line with our obligations under Data Protection Law.

- Personal Data Retention Policy. This is the Personal Data Retention Policy of Dublin City University
- Data Classification Policy The purpose of this policy is to support the classification of data to allow for the protection of Dublin City University data, or data held by Dublin City University, in terms of confidentiality, integrity, and availability.
- Digital Access Control Policy. This document sets out the Dublin City University (DCU) policy for controlling access to digital systems and cloud services used within DCU and is an essential element of IT and data governance of the University.
- Digital Identity Retention Policy. This policy relates to the use of the online domain "dcu.ie" and how it relates to assumptions that can be made about individuals, and their formal relationship to the University. The policy establishes who gains access to a 'dcu.ie' digital identity and for how long they may retain that access.
- Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Security Policy. The purpose of this policy is to protect Dublin City University's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) resources from accidental or malicious disclosure, modification, or destruction, while also preserving the open information-sharing requirements of its academic culture. This policy lays the foundation for a common understanding of information security at DCU based on the generally accepted information security principles of confidentiality, integrity and availability, in particular, "International Standard ISO/IEC 27002:2005. Information technology - Security techniques - Code of practice for information security management".
- Personnel Files Access Policy This policy outlines access controls and procedures for access to information held by DCU People, pertaining to staff recruitment or employment, which are treated as highly confidential and secure to DCU People.

6.3 Enterprise Reporting Tools

The University has adopted the Microsoft PowerBi platform as the enterprise reporting platform to provide business intelligence requirements across the University. This system provides information to different departments for self-monitoring and planning of their portfolio of activities. This platform gives power and flexibility for the running of a suite of standard reports and creating ad hoc reports to respond to specific information requests.

Microsoft Power BI

Microsoft Power BI is the data visualisation and reporting tool. It is used across the university to provide insights and reporting to support planning and decision-making. Microsoft Power BI also provides the capacity to report across multiple institutional data sources as a key management information tool. Reports are currently used wdiely by senior management, faculty administration and professional support offices. The Quality and Insights Office and Digital Transformation Services teams work together to support and deliver dashboard visualisations on a range of data including,

- Student lifecycle reporting and demographic profiles - applications, enrolments, student success metrics, graduating award classifications, Graduate Outcomes Survey results, etc.
- DCU rankings analysis
- Visualisations of the HEA Space Allocation Survey
- Student Growth Model Planning

Guru

Guru is a DCU-developed reporting and academic management tool, used extensively by academic and academic administrators in Faculties for student, module and programme-level reporting, and the management of a number of academic management processes. These include,

- **Guru Stats**- provision of analysis and student registration and academic profile information on students, modules and programmes at DCU, aimed at academics and academic administrative teams.
- **Guru Exam**- operational reporting and quality checks to support the delivery of consistent, standardised, and accessible assessments.
- **Guru Extern**- a range of digital services to help with all aspects of the management of external examiners and their quality review documentation.
- **Guru Archive**- a repository to provide secure and accessible archiving of exam past papers.

Guru 2.0, which supports Guru functionality post-implementation of the new Banner-based Student Information System at DCU will include additional functionality and reporting capacity to academic audiences at DCU. More information about the guru system can be found at the following link: https://gurudevelopments.com/.

Argos eVisions

The use of Argos eVisions has been implemented as part of the SIS Programme implementation to support operational reporting on the Banner-based Student Information Systems. Argos reports provide reporting solutions to ensure the accurate and effective management of administrative processes relating to the Banner student information system.

Mako Data

Mako Data is a reporting solution managed by DCU People to provide both internal and statutory reporting capabilities from Core Pay and Core Personnel.

Prevero

Prevero reporting is a reporting and data visualisation tool used by Finance. It is linked to the Agresso system and is currently used to present Annual accounts for Campus Companies within the defined statutory format.

6.4 DCU Institutional Research and Analysis

The Institutional Research and Analysis function supports the University by gathering and analysing information and evidence for use in university-wide academic and administrative decision-making and assessment activities. Since 2017, this function has become part of the DCU Quality and Institutional Insights Office.

Key functions include:

- Provision of analysis and reporting to inform and support an evidence-based approach to university planning, decision making and quality enhancement.
- Design, analysis and reporting on institution-wide student feedback surveys.
- Coordinating the implementation and monitoring of Key Performance Indicators at institutional level.
- Analysis of the external environment, including benchmarking activities.
- Supporting the implementation of Business Intelligence Systems to deliver user-friendly reporting across the university.
- Supporting the completion, submission and analysis of data to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and other Government Agencies.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

Information on DCU Policies

The Central Policies Webpage (CPW) is the single designated website location for all of the University's policies that govern its academic and business affairs. In addition, the CPW also provides information on the various additional Statutes, Codes and Regulations of the University.

The CPW is managed by the Office of the Chief Operations Officer with day-to-day responsibility for its maintenance falling on the Risk & Compliance Officer. In 2022/23 a project to overhaul the CPW was conducted to convert it into easily accessible HTML content so that everyone, including anyone with a disability, will be able to access it. This level of accessibility to the CPW will also be maintained into the future.

The purposes of the CPW are to:

- provide access, via a single designated website location, to the policies of the University that deal with the administration of its academic and business affairs;
- indicate which policies have been recently amended, or those that have newly created, in the last year;
- indicate, for specific categories of staff, those policies which may be of particular relevance;
- provide guidance on the drafting and approval process for a University policy; and
- to assist in the correct designation and categorisation of various governance documents by applying certain principles.

Planned Activity for Future Development

DCU is currently engaged in a multi-year project to upgrade/replace our student information system. The student information system is in ways the central nervous system of the organisation. A large number of our key IT systems and business processes depend on a robust, available, flexible and secure student information system. As such, the system also plays a key role in the experience of our students both on and off campus.

DCU commenced the implementation of a new solution in 2019, and the new system went live in the summer of 2024. The Student Information System project forms part of a broader range of activities aligned to the development of robust operational processes and organisational structures. The implementation of the DCU Operating Framework is led by the university's Senior Management Group and is focused initially on the development of structures and processes focused on the delivery of a student-centric operating model to support the university's learning activities.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

Annual and Periodic Programme Review

Academic programmes at DCU are subject to internal programmatic review, both annually (APR), and on a five-year cyclical schedule of periodic programmatic review (PPR). In addition, 56% of our taught programme portfolio is subject to ongoing external accreditation by Professional, Regulatory, and Statutory Bodies (PRSBs). APR is conducted during October of each academic year, reviewing the programme for the previous academic year. The outputs of APRs are presented and discussed at Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees, with a summary report on the key issues relating to programme delivery and student attainment discussed at Faculty Management Board. In addition, each Faculty prepares a short report identifying issues raised that are managed beyond faculty-level to the University Education Committee in March following APR completion. Building on an annual cycle, periodic programme review (PPR) is typically conducted on a five-year cyclical basis. The internal PRR process is completed using a standardised template and reporting structure, however, in cases where programmes are also subject to external reviews by PRSBs, the self-evaluation and outputs of these externally led reviews can be used as a substitute for the internal review process, where appropriate. More information on Annual and Periodic Programme Review can be found at the following link.

Externally Led Quality Reviews

The Quality Promotion Office is responsible for facilitating and coordinating the cyclical review of units at DCU, on a 7-year rolling cycle. The reviews are based on a self-assessment approach, followed by a peer review group visit, and conclude with the development of a quality improvement plan by the unit under review in response to the recommendations of the peer review group. The academic and support unit reviews are primarily focused on the evaluation and exploration of strategic, organisational and management issues and external relations.

The quality review process includes 4 key stages,

- **Self-Evaluation Report** - the completion of a comprehensive self-evaluation of an academic or professional support area, led by an internally selected quality review committee. Themes explored during self-evaluation both build on previous quality reviews, and other internal and external review activity, and are aligned to the quality assurance requirements outlined in the QQI Guidelines and European Standards and Guidelines. The process of self-evaluation requires an evidence-informed approach to self-evaluation, and units undergoing review are encouraging to use both existing sources of data and information and seeking new information from relevant stakeholders to support the completion of self-evaluation.

- **Peer Review Visit and Report** - The Peer Review visit is conducted by a six-person team, constituted of three external members, two internal reviewers and a student reviewer. Membership of Peer Review Groups are drawn from national and international experts, both from higher education and a peer from outside of the higher education sector. The Peer Review visit aims to verify and evaluate the self-evaluation report, and meet with staff, students, and other stakeholders to discuss key issues identified. The visit is followed by the completion of a Peer Review Group Report, which summarizes

the Group's findings and makes commendations and recommendations for future quality enhancement within the Area under review.

- **Quality Enhancement Planning -** following receipt of the final Peer Review Group report, the area develops a Quality Enhancement Plan (Quips) in response to the report. This involves both an Area, and University level response to the PRG recommendations. The QuEP is discussed and agreed at a follow-up meeting, attended by at least one external member of the Peer Review Group

- **Publication of Review Outputs** - following consideration and discussion of both the Peer Review Group Report and Quality Improvement Plan at University Executive and DCU Governing Authority, both documents are published on the DCU website.

Detailed information on procedures, background and guidance documents, and templates relating to these unit level reviews can be found at the following link.

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	21
Awarding bodies	3
QA bodies	6

1. Type of arrangement	**Awarding body**
Name of body:	The Teaching Council / An Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Physical Education with Mathematics BSc in Physical Education with Biology BSc in Science Education BSc in Education & Training Bachelor of Education Bachelor of Religious Education and English Bachelor of Religious Education and History Bachelor of Religious Education and Music Bachelor of Education in Gaeilge and French, German or Spanish Professional Master of Education (Primary Teaching) Professional Master of Education (Post-Primary Teaching) Bachelor of Education with Technology, Engineering and Graphics (Post-Primary Teaching)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2023
Date of next review	01/01/2028

2. Type of arrangement	**Awarding body**
Name of body:	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland / An Bord Altranais
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Nursing (General) BSc in Nursing (Mental Health) BSc in Nursing (Intellectual Disability) BSc in Nursing (Children's and General) Higher Diploma in Children's Nursing MSc in Dementia Health Care Practice MSc in Dementia Nursing Practice Masters in General Health Care Practice MSc in General Nursing Practice MSc Intellectual Disability Health Care Practice MSc in Intellectual Disability Nursing Practice Masters in Mental Health Nursing Practice MSc in Mental Health Care Practice
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	01/01/2025

3. Type of arrangement	**PRSB**
Name of body:	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)

Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Aviation Man with Pilot Studies Bachelor of Business Studies Bachelor of Business Studies (Exchange) Business Studies (with INTRA) BA in Global Business BA in Global Business (Canada) BA in Global Business (France) BA in Global Business (Germany) BA in Global Business (Spain) BA in Global Business (USA) Graduate Cert in Management (Business) Graduate Diploma in Business Analytics Bachelor Business Studies International Masters in Business Administration MSc in Accounting MSc in Electronic Commerce (Business) MSc in Finance M.Sc. in Talent, Leadership & HR Strategy MSc in Human Resource Management MSc International Accounting & Business BSc Marketing, Innovation & Technology BSc Marketing, Innovation & Tech(INTRA) MSc in Investment, Treasury & Banking MSc in Management of Operations Graduate Cert in Management of Operation MSc in Work & Organisational Psychology MSc in Management (Aviation Leadership) MSc in Management (Business) MSc in Business Administration MSc in Digital Marketing MSc in Emergency Management MSc in Management (Insights & Innovation MSc in Work & Organisational Behaviour MSc in Management (Strategy)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

4. Type of arrangement	**PRSB**
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Work and Organisational Psychology/Behaviour BSc in Psychology MSc in Psychology BA in Humanities (Psychology Major)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2023
Date of next review	01/01/2028

5. Type of arrangement	**Awarding body**
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	B.Eng. in Biomedical Engineering B.Eng. in Biomedical Engineering MEng in Biomedical Engineering B.Eng. Mechanical & Manufacturing Eng B.Eng. in Mechanical & Manufacturing Eng MEng in Mechanical & Manufacturing Eng B.Eng. in Common Entry into Engineering BEng Electronic & Computer Engineering B.Eng. in Mechatronic Engineering MEng Electronic & Computer Engineering MEng In Electronic & Comp Eng. (Wuhan) MEng in Mechanical and Manufacturing Eng
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	

6. Type of arrangement	**PRSB**
Name of body:	Association of MBA's (AMBA)
Programme titles and links to publications	Executive MBA

Date of accreditation or last review	01/09/2024
Date of next review	01/09/2029

7. Type of arrangement	QA body
Name of body:	European Foundation for Management Development Global Quality System (EQUIS)
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Accounting and Finance BSc in Aviation Management BSc in Aviation Management with Pilot Studies Bachelor of Business Studies Bachelor of Business Studies (Exchange) Bachelor of Business Studies (with INTRA) BA in Global Business BA in Global Business (Canada) BA in Global Business (France) BA in Global Business (Germany) BA in Global Business (Spain) BA in Global Business (USA) Graduate Cert in Management (Business) Graduate Diploma in Business Analytics Bachelor Business Studies International Masters in Business Administration MSc in Accounting MSc in Electronic Commerce (Business) MSc in Finance M.Sc. in Talent, Leadership & HR Strategy MSc in Human Resource Management MSc International Accounting & Business BSc Marketing, Innovation & Technology BSc Marketing, Innovation & Tech(INTRA) MSc in Investment, Treasury & Banking MSc in Management of Operations Graduate Cert in Management of Operation MSc in Work & Organisational Psychology MSc in Management (Aviation Leadership) MSc in Management (Business) MSc in Business Administration MSc in Digital Marketing MSc in Emergency Management MSc in Management (Insights & Innovation MSc in Work & Organisational Behaviour MSc in Management (Strategy)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/09/2024
Date of next review	01/09/2029

8. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Work and Organisational Psychology / Behaviour MSc in Human Resource Management
Date of accreditation or last review	01/09/2024
Date of next review	01/09/2029

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Definitions:

QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012 defines collaborative provision as a process that occurs where two or more providers are involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'joint award' as a single award made jointly by two or more awarding bodies

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'linked provider' as a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.

Type of arrangement	Total Number
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	3
Collaborative programmes	4
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

1. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	Northeastern University, Boston Neoma Business School, Reims, France European School of Business, Reutlingen, Germany ICADE at the Universidad Ponti
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Global Business (France) BA in Global Business (Germany) BA in Global Business (Spain) BA in Global Business (USA) BA Global Business Canada
Date of last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

2. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Dundalk Institute of Technology
Programme titles and links to publications	Research Masters and Research PhD
Date of last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	

3. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	(1) Avignon Université (AU); (2) Universidad de León (ULE); (3) Università di Pisa (UNIPI)
Programme titles and links to publications	European Master in Law, Data and Artificial Intelligence
Date of last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

4. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	(1) University of Glasgow; (2) Charles University, Prague.
Programme titles and links to publications	International Master in Security Intelligence and Strategic Studies
Date of last review	01/01/2017
Date of next review	01/01/2027

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Definition:

Per the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision, an articulation agreement may be defined as a process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advance standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree awarding body. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the parties.

Articulation agreements - Total number	1

1. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Coláiste Dhúlaigh College of Further Education
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Business Studies
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	01/01/2019
Date of next review	
Detail of the agreement	n/a

Dublin City University
2025

Annual   Quality   Report
**PART   B: INTERNAL   QUALITY
ENHANCEMENT   &**
Reporting Period 2023-2024

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

DCU's new Strategy, 2023-2028, sees the University continue its mission to transform lives and societies. The quality of the DCU experience is a cornerstone of this strategy plan, evidenced in the commitment to pioneering a transformative student experience, advancing DCU's research reputation and impact, enhancing local and international engagement, developing its people, and optimising organisational readiness and resilience.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
1	Student Information System: Go Live in August 2024	The DCU Student Information System (SIS) Programme is a multi-year programme that is enabling us to transform how students interact with us and will support us in creating an excellent experience for both students and staff. The new student system went live in August 2024.
2	Power BI Report Development	The QIO continues its work developing a suite of PowerBI dashboards to enhance strategic business intelligence for the university. The QIO is currently exploring new reporting possibilities enabled by a more flexible and advanced student information system. Additionally, the team is collaborating with colleagues to consider the potential and possible benefits of incorporating other data sources into the PowerBI reporting environment.
3	Student feedback on teaching	A Student Feedback on Teaching Subgroup was established by DCU Education Committee in 2023/24. The Subgroup was tasked with reviewing and re-instating an institution-wide approach to student feedback, based on international best practices.
4	Generative AI	DCU continues to closely monitor developments in Generative AI (GenAI). The university is actively considering both the challenges and opportunities presented by developments in this space, and actions required for the coming months. An initial approach to address the role of Gen-AI in our teaching, learning and assessment focuses on three dimensions: • Its potential for how we teach • Its impact on assessment approaches, including how we safeguard academic integrity. • Its impact on the relevance of our programme content Across the five faculties, the likely impact of GenAI on teaching, learning and assessment, programme content and the future roles of our graduates is an ongoing consideration. As a first priority consideration, DCU developed interim guidance on GenAI and assessment to support academic colleagues in the 2023/24 academic year.
5	Performance Review	A new PRD (Performance Review and Development) Scheme was rolled out in 2023/24 following a successful pilot in 2021 and 2022. The enhanced scheme aims to provide staff with a structured framework through which conversations regarding performance and professional development can take place. It is designed to support excellence in both employee and organisational performance where colleagues get a better understanding of how they contribute and support the delivery of the University Strategy through individual and team responsibilities.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Governing Authority Committee Meetings	6 September 2023 18 October 8 December 14 February 2024 24 April 19 June 11 September
Executive Meetings	5, 19 September 2023 3, 17, 31 October 14th, 28th November 12 December 9, 23 January 2024 6, 20 February 5, 19 March 2, 16, 30 April 14, 28 May 11, 25 June 9, 23 July 3, 17 September
Quality Promotion Committee Meetings	20 September 2023 22 November 24 January 2024 20 March 22 May 26 June
Academic Council Meetings	4 October 2023 29 November 7 February 2024 3 April 4 June
Education Committee Meetings	13 September 2023 11 October 15 November 13 December 24 January 2024 21 February 20 March 17 April 15 May 11 September
Graduate Research Studies Board	17 August 2023 19 October 30 November 18 January 2024 15 February 28 March 25 April 30 May 15 August
University Standards Committee	31 August 2023 2 November 11 January 2024 22 February

	11 April 16 May 29 August

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

Structural Changes

- In 2024 DCU appointed its first Dean of Global Relations. Structural changes assocated with this post will take place in the 2024/25 academic year.
- In 2023, DCU launched its ambitious strategy for how DCU will transform lives and societies. To enable this work, the HR Department went through a number of key structural changes to better serve the Strategic Plan, the University and it's people. As part of this reimagining the unit was renamed DCU People.

Data Governance Steering Group

- The 2023/24 reporting period saw the initiation of a project which will result in the development and implementation of institution-wide Data Governance. The implementation of Data Governance at DCU reflects commitments in the DCU Strategy to '*Ensure Organisational Resilience and Readiness*' with the goals of optimising our organisational structures, skillsets, business intelligence and campus development plans. Data Governance is a key component of ensuring the management and effective use of the institution's data as a resource to inform planning and decision-making at DCU. In June 2024, DCU Executive approved the Terms of Reference for a Data Governance Steering Group, whose membership reflects senior university leadership across academic and support domains to lead the development and implementation of Data Governance at DCU.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Guide:

In this section include the reviews completed or in progress during the reporting period. (QQI acknowledges that the institutional review schedule may not be aligned with the AQR reporting period, and that reviews may be in progress and not completed at the point in time when the report is submitted.)

The unit of review may be a programme [private HEIs], faculty, department/school or service delivery unit.
Please include the schedule for reviews included in the previous AQR – this can be cut and pasted from previous report.

In the table below, indicate the academic and support units for which reviews **concluded** (i.e. the point at which the report associated with the review has been published) during the reporting period; the date of completion of review, the reason for conducting the review (if the review had not been planned) or the reason for non-completion (if the review had been planned for completion but was not conducted or concluded during the reporting period).

A link to the report or other relevant documentation arising out of the review should be provided in the third column.

Please delete guide text before submission.

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
DCU Business School	5th - 8th September 2023	https://www.dcu.ie/qio/published-quality-review-reports
DCU Sports & Wellbeing	11th -12th April 2024	https://www.dcu.ie/qio/published-quality-review-reports
Communications, Marketing and Events	24th April - 26th April 2024.	https://www.dcu.ie/qio/published-quality-review-reports
Faculty of Engineering & Computing	7th May - 10th May 2024	https://www.dcu.ie/qio/published-quality-review-reports
Office of the Vice-President for Research	19th-21st June 2024	https://www.dcu.ie/qio/published-quality-review-reports

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels[2] involved in IQA

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

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	5	3	2	0	4	15	
of those:							
On-site processes	5						
Desk reviews	0						
Virtual processes	0						
Average panel size for each process type*	6						

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

---

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

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

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	5	3	2		2	3	2	0	0	3	2
Secretary	5	4	1		5			0	0		
Academic/Discipline Specific	16	8	8					0	0		
Student Representative	5	2	3					0	0		
QA											
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission	4	2	2			4	0	0	0		

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

2.1 Governance and Management of Quality - Changes during the Reporting Period

New Programme Validation and Accreditation

The following new programmes completed accreditation at DCU during the 2023/24 academic year:

- Grad Dip/MSc in Financial Technology and Innovation
- BEd in Home Economics and Technology
- Grad Cert in Women's Health
- MA in Music, Sound, Culture & Media

Periodic Programme Review during the Reporting Period

The following academic programmes underwent periodic programme review during the 2023/24 academic year.

DCU Business School

- BA in Accounting & Finance
- MSc in Human Resource Management
- PNU MSc in Business Administration

Faculty of Engineering and Computing

- BEng in Mechatronic Engineering

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

- English subject on the Bachelor of Arts: Joint Honours programme
- BA in Jazz and Contemporary Music Performance
- MA in Translation Studies
- MA in Translation Technology
- MA in Refugee Integration
- Human Development subject on the Bachelor of Arts: Joint Honours programme

Faculty of Science and Health

- MSc in Diagnostics and Precision Medicine

- Grad Cert in Sexuality Education and Sexual Wellbeing
- BSc in Psychology
- MSc in Psychology (Conversion)

QA of Micro-credentials at DCU

DCU continues to play a pivotal role in shaping and pursuing the development of micro-credentials. The university is actively engaging with QA policy to shape policy both nationally and internationally for micro-credentials looking at key areas such as the use of key European and national tools to support quality, recognition and portability. These activities are aligned with the implementation of the European Commission Recommendation on Micro-Credentials. DCU's has participated in national and international fora on all aspects of QA relating to information and data, recognition, stackability, portability, credit accumulation and the issuing of micro-credentials as per Annex 1 and Annex 2 of the European Micro-Credential Recommendation. DCU through our participation in the ECIU Alliance, awarded qualified eSealed digital micro-credentials using the European Digital Credential Platform during this period and the University is now in the EQAR database. DCU continues to actively engage with stakeholders from the EDC to support the development and refinement of the functionality of the platform to support recognition and portability of micro-credentials. DCU continues through its Director of Micro-Credential Strategy and Innovation to engage with MicroNet a peer-learning network funded by Europe and engages alongside national and European partners including the European University Association, QQI, UNIC & ECIU European University Alliances and with Micro-Creds in knowledge exchange and collaboration activities. DCU has engaged with UNESCO-IIEP in the development of a national framework for Micro-Credentials. DCU continues its active involvement and leadership in national and international initiatives such as ECIU related to the development and implementation of micro-credentials including the HCI-funded IUA-led multi-Campus MicroCreds initiative, participating in a webinar in November 2023 to document the technical journey of issuing qualified eSeal micro-credentials and supporting the publication of a white paper on the use of key Bologna tools for Micro-Credentials, institutional quality assurance processes and navigating transparency issues for micro-credentials for learners.

ECIU- European Consortium of Innovative Universities Update

European University Alliances are an important element of the new internationalisation policy in Ireland, and of EU policy. In line with DCU's vision statement "To be a leading innovative European University distinguished by the quality of the DCU experience, and the impact of our teaching and research on our stakeholders and on issues of global concern" and our focus on transformative student experience, international engagement and research, we continue to progress the aims of ECIU.

Founded in 1997, the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU) network is dedicated to ensuring a culture of innovation in its member institutions, and to providing a catalytic role for innovation in business and society at large. DCU joined ECIU on 1st January 2012.

The advent of the European Universities Initiative provided ECIU with an opportunity to significantly raise its ambition in terms of what could be achieved as a network. ECIU was successful in being included in the first tranche of European University Alliances funded by the European Commission and our pilot project "ECIUn" spanned Nov 2019-Oct 2022. The initiative took forward the concept of collaborative networks of universities across Europe, enabling students to combine studies in several EU countries. During the reporting period, the member institutions successfully delivered on the project and strengthened the links between teaching, research and innovation and knowledge transfer. The network was also successful in securing Erasmus+ funds for an ambitious second phase project "ECIUn+" (Nov 2022-Oct 2026, with a possibility of a two-year extension). This new project aims to strengthen the development of three key innovative concepts in higher education and the ECIU University ecosystem: i) Challenge-based approach, ii) Micro-credentials and iii) Flexible learning pathways, where the alliance has committed to integrating challenge-based learning opportunities into our institutional programmes.

DCU has made a strong commitment to play a leadership role in ECIU developmentsand has worked closely with the European Commission to support ECIU becoming the first European University Alliance to e-seal and issue micro-credentials.

Internally at DCU, governance structures are in place to ensure oversight of ECIU activities and delivery on the ECIUn+ project: i) The DCU ECIU Strategic Oversight Committee, provides institutional oversight, guidance and direction in relation to a variety of projects and activities, implementation of which is central to the realisation of university strategic objectives as they relate to ECIU. The Committee is a constituent element of both ECIU and University governance structures, being a sub-committee of Education Committee. Membership comprises: the Vice President for Academic Affairs (Chair); Vice President for Research; DCU Chair of Digital Learning; Executive Director of Engagement; the Executive Deans for each of the five faculties; and ECIU Senior Project Officer. ii) The ECIUn+ Implementation Group, reporting to the University's ECIU Strategic Oversight Committee, is delivering on DCU's commitments in the ECIUn+ project, namely: the identification, development and delivery of innovative curricular changes involving challenged-based learning, associated modules, micro-credentials and mobility opportunities and related tasks to ensure realisation of those in the context of ECIU University. Membership includes the ECIU Senior Project Officer (Chair) and representatives from: DCU Studio; Registry; Teaching Enhancement Unit; Placement; Office of the Vice-President of Academic Affairs; Information Systems Services; Communications, Marketing and Events Department; and all five faculties. During the 2023/24 academic year, the Implementation Group continued its delivery on ECIUn+ with FEC delivering two modules to incoming ECIU students and opening space in the programme for DCU students to participate in a module delivered by Linköping University.

During 2023, as part of a university drive to further develop relationships with ECIU partners, DCU Faculties devised plans to deepen bilateral engagement with specific key ECIU partners. Several staff mobilities, funded through Erasmus+, the ECIU Researchers Mobility Fund and School funding, have taken place. DCU hosted visitors from ECIU partners including the EduCo group in May 2023 on St. Pat's campus.

ECIU's H2020 'Science with and for Society' (SwafS) project, SMART-ER, finished in early 2024. Various initiatives were delivered through SMART-ER: Seed funding, Citizen Science and a Training Academy and DCU was an active partner in all activities.

Staff members participated in the ECIU Leadership Development Programme. DCU was represented by staff attending the first ECIU research conference in Barcelona in October 2023 and the first annual ECIU University Forum "Education for a Resilient and Sustainable Society" which took place in Kaunas in June 2024. Two DCU Student Ambassadors were recruited to support the promotion and awareness raising of ECIU at a local level. Reporting was submitted to the HEA in January 2024 in the context of support funds received for ECIU activities. Additional HEA support funds were also received in January 2024 for continued activities. Colleagues continue to engage with the National Forum of Irish European Universities Initiative (EUI) partners.

DCU Futures

DCU Futures is the most ambitious innovation in teaching and learning in the history of Dublin City University (DCU). This €19.9 million project is an unprecedented commitment to radically re-imagine undergraduate education for the 21st century in order to meet the challenge of empowering students to be future-capable and thrive in an increasingly unscripted world. DCU's solution involves stakeholders from multiple sectors/domains, comprising multiple sub-projects of varying complexity, structured around three core pillars: (i) what students learn, (ii) how students learn, and (iii) embedding key transversal skills.

In 2021, embracing the value of interdisciplinarity, DCU launched nine new undergraduate degree programmes - BSc in Psychology and Disruptive Technology, BSc in Psychology and Maths, BEng in Mechanical and Sustainability Engineering, BSc in Digital Business and Innovation, BSc in Business Studies with Business Analytics, BSc in Chemistry with Artificial Intelligence, BSc in Physics with Data Analytics, BSc in Bioprocessing, and BA Climate and Environmental Sustainability - with a tenth programme, the BSc in Global Challenges, launched in 2022.

DCU Futures represents a focused investment in innovative pedagogies, including challenge-based learning and virtual laboratories, which embrace experiential learning, prioritise engagement with key industry partners, leverage the affordances of technology, and offer students valuable opportunities to apply knowledge meaningfully.

With more frequent career mobility and the increasing functionality of AI, transversal skills are vital to student/graduate success. Through wide internal and external collaboration, DCU Futures has architected a unique Transversal Skills Competence Framework, ensuring that these skills are embedded, assessed and evidenced rigorously and transparently across programmes. As part of this, all students undertake an innovative module on Data Literacy and can study five different languages at varying levels. Over 160 DCU Futures students registered to study a language as an additional aspect of their programmes.

During the 23/24 academic year, as part of the DCU Futures project, the transversal skills framework continued to develop and gather momentum. Following the initial steps of skill identification and definition development, 23/24 opened the door to allow the newly developed 10 Futures programmes, as well as the 5 existing 'retro-fit' programmes the opportunity to begin prioritising which skills would best enhance the student experience.

Throughout 23/24 each of the 15 programmes undertook a detailed skill selection and mapping process with the input of their entire programme team, and the guidance of the Futures core team. Programmes selected their 6 priority skills, alongside the already existing Career Visioning, Data Literacy and Multilingualism offering. The programmes created a comprehensive plan for embedding their six skills, which included looking at curriculum and programme design, assessment design, challenge based learning opportunities, innovative pedagogy opportunities, and overall programme delivery. In addition to the work undertaken by the programme teams in mapping their chosen skills onto their programmes, the Futures team developed a comprehensive suite of supporting materials, including, close to 300 rubric statements to allow the assessment of transversal skills, and an array of skill-related video content available for staff and students alike (developed in conjunction with DCU Studio). A major milestone was reached when the development of the myskills student platform began in 2023/24, in conjunction with the selected developer, Symplicity. The platform, which has subsequently been launched and is in use by students, pulls together a student's DCU-verified skill ratings, as well as allowing students to self-report on experiences (academic and non-academic) which have allowed them to enhance their skill competence levels. The platform is supported in the form of a dedicated Loop Transversal Skills page, as well as weekly student drop-in support clinics, and ongoing user training.

Oversight for the DCU Futures programme has been established through a Strategic Learning Innovation Projects (SLIP) steering group to provide executive leadership and oversight in managing all HCI 3 projects, including DCU Futures. The SLIP Steering Group is a sub-group of DCUs Education Committee and is accountable to the HEA for delivering all HCI 3 projects as planned and realising project benefits. It is accountable to the DCU Executive for risk management and governance. The SLIP Steering Group membership comprises the Vice President for Academic Affairs (Chair), Deputy Vice President for Academic Affairs, Institutional Lead for DCU Futures and the Executive Deans for each of the five faculties.

2024 Quality Innovation and Development Fund (QuID)

The Quality Improvement and Development fund (QuID) is an open call for enhancement-focused proposals from across the DCU community, which seek to enhance quality within Schools and Units of the University and impact both staff and students.

DCU Quality Promotion Committee selected the theme of 'Transitioning AI from a Threat to a Tool: Empowering and Supporting a 21st Century University' as the theme for the 2024 call. The call led to 19 applications across a number of schools and professional units and 11 projects were approved for funding. The funded initiaives were presented at the inagurial QuID showcase event in late 2024. Further information on the projects can be viewed on the QuID website.

2.2 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity Policy Sub-Committee

Following the publication of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) Academic Integrity Guidelines and the National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms in September 2021, a paper entitled 'Towards an Institution-wide Approach to Academic Integrity' was presented to the University Standards Committee (January 2022). The paper outlined a proposed institutional approach to embed a culture of academic integrity. Amongst the recommendations was a proposal to revise the existing DCU Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy.

A Subcommittee of the DCU University Standards Committee was convened to review the Academic Integrity Policy. The Policy was updated in 2023, and it was agreed that it would be reviewed after one year of implementation. In the meantime, the Procedure for Academic for Academic Misconduct and Investigation has also been reviewed and updated. The Subcommittee therefore agreed that an in-depth review of the Academic Integrity Policy should be deferred until the review of the Procedure takes place, as it is logical to review both documents concurrently given that they are so closely interlinked. Some minor amendments were made to the Policy to ensure consistency of language with the university's recently implemented new student information system, to make more direct reference to research students, and to update links to related documentation which have been updated in the interim. These minor amendments the Academic Integrity Policy are to be approved by Academic Council for implemented in 2025-26.

Integrity- Erasmus+ Project

DCU Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU) worked with partner universities on the INTEGRITY project, funded under the KA2 strand, aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching and learning processes that are based on the principles of academic integrity, supported by policies, mechanisms, and tools that help prevent and detect cases of plagiarism in higher education. As part of this collaboration, TEU developed a resource toolkit for academics to support them in designing assessments that actively encourage academic integrity. The suite of resources advanced for the toolkit includes a literature review publication; a set of twelve principles and related explanations; an interactive glossary; self and team checklists; animated scenarios; and a collection of case studies.

Artificial Intelligence

When GenAI was made available to the public in November 2022, there was an immediate, widespread interest in GenAI tools. DCU acted quickly to provide guidance to academics, particularly in relation to assessment, and workshops to support implementation of that guidance. It is clear from the predictions of the impact of GenAI capabilities that there is a need for DCU to continue to strengthen assessment practices, while at the same time building staff understanding of GenAI and incorporating it into programme offering design and delivery.

DCU continues to closely monitor developments in Generative AI (GenAI). The university is actively considering both the challenges and opportunities presented by developments in this space, and actions required for the coming months. An initial approach to address the role of Gen-AI in our teaching, learning and assessment focuses on three dimensions:

- Its potential for how we teach
- Its impact on assessment approaches, including how we safeguard academic integrity.
- Its impact on the relevance of our programme content

Across the five faculties, the likely impact of GenAI on teaching, learning and assessment, programme content and the future roles of our graduates is an ongoing consideration. As a first priority consideration, DCU developed interim guidance on GenAI and assessment to support academic colleagues in the 2023/24 academic year.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1QA 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 *Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.* *If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).*
1	Continued implementation of the new SIS and associated operating model	Work on the SIS project will continue throughout the 2024/25 implementation year, with significant investment and input required from across the full university community.
2	Race Equality Action Plan	DCU has signed the Anti-Racism Principles for Irish HEIs and is currently creating an Action Plan for students and staff which will bring us towards an inclusive, non-judgmental and culturally aware campus environment. This will be in place by the end of the year.
3	Student feedback on teaching	Education Committee established the Student Feedback on Teaching (SFT) Working Group in 2023 to consider how DCU can address the Cinnte recommendation that DCU "implement a fit-for-purpose, University-wide system of independent evaluation of the student learning experience at the module level". The work of this group has now concluded and in 2024/25 DCU has prioritised closing the feedback loop and utilising existing mechanisms for obtaining student feedback on teaching. This is the first stage in a phased approach to establishing a university-wide approach to student feedback. Progress in this regard will be reporting to Education Committee during the 2024/25 academic year.
4	Generative AI	DCU continues to monitor developments in Generative AI. The University is actively considering the issues as well as the opportunities relating to AI-generated content and actions that might be taken in the coming months. Particular focus is being paid to the impact on individual disciplinary areas and programmes of study, curricular evolution and the potential impacts on the future careers of our learners.
5	Data Governance and Strategic Business Intelligence	As part of the strategic objectives of optimising organisational resilience and readiness, DCU will complete the development of an institution-wide Data Governance Framework to support the coordinated and consistent protection and management of institutional data. The continued management of institutional data shall be supported by a Data Governance Steering Group and Data Governance Stewardship Council. During 2024/25, DCU will implement a model of data stewardship across all university departments with responsibility for core university systems.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Office of Student Life	5th to 7th March 2025	27th, 28th February & 1st March 2019
DCU Centre for Talented Youth, Ireland	27th & 28th March 2025	Reviewed previously as part of the Offices of the Chief Operations Officer (24th - 27th May 2019)
President's Office	8th & 9th May 2025	25th to 27th March 2020
Careers Service	16th & 17th Oct 2025	Reviewed previously as part of Student Support & Development (27th - 29th March 2019)
Office of the Chief Operations Officer	25th - 27th March 2026	22nd, 23rd & 24th May 2019

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

The schedule for 2024-2030 is available here.

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Case Study 1: Interactive Oral Assessment: Enhancing Authenticity and Integrity

Authenticity and academic integrity in assessment are consistent and often challenging cornerstones of assessment design in higher education. In recent years, Generative Artificial Intelligence has provided additional impetus to reconsider the range and format of assessment approaches. Since 2020, DCU has embarked on a guided and scaffolded approach to the use of Interactive Oral (IO) Assessment as an innovative response to the aforementioned challenges. The IO approach has many benefits including an authentic approach to assessment, enhanced academic integrity, increased student engagement and the application of transversal skills. Currently IO assessment is used in DCU across 21 different courses, with 33 different cohorts. In total, over 3,400 DCU students have experienced interactive oral assessment.

An Interactive Oral assessment is a two-way, free-flowing, unscripted conversation based on a real-world scenario. The assessors' prompts or genuine natural questions allow students to highlight their learning in a professionally aligned environment and provide students with the opportunity to extend and synthesise their knowledge. In the initial stages of considering the use of such an assessment approach, the Teaching Enhancement Unit in DCU collaborated and consulted closely with Griffith University in Australia who pioneered the approach (Sotiriadou et al., 2019). Subsequent funding from the QQI "Rethinking Assessment Initiative" supported the creation and continuing development of DCU specific approaches and guidance for faculty. This includes a weekly IO Community of Practice (CoP) which provides a space for faculty to share their experiences and support each other in the design and implementation of Ios and a comprehensive suite of resources including an Interactive Oral User guide, assessment design templates and examples of practice.

Feedback from students suggests a positive response to the role that IO assessment plays in providing practice for future employment, and a sense that the interconnected design of IO assessment supports academic integrity.

Over the past year, our practice and processes have been shared with other Higher Education Institutions and an interinstitutional Community of Practice for Academic Developers is in development. Following an initial DCU led publication (Ward et al. 2024) on the use and implementation of Ios, further research is underway to explore the experience of faculty in their implementation of Interactive Orals as a method of assessment. The research focuses on how faculty perceive their experience of implementing Interactive Oral Assessments, and the perceived impact of this mode of assessment on their identity as assessors and educators.

References:
Sotiriadou, P., Logan, D., Daly, A., & Guest, R. (2019). The role of authentic assessment to preserve academic integrity and promote skill development and transversal skills. *Studies in Higher Education, 45(*11), 2132-2148

Ward, M., O'Riordan, F., Logan-Fleming, D., Cooke, D., Concannon-Gibney, T., Efthymiou, M., & Watkins, N. (2024). Interactive oral assessment case studies: An innovative, academically rigorous, authentic assessment approach. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, *61*(5), 930-947.

Case Study 2: A Collective Leadership Approach to Quality Enhancement

One of the key drivers of DCU's 2023-28 Strategic Plan is the University's emphasis on collective leadership, which promotes the concept of leading from where you are. The Strategic Plan emphaises the importance of recognising, prioritising and fostering a culture and system in which staff across the entire institution are empowered to identify opportunities for enhancement and innovation, pursue new ideas and convince management and colleagues to bring their ideas to fruition.

Although collective leadership is explicitly called out in our most recent strategy, it has always been integral to DCU's culture and identity. Collective leadership underpins our commitment and approach to ongoing quality enhancement and improvement, which requires buy-in, input and leadership from across the entire university community. This concept is realised in various ways, including our approach to quality reviews, the broad representation on our Quality Promotion Committee and perhaps most explicitly, in DCU's long-standing commitment to the Quality Improvement and Development Fund (QuID).

Established in 2012, QuID is an open funding call to support community-led quality enhancement initiatives across DCU that impact our staff, students, and stakeholders. This scheme embraces collective leadership as a core principle, recognising that staff from all areas, grades, and roles can be empowered to identify opportunities for improvement, pursue new ideas, and effect change. Overseen by the Quality Promotion Committee, the scheme is designed to embed and promote a quality enhancement culture while creating opportunities for staff to lead initiatives that align with strategic goals, promote innovation, and foster excellence.

Since its inception, the QuID fund has supported a wide range of quality enhancement initiatives across the university, bringing innovative projects to life. These range from the creation of the All Hallows community garden to a virtual reality initiative with secondary schools in North Dublin, and even a commissioned artwork for the Glasnevin reception. These projects demonstrate how modest investments can significantly benefit students, staff, and the broader DCU community, often acting as catalysts for further development.

Between 2012 and 2024, the QuID Fund has supported 165 projects, with each year's theme selected by the Quality Promotion Committee and aligned with a key strategic priority, a contemporary issue in higher education or a recurring theme from quality review processes. Over the years, themes have included sustainability, student voice, internal communications, and most recently, artificial intelligence. The most recent call, titled "Transitioning AI from a Threat to a Tool, Empowering and Supporting a 21st Century University," funded ten projects across diverse areas. These included the development of a chatbot, exploring the use of AI in proposal development, developing supports for researchers to integrate AI ethically into their research practice, using AI to create classroom quizzes, and sparking musical creativity in early childhood music education. The ten awardees presented their research to the DCU community at a showcasing event in late 2024, ensuring that the learnings have an impact beyond the areas involved.

Case Study 3: The provision of a necessary quiet space for Autistic students

Over the years, anecdotal evidence has suggested that autistic students might face broad social, academic, and sensory challenges in university environments. DCU, in conjunction with AsIAm, commissioned several surveys to look at the thoughts and opinions of the students and the challenges that may be faced by autistic students attending DCU in particular. The surveys aimed to establish how DCU might become a more friendly institution for them. Researchers analysed these surveys, collated the data, and produced a study called Living with Autism as a University Student in DCU" (2018). This study revealed the sensory environment as a major academic and social barrier to autistic students on campus. As one DCU student explains, "On a busy campus, I have felt lost, bewildered, and in pain from a stress headache, exasperated by the constant, complex mixture of noises." Another student explained how she manages the sensory environment on campus "Before walking into noisy areas on campus, I tense up. It is like putting on armour before battle. If I do not find a space to decompress, I stay in warrior mode all day." Students surveyed reported heightened awareness of noise and lighting as the greatest challenge and highlighted the urgent need to make the environment more autism friendly.

The change process began with the creation of the DCU Autism Friendly Design Guide, (2021) by a DCU project team led by Professor Magda Mostafa, the world leader in the field of autism friendly architectural design. This guide was produced following a series of actions taken by the project team. A review of peer-reviewed papers on the experience of autistic students in other American and European third-level educational institutions was conducted. Following this review, the project team conducted online student surveys, focus groups that included autistic students and staff, semi-structured interviews with academics and support staff and a sensory audit of three DCU campuses. Workshops were held to examine questions such as what built environments created barriers to access for autistic students and what strategies might change these environments? The workshops included representatives from the autistic student body, neurodivergent society, occupational therapists, health and safety, estates and SMART DCU. External stakeholders included AsIam, Student Ambassadors and experts in acoustics, biophilic design and lighting.

The primary recommendation of the DCU Autism Friendly Design Guide was the urgent provision of quiet sensory-friendly spaces on campus. The objective of such space was to provide respite for autistic students from the over-stimulation induced by a busy campus.

The DCU Autism Friendly Design Guide contains a number of evidence-based criteria and stipulations for the 'quiet space', as it is popularly known. Like the autistic spectrum itself, the interior of the space is designed to provide a graduated approach depending on respite need; from the fully and semi-enclosed booths and chairs, to fully exposed bean bags. As fluorescent lighting can have a detrimental effect on autistic individuals due to flicker and acoustical challenges through the buzzing noise, only LED and incandescent and halogen lighting should be used. The fully enclosed booths within the space should provide Individual control over the lighting. Advanced design features include sound-absorbing wall and ceiling panelling, physical partitioning, soft finishes, and muted colours. Poor directional signage was highlighted as a barrier in the consultation process and the guide stipulates that particular attention be paid to this signage. Signage should be accompanied by

accessible photos and 360-degree views where possible to increase familiarity for the student. Predictability and familiarity were identified as important factors by the students.

The Quiet Space

Comma Architects were appointed to draw the plan for our first quiet space. It was stipulated that the plans must adhere to the criteria for the 'quiet space" in the DCU Autism Friendly Design Guide. The location for the quiet space was selected in a busy corridor identified in the sensory audit as the most difficult to use. The space is adjacent to the Student Support and Development offices and is in an area heavily used by the student population. In addition to adequate signage, photographs of the location and a 360° video of the quiet space were posted to Campus Explorer to improve predictability.
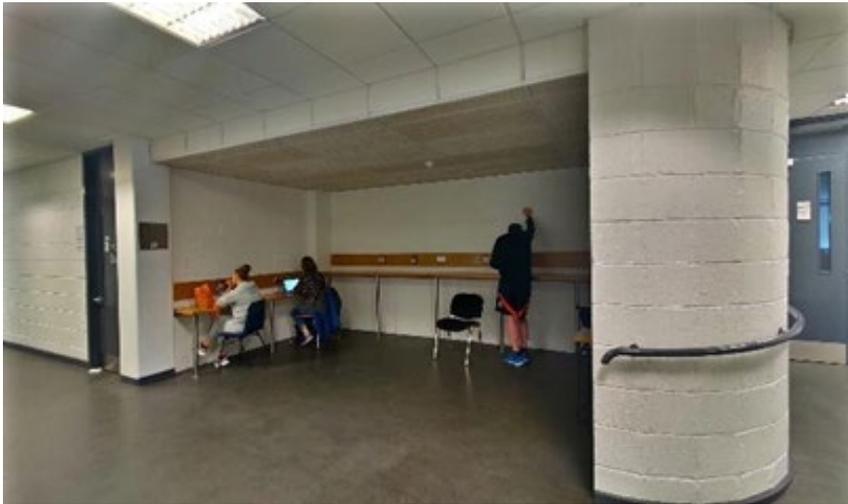
Before

After

Conclusion and Feedback

Surveys have shown that the Quiet Space has been an immense success in the facilitation of inclusion and in the provision of support for autistic students to the extent that planning is underway to develop another quiet space in our St Patrick's Campus. In addition, it has been noted that the whole student population has used the quiet space. It provides a respite for all students who require escape; those with anxiety or social, physical and mobility challenges.It seems very appropriate to leave the last words to the autistic students themselves. They explain:

"It feels like I'm holding my breath all day long, I get to exhale when I go to the quiet space."
"It allows me to charge, like an iPhone so I can work to the best of my ability."
"It allows me to be on the same playing field as neurotypical people, it is an important step towards equality."
"It makes me feel seen and safe; even knowing it is an option lowers my anxiety."

Scan here to watch "A typical Campus Day" video created by students to explain the need and benefit of the Quiet Space.