Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)

2015

Annual Quality Report (Dundalk IT)
Reporting Period
2013-2014

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Annual Quality Report (Dundalk IT)
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2013-2014

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.

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Guidelines on Completing the Report

The AQR is aligned with QQI's Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and with the ESG (2015). A mapping of the ESG to QQI Core QA Guidelines is included in Table 1 below; the structure of Part A of this report template aligns with the first column of the table. Additional guidance on completing this template and reference material is included in each section. Institutions should adhere to this guidance and take account of QQI Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. **The guide text within each section should be deleted before submission of the report.**

Submission Process and Timeline

The deadline for submission of the AQR each year is in February of the relevant year, with the call for submission sent to institutions in Q4 of the preceding year. Once the call for submission has been made, QQI will provide access of QQI's provider portal, QHub, to the designated institution contact(s) to facilitate submission of the report. Through QHub, each institution will have access to an editable version of its AQR for the previous reporting period. This document can then be amended/updated to reflect any changes or developments that occurred during the current reporting period before submitting the final report to QQI.

Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report – where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- When providing reflections on quality enhancement it is interesting to share a broad range of examples including what worked or didn't work.

Report Structure

Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR should provide a succinct outline of the institution's internal quality assurance (IQA) system and include details of the governance and management structures and supports in place, and all policies and procedures underpinning quality across the organisation.

Links to current QA policies and procedures in operation in the institution should be included. Please ensure that all links are correct and functional. As the AQR is submitted in respect of a specific reporting period, it is recommended that the institution establish a unique SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for that reporting period to archive current versions of the policies and procedures and include relevant hyperlinks that are included in the AQR.

The information contained in Part A is carried from one reporting period to the next and should not require substantial update on an annual basis. However, institutions are asked to update and highlight any significant changes in the structures and published material that support the internal IQA framework as they arise.

Part B: Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE)

Part B of the AQR focuses specifically on the effectiveness and impact of the IQA framework on the QA activities and developments across the institution. Here, the institution is invited to document the quality enhancements adopted and implemented during the reporting period and describe concisely the impact of these across a selected range of QA activities. Part B should also be used to demonstrate how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period. These plans may be linked to strategic objectives, to QQI reengagement recommendations, or to institutional review recommendations.

Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. The institution may also include case studies on topics of their choosing, demonstrating good practice in QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, the institution is encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other HEIs and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

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

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

- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)
- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the Annual Quality Report (AQR) for **Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)** for the reporting period **1 September 2013 – 31 August 2014.** The AQR was submitted to QQI on **Friday, 27 February 2015.**

The AQR has been approved by the **Registrar's Office** and was submitted by **Dr Brendan Ryder, Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance, Registrar's Office.** It will be noted at the DkIT Academic Council in semester 2 in the academic year 2024/2025.

This section provides an overview of the Institution and the process for the development and approval of the Annual Quality Report (AQR).

Institution Overview

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is an autonomous Institute, established under the Regional Technical Colleges Act (1992) which has been at the forefront of delivering excellence in higher education to meet the educational, economic, social and cultural needs of the region since 1970. Set in an 87-acre campus, DkIT provides quality learning and teaching to circa 6,000 full-time and part-time students across four Schools in Business and Humanities, Health and Science, Engineering and Informatics and Creative Arts at undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from Level 6 to Level 10, in addition to its track record of excellence in craft and higher apprenticeships. DkIT is situated within a unique, rural border landscape strategically positioned at the nexus of the island's two capital cities along the vibrant M1 Corridor. It is a region rooted in innovation and creativity with a strong and proud heritage and cultural expression.

It is within this vibrant and ever-changing, dynamic environment that DkIT plays a pivotal role in the educational, economic, social and cultural evolution of the region. DkIT has placed collaboration and partnership at the heart of its approach in delivering on its remit. Its meaningful engagement with its key stakeholders – students, employers, educational partners and the wider community - has ensured that the Institute remains relevant, responsive and impactful.

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT) is a designated awarding body since 1 January 2020 following amendment to the Regional Technical Colleges (RTC) Acts (form the legal basis on which DkIT was established and refer collectively to the following Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992, S.I. No. 149/1997 - Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 (Amendment) Order, 1997, S.I. No. 19/1998 - Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 (Change of Name of College) Order, 1998, Institutes of Technology Act 2006) by commencement order S.I. No. 540/2019 - Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 (Commencement) (No. 2) Order 2019 (irishstatutebook.ie).

As a designated awarding body, DKIT has authority in law to make awards up to and including level 9 in the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This is comparable to level 7 in the European Quality Framework (EQF). DKIT can thus offer first or second cycle degrees within the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area without further external authorisation or accreditation. This authority includes the power to award Masters degrees by Research. DKIT can enter into joint degree arrangements with other degree awarding institutions. Information pertaining to specific awards offered by DKIT are also included in the Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ) which comprises details on specific programmes, qualifications and their associated reference level in the EQF. Information included on programmes and qualifications in the Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ) helps make Irish qualifications visible in Europe as the IRQ is linked to the Qualifications Dataset Register on the upgraded Europass platform.

DKIT, as a designated awarding body, is also subject to cyclical review by QQI of its QA activities, in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for QA in HE, including how it exercises its degree-awarding powers, in accordance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and amended 2019 Act.

Process for the Development and Approval of the AQR

The Annual Quality Report (AQR) is an annual report concerned with internal quality assurance that institutions provide to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and publish every year. It is a key component of the Institute's quality assurance and enhancement system that provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of the Institutes internal quality system. As quality "is everyone's business", the development of the AQR for a particular reporting period is an ongoing iterative and organic process involving all stakeholders within the organisation. The Registrar's Office has overall responsibility for the production of the AQR and ensures that all inputs to the report are gathered in a systematic and consistent manner for incorporation into the report. Outputs from annual quality assurance and enhancement activities are fed in to the AQR as appropriate.

Institution-level quality assurance decision-making fora, including the Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC) of the Academic Council, play an active part in the compilation of the report and provide feedback on the AQR.

The final AQR is normally submitted to the Institute's Academic Council for adoption prior to its submission to QQI which is normally at the end of February of the reporting period. Should the AQR not be adopted by the Academic Council in advance of submission to QQI, it is noted at the next scheduled Academic Council meeting.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

This section provides information on the overarching quality assurance system, its governance and management at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), specifically the following:

- Quality Assurance Framework.
- Policies and Procedures.
- Governance and Management of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) System.
- Student Engagement with Quality Assurance and Enhancement Activities.

1.1.1 Quality Assurance Framework

Dundalk Institute of Technology strives to achieve excellence in all of its activities and provide a high-quality service to all its stakeholders. DkIT operates an integrated system for quality assurance and enhancement which contributes to the achievement of the Institute's Strategy (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/institute-reports-and-publications/strategic-plan.html). The strategic plan is aligned to the Institute's Mission-Based Performance Compact between Dundalk Institute of Technology and Higher Education Authority (HEA) (https://hea.ie/higher-education-institutions/dundalk-institute-of-technology/performance/).

DkIT's mission, vision, values, and strategic pillars outline its aspirations for the 2024-2028 period and reflect the Institute's goals across five key areas which have been shaped by the needs of students, staff, and the wider regional community:

Strategic Pillar 1: Sectoral and Tertiary Cohesion - Our Place in the Landscape;
Strategic Pillar 2: Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Quality of Student Experience;
Strategic Pillar 3: Widening Access and Participation;
Strategic Pillar 4: Excellence in Research and Innovation;
Strategic Pillar 5: Enhanced Engagement.

Figure 1 illustrates the *Quality Assurance and Enhancement System*, which must be agile, responsive and effective/fit-for-purpose, and its relationship with Institute strategy (and HEA Performance Agreement). The Institute is responsible for the academic standards of awards made in its name, and for ensuring that the quality of the student learning experience, both undergraduate and postgraduate is exemplary, in order to enable students to achieve these standards. DkIT assures and enhances the quality of its core activities of teaching, learning, research, engagement and service delivery through its regular review and continuous improvement process, its *Quality Assurance Framework* (Figure 2).

The mechanisms for assuring and enhancing the quality of provision include (Figure 2):

- Regular review of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) processes.

- Robust programme approval and curriculum review processes.

- Robust approval, monitoring and review of collaborative taught programmes.

- **Monitoring:**

  - **Annual School Monitoring:** Programme Board reporting (including PSRB annual reports), Student Feedback (programme-level (QA3) and StudentSurvey.ie), External Examining, programme changes).
  - **Annual Postgraduate Research (PGR) Monitoring**: (DCU-DkIT Graduate School annual reporting to DCU's Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB), postgraduate research student feedback (including PGRStudentSurvey.ie, Designated Research Centre annual reporting).
  - **Annual Professional Support Unit Monitoring** (e.g., Student Services, Examinations Office, International Office, Library, etc.).

- **Periodic Review:**

  - **School Programmatic Reviews** including Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body Reviews (PSRBs) Reviews.
  - **Postgraduate Research Reviews.** This includes DCU-DkIT Graduate School Quality Reviews which are conducted in accordance with the DCU-DkIT Collaborative Partnership Agreement and Designated Research Centre/Group Reviews.
  - **Professional Support Unit Reviews** (e.g., Student Services, Examinations Office, International Office, etc.).
  - **Thematic Reviews**. Systematic and focused examination of a particular theme or topic across the Institution. This type of review aims to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and overall quality of processes, practices, or policies related to a theme.

- **Annual External Monitoring:**

  - Annual Quality Report (AQR) (this report) and QQI Periodic Quality Dialogue (bi-annually).

- Cyclical Institutional Review (CINNTE Review).

- Systematic student engagement with Quality Assurance and Enhancement processes.

- Established procedures for the appointment of staff and a range of supports for their ongoing professional development (Human Resources and the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)).

Part of the Quality Framework involves reporting annually to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) on quality assurance and enhancement activities through the Annual Quality Report (AQR). Information on the annual QQI dialogue for the reporting period can be found in AQR Part B (if applicable).
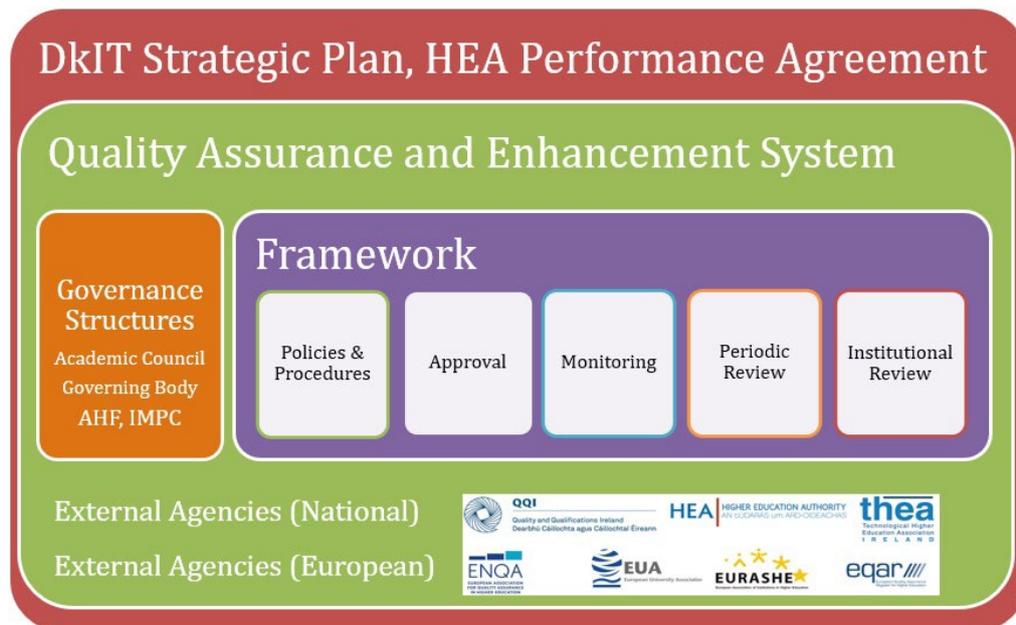
Figure 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement System is used to identify areas for improvement and is an enabler for the implementation of a continuous improvement quality culture within DkIT. Areas of improvement are typically captured in action plans across the various areas (academic and non-academic) within the Institute and are implemented and monitored. Once areas for improvement are identified, targeted action plans are developed in collaboration with relevant academic and functional units. These plans serve as structured roadmaps for enhancement, detailing specific actions to be undertaken, the personnel or committees (including working groups) responsible for implementation, and the resources necessary to ensure effective execution. Each plan also establishes clear timelines and measurable indicators, enabling ongoing tracking of progress and ensuring accountability. By aligning these initiatives with institutional priorities, the approach fosters continuous improvement and enhances the overall quality of academic and operational processes.

DkIT continues to ensure that Quality Assurance and Enhancement is firmly embedded within the day-to-day aspects of work at the Institute to ensure that a quality culture underpins all of its activities. All staff within the Institute contribute to the culture of quality and there is acceptance that this is a 'continual process' as new challenges and new ways of educating students and developing faculty and staff continue to be central to the work of the Institute.

The Institute has developed a Student Success Strategy (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html) which is aligned with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Higher Education System Performance Framework (2023-2028) (https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/managing-performance/system-performance-framework/) that HEIs put in place an Institute wide Student Success Strategy which embeds 'whole of HEI' approaches to student access and completion. The aim of the strategy is to develop a holistic, student-centred approach across all dimensions of the student experience to foster measurable improvements in: retention, progression and completion rates, student achievements, student engagement and graduate outcomes.
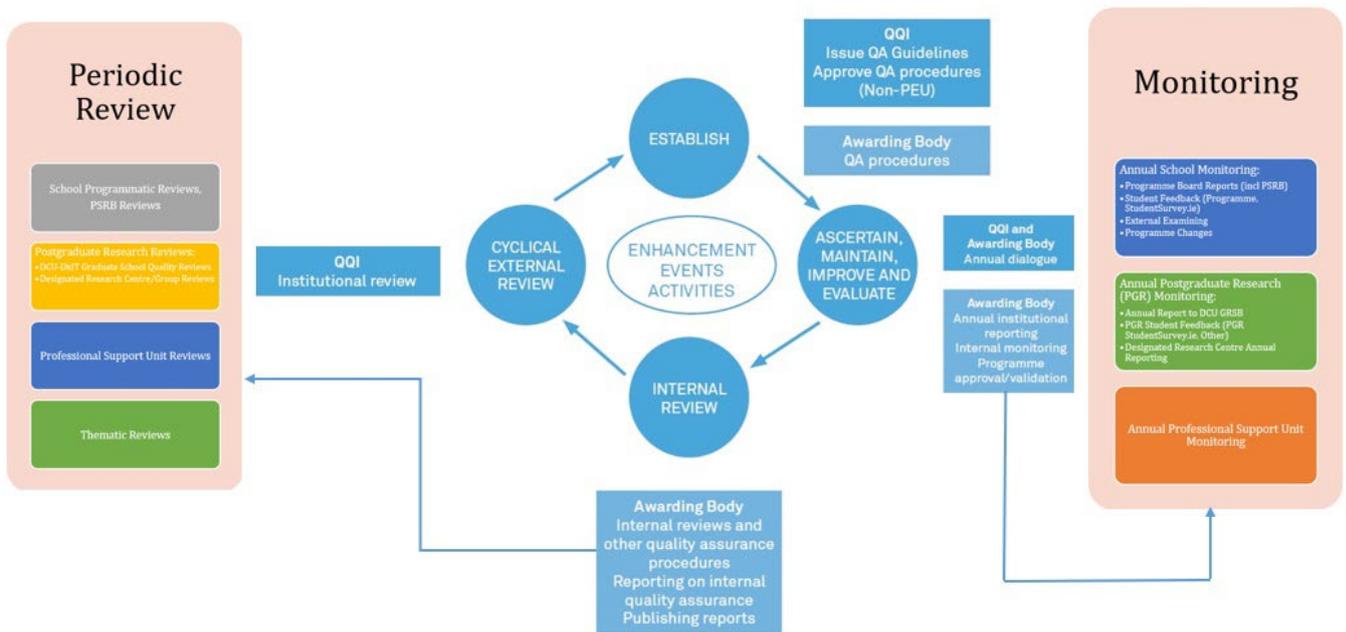
(See enlarged "Monitoring" and "Periodic Reviews" below)
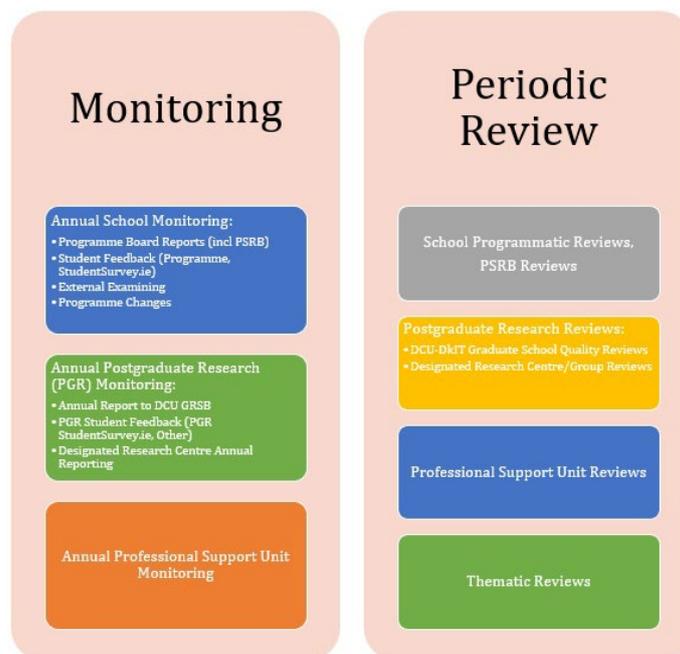
Figure 2: Quality Assurance Framework

1.1.2 Policies and Procedures

Quality Assurance and Enhancement policies and procedures are an integral part of the Institute's Quality Framework. DkIT has developed a framework of policies and procedures in the context of best practice within the higher education sector. The policies and procedures are aligned to QQI's Core and relevant Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (https://www.qqi.ie/node/632), with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG) (https://www.enqa.eu/esg-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance-in-the-european-higher-education-area/) and other national and international best practice policies, procedures, guidelines, frameworks and strategies.

Academic Policies and procedures (and associated documentation) are stored in an Institute centralised repository which is managed by the Registrar's Office (specifically the responsibility of the Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance). There is one single centralised repository which is utilised as appropriate across the Institute by academic Schools, Professional Support Units (Student Services, etc.) and postgraduate research students and staff. The policies and procedures categorisation scheme / taxonomy has been derived from the dimensions of the European Standards and Guidelines 2015 with the addition of a category for Research and Knowledge Exchange (Figure 3).
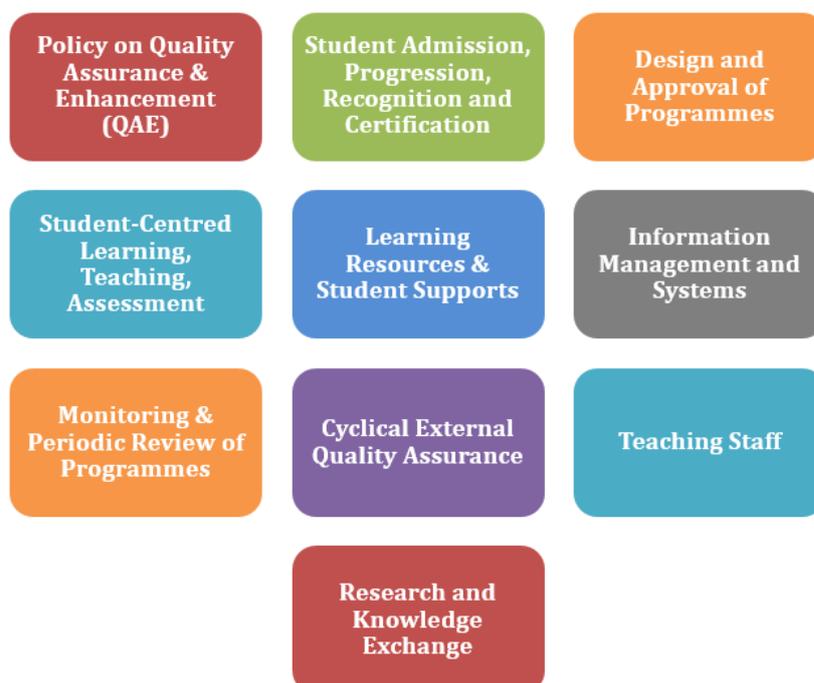
Figure 3: DkIT Policies and Procedures Management (Categorisation Scheme)

A snapshot of Policies and procedures (and associated documentation) for a particular reporting period are made available to Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) as part of the Annual Quality Report (AQR).

Policies and procedures (including guidelines, frameworks and strategies) are regularly reviewed in accordance with a Policy Review Schedule and a Standard on DkIT Academic Policy (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html).   Revisions are carried out at least every three years or sooner if required and the effectiveness of policies and procedures is regularly monitored through consultation with staff and students. Development and amendment of academic policies and procedures, and related documentation, is primarily the responsibility of the Registrar's Office in collaboration with relevant Institute stakeholders. All academic policies are subject to Academic Council approval and some are also subject to Governing Body approval. Most are developed and/or reviewed by sub-committees or working groups of the Academic Council, the members of which determine best practice within the higher education sector to ensure that policies and procedures (and related documentation) are relevant, effective and continually being enhanced. Feedback from students, staff members and other stakeholders is also taken into consideration.

Quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures are published on the Institute website (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html) and communicated to staff and students, as appropriate, by email (See *Section 7.0: Public Information and Communication*). Training and awareness workshops/events are organised by the Registrar's Office and the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) with the aim of communicating and explaining policies and procedures to staff and students and facilitating feedback on their effectiveness.   This also serves to encourage Institute members to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to quality assurance and enhancement and embed a culture of quality throughout the organisation.

1.1.3 Governance and Management of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) System

Decision Making Fora

The Academic Council at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is established in accordance with the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 and any subsequent amended Act(s). The Governing Body appointed the first DkIT Academic Council in 1993. The Academic Council assists the Governing Body in the planning, co-ordination, development and oversight of the educational work of the Institute and protects, maintains and develops the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the Institute. The Academic Council is accordingly, the primary statutory body with direct responsibility for academic quality assurance and enhancement. The President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar are respectively, Chairperson and Secretary of the Academic Council. Academic Council approves action plans following quality enhancement activities and these plans are then assigned to relevant academic and administrative/professional service area(s) for implementation.

The Academic Council operates in accordance with the DkIT Academic Council Constitution (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/governance/academic-council/) with the membership of Academic Council consisting of ex-officio and elected members. The DkIT Academic Council Constitution was amended during the reporting period (2023-2024) in advance of the establishment of a new Academic Council on the 23rd February 2024 (see AQR Part B, 1.3 Governance and Management). An Academic Council Constitution Working Group was established at the Academic Council meeting (Meeting No. 190) on the 24th November 2023. The scope of the working group involved updating the Constitution to include:

- Amendments to incorporate statutory requirements relating to gender. The process to achieve this was challenging due to the high proportion of ex-officio membership on the Council (was 46% of membership).
- Amendments to incorporate legislative changes as appropriate. The Regional Technical Colleges (RTC) Act, 1992 has been amended by the Technological University (TU) legislation, Higher Education Authority (HEA) legislation and other relevant pieces of legislation.
- Limited amendments to the membership. It was not possible, within the time frame available, to carry out an in-depth review of the full membership.

The new Academic Council Constitution was approved at the Academic Council meeting on the 23rd February 2024 (Meeting No. 191) following a completion of a consultation at a special meeting of the Academic Council on the 7th February 2024.

Once adopted, the minutes of all Academic Council meetings are tabled at Governing Body meetings. Where urgent matters arise, these are brought to the attention of the Governing Body by way of a special motion to facilitate Governing Body approval prior to the formal adoption of the minutes.

The Academic Council is supported by the work of the following sub-committees:

1. Standing Committee (SC);
2. Academic Quality Sub-Committee (AQSC);
3. Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee (LT);
4. Research and Innovation Sub-Committee (RSIC);
5. DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (DkIT GRSB);
6. Programme Evaluation Sub-Committee (PEC).

Terms of Reference of the sub-committees can be found at https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/governance/academic-council/academic-council-subcommittees.html).

Typically, five meetings of the Academic Council and five meetings of each of the sub-committees are held each year (See AQR Part B for meetings held during the reporting period). The sub-

committees contribute to the development of quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures at Institute level. In addition to sub-committees of Academic Council, working groups are regularly established to conduct environmental scanning of best practice and report back to Academic Council in advance of updates to policies and procedures (including guidelines, frameworks and strategies). This practice ensures that quality assurance and enhancement is relevant, current and embedded within the academic and non-academic communities of the Institute. DkIT continues to collaborate with Dublin City University (DCU) on postgraduate research provision through the DCU-DkIT Graduate School (the relationship is governed by a Collaborative Partnership Agreement). The governance of the relationship is managed through the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (see Academic Council sub-committees above). The sharing of best practice with DCU has served to enhance postgraduate research quality assurance at DkIT. This has also involved further development of the Institute's postgraduate research degree regulations in line with those at DCU and taking into account external developments in terms of national policy development.

The responsibility for ensuring the implementation of quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures rests ultimately with the Executive Board and falls particularly within the remit of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (Registrar's Office). The Executive Board ensures that activities undertaken by the Institute are in line with its Strategic Plan and that elements of associated risk, governance and resource implications are approved before being undertaken. At School and Departmental level, Heads of School, Heads of Department, Heads of Section and Programme Boards have local responsibilities for implementing and monitoring quality assurance and enhancement.

The academic management of programmes is the responsibility of the Programme Boards. Opportunities for enhancement of quality policies and procedures are frequently identified through annual school, research and Professional Support Unit monitoring to Academic Council (see activities in the reporting period for further information). Student representatives from programmes are members of the associated Programme Boards ensuring the student voice is heard at this level. Stage Convenors (who provide pastoral care to students) and Programme Directors (who support Heads of Department in the management and operation of programmes) also contribute to Programme Boards, providing a robust front-line approach to programme management. Programme Boards provide valuable feedback on all issues including quality assurance and enhancement via their Annual Programme Board Reports at Institute level and also their participation in School/Faculty Boards at School level which contain academic faculty members, School management, School administration and student representatives.

School/Faculty Boards are critical to the operation of quality assurance and enhancement at School level. The School Board collaborate with the Head of School in:

- Developing, implementing and monitoring the School's strategic plans in the context of the overall Institute strategic plan;

- Planning the strategic development of the School's suite of programmes;
- Promoting effective communication and information sharing within the School;
- Fostering participation and a sense of collegiality within the School;
- Promoting the co-ordination of activities relating to teaching and learning and research across departments;
- Promoting and implementing Institute-wide policies and strategies;
- Formulating, implementing and evaluating relevant School-wide policies and strategies.

Further fora, which contribute to the implementation, monitoring and review of quality policies and procedures, include both (i) the Academic Heads Forum (AHF) consisting of Heads of Schools, Heads of Departments, and the Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance and (ii) the Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC), consisting of representative academic and professional services area managers. In 2018, a Registrar's Heads of Function Group was established by the Registrar's Office bringing together Registry, Quality Assurance, International Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office, Student Services and Library to meet once a month to ensure the seamless integration of services provided by the Registrar's Office.

Functional Areas

Notwithstanding that all members of staff across the Institute contribute to quality assurance and enhancement, the following functional areas have a particular role to play in the provision of an exemplary student experience:

Area of Responsibility	Functional Area	Reporting to
Quality, Admissions, Examinations, Access, Professional Support Units Student Services, Careers, Schools Liaison, Awards and Conferring, Programme Validations, Student Feedback.	Academic Affairs	Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar
Learning, Teaching and Assessment. Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC)	Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)	
Academic administration and support of postgraduate research students.	Research and Graduate Studies Office	

Support of researchers.		
Support of International students	International Office	
Library and information literacy	Library	
Staff recruitment and professional development	Human Resources	Vice-President for Finance, Resources and Diversity
Information Technology infrastructure and services	Computer Services	
Programme promotion	Marketing and Communications Office	Vice-President of Strategic Planning, Communications and Development
Administration and support of part-time students	Life-Long Learning Centre (LLL)	
Innovation, business development, industry liaison	Regional Development Centre (RDC)	
Delivery and management of academic programmes	Academic Schools (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/academic-schools.html): • Business and Humanities; • Engineering; • Health and Science; • Informatics and Creative Arts; Academic Departments	Heads of School Heads of Department, Heads of Section (as appropriate)

Professional Support Units (Student Services)

Professional Support Units (Student Services), which are managed by the Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager (AASAM), operate under the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (Registrar's Office) are a team of professional service providers who provide support for students to actively engage in their third level experience. The Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager meets representatives of the professional service providers on a regular basis to ensure efficient and effective delivery of supports to students. The Academic Administration and

Student Affairs Manager (AASAM) is also a member of the Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC) and Academic Council (AC). The services are provided to full-time and part-time undergraduate, postgraduate, Springboard and apprentice students:

Service Provider	Description
Access: • Access Officer (Full-time)	• The Access Service works to increase access to third level from under-represented groups identified as key target groups in the National Access Plan (NAP)
Student Support Officer (Full-time)	• The Service supports the increased participation of Access students with a view to successful completion of their programme of study. • The Service manages the Student Assistance Fund and supports 1916 bursary recipients
Disability: • Disability Officer (Full-Time) • Learning Support Tutors (Full-time equivalent) • Assistive Technology Assistant (Part-time)	• The Disability Service (DS) provides support to students with a disability or a significant ongoing illness or mental health condition who disclose to the service and request support. • The DS is funded by the Fund for Students with Disabilities (ESF/HEA) and supports students who meet the criteria for funding. • DkIT also offers a general level of support to any student who presents for support through examination accommodations and the range of services provided by other support services including the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
Health Unit: • Nurse (Full-time) • Nurse (Part-time) • General Practitioner (GP) (7 hours per week) Mental Health Nurse Advisor (Full-time)	• The Health Unit (HU) provides a holistic approach to student wellbeing. • The service provides a general medical, psychological and health educational service to all students. • The HU is an integral part of the Student Services, where cooperation between services plays a vital role in assisting each other to enhance the wellbeing of students.
Student Counselling: • Head of Service (Full-time) • Student Counsellor (4 days) • Student Counsellor (3 days) • Student Counsellor (3 days)	• The Student Counselling Service provides accessible, confidential, non-judgemental support to all registered students.
Pastoral Care:	• Pastoral Care is collaboratively involved in the provision of holistic care within the Institute community.

• Pastoral Care Co-ordinator (Full-time)	
Sports and Societies: • Sports and Societies Officer (Full-time)	• The Sports and Societies Office supports, funds and resources all sports and societies to encourage students to be active and involved and make their mark on student life.
Careers and Employability Centre (CEC): • Careers and Employability Co-ordinator • Careers Officer (Full-time) • Employability Advisor (Full-time) • Placement Co-ordinator (Full-time) • Placement Officers (2 x Full-time and 2 x Part-time)	• The Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) works to ensure that graduates of DkIT are self-aware, self-resourceful and work ready. • To do this, CEC work with students from first year through to graduation in the area of Career Development support and student Work Placement. • We work alongside academic colleagues and industry to embed employability into the curriculum

See AQR Part B for information on Professional Support Units (Student Service) activities (including monitoring activities) and developments during the reporting period.

Research and Graduate Studies Office

The Research and Graduate Studies Office (https://www.dkit.ie/research/) is managed by the Head of Research and Graduate Studies, reporting to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar. Section 4.0: QA of Research Activities and Programmes provides further information on the quality assurance of postgraduate research activities at the Institute. See AQR Part B for information on postgraduate research activities (including monitoring activities) and developments during the reporting period.

International Office

The International Office provides supports to international and Erasmus students registered at the Institute. International students form an important part of the learning environment at DkIT, with teaching and administrative staff catering for the needs of students of different educational, cultural and language backgrounds. The International Office comprises of five staff based at the Institute and two international recruitment officers, with responsibility for markets across China, South East Asia, India, Africa, North America, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. International Office staff are the first point-of-contact for students, who need academic, or other assistance.

In addition to the day-to-day administrative supports provided, the International Office also provides a number of additional services, unique to international students, including:

- Airport collection on arrival in Dublin.
- **Accommodation Provision:** The International Office has a part-time Accommodations Officer, who assigns and manages student accommodations for international and Erasmus students in secure accommodation off-campus.
- **GNIB support:** The International Office coordinates appointments with the local Immigration Office for ~~GNIB~~ IRP Card provision and renewal on arrival.
- **Recording of international student attendance:** The International Office liaises with the four Schools to record international student attendance for the Immigration Office, for ~~GNIB~~ annual study-visa renewal.
- **International Welcome Days:** The International Office hosts Welcome Days for international students twice yearly at enrolment stage (September and January).
- **Pastoral Care:** The International Office has a Pastoral Care Officer on its team, tasked with care of ill students, providing home and/or hospital visitations where needed, and liaises with the Institute's Health Unit and the Institute's Pastoral Care Office. The International Office visits at-risk students in accommodations, where required. The International Office Manager is available by phone out-of-hours to international students in an emergency situation.
- **Academic and Learner Supports:** The International Office interfaces with faculty and student support services for the provision of academic and learner supports including: Careers Information Day (in tandem with the Careers and Employability Office); Academic Learner Supports (English and IT) provided through the Student Learning and Development Centre; All Staff Intercultural Awareness Training (coordinated by the Counselling Service).
- **Liaison with Stakeholders:** The International Office is responsible for communications on students' academic progress to University Partners, Recruitment Agents and Sponsoring Bodies.
- **Hosting Visits:** The International Office is responsible for hosting visits from partner universities, for the purpose of Teaching and Training Mobilities within the Erasmus+ programme framework.
- **Erasmus+ Awareness:** The International Office promotes awareness of the Erasmus programme within Schools and provides learner support to students preparing for Erasmus Study and/or Placement.
- **Inter-institutional exchange agreements:** The International Office works with Schools to identify new Erasmus+ partner colleges and agreements for learners, for the purpose of study, work-placement, staff teaching, training and research opportunities.
- **Requests and Feedback:** The International Office actions requests from stakeholders around the enhancement of the international student experience, and it elicits feedback from departing Erasmus students and graduating international students of DkIT on their experience of the Institute.

See AQR Part B for information on Professional Support Unit (International Office) Activities and Developments during the reporting period.

An organisation chart for DkIT can be found in Appendix 1 (See AQR Part B) (https://www.dkit.ie/assets/uploads/documents/HR/Organisational_Chart/dkit_organisation_chart.pdf)

1.1.4 Student Engagement with Quality Assurance and Enhancement Activities

At DkIT, the student voice is valued and the Institute works in partnership with students and is committed to student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement activities. The Institute is also committed to being responsive to student feedback. The Institute recognises that students have a major contribution to make through review and feedback on their experiences at the Institute.

Students have representation on a range of Institute decision making fora:

Governing Body	• The Students' Union President and Vice President are ex-officio members.
Academic Council	• The Students Union President and a Vice President are ex-officio members. There are student representatives on some of the sub-committees. The 'Student Voice' is a standing item on the agenda Academic Council meetings.
Programme Boards	• Student representatives from each programme stage are on Programme Boards.
Review and Development Activities	• Students are invited to participate in quality assurance activities as they arise, e.g., Programme validations, Programmatic Reviews, Institutional Reviews.

The following primary mechanisms are used to obtain student feedback on their student experience in DkIT:

Undergraduate	Postgraduate Research
Programme level feedback (QA3) to Heads of Department on a semester basis.	Participation in the annual postgraduate research student feedback survey.
Participation in the annual student feedback survey StudentSurvey.ie (https://studentsurvey.ie/).	Participation in the bi-annual national postgraduate student feedback survey (PGR StudentSurvey.ie - https://studentsurvey.ie/).

Other student feedback surveys are carried out periodically, including:

- Student surveys that are carried out as part of cyclical five-yearly School Programmatic Reviews;
- First year students are surveyed following their induction;

- Surveys are carried out to ascertain student views on various services and/or academic initiatives;
- Recent graduates are surveyed each year between 6-9 months after graduation as part of the HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey by the Careers and Employability Centre. The Centre also conducts a national survey CIBYL - which is a Survey of all Higher Education Careers Services in Ireland and UK. Both of these surveys serve as part of national benchmarking and as a student feedback mechanism.

The data collected by these feedback surveys, and subsequent analysis, enables the Institute to monitor and continuously enhance the student experience along both academic and non-academic dimensions. DkIT values the importance of evidence-based decision making and so student intake, progression and graduation data is provided to academic Schools each year for consideration by Programme Boards as part of the programme monitoring process.

See AQR Part B for information on monitoring activities (Academic, Professional Support Units (Student Services), Postgraduate Research, etc.) completed during the reporting period.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

The section provides information on the engagement with third parties for the provision of programmes and other activities.

Linked Providers

DkIT currently has no linked provider arrangements.

Collaborative and Transnational Provision

See Section 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

DkIT is currently validating a transnational programme, *Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in International Civil Engineering*, in collaboration with Hebei University of Engineering (HUE), China.

Higher Education provision with others is carried out in accordance with the institute Policy on Collaborative Provision, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html).

Collaborative Partnerships

The Institute has a collaborative partnership arrangement with Dublin City University (DCU) for postgraduate research awards at NFQ levels 9 and 10 (See Section 4: QA of Research Activities and Programmes, Section 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties).

The Institute commenced discussions with Maynooth University (www.maynoothuniversity.ie/) in the reporting period (2023/2024) regarding the establishment of a Regional Graduate Academy (RGA)

for postgraduate research (See AQR Part A, Section 4.0: QA of Research Activities and Programmes).

The Institute maintains a Register of Collaborative Partnerships and makes the register available as part of its public information policy (See Section 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties).

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

This section provides information on the institution-wide approach to the quality assurance of the design and approval of the range of programmes provided including taught programmes and apprenticeship/work-based learning programmes.

It is the policy of the Institute that all programmes are approved by external peer review to ensure that they are relevant, well designed and conform to the standards of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) (https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/the-qualifications-system/national-framework-of-qualifications). Programmes are developed and approved in accordance with *Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes* (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html). As DkIT has placed strategic importance on the development of part-time programmes, the Registrar's Office developed guidelines on the development of part-time programmes. These guidelines provide extensive support on the generation of new programme offerings through the utilisation of appropriate existing modules. The guidelines can be found at: https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html.

Programme development is carried out by Academic Schools and, in the case of major awards, is subject to initial approval by the Executive Board to ensure that the overall objectives are in line with the Institute Strategic Plan. Following this, the approval process is managed by the Registrar's Office. Academic staff members are provided with ongoing training and guidance, provided collaboratively by the Registrar's Office and the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), in aspects of programme development (e.g. use of curriculum management system (Akari curriculum-https://courses.dkit.ie/curriculum/), writing learning outcomes, development of programme assessment strategy, etc.). Each programme is designed such that:

- There are explicit intended learning outcomes (linked to DkIT Award Standards) and the programme meets the objectives set for it, including the learning outcomes and graduate attributes.
- The resulting Award is clearly specified, referring to the level on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), award class and type and number of ECTS credits.
- The development is inclusive, involving students and other stakeholders, with due cognisance of external expertise and published information.
- Student transfer and progression are facilitated.
- The expected student workload is defined (through the use of ECTS credits).
- Well-structured placement opportunities are provided where appropriate.
- It is subject to a formal approval process by the Institute's Academic Council.

All proposals for new and revised programmes are required to present a Teaching and Learning Strategy and an Assessment Strategy. Programme documentation must demonstrate that assessments are constructively aligned to module and programme learning outcomes.

All new major awards require a full validation process through an external panel of experts appointed by the Registrar's Office. Non-major awards require validation by an external panel using the Differential Validation process. All programmes require re-validation at five-yearly intervals through the Programmatic Review process.

Changes to programmes between programmatic reviews require approval using one of three processes depending on the magnitude of the changes required:

- **Minor changes** do not affect the programme learning outcomes of a programme. They ensure continued consistency with the recommendations and conditions of the original validation report and do not compromise the programme's stated aims, objectives, and intended learning outcomes. Such changes may include changes to the balance between assessment types in a specific module; changes in module titles; minor changes in contact hours; inclusion or exclusion of, core modules and the rebalancing of credits for particular modules. Minor changes require internal approval only, through the Programme Evaluation Sub-Committee (PEC) of Academic Council.

- **Structural Changes** to a programme include changes in delivery modes, inclusion of a new elective strand, inclusion or exclusion of work placement or dissertation, significant re-distribution and re-sequencing of content or a change to the programme title. Where such changes do not compromise the programme's stated aims, objectives, and intended learning outcomes, the programme may undergo a differential validation process rather than a full re-validation.

- **Major changes** which change the programme's intended learning outcomes require revalidation by an external panel. All programmes offered through collaborative provision require full validation in line with the Institute's Policy on Collaborative Provision, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards.

DkIT has a significant number of articulation agreements with European and International Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in relation to Erasmus exchanges, student transfers and progression opportunities. The Institute also manages a number of collaborative provision arrangements (See Section 1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision), underpinned by robust quality assurance frameworks, as follows:

1. Provision of a suite of Agriculture programmes collaboratively with Teagasc (Ballyhaise College, Cavan).

2. Provision of suite of Nursing and Midwifery programmes in collaboration with clinical partners (e.g., Health Service Executive (HSE)).

3. Provision of a suite of Engineering Apprenticeship programmes with SOLAS (https://www.solas.ie/).

The Institute's Policy on Collaborative Provision, Transnational Provision and Joint Awards was invoked in the case of 1. and 2. above, which lead to DkIT awards (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html).

DkIT offers apprenticeships programmes in the areas of Electrical, Motor Mechanics, Plumbing and Carpentry in conjunction with the Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB). The Department of Engineering Trades works in collaboration with SOLAS (https://www.solas.ie/), employers and other agencies to develop and deliver the intermediary and senior phases of a number of apprenticeship programmes. The craft apprenticeships are subject to a national agreement or MOU between SOLAS and the providers.

Apprenticeship is a system of employment-based training and education which enables a person to obtain the skills, knowledge and education required to satisfactorily perform the core skills of their chosen trade. Apprenticeship is the recognised means by which people are trained to become craftspeople in Ireland and typically takes four years to complete. The programmes offered by DkIT comply with QQI's Topic-specific guidance for Apprenticeship programmes (Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes, https://www.qqi.ie/node/632).

Engagement with stakeholders is a central part of DkIT's strategy and is regarded as being integral to the quality of programme development and delivery. Schools meet regularly with Industry Advisory Boards which feed into the curriculum. Many departments are increasing their level of participation in 'live' student projects, carried out in consultation with industry or community organisations. All Schools normally avail of 'guest lecturers' from external organisations and many engage in 'site visits'. The DkIT Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/) co-ordinates the work placements each year within academic programmes across all Schools. The CEC also organises an annual Industry Day on campus, providing opportunities for industry to meet with students and potential graduate recruits. Interview panels for staff recruitment and programme validation panels are required to have industry representation. The Institute's strategy in relation to interactions between education and providers is informed by QQI's A Strategic Approach to Employer Engagement (Sept 2014; https://tinyurl.com/2xudhyuc).

Since 1989, the DkIT Regional Development Centre (RDC) has acted as the commercially oriented interface between DkIT and the industry, commercial and business life of the region (https://www.dkit.ie/services-to-business/). The RDC provides incubation facilitates for start-up

businesses and provides support to entrepreneurs through schemes such as the Enterprise Ireland (EI) New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme (NFP).

The Institute developed and updated policies relating to blended and online learning in the reporting period 2020/2021 with approval at Academic Council postponed until September 2021 in the reporting period 2021/2022, specifically:

- Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes (amended).
- Policy on Blended and Online Learning (related policy).

DkIT adopted (Academic Council Meeting No. 174, Motion 174.06, 30th April 2021) the *QQI Principles for Professional Engagements with Education Providers, including Programme Validation, Professional Accreditation and Approval* (https://www.qqi.ie/News/Pages/Final-Version-of-Principles-for-Professional-Engagements-with-Education-Providers,-including-Programme-Validation,-Professi.aspx). The endorsement of the principles was formally communicated by DkIT to QQI on 19th May 2021 with acceptance of the endorsement being confirmed by QQI to DkIT on 25th May 2021.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2021/2022:

- Academic Council approved the adoption of DkIT Employability Statement and DkIT Graduate Attribute Framework updated (Academic Council Meeting No. 177, Motion 177.07, 8th October 2021). The Employability Statement and Graduate Attribute Framework were phase one outputs from the DkIT Embedding Employability Initiative (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/dkit-embedding-employability.html) which was funded by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning as part of the Strategic Alignment for Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund in 2019 and enhances the Institute's commitment to graduate employability

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2022/2023:

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- The Policy on the Design and Approval of programmes was updated to reflect changes in Stage 1 of the programme validation procedures (Academic Council Meeting No. 185, Motion 185.05, 24th February 2023). The policy was also updated to include requirements for Approved Programme Schedules (APSs) to include the DkIT Guidelines on Sectoral Benchmarked Programme Delivery Hours. The guidelines provide programme norms using the RGAM programme classification scheme per programme stage. The norms were approved at a special meeting of the Council (Academic Council Meeting No. 184S, Motion 184S.01 and 184S.02, 14th February 2023).

Change in Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies under this category in this reporting period (2023/2024): Yes.

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- A Micro-credentials Policy was approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 194, Motion 194.08, 20th June 2024). The European Council/Commission definition was adopted in an interim step (Academic Council Meeting No. 191, Motion 191.04, 23/02/2024).

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

This section discusses the information the Institution provides to learners in respect of access, transfer, progression (ATP) and certification. It also highlights initiatives that the Institute participates in to enhance ATP opportunities for students.

Policies and procedures have been developed to cover a range of matters relating to the student lifecycle, from admission (access), transfer, progression to conferring of awards and transcripts provision. Mobility both within DkIT and across the Higher Education sector is facilitated through the use of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credit system (https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system-ects_en) and the National Framework for Qualifications (NFQ) (https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx). In the case of international students, NARIC (https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/NARIC-Ireland.aspx) and ENIC (https://www.enic-naric.net/) are used to facilitate access to programmes. Graduates are provided with transcripts of assessment results for each programme stage in addition to an award parchment and access to a European Diploma Supplement (EDS) (https://ec.europa.eu/education/diploma-supplement_en). Academic Schools, the Admissions Office and Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/) provides advice and information regarding transfer and progression opportunities both within DkIT and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

There are a number of policies under this category, the application of which ensures fair recognition of education qualifications and prior learning (both formal and non-formal):

Policy	Web Address
Admissions Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Transfer and Progression Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html **Note:** There are specific progression policies for the Section of Midwifery.
Recognition of Prior Learning Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Equal Access and Participation Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Assessment and Standards	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html

Exit Awards Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Prizes Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html

The implementation of the policies above is the responsibility of the Registrar's Office and is facilitated through various administrative offices, all of which work in close collaboration with the Academic Schools:

Administrative Office	Web Address
Admissions Office	https://www.dkit.ie/academic-administration
Access Office	https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/student-supports/diversity-and-access.html
International Office	https://www.dkit.ie/international-students/
Life-Long Learning Centre (LLC)	https://www.dkit.ie/parttime-courses/
Disability Office	https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/student-supports/access-and-disability.html
Examinations Office	https://www.dkit.ie/examinations-office
Awards Office	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/awards-office/graduation.html
Careers and Employability Centre	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/dkit-careers-service/

Relevant policies and procedures are communicated to students through the DkIT website, Department handbooks and student induction events. Extensive induction processes for new and advanced entry students are co-ordinated centrally by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) with inputs from academic Schools and Student Services.

DkIT participates in collaborative arrangements to facilitate transfer and progression across the higher education system. The Institute is a member of the Midlands East North Dublin (MEND) Cluster. The cluster aims to share information regarding innovations in learning and teaching and to improve arrangements for access and transfer between institutions. DkIT is a founder member of the North East Further and Higher Education Alliance (NEFHEA) which is a regional higher and further education initiative comprising DkIT and further education institutions in the North-East and Northern Ireland. The purpose of the alliance is to strengthen progression opportunities for students in the region from further to higher education.

Progression Policies for undergraduate Nursing/Midwifery students and for students on the *Higher Diploma in Midwifery* in the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years were approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 171S, Motion 171S.03, 11th December 2020). A Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Practice and Garda/Police Vetting Procedures for the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care* were approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 172, Motion 172.06, 19th February 2021). This was part of a number of policy amendments made by the Department of Humanities required by the professional body CORU (https://www.coru.ie/), Ireland's multi-profession health regulator who is responsible for the statutory registration of health and social care professionals.

The Institute A-Level entry requirements for NFQ Level 8 awards was amended and included in the Admissions Policy. This followed a recommendation by the Institute's Northern Ireland Working Group that a Double Award A-Level be scored as two distinct A-Level grades. The current position in the sector (as of 2020/2021) is that Double Awards are scored as one A-Level only. The change in scoring was recommended for two reasons: (1) Universities in Northern Ireland score a Double Award A-Level as two distinct A-Level grades and (2) DkIT score a BTEC Double Award Grade Merit as two distinct Merit grades (Academic Council Meeting No. 175, Motion 175.01, 28th May 2021).

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2021/2022:

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy for the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care* updated (Academic Council Meeting No. 176S, Motion 176S.03, 10th September 2021). The policy was amended further following discussions with the professional body for social care professionals (CORU) (Standing Committee, Meeting No. 70S, Motion 70S.01, 13th December 2021). Following further discussions and clarification from CORU the approval of the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy for the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care* was then revoked (Standing Committee, Meeting No. 71S, Motion 71S.01, 7th February 2022). A derogation from the Institute's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy for the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care* was approved (Standing Committee, Meeting No. 71S, Motion 71S.02, 7th February 2022).
- Admissions Policy and Procedures was updated (Academic Council Meeting No. 179, Motion 179.03, 25th February 2022).
- Prizes Policy was approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 180, Motion 180.03, 29th April 2022). The President's Prizes for Conferring Policy was amended to incorporate group nominations for the "Enterprising Student of the Year" and expanded to include School Prizes (policy was retitled as a result). All prizes will be included on an Institute Prizes Register, following consideration and approval, typically for five years, by the Academic Council. Schools prizes for inclusion on the Institute Prizes Register were considered and approved by the Academic Council:

    o School of Business and Humanities: Karl Mernagh Prize (Academic Council Meeting No. 181, Motions 181.03, 27th May 2022);
    o School of Business and Humanities: Irish Association for Social Care Educators (IASCE) Award for Academic Achievement in Social Care (Academic Council, Meeting No. 182, Motions 182.13, 20th June 2022);
    o Engineering: MOFFETT Female Engineering Graduate (Academic Council Meeting No. 181, Motions 181.04, 27th May 2022);
    o Health and Science: Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) Student of the Year (Academic Council Meeting No. 181, Motions 181.05, 06, 27th May 2022);
    o Health and Science: ABP Award for Agri-Food Student of the Year. (Academic Council Meeting No. 181, Motions 181.05, 06, 27th May 2022).

- o Health and Science: Shane Dromgoole Prize (Academic Council, Meeting No. 182, Motions 182.14, 20th June 2022);
- o Health and Science: Duggan Veterinary Prize for Excellence in Anaesthesia (Academic Council, Meeting No. 182, Motions 182.13, 14, 20th June 2022);
- o Informatics and Creative Arts: John Moore Prize (Academic Council Meeting No. 181, Motions 181.06, 27th May 2022);
- o Informatics and Creative Arts: Fís Best in Show Prize (Academic Council Meeting No. 181, Motions 181.06, 27th May 2022).

- Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards Policy was approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 182, Motion 182.06, 20th June 2022). The Posthumous Awards Policy was expanded to include aegrotat awards.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2022/2023: No.

Change in Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies under this category in this reporting period (2023/2024): Yes.

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- Progression Policy for Undergraduate Nursing/Midwifery Students was amended (Academic Council Meeting No. 191, Motion 191.03, 23/02/2024). Clinical partner names were updated and information on the appeals process were included in sections outlining procedures to be followed following a first and second failed clinical placement.
- Progression Policy for Higher Diploma in Midwifery Students was amended (Academic Council Meeting No. 192, Motion 192.02, 26/04/2024). Clinical partner names were updated and information on the appeals process were included in sections outlining procedures to be followed following a first and second failed clinical placement.
- Transfer and Progression Policy was amended in explicitly incorporate articulation agreements. (Academic Council Meeting No. 194, Motion 194.09, 20/06/2024).
- Entry requirements were amended for the following programmes:
  - o Mathematics was removed as an entry requirement for the Bachelor of Arts in Community Youth Work and Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Youth Work (Academic Council Meeting No. 193, Motion 193.07, 24/05/2024).
  - o *Certificate in Newborn Clinical Examination* (DK_NNBCE_9) (Academic Council Meeting No. 192, Motion 192.04, 26/04/2024).

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

As mentioned in Section 2.1, it is the policy of the Institute that all programmes are well designed and conform to the standards of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) (https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx). Programmes

are developed and approved in accordance with the Programme Design and Approval Policy (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html).

Programmes are developed in accordance with DkIT Award Standards. The Institute adopted the QQI Award Standards (https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/qqi-awards/qqi-awards-standards) as their own standards in the reporting period 2019/2020. Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) must be aligned to the relevant award standard(s), a requirement included in the Programme Design and Approval Policy. Programmes with professional accreditation are also aligned with the relevant standards for professional bodies, professional regulatory and/or statutory bodies (PSRBs) as appropriate.

Examinations and Assessment are carried out in accordance with DkIT's Assessment and Standards (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html; See Section 2.4 Teaching Learning and Assessment).

Assessment and Standards describes the Institute's policy on the following:

- General Requirements for Examinations and Awards;
- Approved Programme Schedule (APS);
- Marks Allocation;
- Allocation of Marks to Assessment Elements;
- Pass by Compensation;
- Exemptions;
- Requirements for Progression;
- Internal and External Examiners;
- Return of Examination Marks/Grades by Internal Examiners;
- Meeting of Examination Board;
- The Granting of Awards;
- The Revocation of Awards;
- Award Classifications Systems;
- Post Award Achievements.

As part of the Institute policy enhancements relating to Designed Awarding Body (DAB) status (which commenced in January 2020) an Awarding Policy was approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 174, Motion 174.03, 30th April 2021).

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2021/2022:

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- The QQI "Joint Sectoral Protocol between DABs and QQI" was endorsed (Academic Council Meeting No. 180, Motion 180.07, 29th April 2022).

The joint sectoral protocol allows for the inclusion of the awards of Designated Awarding Bodies (DABS) within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This is a requirement under Section 55 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Amendment Act (2012 and 2019 amended Acts). This sectoral protocol has been developed by QQI with input from the THEA and the IUA (QQI, in co-operation with THEA and the IUA, collaborate with the sector in relation to sectoral protocols. The protocols are agreed by QQI and providers).

It reflects existing practice and strengths around quality assurance and is designed to avoid putting in place any additional/burdensome process to meet the statutory requirement of including DABs' awards in the NFQ. It is a regulatory requirement that requires formal endorsement by each Higher Education Institution (HEI) with DAB powers. General consensus and broadly shared meaning are sufficient to underpin the operation of the protocol.

The sectoral protocol does not promote a standardised approach to the determination of awards standards or the making of awards within designated awarding bodies, rather it reflects the generally accepted norms based on professional judgement and consensus. Participating institutions are encouraged to interpret and apply the protocol so that it works well with relevant institutional practice, policies and procedures.

Subject to the agreement of DABs, QQI will report on the status of the protocol and will promote it nationally and internationally as a reflection of transparent and trusted procedures within DABs for the inclusion of their awards within the NFQ. The protocol consolidates and confirms the existing practices articulated in institutional policies and procedures, sector led guidance and advice and in national and European guidelines on quality assurance.

The protocol may be used by designated awarding bodies to confirm that such procedures are in place and facilitate the listing of their awards on the Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ). From the date that a DAB endorses the protocol, all qualifications offered by the DAB that are currently published on the IRQ shall be deemed to be included within the NFQ.

Once endorsed, the protocol is expected to be observed over time by designated awarding bodies and QQI. Reporting requirements will be proportionate to the strong record of NFQ implementation by designated awarding bodies. Part A of the Annual Institution Quality Report (AQR) will include a reference this protocol and can be used to record confirmation by a designated awarding body that it continues to apply. Part B of the AQR will be used to report any changes or developments that may have impacted on the operation and implementation of the

protocol for example, specific quality enhancement initiatives or updates to relevant policies and procedures.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2022/2023: No.

Change in Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies under this category in this reporting period (2023/2024): Yes.

- DkIT agreed to abide by the proposed QQI convention of the titling of minor, special-purpose and supplemental classes of awards (Academic Council Meeting No. 191, Motion 191.07, 23rd February 2024). This resulted in the Awarding Policy being updated.
- Awarding Policy was amended and approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 194, Motion 194.05, 20th June 2024). Structured Masters degrees were reclassified as research masters (see related amendment to Assessment and Standards).

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

This section provides information on how the Institute quality assures teaching, learning and assessment.

Academic programmes are delivered in a student-centred manner that encourages learners to take an active role in their learning process. Learning, teaching and assessment at DkIT:

- Respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths;
- Uses a variety of delivery modes and pedagogical methods, which are regularly evaluated and adjusted;
- Encourages autonomy in the learner while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the lecturer and promotes mutual respect within the learner-lecturer relationship.

A number of academic policies ensure that teaching, learning and assessment remain student-centred. Training and support/guidance is provided to academic staff in relation to these policies and procedures.

The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html) sets out DkIT's strategic priorities in relation to learning, teaching and assessment and provides a framework for ensuring that these are used to promote student success in line with the vision and priorities set out in the DkIT Strategic Plan.

The Assessment and Learning Policy (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html) provides guidance on the development and maintenance of

assessment strategies at the levels of both programme and module. It is based on five core principles (Figure 4)
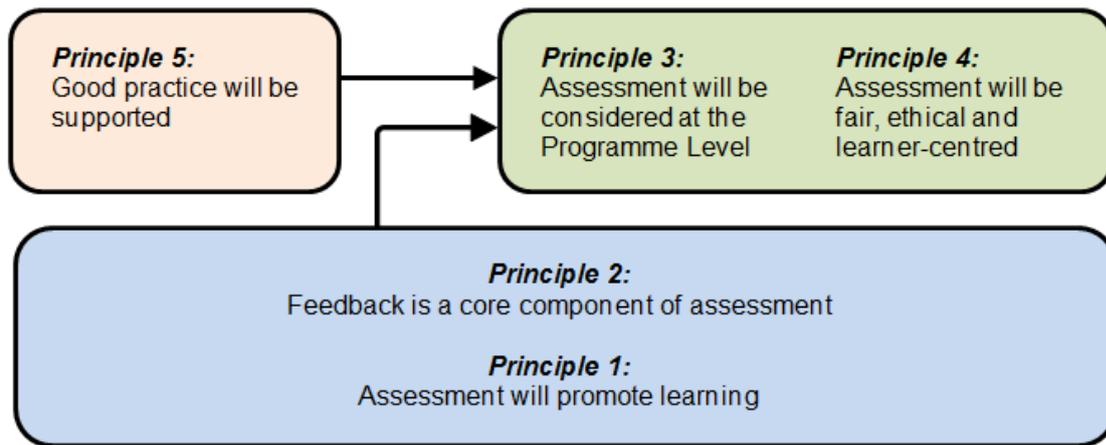
Figure 4: Assessment and Learning Core Principles

DkIT has developed a framework for the management and development of assessed group work (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html), the impact of which is formally monitored.

Examinations and assessment are carried out in accordance with DkIT's Assessment and Standards (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html), which is aligned to QQI's Assessment and Standards (revised 2022). DkIT operates a system of external moderation of assessed student work and examinations. The external examiners are appointed by Academic Council and serve a term of three years. External Examiners report annually to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar and copies of these reports are circulated to relevant academic managers for consideration and response by Programme Boards. The Institute's quality assurance policy and procedures can be found in DkIT's External Examiner Duties and Procedures (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html; see cross referencing in Section 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review). Students have the right to appeal examination or assessment results using the appeals process prescribed in Assessment and Standards and this document also outlines the procedures to be used in the case of students with mitigating circumstances.

The Continuous Assessment Procedures (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html) outline the operational parameters associated with assessment of students. This policy, in conjunction with Assessment and Standards, ensures that procedures for assessment are valid, consistent and fair, that criteria are provided to students in advance, records are properly maintained and feedback opportunities are available.

The Blended and Online Learning Policy (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html) aims to provide guidance for individuals and programme teams to enable the development and delivery of blended and online programmes and modules. It is based

on good practice principles which focus on the design, delivery, support and quality assurance of blended and online modules or programmes.

The DkIT Academic Integrity Policy (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html) provides best practices and outlines the procedures used by the Institute for investigation of possible contraventions of Academic Integrity. The Student Voice Policy (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html) promotes student involvement in decision making and sets out how DkIT staff and students communicate and engage with each other, working in partnership to improve our students' experience.

DkIT aims to provide an environment which is collegial and respectful of all members. Students registered at DkIT are required to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html) and the Social Networking Policy (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html). DkIT values the student voice and welcomes learner input to decision making across the Institute (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html). In addition to being invited to participate in feedback surveys, students have representation on Programme and School/Faculty Boards, Academic Council and Governing Body.

The Institute's Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/centre-for-excellence-in-learning-and-teaching/) provides learning, teaching and assessment advice, guidance and support for both staff and students. The Centre also engages in a considerable level of scholarly activities in these areas, both through the delivery of Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching and through a number of enhancement projects funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/). The outcomes of these projects are informing policy and enhancing practice across the Institute.

Other Policies and Procedures Relevant in this Category:

Policy	Web Address
Guidelines for Remote Assessments-students	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm
Academic Regulations for Masters (Taught and Structured) Research Projects	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm
Recording of Online Classes: Guidelines and Code of Practice for DkIT Staff and Students (including Data Privacy notice)	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm
Social Networking Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm
Student Guidelines for Online Behaviour or Netiquette	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.htm
Examination and Assessment Policy and Procedure	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html

Conduct of Examinations Guidelines (In-Class Assessments)	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities- Policy, Guidelines and Procedures	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Work Placement Common Procedures (including Remote Working)	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Policy on Student Practice Placement Attendance (requirements of CORU (Regulating Health and Social Care Professionals))	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Student Complaints Procedure	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Student Fitness to Practice Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2021/2022:

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- Assessment and Standards was amended to permit students to repeat for honours in specific circumstances, effective for the academic year 2022/2023 (Academic Council Meeting No. 182, Motion 182.15, 20th June 2022).

  A special meeting of the Academic Council (Meeting No 177S, 30th November 2021) was convened with the sole purpose of agreeing an Institute response to the QQI consultation on a proposed modification to '*Sectoral Convention 3 on Repeating for Honours'* in QQI's 'Assessment and Standards' (2013). QQI sought feedback from stakeholders on the proposal outlined in a white paper (https://tinyurl.com/4vptvdmw) by Friday 3rd December 2021. Following extensive discussions after a detailed briefing, which included consideration of the QQI whitepaper, the Academic Council was in agreement that the current Sectoral Convention 3 needed to be amended but was not in agreement with the proposed wording as articulated in the QQI whitepaper.

  Council agreed to permit students to repeat a failed module(s) contributing to an award grade in order to achieve an honours classification subject to the following conditions: (1) Only one repeat attempt will be permitted which must be at the next available examination sitting; (2) A maximum of 10 ECTS credits can be repeated; (3) The calculation of the award classification will be based on the first attempt grades; (4) No capping of module marks will be applied to the repeat sitting) (Academic Council Meeting No 177S, Motion 177S, 30th November 2021). DkIT submitted its response in relation to the Sectoral Convention 3 to QQI on the 2nd December 2021. DkIT's Assessment and Standards was subsequently amended in June 2022 (as above).

- Work Placement for Social Care - Common Policies and Procedures (Academic Council Meeting No. 176S, Motion 176S.02, 10th September 2021).

- Policy for Blended and Online Learning (Academic Council Meeting No. 176S, Motion 176S.04, 10th September 2021). See cross reference in Section 2.1 Programme Development and Approval.

- Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures (Academic Council Meeting No. 178, Motion 178.07, 10th December 2021). A role description for a Plagiarism Advisor and guidelines for staff on the conduct of oral verification interviews were included.

- DkIT Work Placement Common Procedures (specifically terms and conditions) (Academic Council Meeting No. 180, Motion 180.09, 29th April 2022).

- Policies (Assessment and Standards, Continuous Assessment Procedures, External Examiner Duties and Procedures) were updated to facilitate a requirement that modules with continuous assessment components with a weighting of 40% or more will have to be reviewed by External Examiners in advance of distribution to students (similar to the current practice of External Examiners reviewing final examination papers in advance of the examination session) (Academic Council Meeting No. 180, Motion 180.10, 29th April 2022).

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2022/2023:

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- DkIT Student Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures were updated (Academic Council, Meeting No. 185, Motion 185.04, 24th February 2023). The part-time programme Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Youth Work was added to the list of programmes included in the policy and procedures.

- Framework and Guidelines for Assessed Groupwork was updated. The amendments to the guidelines focussed on more inclusive approaches to group work, including the use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. A greater emphasis was placed on the development of graduate attributes including the incorporation of the DkIT Graduate Attribute Framework. The academic literature underpinning the guidelines was also updated.

- Award classifications and Broadsheet Annotations relating to Structured Masters programmes were incorporated into DkIT Assessment and Standards and were approved (Academic Council, Meeting No. 186, Motion 186.10, 28th April 2023).

- Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures were amended to include an initial Institute position, informed by best national and international best practice, on the use of generative artificial intelligence tools (GenAI) (e.g., ChatGPT) for assessment. (Academic Council, Meeting No. 186, Motion 186.13, 28th April 2023). The updated policy stipulated that using generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT) in an assessment unless explicitly permitted to do so and with proper acknowledgement is a form of plagiarism. The policy will be further reviewed as required in light of the ever-changing Academic Integrity landscape. See AQR Part B for Academic Integrity initiatives.

- Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure was significantly updated and approved (Academic Council, Meeting No. 187, Motion 187.08, 26th May 2023).
- Examination and Assessment Policy and Procedure was updated and approved (Academic Council, Meeting No. 188, Motion 188.05, 20th June 2023). The "Procedure for Music Performance Assessment" (Appendix 6) was updated.

Change in Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies under this category in this reporting period (2023/2024): Yes.

- Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) guidelines for students and staff were approved (specifically "Generative Artificial Intelligence and Your Assessments-A Guide for Students" and "Generative Artificial Intelligence-Staff Guidance"; Continuous assessment coversheet was updated to reflect GenAI) (Academic Council Meeting No. 189, Motions 189.17, 189.18, 189.19), 29/09/2023).
- Assessment and Standards amendments were approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 194, Motion 194.05, Motion 194.06, Motion 194.10, 20/06/2024). Structured Masters degrees were reclassified as research masters (See related amendments in the Awarding Policy). Award classifications and Broadsheet Annotations were updated.
- Social Care Policies (Student Attendance and Work Placement Policies) for the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care* were amended and approved Academic Council Meeting No. 194, Motion 194.07, 20/06/2024).
- Assessment and Learning Policy was updated and approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 190, Motion 190.21, 24/11/2023).

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

This section provides information on the resources, infrastructure and supports that are provided to students.

To the best of its resourcing ability, DkIT seeks to ensure that learning environments and resources are suitable for both individual and group learning and that learners have access to resources for effective study and to resources which increase educational opportunity. Full details of resources and supports are provided to students at induction when they first arrive to study at DkIT. Institute Open Days also inform prospective students of the supportive learning environment they will experience. Supporting learning is continually reviewed and upgraded despite budgetary constraints because it is seen as the central aspect of the functions of the Institute. Robust feedback channels are in operation to ensure that any deficiencies in service to learners are brought to the attention of the relevant manager in a timely manner and actioned accordingly.

The following student supports are available to students studying at DkIT:

Student Services (https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/student-services/)**:** Students are provided with practical and pastoral support and guidance through various services including the Health Centre, Counselling Service, International Office, Access Office, Disability Office and Chaplaincy. Advice on accommodation and financial matters is also available.

An online Student Support Hub, which complements the face-to-face student supports, is available in the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and is part of the online student learning infrastructure (the Hub was launched in 2020/2021 having been funded from the Higher Education Authority's (HEA's) 2018 Innovation and Transformation Fund). The Hub has made the provision of student supports more flexible and accessible to all our students, whether on-campus or off.

Student supports are an integral part of the Institute's Student Success Strategy (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html). Support services are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose and accessible and that students are aware of them. See Section Governance and Management of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) System, Professional Service Areas (Student Services) for a full description of service providers that provide support to students.

DkIT Library (https://www.dkit.ie/library/): The library provides teaching, learning and research supports to a variety of learners as follows:

- Access to physical books (51,997), journals, Special Collections and Archives.
- 24/7 access to electronic collections online (eBooks / e-Journals / databases).
- Access to 473 desks in addition to dedicated study rooms for collaborative study and a separate quiet zone in the library.
- Rest and relaxation areas with comfortable seating to reflect and unwind from busy schedules.
- Provide information skills training sessions in consultation with the relevant academic Departments to support research, teaching and learning (online and in-person).
- Inter-library loans / document-supply and access cards to other libraries.
- Dedicated staff who supply information and research support at all levels.
- Subject Guides for each area of study in the Institute, a great source of relevant subject-specific material and resources and upskilling tutorials.
- Provide guidance on how to avoid plagiarism by referencing. The library also offers an introduction to various Reference Management Software and provides an Academic Integrity online resource in the Moodle VLE.
- Research Support Service offering a wide range of services up to post-doctoral level (https://www.dkit.ie/library/library-supports/support-for-research/)

Most supports, including journal databases, e-books and support guides are available online to ensure learners can avail of what they need 24/7. Provision has shifted more recently to prioritising electronic resources. Print stock is managed through varying loan periods to ensure maximum sharing of resources.

Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC) (https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/study-experience/student-learning-and-development-centre/): The SLDC is part of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and was established in 2010 to offer support to students in basic IT skills, study skills and academic writing. The Centre also co-ordinates the student induction process and the services have expanded to include the provision of English language support to international students and pre-entry support to mature students. The Centre offers a schedule of workshops for students, one-to-one sessions, and drop-ins, both face-to-face and online. Tutors also collaborate with lecturers to deliver tailored support for class groups. The SLDC also develops and curates a wide range of learning development resources for students and these are available on the Student Support Hub.

Mathematics Learning Centre (MLC) (https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/study-experience/maths-learning-centre.html): The MLC is a free service open to all DkIT students which aims to provide additional Mathematics support and offers a number of services including 'drop-in' sessions, small group workshops on specific topic and one-on-one support sessions.

IT Learning Centre (ITLC) (https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/study-experience/it-learning-centre.html): This Higher Education Authority (HEA) funded initiative in the Departments of Computing Science and Mathematics and Visual and Human-Centred Computing provides specific support to computing students in a range of computing related areas including programming languages, mathematics topics, networking, web development, etc.

IT Infrastructure and Services: Computing Services (https://www.dkit.ie/computer-services) provide information technology technical support to the Institute community. It provides network and Internet based services including email, web, wireless and printing services. It is also responsible for maintaining the PC laboratories which exist across the campus in academic schools, library and other central locations. A number of policies exist to guide and direct users (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/it-policies.html). An online Institute helpdesk (https://helpdesk.dkit.ie/) support students and staff with technical queries or difficulties. Computer services also provides administrative and infrastructural support with the Institute Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle). This support complements the supports provided by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).

International Office (https://www.dkit.ie/international-students/) International students are additionally supported by the International Office with all services and supports being provided in accordance with the *QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training*

to International Learners (https://tinyurl.com/2578s5ux). The Code of Practice is a comprehensive set of threshold requirements particular to the provision of education and training to international learners specifically relating to the pastoral care, including service support and information provision. Requirements are also included for the protection of enrolled learners; marketing, recruitment and admissions practices; and transparency of fees and refund processes which apply before and after enrolment. DkIT is also compliant with the London Statement, which is a code of ethics for the use of international education recruitment agents (See AQR Part A).

DkIT also implements the EU Erasmus+ Programme in accordance with the principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, 2021 - 2027 (https://eurireland.ie/erasmusplus/erasmus-charter-for-higher-education/) and with the regulatory requirements prescribed by the National Agency for Erasmus in Ireland (HEA).

Other Policies and Procedures Relevant in this Category:

Policy	Web Address
International Refund Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Erasmus Policy Statement	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Scholarship Programme at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html

See AQR Part B for information on Professional Support Units activities and developments during the reporting period.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2021/2022: No.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2022/2023: No.

Change in Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies under this category in this reporting period (2023/2024): No.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

This section provides information on the quality assurance and enhancement of postgraduate research activities at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT). It includes the quality assurance and enhancement framework for the governance, design, approval, delivery, assessment, monitoring and review of research activities across the institution. As a Designated Awarding Body (DAB), DkIT is responsible for organising an integrated system of quality assurance in relation to its research activities.

The quality assurance and enhancement of research activities of the Institute are informed by the following:

- Topic-Specific QA Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/Research%20Degree%20Programmes%20QA%20Guidelines.pdf
- Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes (2019): https://tinyurl.com/679sw2tb.
- HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education: https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/engagement-insights-and-knowledge-sharing/national-forum-for-doctoral-education.
- Report of Expert Panel on the Quality Assurance of Research Degree Programmes in Irish Higher Education Institutions: https://tinyurl.com/679sw2tb
- National Framework for Doctoral Education Implementation Report: https://tinyurl.com/679sw2tb
- The 'Salzburg' Principles, The 'Salzburg II' Recommendations: https://eua.eu/resources/publications/615:salzburg-ii-%E2%80%93-recommendations.html.
- National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland: https://www.iua.ie/publications/national-policy-statement-on-ensuring-research-integrity-in-ireland/#.
- Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019, https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/publications/irelands-national-ip-protocol-2019.html.

The principle aim of research is both to answer key questions and to generate new knowledge in specific domains. The Institute prides itself on supporting and engaging in a broad range of research enquiry across a range of disciplines which are aligned to the research and innovation core principles. The Institute's approach to research has always been to invest in growth areas of strategic importance, which are aligned with our research strengths and which are informed by the external environment. Our research is founded upon excellence led by global needs with real-world societal and economic impacts.

Excellence with an emphasis upon "translational research with impact – TRL level refocus"

Research with real societal and economic impact which addresses current global challenges Horizon Europe

Research which is consolidated and concentrated into cross-cutting interdisciplinary teams within our prioritized research themes

The strategic direction and operational management of research across the campus is a partnership approach between the academic Schools, Research and Graduate Studies Office and the Regional Development Centre (RDC).

The consolidation and concentration of our research into thematic areas of strength which are underpinned by internationally recognised research teams has been at the heart of strategic development for the past decade. The Institute has always recognised the need to have a diversity of research centres and groups, including academic, industry facing and mission- orientated which underpin our thematic areas. In view of the size of the Institute in terms of its research community, collaboration between existing research centres and groups and consolidation of existing groups and centres has been encouraged and achieved over the lifecycle of the current research strategy (2020-2024). However, there is further scope to build upon this with further possible consolidation and development of collaborative synergies between existing teams of researchers. This allows a focus on building higher critical mass within our prioritised research themes.

Institutional High-Level Achievements:
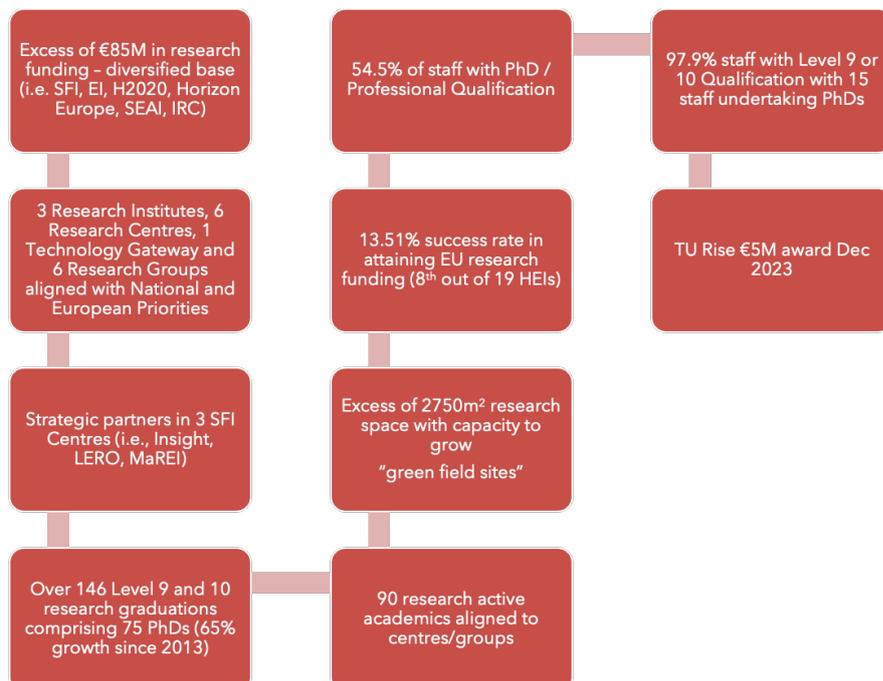
Institutional Professional Support Staff: The Research and Graduate Studies Office are the primary professional support unit within the Institute for the operational and professional development of Graduate Studies within the Institute. The Office is comprised of the following roles:

- Head of Research and Graduate Studies;
- Research Office Manager;
- Research Projects;
- Postgraduate Research Support Office;
- Postgraduate Research Support Officer.

The office is committed to providing the researcher community at DkIT with the resources required to ensure they are effectively supported in their career development, their pursuit of research funding and throughout their postgraduate research degree. Students undertaking a postgraduate degree in the Institute are supported from the outset by the Research and Graduate Studies Office who provide clear guidance and support throughout the entire postgraduate cycle from recruitment to registration through to graduation and where required, act as liaison between the student and the wider DkIT support units. These supports range from assisting with the preparation and collation of all administration forms required for the registration process and the provision of information regarding other support units on campus, including the DkIT Health Unit, and Student Services. International postgraduate students are provided with relevant information on the legal requirements for a move to Ireland, including how to apply for PPS numbers, and the provision of support letters for Visa applications, where relevant. In addition to their supervisory team, the Research and Graduate Studies Office ensure that all students are appointed an Independent Panel Member (IPM) who they meet with on an annual basis and are an advocate for them, should they require it. The postgraduate research administrative support staff also assists the students and their supervisory team in the PhD viva voce examinations process, liaising with examiners, and providing all necessary administrative support. The Research and Graduate Studies Office provide support and training to postgraduate supervisory teams to ensure that all DkIT postgraduates are receiving the most effective and efficient supervision, which caters not only to the academic needs but also to their wider well-being.

The Research Office assist the wider DkIT research community through the provision of dedicated supports in the areas of career development, preparation of funding strategies for both individuals and research centres/groups, the delivery of training, and the provision of pre and post-award administrative support. The primary focus of the Research and Graduate Studies Office is to enhance and diversify the Institute's research funding streams. This is achieved through horizon scanning of future funding opportunities, providing hands-on, experienced support in the preparation of funding applications, liaising with external funders and lobbying for increased financial support of under-funded, strategically important areas. The Research and Graduate Studies Office sits on numerous national committees and bodies and keeps abreast of all relevant national and international policies to ensure that the supports it delivers are appropriate and effective. This extends to the provision of

Researcher training. The Office is dedicated to providing training that will ensure that researchers, at all careers stages, are well prepared and equipped with the knowledge and skills required to effectively support their postgraduate students and continue on an upward career trajectory. The Office is responsible for developing and managing numerous internal funding opportunities, including the annual DkIT Postgraduates scholarship scheme and Career Development Opportunities for Early to Advanced-stage researchers, providing teaching buy-out to facilitate the progress of research interests and the pursuit of external funding opportunities.

Through the Research and Graduate Studies Office, the Institute was awarded the Human Resources (HR) Excellence in Research Logo (https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/hrs4r) in October 2015 in recognition of its commitment to be an attractive, supportive and stimulating environment in which to carry out research and which understands the importance of providing its researchers with the training and means to be competitive and mobile (https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/hrs4r/awarded). The award was made in light of DkIT's commitment to aligning its HR policies and practices with the European Commission's European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. DkIT was one of only four Institutes of Technology to receive such an award.

Research and Innovation Strategy (2020-2025) – Core Principles and Strategic Imperatives

Context: Society is currently facing real global challenges which affect people's quality of life, including finding renewable forms of alternative energy, finding cures for fatal diseases and addressing the societal issues around ageing populations. Within our cross disciplinary research teams, through both basic and translational research programmes, we are attempting to address these global issues and find solutions for industry and society. Ensuring our research has impact, whether it is contributing to the knowledge gap, aiding economic development, solving societal challenges, informing national and international policy and informing the teaching remit of the institute, has always been at the heart of our research endeavours. It is vitally important that the Institute increases the visibility of its research to external stakeholders, including research funders, private and public bodies, potential collaborators and society at large. This will, in itself, demonstrate the unique contribution the Institutes' research outputs are making to the knowledge economy. Greater visibility will not only lead to strengthening the Institute's ability to secure external research income but it will also enable the development of strategic partnerships with public and private bodies. We recognise that it is the quality and expertise of our researchers which underpins our research success to date. The Institute must strive to actively support its research community in their endeavours, both established and early career researchers. It is only through this that the Institute can attain its research vision to be a leader in its research themes. Research, is a critical and integral part of the overall learning environment of the Institute for its staff and student body.

Core Principles: The Research and Innovation Strategy (2020-2022) is founded upon five core principles (CPs) from which the stated strategic imperatives and associated actions flow. These core principles include:

- **Embedding a research culture:** Dundalk Institute of Technology was originally established as a Regional Technology College with a primary focus on education at levels 6 and 7. For the past decade the research and innovation agenda has significantly matured allowing the Institute to become an internationally recognised research-intensive institution in its key research areas. However, the careful balancing act required, and tension between the teaching and learning and research worlds to attain this has been beset with significant challenges and obstacles, both internally and externally. With the Institute approaching its 50-year anniversary it seems opportune to ensure that research and innovation is at the core of all its activities. An integral part of this will be to ensure that research and innovation is viewed by all internal stakeholders as of strategic importance and as mainstream activity of the Institute. The latter shall involve ensuring all functional areas and academic schools are supportive of research and innovation in equal measure and that effective communication exists across the Institute so all can better understand research and innovation. To achieve this a detailed review of all governance structures in tandem with the development of policies that are fit for purpose will be required.

- **Safeguarding academic freedom and enquiry:** The cornerstone of any research intensive higher educational body should be the recognition of the principle of academic freedom for research endeavour irrespective of the research discipline. Dundalk Institute of Technology has encouraged this approach through its support of research across a wide spectrum of discipline areas and recognition of how the outputs of scholarly research differ across such disciplines. This approach should continue and be bolstered through greater recognition and reward for different forms of research output. The prioritisation and consolidation of research into selected themes of strength aligned with national and internal global challenges should continue but recognition of other research disciplines and the unique contribution they make to Institute life and society need to be valued in equal measure and recognised.

- **Ensuring a culture of inclusivity and gender equality:** The Institute will continue to be committed, through the Athena Swan process and recent institutional strategic planning process to align with National and European best practice with respect to the principles enshrining gender equality and inclusivity within the Higher Education Sector. The European funding instrument, Horizon 2020, states three objectives which underpin its strategy on gender equality which the Institute has taken cognisance of and has become the implementation where necessary. These objectives include "fostering gender balance in research teams so as to close the gaps in female participations", "ensuring gender balance in decision making groups" and integrating a gender dimension in research and innovation content". Specific measures at an institutional level which can be implemented include ensuring any perceived barriers for participation of females in research are highlighted and removed, a review of all governance structures around research

and innovation and encouragement of underrepresented genders in certain research disciplines and research teams to proactively become research active.

- **Ensuring public outreach and awareness of what we do in research:** Dundalk Institute of Technology carries out translational research which has had significant societal and economic impact, whether that has been through addressing issues around ageing, the climate or health. This has cemented the institute's research reputation with external stakeholders from funders to governmental bodies. The awareness however of what we do in research to private enterprise and what problems our research community may be able to solve for such enterprises needs improving. This can be achieved in ensuring the research community within the Institute engages proactively with the Regional Development Centre. In addition, the need to communicate what we do in research and innovation to the general public has never been as important due to the current challenges in the public finances and how research and innovation are funded. Efficient public outreach and awareness will form an important aspect of what we do in research moving forward. Engaging with our region across all sectors can be achieved through ensuring the communications office, the research office and research community work in unison and develop specific measures and policies around public outreach and engagement.

- **Positioning DKIT as a research leader in its sector:** Dundalk Institute of Technology has cemented its position as one of the leading research-intensive Institutes of Technology over the past five years with some notable successes both on the National and European scene. The performance of the Institutes research community is one important facet through which reputational enhancement is achieved, however another is that the Institute's management, through leadership from the Research Office, influences national research and innovation policy so the needs of the research community in the Institute are better served. This takes the form of ensuring the Institute plays key roles in national fora and communicates with external stakeholders of influence. As the national Higher Education Landscape goes through dramatic changes through the creation of the Technology Universities and the short to long terms challenges posed by Covid 19 it is vital the Institute is seen to be at the forefront of those challenges from within its own sector.

Strategic Goals (2020-2025)

Goal 1: Focus on and drive research excellence that has societal and economic impact

Goal 2: Create an enabling environment for all researchers to reach their full potential

Goal 3: Build new national and international collaborative networks of scale and impact

Goal 4: Increase the visibility and impact of our research

Goal 5: Embed research and innovation into our teaching and learning agenda

At present the six research centres include (https://www.dkit.ie/research/research-centres-and-groups/):

- Smooth Muscle Research Centre (SMRC);
- Centre for Freshwater and Environmental Studies (CFES);
- Netwell/Casala;
- Regulated Software Research Centre;
- CREDIT (Centre for Renewable Energy at Dundalk Institute of Technology);
- Creative Arts.

The period from 2017 up to 2019 for the last research strategy saw continued growth of the research agenda in the Institute. During this period the Institute has strengthened its position as one of the leading Institutes of Technology with international reputation in terms of its research performance within its prioritised research domains.

The current five-year Research and Innovation Strategy (2020-2024):

- Sets out the recent developments in both National and European policy which has informed the strategic positioning of research and innovation within the Institute:
- Details the Institute's past performance in terms of its research and innovation agenda over the lifespan of the last strategy:
- Details the suite of strategic goals, specific objectives and associated key performance indicators which will enable the institute to deliver upon its research and innovation vision:
- Underpins the Institute's current Strategic Plan and builds upon previous research strategies.

The principle aim of research is both to answer key questions and to generate new knowledge in specific domains. The Institute prides itself on supporting and engaging in a broad range of research enquiry across a range of disciplines which are aligned to the research and innovation core principles. The Institute's approach to research has always been to invest in growth areas of strategic importance, which are aligned with our research strengths and which are informed by the external environment. Our research is founded upon excellence led by global needs with real-world societal and economic impacts.

DkIT's Research Clusters and Teams: The consolidation and concentration of our research into thematic areas of strength which are underpinned by internationally recognised research teams has been at the heart of our strategic development for the past decade. The Institute has always recognised the need to have a diversity of research centres and groups, including academic, industry facing and mission orientated which underpin our thematic areas. In view of the size of the Institute in terms of its research community, collaboration between existing research centres and groups and consolidation of existing groups and centres has been encouraged and achieved over the lifecycle of the preceding research strategy (2017-2019). However, there is further scope to build upon this with further possible consolidation and development of collaborative synergies between existing teams of researchers. This allows a focus on building higher critical mass within our prioritised research themes. Since the previous research strategy (2017-2019) there have been significant

developments in terms of the number of research groups and the alignment of all centres and groups within one of the three research themes. At present, the institute has six research centres and seven research groups. Outside of our established research centres and groups there are individual researchers across the four academic schools who are not formally aligned within existing research centres and groups but bring their own research expertise and outputs to the Institute's research vision in their individual fields of enquiry.

Through the National Research Prioritisation Exercise, the recent Horizon Europe programme, Innovation 2020 and a recent Institute self-assessment exercise, DkIT identified its current research strengths and has consolidated them into three defined research clusters of scale and impact. Over the life course of this research strategic plan, a review of the research governance structures of centres and groups operating across the Institute will be undertaken in order to ensure that the Institute continues to be well positioned to take advantage of national and international opportunities in the research and innovation space. A key action will be to revise and develop new governance structures around the strategic development of each of the research themes involving the research leaders, research office, academic schools and the technology transfer office.

ICT, Health and Ageing Cluster: This theme represents the highest number of associated research centres and groups spanning two academic schools, namely, Health and Science and Informatics and Creative Arts, with a critical mass of researchers comprising 39 academics, 4 Postdoctoral Fellows, 5 Research Fellows, 3 Support Staff and 40 postgraduate research students. There are three research centres, namely, Smooth Muscle, Regulated Software and Netwell/Casala, and two research groups, Interfaces & Electrochemistry (EIRG) and the Nursing, Midwifery & Early Years (NMEY) aligned to this Institute. This theme accounts for over €40M of the institute's research income form sources such as the SFI Centre programme, EU FP7, Horizon 2020, Interreg IVA, Irish Research Council and direct industry funding. Several of the teams are involved in European wide networks of scale and have established strong linkages with university researchers both nationally and internationally.

Climate and Natural Resources Cluster: This cluster spans two academic schools, Health and Science and Engineering and is composed of two research centres, Centre for Renewable Energy (CREDIT) and its associated Technology gateway, Centre for Freshwater & Environmental Studies (CFES), and one research group, Electrochemistry and Interfaces (EIRG), with the latter also conducting research underpinning the health domain. It is comprised of 20 academics, 2 Postdoctoral Fellows, 2 Senior Research Fellows, 1 Support Staff and 25 postgraduate researchers.

Creative Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Cluster: Comprised of one research centre, Creative Arts (CARC) and three research groups, Humanities, Tourism and Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Marketing and Management (ELMM), this cluster spans two academic schools, Business and Humanities and Informatics and Creative Arts. It is composed of 68 academics and 30 Postgraduate research students.

Research Theme	Academic Members	Postgraduate Researchers	Career Researchers
ICT, Health and Ageing	33	35	10
Climate and Natural Resources	20	25	5
Creative Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	68	30	0

Outside of these priority research themes and their associated centres and groups, the institute aims to establish a teaching and learning research group which will span the four academic schools and includes members from existing research centres and groups. The Teaching and Learning Research group will be strategically linked to the Institute's Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). It is a growing area of research interest for the Institute and is composed of leading academics from each of the four academic schools.

Since September 2014, registered DkIT postgraduate research students are studying for Dublin City University (DCU) awards through the DCU/DkIT Graduate School (https://www.dkit.ie/research/postgraduate-studies/). The regulations applying to these awards are aligned to DCU regulations for postgraduate research awards. The regulations are regularly updated to ensure that they are in line with DCU regulations (typically in May/June of each academic year). Prior to 2014 postgraduate research students received awards from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and were governed by separate regulations for QQI awards (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html).

Admissions applications for postgraduate research are firstly considered by the relevant School Graduate Research Programme Board (GRPB). There is a GRPB in each of the four Schools in the Institute. Once approved by the GRPB applications for admission are considered and approved by the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (DkIT GRSB). All applications in relation to examinations are approved by the DCU GRSB. The GRPBs and GRSBs also process transfer applications, notification to submit applications and deferrals. Postgraduate research students must complete an Annual Progress Monitoring Report. Examination Boards take place as required to confirm postgraduate research awards. The Registrar's Office is responsible for making the request for a parchment to DCU and inviting the candidate to attend a conferring ceremony. An annual report is also submitted to DCU as part of the annual monitoring quality assurance processes.

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is a Designated Awarding Body (DAB) since 1st January 2020 following amendment to the Regional Technical Colleges (RTC) Acts by commencement order S.I. No. 540/2019 - Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 (Commencement) (No. 2) Order 2019 (irishstatutebook.ie). As a designated awarding body, DKIT has authority in law to make awards up to and including level 9 in the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This authority includes the power to award Masters degrees by Research (at NFQ Level 9).

For the provision of NFQ Level 10 postgraduate research programmes DkIT has maintained a collaborative partnership arrangement with Dublin City University (DCU) through the operation of the DCU-DkIT Graduate School since September 2014. The DCU-DkIT Graduate School allows for the awarding of both NFQ Level 9 and 10 DCU accredited postgraduate research awards to DkIT based students registered from the 1st September 2014 up to the October 31st 2023. Since the latter date all incoming postgraduate research students, irrespective of duration of their research programme or funding source, have been registered on the DkIT NFQ Level 9 register. The rationale for this was that the DCU-DkIT Graduate School had commenced a phased cessation of the Graduate School due to strategic decisions which were made by DCU and DkIT in this regard in terms of their strategic pathways.

At present the majority of postgraduate research students in DkIT are registered with the DkIT-DCU Graduate School and are governed by the regulations Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis (DCU Awards). Since 1st November 2024, NFQ Level 9 postgraduate research students are registered with DkIT and are governed by the regulations DkIT-Academic-Regulations-for-Postgraduate-Degrees-by-Research-DKIT-Awards.

In order to protect the Institute's ability to recruit and retain NFQ Level 10 postgraduate research students the Institute embarked on a series of strategic engagements with Maynooth University (https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/) during the reporting period (2023/2024) which involved the following:

- Formal engagements between both the Executive Boards/Leadership Teams in both Maynooth University and Dundalk Institute of Technology.
- Signing of a "Letter of Intent" with Maynooth University (https://www.dkit.ie/news/dkit-and-maynooth-university-sign-strategic-letter-of-intent.html) indicating their agreement to collaborate on a series of activities.
- Formal discussion between the Registrars Offices and Graduate Studies Offices from both Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) concerning the establishment of a Joint Regional Graduate Academy (RGA), called the Maynooth University-Dundalk Institute of Technology Regional Graduate Academy, where future NFQ Level 10 postgraduate research students from Dundalk Institute of Technology would be jointly registered. These initial engagements in the reporting period involved:

  o Identifying and agreeing the process for application and approval of the Regional Graduate Academy (RGA) by both Academic Councils.
  o Developing the relevance quality assurance governance structures through which the RGA would be governed.
  o Identifying the research domains/disciplines for the initial phase of the RGA.
  o Developing joint postgraduate research degree regulations that would apply to students registered with the RGA.

Postgraduate Research Supports

The Research and Graduate Studies Office provide high-quality support for all researchers at Dundalk Institute of Technology. The Research Support Team work collaboratively and in partnership with staff, research centres and groups, the academic schools, Technology Transfer Office (TTO), Finance, Human Resource (HR) and Library to provide research support.

The following range of supports are provided by the Research and Graduate Studies Office:

- Identifying potential sources of research funding;
- Helping in the preparation and submission of research funding proposals covering all aspects of a typical proposal (e.g., finance);
- Provide training courses and information sessions on research related topics;
- Access and publicise the impact of the Institute's research activities;
- Work in partnership with the research centres and groups to drive their research performance;
- Provide and review all research agreements;
- Act as the primary point of contact for external funders;
- Provide career development advice for career researchers;
- Develop and implement all research-related policies and procedures;
- Provide institutional research funding support schemes.

DkIT has a successful track record in relevant metrics and peer review, especially in terms of research funding secured and the number and associated citations of peer reviewed publications. The primary benchmark employed for measuring the impact of the Institute's research was the Scopus database (https://www.scopus.com). The Institute is ranked 4th in the sector in terms of total citations.

Through the Graduate Studies Office, the Institute was awarded the HR Excellence in Research Logo in October 2015 in recognition of its commitment to be an attractive, supportive and stimulating environment in which to carry out research and which understands the importance of providing its researchers with the training and means to be competitive and mobile. The award was made in light of DkIT's commitment to aligning its HR policies and practices with the European Commission's European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. DkIT was one of only four Institutes of Technology to receive such an award.

Other Policies and Procedures Relevant in this Category:

Policy	Web Address
Good Research Practice Guidelines	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Research Data Management	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Export Controls Policy and Procedures	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Managing Research Data	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Open Access Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Research Authorship and Publication	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html

Intellectual Property Policy and Procedures	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Consultancy Policy Conflict of Interest Policies and Procedures	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Research Centre and Group Designation (including Annual Report template)	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Research Ethics Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Postgraduate Research Supervision Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Postgraduate Teaching Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
Postgraduate Research Agreement (Funded and Non-Funded)	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html
DkIT PGR Forms	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2021/2022:

- Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis (DkIT Awards) (Academic Council Meeting No. 182, Motion 182.03, 20th June 2022).
- Terms of Reference for the Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) (Academic Council Meeting No. 182, Motion 182.04, 20th June 2022).
- Access to Research Infrastructure Policy (Academic Council Meeting No. 182, Motion 182.05, 20th June 2022).

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2022/2023:

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies (under the category of QA of Research Activities and Programmes):

- Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis (DCU Awards) (Academic Council Meeting No. 184, Motion 184.05, 9th December 2022). This is part of the annual monitoring activities for postgraduate research.
- The HEA Principles of Good Practice in Research within Irish Higher Education Institutions (2022) were adopted (Academic Council Meeting No. 185, Motion 185.03, 24th February 2023).
- Research Infrastructure Policy was updated (Academic Council Meeting No. 188, Motion 188.20, 20th June 2023). The update included the addition of a liability clause.
- Academic Support Policy for Postgraduate Research was approved (Executive Board, March 2023).

Change in Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies under this category in this reporting period (2023/2024): Yes.

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis (DCU Awards) (Academic Council Meeting No. 189, Motion 189.14, 23rd September 2023). This is part of the annual monitoring activities for postgraduate research.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

This section provides information on published quality assurance policies and procedures that demonstrate how the institution takes responsibility for the quality of its staff, and how it provides staff with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively. This includes recruitment, management and development of staff, as well as the institution's communication with staff.

DkIT is cognisant of the changing role of the lecturer due to the increasing diversity of the learner body and stronger focus on learning outcomes and a learner centred approach to educational provision. This informs the recruitment and training of staff.

Recruitment of staff is managed through the Institute's Human Resources Department (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/professional-services/human-resources/) and is in line with relevant legislation, including the Institute of Technology Acts 1992 to 2006 and as amended, the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 (OWTA 1997), The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (SHWWA 2005), Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2018, Terms of Employment (Information) Acts, 1994-2014. Scoring of candidates for lecturing positions gives due consideration to prior teaching qualifications and experience. All staff appointments are subject to a formal probationary period

The Human Resources Office and the Registrar's Office manage staff training and development activities (Staff Training and Development Policy (https://www.dkit.ie/human-resource/policies-procedures) on a variety of pedagogical and academic administrative topics of relevance to higher education (e.g., academic integrity and data protection). New staff members undergo an extensive induction process, at both Institute and at Department level. In the case of academic staff, this includes introductory training in learning, teaching and assessment and in academic quality assurance and enhancement.

The Institute, through its Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) (https://www.dkit.ie/centre-learning-teaching), offers a Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching (via blended learning). Sub-awards (Postgraduate Diploma / Certificate) are also available, as are individual modules. CELT also provides regular short programmes and master classes in learning, teaching and assessment topics, including programme development, delivery, assessment and technology-enhanced learning. The use of innovation in learning, teaching and assessment is encouraged and facilitated. Staff members have opportunities to participate in learning and teaching enhancement projects and other scholarly activities.

Academic staff members have opportunities for professional development and scholarly activities in their discipline areas, mainly through linkages within one of the Institute's Research Centres. A number of schemes to facilitate staff engagement with research and supervision of research

postgraduate students are administered by the Research and Graduate Studies Office, which also provides training programmes for staff involved in postgraduate student supervision. Academic staff members also have opportunities to participate in short term industry projects or consultancy through the Regional Development Centre (RDC) (https://www.dkit.ie/innovation-and-business/rdc-supports.html and https://www.dkit.ie/innovation-and-business.html).

All staff members studying for higher awards are eligible for fees subsidies and at any time a significant number of academic staff members are working towards doctoral awards. In the reporting period 2023/2024, 39.38% of all staff at DkIT possess a doctoral degree. 48.62% of all staff possess a doctoral degree or Professional Qualification.

Other Policies and Procedures Relevant in this Category:

Policy	Web Address
Addiction Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Annual Leave Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Carer's Leave Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Career Break Policy-Academic Staff, Non-academic Staff	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Code of Conduct	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Dignity at Work Bullying and Harassment Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Domestic Violence Leave Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Job Sharing Policy - Academic Staff, Non-academic Staff	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Recruitment and Selection Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Force Majeure Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Flexitime Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Maternity Leave Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Parental Leave Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Parents Leave Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Paternity Leave Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Marriage and Civil Partnership Leave	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html

Progression from Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer Grade	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Resolution of Grievance Disputes Procedure	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Staff Training and Development Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Double Employment External Work Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Adoptive Leave Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Appointments at Assistant Lecturer Level Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Garda Vetting Policy - Staff, Students	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/professional-services/human-resources/garda-and-police-vetting/ https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Sickness Absence Management Policy	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Disciplinary Procedure	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-policies.html
Child Protection Policies and Procedures (Managed by the DkIT Child Protection Policy Committee)	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/child-protection.html

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2021/2022: No.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2022/2023: No.

Change in Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies under this category in this reporting period (2023/2024): Yes.

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- Recruitment and Selection Policy was approved by Governing Body on 23rd July 2024.
- Garda Vetting Policy for Staff was approved by Executive Board on the 22nd May 2024.

6.0 Information and Data Management

This section provides information on information systems and processes and the way data and information is used to inform practice and decision making. Information is also provided on records maintenance and retention, as well as data protection and freedom of information.

The Institute is a client of HEAnet Network Operations and uses the Banner Student Management System (academic records), CORE (Human Resources), Agresso (Finance) and Koha (library) as its core information management tools. Records of student academic history are stored on Banner and used for the production of results transcripts, parchments and European Diploma Supplements.

This information is retained indefinitely and allows DkIT to verify graduate results and awards retrospectively.

Anonymised data relating to students and graduates is analysed with a view to informing decision making. For example, data on student applications, registration, progression and drop out, conferring of awards and graduate destinations is circulated internally and analysed annually and as part of five-yearly Programmatic Reviews.

EvaSys survey software (https://evasys.co.uk/) is used for quality assurance and enhancement monitoring activities to obtain formal student feedback about their programme of study bi-annually. The Institute also participates annually in the HEA StudentSurvey.ie (formerly the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)). The data collected in the surveys, and subsequent analysis, enables the Institute to monitor and enhance the student experience along both academic and non-academic dimensions.

Statistics on use of learning support and other student services are collated and used to inform decision making in relation to the management and resourcing of these units.

The curriculum management tool Akari Curriculum (https://courses.dkit.ie/curriculum/) is used to aid the design of programmes and modules. Proposed programme schedules, learning outcomes and module descriptors from the curriculum management tool are presented to programme validation panels and, following the approval process, this information is published (http://courses.dkit.ie/). Changes to modules and programmes as a result of ongoing or five-yearly reviews are updated in Akari Curriculum and re-published.

The research management system Smart Simple (https://dkit.smartsimple.ie/s_Login.jsp) is used to track research proposals and the progress of postgraduate students.

All personal data is managed with due regard to legislative data protection requirements. The Institute has a designated Data Protection and Freedom of Information Officer to guide on such matters. Information on Data Protection can be found at: https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/data-protection-policies-and-procedures.html. Information on Records and Retention can be found at https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/legal/data-protection/records-and-retention.html.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2021/2022: No.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2022/2023: No.

Change in Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies under this category in this reporting period (2023/2024): No.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

This section provides information on information provided to the general public (local, national and international levels). The Institute's approach to communicating with the public is also provided.

The DkIT Marketing and Communications office in conjunction with the appropriate Head of School/Department /Functional Area has overall responsibility for how public information is presented to external audiences via published promotional materials and the DkIT website. The Marketing and Communications office works with internal functional areas/Schools to ensure that information is correctly presented via the website to prospective and current students.

A variety of internal methods of communications are also used by individual functional areas and Schools to disseminate information to these audiences including email, Moodle VLE, noticeboards etc.

DkIT provides information to current and prospective students, staff, graduates, other stakeholders and the public through its website (http://www.dkit.ie). This information includes the following:

- Programmes of study (https://www.dkit.ie/courses/) including detailed programme and module descriptors (http://courses.dkit.ie/);

- Application processes and entry requirements (https://www.dkit.ie/admissions-and-fees/how-to-apply.html);

- Policies and procedures (grouped by functional area);

- Student support services (https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/student-services/);

- Academic calendar (https://www.dkit.ie/study/current-students/academic-calendar.html);

- Academic timetables (https://timetables.dkit.ie/);

- Examination timetables (https://www.dkit.ie/examinations-office/examination-timetables);

- Regional Development Centre Supports (https://www.dkit.ie/innovation-and-business/rdc-supports.html) and Innovation and Business Support (https://www.dkit.ie/innovation-and-business.html);

- Student Life (https://www.dkit.ie/dkit-life/).

Reports from quality assurance events such as programme validations, Institutional and Programmatic reviews and annual reports to QQI (AQRs) are also available on the website (https://www.dkit.ie/registrars-office/quality-assurance-enhancement). Registers of Collaborative Partnerships and Professional, Statuary and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) are also made available publicly.

Registered students receive information about their programme within their Academic Department, including:

- Department Handbook;

- Continuous Assessment Schedule;

- Assessment Briefs.

DkIT is open to the public for various 'Open Day' events, which facilitate the provision of information on academic programmes and application processes to Secondary Schools, Further Education and Training (FET) Providers and the general public. These events include opportunities for School representatives (e.g., Guidance Counsellors) to provide feedback. The DkIT Schools Liaison Office also participates in Higher Education expos and other national and regional events. Visits to individual schools are carried out as part of the Institute's ongoing promotional activities. Programme information is also published in hard copy prospectus format. These documents are available at promotional events, school visits and at DkIT reception.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2021/2022: No.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2022/2023: No.

Change in Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies under this category in this reporting period (2023/2024): No.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

This section provides information on monitoring and periodic review quality assurance and enhancement activities.

Monitoring

Academic programmes are managed and monitored on an ongoing basis by Programme Boards. These Boards consist of all the academic staff members who are involved in the delivery of a programme and student representatives from each stage. They are normally chaired by the Head of Department or Programme Director and meet at least three times during the academic year to discuss all aspects of programme delivery. They operate in accordance with the DkIT Monitoring of Programmes Policy (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html) and report annually to Academic Council. Follow up takes place at both Department level and centrally through an action plan agreed by Academic Council.

External Examiners act as independent and impartial advisors providing the Institute with informed comment on the standards set and learner achievement in relation to those standards. External examining is therefore an integral and important part of institutional quality assurance and enhancement. DkIT's External Examiner Duties and Procedures (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html) provides information on the following (cross reference in Section 2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment):

- Nomination (including criteria);
- Approval;
- Appointment;

- Number of External Examiners;

- Role of External Examiner;

- Boards of Examiners;

- Reporting Arrangements.

Minor changes to validated programmes, as decided by Programme Boards, can be approved by the Academic Council Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC), in accordance with the Design and Approval of Programmes Policy (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html). See AQR Part B for activities during the reporting period.

The Research and Graduate Studies Office conducts quality assurance and enhancement monitoring activities annually. DkIT submits a postgraduate research annual report to DCU's Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) as part of the Collaborative Partnership Agreement which is an integral part of the DkIT quality assurance and enhancement framework relating to internal monitoring (see Figure 2). Annual Reporting for the collaborative partnership arrangement is through the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) and DCU Academic Council. DkIT completes the Annual Report template which is submitted for consideration annually at the October meeting of DCU GRSB. The Annual Report is also noted by the DkIT GRSB and the DkIT Academic Council. The Annual Report contains information on the following relating to postgraduate research activities at DkIT:

Annual Report Section	Description
Recruitment	Recruitment activities. Applications received and admissions approved.
Students and Projects	Information in respect of students registered on research programmes. Project information, including ethics applications. Supervision arrangements established.
Progression, transfers and deferral / withdrawals	Annual progression recommendations. Applications to transfer to the PhD register. Deferrals and withdrawals. The reports are created in an online management system (SmartSimple - https://dkit.smartsimple.ie).
Examinations and Awards	• External Examiners approved. • Examinations held, and Examination Board recommendations. • Awards approved and conferred.
Appeals and Grievances	• Cases of conflict / grievance raised. • Appeals processes invoked
Training	• Orientation and induction activities.

	• Uptake of graduate training. • Supervisor training activities.
Finance	• Student scholarships and grants awarded. • Tuition fees received.
Quality Assurance and Governance	• Quality Assurance review and recommendations. • Governance activities and representation.
Developments	• Changes to and/or developments in agreed standards and processes. • Development / accreditation of new modules. • Other new developments and activities.

The Annual Report is informed by student feedback (Postgraduate Research Student Feedback and the PGR StudentSurvey.ie (https://studentsurvey.ie/). The PGR StudentSurvey.ie survey was piloted in 2018 and fully implemented across 22 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 2019. The feedback survey requests feedback on the following dimensions of the postgraduate research student experience: Research Infrastructure, Funding, Supervision, Research Culture, Progress, Development Opportunities, Research Skills, Personal Outlook, Transferable Skills, Responsibilities, Motivations, Career and Overall Experience.

DkIT employs the *SmartSimple* Management System (https://dkit.smartsimple.ie) to monitor the annual progression of each postgraduate research student. In addition, this system is employed to quality assure all external research and innovation proposals being submitted to external funding bodies. In summary:

• Oversight and formal sign off by the postgraduate research student, supervisory team and the academic school graduate research programme board concerning the annual progress monitoring of the student is managed through the on line SmartSimple system.

• Oversight and formal institutional sign off, by the Head of Research and Graduate Studies, of all external research and innovation funding applications prior to submission. This ensures that all submitted proposals are aligned with best practice and allows effective management of institutional resources.

The Research and Graduate Studies Office implements the quality assurance policy and procedures related to Research Centre designations. Designated Research Centres and Research Groups are required to submit an annual report to the Research and Graduate Studies Office.

Professional Support Units complete quality assurance and enhancement monitoring of their services annually and produce annual report(s). See AQR Part B for monitoring activities during the reporting period (2023/2024).

Periodic Review

All academic programmes are subject to a five-yearly review which is managed by the Registrar's Office.

The Programmatic Review is a School-based activity involving two stages:

- School self-study, involving a review and evaluation of all activities within the School (strategy, learning, teaching, assessment, resources, etc.) with reference to an extensive consultation exercise. This includes an external scan of the changing needs of society and industry, relevant internal statistics (e.g. student intake, progression, etc.) and feedback from both internal and external stakeholders (including students and graduates).

- Review and re-validation of all academic programmes.

A number of programmes of study within DkIT are accredited by external Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). The programmes are required to undergo regular reviews to retain accreditation status (see cross reference to Section 2.1 Programme Development and Approval).

Policies and criteria for the review of programmes for School programmatic reviews are available at https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html) (latest policy and criteria relates to the most recent Programmatic Review cycle in 2018/2019).

DkIT conducts periodic postgraduate research quality reviews in accordance with the DCU-DkIT Collaborative Partnership Agreement which is an integral part of the DkIT quality assurance and enhancement framework relating to internal reviews (see Figure 2). The quality review focusses on the effectiveness of the partnership, and is an assurance of the quality of postgraduate research (PGR) provision for DCU accredited research programmes. The quality review is carried out by Dublin City University (DCU) as an internal cyclical review in line with existing procedures established for DCU quality reviews and aligned to the QQI guidelines and policy where appropriate. Also, designated Research Centres within DkIT undergo an external review every three years to retain their designation status. These reviews are co-ordinated by Research and Graduate Studies Office.

Finally, Professional Support Units quality reviews take place every five years as indicated in the DkIT quality assurance and enhancement framework relating to internal reviews (see Figure 2).

Cyclical External Quality Assurance

As a Designated Awarding Body (DAB), DkIT is required to undergo a Cyclical Institutional Review (CINNTE Review, https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Institutional-Reviews07.aspx). The review evaluates the effectiveness of institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and enhancing the quality of the education, training, research and related services provided by a Higher Education Institution (HEI). The review process is in keeping with Parts 2 and 3 of the ESG (2015) and consists of the following elements:

- The publication of terms of reference by QQI;

- The preparation of an Institution Self-Evaluation Report (ISER);

- An external assessment and site visit by a team of reviewers appointed by QQI;

- The publication of a panel review report including findings and recommendations;

- A follow-up procedure to review the actions taken.

DkIT completed an Institutional Review in the academic year 2018/2019 (https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/quality-assurance-education-training/reviews), the previous review having been carried out in 2008/2009. See AQR Part B for periodic review activities during the reporting period (if applicable).

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2021/2022: No.

Change in policies and procedures under this category in 2022/2023: No.

Change in Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies under this category in this reporting period (2023/2024): Yes.

The following amendments were made to Institute policies, procedures, frameworks or strategies:

- A Programmatic Review Handbook 2024-2026 was approved in preparation for the Programmatic Reviews in 2024/2025 (School of Engineering, School of Health and Science) and 2025/2025 (School of Business and Humanities, School of Informatics and Creative Arts) (Academic Council Meeting No. 189S, Motion 189S.01, 16/10/2023). N-TUTORR Curriculum Framework / Guiding Principles were noted in the context of the Programmatic Review (Academic Council Meeting No. 191, 23/02/2024).

    Under DkIT's Quality Assurance Framework, Programmatic Review is conducted in a two-part process: Part 1: School Self-Assessment and Part 2: Review of Programmes. Part 1 (School Self-Assessment) is concerned with strategic high-level issues and results in the production of a Self-Assessment Report (SAR). The Self-Assessment Report (SAR) is reviewed and evaluated by a panel of external peers, the Peer Review Group (PRG). The Peer Review Group (PRG) is appointed by the Registrar's Office with nominations being accepted from the School (with the exception of the Chair). Part 2 (Review of Programmes) is concerned with a detailed programme-by-programme review and re-validation of programmes for a further five years and results in the production of programme documentation for the revised programmes. Timelines for the Review were updated and approved (Academic Council Meeting No. 193, Motion 193.06, 24/05/2024).

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	10
Awarding bodies	1
QA bodies	1

1. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU (Regulating Health and Social Care Professionals)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care
Date of accreditation or last review	02/03/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2027

2. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Association of Chartered and Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance
Date of accreditation or last review	22/05/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2027

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Institute of Analytics (https://ioaglobal.org/)
Programme titles and links to publications	Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Data Analytics for Business
Date of accreditation or last review	18/03/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2027

4. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI (Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in General Nursing, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Intellectual Disability Nursing, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing, Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Midwifery, Higher Diploma in Midwifery, Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Management of Aggression and Violence.
Date of accreditation or last review	20/06/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2026

5. Type of arrangement	PRSB

Name of body:	Department of Education
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Studies, Bachelor of Arts in Applied Early Childhood Studies.
Date of accreditation or last review	23/05/2022
Date of next review	01/01/1900

6. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	IOSH (Institution of Occupational Safety and Health) (https://iosh.com/)
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Health and Safety (Manufacturing industry)
Date of accreditation or last review	17/05/2022
Date of next review	17/05/2027

7. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering Bachelor of Engineering Mechanical Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical and Electronic Systems Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Civil Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2024

8. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CIOB (The Chartered Institute of Building)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Management Bachelor of Science in Construction Management
Date of accreditation or last review	16/02/2023
Date of next review	01/01/2028

9. Type of arrangement	QA body
Name of body:	North/South Education and Training Standards (NSETS)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Youthwork
Date of accreditation or last review	01/06/2021
Date of next review	01/06/2026

10. Type of arrangement	PRSB

Name of body:	Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Building Surveying Bachelor of Science in Building Surveying Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Building Surveying Master of Science in Building Surveying
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/1900

11. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science in Architectural Technology Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Architectural Technology
Date of accreditation or last review	02/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2029

12. Type of arrangement	Awarding body
Name of body:	Dublin City University (DCU)
Programme titles and links to publications	Collaborative Partnership agreement with Dublin City University (DCU) for postgraduate research provision at NFQ Level 9 and 10.
Date of accreditation or last review	25/02/2022
Date of next review	

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	0
Collaborative programmes	3
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

1. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	DkIT, Teagasc at Ballyhaise College, Co. Cavan
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture and Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agri-Food (DkIT Award)
Date of last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	

2. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	DkIT, Cork College of Commerce
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts in Applied Early Childhood Studies (DkIT award)
Date of last review	01/08/2016
Date of next review	

3. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	DkIT, Hebei University of Engineering (HUE), China
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in International Civil Engineering (DkIT award). The collaborative programme was still going through the various stages of approval in the reporting period (2023/2024). Programme was validated.

Date of last review	11/04/2024
Date of next review	

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	5

1. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	University of The Mayab, Mexico
Programme titles and links to publications	Not applicable.
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	20/06/2022
Date of next review	20/06/2027
Detail of the agreement	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

2. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Cavan Institute
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Youth Work Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Business with Management Bachelor of Business (Honours) in International Business with Digitalisation Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Digital Marketing and Strategic Communication Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sport and Exercise with Business Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Event Management with Marketing Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Hospitality Management with Business Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing and International Tourism Management Bachelor of Business (Honours) Part-time
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	05/02/2024
Date of next review	
Detail of the agreement	Articulation-an agreed transfer pathway between an approved educational partner/provider and DkIT, whereby specific qualifications and/or credits obtained at an approved partner institution is recognised as a means of advanced standing or entry to a specified programme of study at DkIT.

3. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Louth and Meath Education and Training Board
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Youth Work Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Business with Management Bachelor of Business(Honours) in

	International Business with Digitalisation Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Digital Marketing & Strategic Communication Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sport & Exercise with Business Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Event Management with Marketing Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Hospitality Management with Business Bachelor of Arts(Honours) in Marketing and International Tourism Management Bachelor of Business (Honours) Part-time
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	18/10/2024
Date of next review	
Detail of the agreement	Articulation-an agreed transfer pathway between an approved educational partner/provider and DkIT, whereby specific qualifications and/or credits obtained at an approved partner institution is recognised as a means of advanced standing or entry to a specified programme of study at DkIT. Date of last review indicates a new agreement during the reporting period (2023/2024). Work on the agreement was completed in the reporting period (2023/2024) but the agreement was not officially signed by both parties until the date indicated.

4. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Monaghan Institute
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Youth Work Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Business with Management Bachelor of Business (Honours) in International Business with Digitalisation Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Digital Marketing and Strategic Communication Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sport & Exercise with Business Bachelor of Arts(Honours) in Event Management with Marketing Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Hospitality Management with Business Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing & International Tourism Management Bachelor of Business (Honours) Part-time
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	05/02/2024
Date of next review	
Detail of the agreement	Articulation-an agreed transfer pathway between an approved educational partner/provider and DkIT, whereby specific qualifications and/or credits obtained at an approved partner institution is recognised as a means of advanced standing or entry to a specified programme of study at DkIT.

5. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Ó Fiaich Institute of Further Education (OFI)

Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science in Bioscience Bachelor of Science Pharmaceutical Science
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	31/12/2024
Date of next review	
Detail of the agreement	Articulation-an agreed transfer pathway between an approved educational partner/provider and DkIT, whereby specific qualifications and/or credits obtained at an approved partner institution is recognised as a means of advanced standing or entry to a specified programme of study at DkIT. In this case, Laboratory Techniques (5M3807) QQI Award to Bachelor of Science in Bioscience and Bachelor of Science Pharmaceutical Science. Work on the agreement was completed in the reporting period (2023/2024) but the agreement was not officially signed by both parties until the date indicated.

6. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Cavan Institute and Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts in Audio and Music Production
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	19/08/2024
Date of next review	
Detail of the agreement	Articulation-an agreed transfer pathway between an approved educational partner/provider and DkIT, whereby specific qualifications and/or credits obtained at an approved partner institution is recognised as a means of advanced standing or entry to a specified programme of study at DkIT. In this case, Audio and Music Production (6M22095) QQI Award to Year 3 of the BA Audio and Music Production

7. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Colleges Ontario (Canada)
Programme titles and links to publications	Not applicable.
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	26/11/2023
Date of next review	26/11/2028
Detail of the agreement	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)-sectoral MOU signed by THEA.

8. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement

Name of body (/bodies):	Lovely Professional University (LPU), Punjab (India)
Programme titles and links to publications	Not applicable
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	09/04/2024
Date of next review	09/04/2029
Detail of the agreement	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

9. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Methodist College, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)
Programme titles and links to publications	Not applicable.
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	05/06/2024
Date of next review	05/06/2029
Detail of the agreement	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

10. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	ISDC Global Services Ltd (World-wide)
Programme titles and links to publications	Not applicable.
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	19/04/2024
Date of next review	19/04/2029
Detail of the agreement	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)

2015

Annual Quality Report (Dundalk IT)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2013-2014

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.6), **Part B** of the AQR focuses specifically on the effectiveness and impact of the IQA framework on the QA activities and developments across the institution during the reporting period.

Here, the institution is invited to document the quality enhancements adopted and implemented during the reporting period and describe concisely the impact of these across a selected range of activities. Part B should also be used to demonstrate how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period. These plans may be linked to strategic objectives, to QQI reengagement advices, or to Cinnte review recommendations.

Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. The institution is encouraged to reflect on what worked well and what did not, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks and feedback/judgement) and detail how they led to specific improvements of and enhancement in QA activities.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact[2] of QA activities within the totality of the institution's QA system.

Section 1 pertains to internal quality assurance implementation and developments since the previous reporting period.

Section 2 considers the institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and their impact on a range of activities including academic integrity.

Section 3 relates to IQA developments and plans for the next reporting period.

Section 4 provides an opportunity for institutions to showcase IQA in action through case studies in relevant thematic areas.

Institutions are invited to use case studies to demonstrate quality in action and to highlight areas of practice for dissemination at any point in this part of the report.

Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:
- Be between half a page and two pages in length;
- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;
- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear and concise concluding paragraph with an overview of the key outcomes/learning.

Although case studies will generally be in written form, institutions may also provide links to audio-visual/multimedia case studies. QQI does not prescribe a format for case studies.

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[2] The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education have considered impact and measures leading to development and improvement specifically in terms of teaching and learning. See: https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/NF-2020-Insights-from-Practice-About-Impact-in-Teaching-and-Learning-web-ready.pdf.This is a very useful reference, though impact in the context of this report should be considered

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

The Institute's Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) serves as a key mechanism for continuous improvement, ensuring that quality assurance (QA) activities lead to meaningful enhancements across academic and operational areas. As mentioned in AQR Part A, the QAES enabled DkIT to systematically identify areas for improvement or enhancement. These areas of improvement are then addressed through action plans, which are implemented, monitored, and refined as part of an ongoing cycle of quality enhancement. The Strategic Plan 2024-2028 (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/institute-reports-and-publications/strategic-plan.html) was in effect during the reporting period. The strategic plan is aligned to the Institute's Mission-Based Performance Compact 2024-2028 between Dundalk Institute of Technology and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) (https://hea.ie/higher-education-institutions/dundalk-institute-of-technology/performance/). The Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) (see AQR Part A) continues to support the Institute's Strategic Plan.

The implementation and monitoring of action plans remained a challenge in the reporting period, particularly in ensuring sustained engagement across multiple stakeholders and embedding a structured tracking mechanism. A recurring challenge in the implementation of quality assurance activities is capturing tangible evidence of impact. While progress on action plans is periodically reviewed with plans being updated, measuring the direct effect of quality initiatives on student experience, academic standards, and institutional performance requires longitudinal data tracking and structured impact assessment methodologies. The Institute continues to aim to further refine its QA impact measurement frameworks, ensuring that the link between QA processes, enhancement actions, and institutional development is more explicitly demonstrated.

The following section provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement during the reporting period (2023/2024) which are aligned with the Institute's strategic objectives. This includes:

- QQI Periodic Quality Dialogue;
- Changes to Policies and Procedures;
- Programme Development and Approval;
- Programme Changes;
- Professional Support Unit (Student Services) Activities and Developments;
- Professional Support Unit (Library) Activities and Developments;
- Postgraduate Research Activities and Development;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Activities and Developments;
- Professional Support Unit (International Office) Activities and Developments.

1.1.1 QQI Periodic Quality Dialogue

As part of the external quality assurance framework in Ireland, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) engages in periodic Quality Dialogue Meetings (QDMs) with Ireland's publicly-regulated higher education institutions. Dialogue meetings form part of the external quality assurance (QA) framework in Ireland and provide an opportunity for QQI to discuss with each institution internal and strategic developments in relation to quality assurance and enhancement.

DkIT had one on campus quality dialogue meeting with QQI during the reporting period 2023/2024 on the 14th November 2023. The meeting covered strategic updates from DkIT including the future provision of postgraduate research provision with Maynooth University (see AQR Part A, Section 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes), collaboration with the ETB's, cross border initiatives and apprenticeship provision (including higher education apprenticeships). An update on the International Education Mark (IEM) was provided by QQI. DkIT completed an expression of interest for the International Education Mark (IEM) on the 2nd December 2022 and submitted feedback on the whitepapers relating to same on the 20th December 2023.

QQI also provided strategic updates on the following:

- Integrated QQI Award Standards at NFQ Levels 5-9;
- Consultation on Statutory QA Guidelines for Programmes supported by Digital Learning;
- Development of Statutory QA Guidelines on Work-integrated Teaching, Learning & Assessment;
- The Rethinking Assessment Programme, including the Degree Classifications Project;
- Update on Academic Integrity;
- QQI's Engagement with the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs);
- Proposed withdrawal of QQI's Sectoral QA Guidelines for the Institutes of Technology;
- Development of procedures for the accreditation of joint programmes based on the European approach and QA of European Universities;
- Update on the Irish Quality and Qualifications Forum (IQQF);
- Update on National Framework for Doctoral Education (NFDE);
- Update on Monitoring (Evaluation of the QQI Annual Quality Reporting Model, Thematic analysis of AQRs, Development of new QQI Monitoring Framework);
- Launch of New QQI Logo and QQI Award Brand;
- Recognition Update, including RPL (European Guidelines on the validation of non-formal and informal learning 2023);
- Redevelopment of Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ) and Qualifax;
- Update on National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP);
- 20th Anniversary of National Framework of Qualifications.

The quality dialogue meeting provided a valuable collaborative forum for open discussion on both institution-specific initiatives and broader sectoral developments, underscoring DkIT's commitment

to continuous quality enhancement and strategic alignment with national quality assurance standards, and QQI's support of education and training providers in the sector. DkIT welcomes the ongoing opportunity to engage with QQI on various aspects of our provision as a provider of higher education in Ireland.

DkIT also participated in a QQI "strategic conversation with core partners" series during the reporting period (March 2023) where QQI sought provider perspectives on areas of mutual interest such as the International Education Mark (IEM), the future role of the NFQ and the qualifications system, challenges and opportunities posed by Artificial Intelligence, and building relationships with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), among other areas.

1.1.2 Changes to Policies and Procedures

Changes to policies and procedures in the reporting period 2023/2024 were described in the AQR Part A. See AQR Part B, Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule for meeting schedules and a summary of matters considered by the Institute's various governance structures (in addition to amendments to policies and procedures included in AQR Part A).

1.1.3 Programme Development and Approval

The Institute continued with its programme portfolio implementation during the reporting period (2023/2024) which was aligned with the Programmatic Portfolio Planning 2018 to 2028 (with amendments being made as appropriate). The ongoing development of the programme portfolio supports the DkIT strategic objective of "*delivering work-ready, globally-minded graduates with the necessary skills and attributes to work and live in an ever-changing world*" (DkIT Strategic Plan 2024-2028, pg. 15).

Programme validations/reviews continued to operate effectively remotely, using web conferencing software (Microsoft Teams) during the reporting period. The Registrar's Office continued to observe an increase in the availability of Panel members, both academic and industry representatives, particularly international Panel members, when web conferencing platforms continued to be utilised. The Registrar's Office will continue to monitor the effectiveness of virtual programme validation events for the various types of validations.

New Programme Validations

The following new programme validations were completed during the reporting period (2023/2024):

Validation Type	Programme Title	NFQ Level	Award Type	Award Class	ECTS	Delivery Mode
New Programme	*Master of Business in Strategic Data Analytics for Business*	9	Major	Masters Degree	90	Full-time, Part-time, Full-time Blended, Part-time Blended,

						Full-time Online, Part-time Online.
New Programme	Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Strategic Data Analytics for Business (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma	60	Full-time, Part-time, Full-time Blended, Part-time Blended, Full-time Online, Part-time Online.
New Programme	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Quantity Surveying	8	Major	Honours Bachelor Degree	240	Full-time, Modular.
New Programme	Bachelor of Science in Quantity Surveying (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)	7	Major	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	180	Full-time, Modular.
New Programme	Higher Certificate in Science in Quantity Surveying (Embedded Exit Award)	6	Major	Higher Certificate	120	Full-time, Modular.
New Programme	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in International Civil Engineering*	8	Major	Honours Bachelor Degree	240	Full-time Blended.
New Programme	Master of Science in Sustainable Food Technology and Innovation	9	Major	Masters Degree	90	Full-time blended, Part-time blended.
New Programme	Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Food Technology and Innovation (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma	60	Full-time blended, Part-time blended.
New Programme	Certificate in Operations Management and the Production of Innovative and Sustainable Food Products	9	Minor	Certificate	20	Full-time blended, Part-time blended.
New Programme	Certificate in Compliance and Continuous Improvement in Sustainable Food Manufacturing	9	Minor	Certificate	20	Full-time blended, Part-time blended.
New Programme	Master of Science in Community Mental Health Nursing	9	Major	Masters Degree	90	Part-time blended.
New Programme	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Community Mental Health Nursing (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma	60	Part-time blended.
New Programme	Certificate in Science in Nursing in Community Mental Health Nursing (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)	9	Minor	Certificate	30	Part-time blended.
New Programme	Certificate in Trauma Informed Care	9	Minor	Certificate	10	Part-time blended.

New Programme	Certificate in the Fundamentals of Understanding and Responding to Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence	8	Special-Purpose	Certificate	20	Part-time blended.
New Programme	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Applied Data Science	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma	60	Full-time, Full-time blended, Full-time online, Part-time, Part-time blended, Part-time online.
New Programme	Certificate in Data Analytics with Python (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)	9	Minor	Certificate	20	Full-time, Full-time blended, Full-time online, Part-time, Part-time blended, Part-time online.
New Programme	Postgraduate Certificate in Data Analytics and Visualisations (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)	9	Minor	Postgraduate Certificate	30	Full-time, Full-time blended, Full-time online, Part-time, Part-time blended, Part-time online.
New Programme	Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Artificial Intelligence (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)	9	Minor	Postgraduate Certificate	30	Full-time, Full-time blended, Full-time online, Part-time, Part-time blended, Part-time online.
New Programme	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Music and Performance Technologies	8	Major	Honours Bachelor Degree	240	Full-time, Part-time.
New Programme	Bachelor of Arts in Music and Performance Technologies (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)	7	Major	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	180	Full-time, Part-time.
New Programme	Higher Certificate in Arts in Music and Performance Technologies (Exit Award)	6	Major	Higher Certificate	120	Full-time, Part-time.
New Programme	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sound Design	8	Major	Honours Bachelor Degree	240	Full-time, Part-time.
New Programme	Bachelor of Arts in Sound Design (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)	7	Major	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	180	Full-time, Part-time.
New Programme	Higher Certificate in Arts in Sound Design (Exit Award)	6	Major	Higher Certificate	120	Full-time, Part-time.
New Programme	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Audio Development	8	Major	Honours Bachelor Degree	240	Full-time, Part-time.
New Programme	Bachelor of Arts in Audio Development (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)	7	Major	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	180	Full-time, Part-time.

New Programme	*Higher Certificate in Arts in Audio Development (Exit Award)*	6	Major	Higher Certificate	120	Full-time, Part-time.
New Programme	*Master of Science in Digital Health Innovation*	9	Major	Masters Degree	90	Full-time, full-time blended.
New Programme	*Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Digital Health Innovation (Embedded Entry and Exit Award)*	9	Major	Postgraduate Diploma	60	Full-time, full-time blended.

* Programme was validated. The collaborative programme (DkIT and Hebei University of Engineering, China) was still going through the various stages of approval in the reporting period (2023/2024).

Differential Validation(s)

A differential validation refers to the validation of a programme that is based on, or a modification or extension of, an existing DkIT validated programme. The validation of the original programme can inform the validation of the derived programme and this can simplify the validation process for the derived programme.

The Registrar's Office observed a lower number of differential validations during the reporting period as Schools were embarking on Programmatic Reviews in 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 and all programme amendments were being incorporated into the review activities. The following differential validations were completed during the reporting period 2023/2024:

Validation Type	Programme Title	NFQ Level	Award Type	Award Class	ECTS	Delivery Mode
Differential	*Master of Science in Computing in Medical Device Software Engineering*	8	Major	Masters Degree	90	Full-time online, Part-time online.

Module Validation(s)

Where validation of an individual module is required, the module descriptor is sent to an External Expert for review (in accordance with DkIT's Design and Approval of Programmes Policy). There were no module validations in the reporting period 2023/2024.

Programme Accreditations
(**Note:** See Section 9.0: Details of Arrangements with Third Parties)

Programme(s)	Body	Description
• *BSc in Architectural Technology* • *BSc (Hons) in Architectural Technology*	Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT) Accreditation in Principle	• Accreditation confirmed to DkIT on the 2nd January 2024.

• *Bachelor of Science in Building Surveying* • *Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Building Surveying* • *Postgraduate Diploma in Building Surveying* • *Master of Science in Building Surveying*	Society of Chartered Surveyors of Ireland (SCSI)	• The School of Engineering agreed the synchronisation of programme re-accreditation with SCSI with DkIT's Programmatic Review which will take place in semester 2 of the academic year 2024/2025 (the next reporting period). This is a tangible outcome of QQI's "*Finding Common Ground*" initiative with PSRBs and HEIs.

Off-Campus Venues for Programme Delivery

There were no off-campus venues approved for programme delivery in the reporting period 2023-2024.

Programme validation is a key mechanism for continuous quality improvement within the Institute's overall Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Framework. The Institute's programme validation policy and procedures ensure that all new and revalidated programmes undergo rigorous evaluation against established programme validation criteria. This structured assessment enables the identification of areas for enhancement, ensuring that programmes remain aligned with evolving academic and professional standards, institutional priorities, and student needs.

Each programme validation process results in a formal report that documents conditions and recommendations for improvement. Conditions must be addressed before a programme can be approved for delivery. Recommendations, while not mandatory, provide opportunities for programme teams to refine and enhance curricula, assessment strategies, learning resources, and student support mechanisms. These recommendations lead to iterative improvements in programme design, delivery, and pedagogical approaches.

The categorisation of conditions and recommendations against programme validation criteria provides a structured means of tracking quality improvements at both programme and institutional levels. This categorisation enables the Institute to identify common themes across programme validations, informing broader strategic enhancements and innovation in curriculum development, and academic staff development.

Furthermore, the programme validation process contributes to ongoing quality enhancement by:

• Encouraging programme teams to engage in reflective practice and constructive peer review.

• Ensuring alignment with institutional and national policies on programme design.

- Facilitating external input from subject matter experts, industry representatives, and professional bodies to ensure programme relevance.

- Strengthening student-centred learning approaches by embedding feedback from student representatives.

Programme Validation Panel Reports with School responses for each validation event completed during the reporting period can be found at: https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/professional-services/registrars-office/quality-office/

1.1.4 Professional Support Unit (Student Services) Activities and Developments

This section provides a summary of the activities and developments in the professional support unit (Student Services) for the reporting period 2023-2024. An update on the planned actions in the Area for the reporting period can be found in section "1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR". Planned actions for the upcoming reporting period (2024-2025) can be found in section "3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period".

Access Service

The service continued to provide supports aimed at promoting equal opportunity and participation for all students in the reporting period 2023/2024:

- **HEA, Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH):** The Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) (https://hea.ie/policy/access-policy/path/) is a dedicated fund, broken into five strands, committed to increasing participation by under-represented groups in higher education. The programme supports the delivery of the National Action Plan Objectives. The following is an update on projects which have been developed over the reporting period in DkIT, under strands 2-5, to support the priorities of the National Access Plan (https://hea.ie/policy/access-policy/national-access-plan-2022-2028/).

- **PATH 2 – 1916 Bursary:** In 2023/2024 the application process moved to a centralised national process and the Access Service promoted the scheme and provided information to 1st year students pre and post entry. This scheme will be administered by SUSI, the national awarding authority for Further and Higher Education Grants, for the next academic year.

- **PATH 3 – Higher Education Access Fund:** DkIT has a particular focus on working to support the recommendations made in the Drogheda Report Implementation Plan which is a development from the Geiran Report (https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c9386-scoping-report-into-community-safety-and-wellbeing-in-drogheda/). The Access Service worked on building relationships with community groups and organisations (particularly Youthreach) that deliver diversion activities and after-school supports to young people who are at risk of dropping out of

formal education as well as working with those who have already dropped out of school but who are being encouraged to return to formal education or related. We supported 'New Choices' in Drogheda and 'NYPD Youth Diversion Project' in Navan working with young people at risk of early-school leaving and involvement in criminality.

- **REACH (Raising Educational Aspirations for Communities in Higher Education):** Further discussion between DkIT staff and the community organisations working in the area of diversion highlighted the need for further networking and training opportunities given the scale of the challenges faced in working with young people most at risk. These discussions culminated in the REACH (Raising Educational Aspirations for Communities in Higher Education) seminar on 6th February 2024 – funded by *PATH 3 College Connect*. There were over a hundred attendees at this event (including our partners in Drogheda and Navan). The focus of the event was on how to empower community organisations to increase access rates from young people in their community. A particular focus was on how to conduct this work in an environment in which child trafficking is rife (specifically 'recruitment' of young people into the illegal drugs trade).

    DkIT is committed to being responsive to the needs identified rather than being prescriptive in term of what is required and to providing further opportunities to these community groups to meet, to develop strategies and to collaborate.

- **PATH 4 Phase 1; Universal Design Fund – Supporting inclusive universally designed higher education environments for all:** The Disability Officer led out on two projects under this PATH Strand to provide Campus Accessibility Improvements that will demonstrate best practice in Universal Design (UD) and support autism-friendly campuses. The third project under this strand, to provide Technology-based solutions that support inclusive practices in teaching and learning, was led by the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CELT). All of these projects will contribute to enhancing an inclusive environment and to the digital accessibility aspect of inclusive practices:

- **Enhancing accessibility on campus:** In July 2022 DkIT commissioned an accessibility audit, conducted by a consultant architect with expertise in Universal Design. The output of the audit will aid in the formulation of an action plan to support improved accessibility. Funding from this project has been used to support the implementation of priority actions from the plan.

- **Towards an Autism-friendly campus at DkIT:** AsIAm (https://asiam.ie/) conducted a campus sensory audit in September 2022. The outcome of this audit, together with evidence and best practice, has been used to develop an action plan. Funding has been used to support the development and commence implementation of this action plan.

- **Enhancing Digital Accessibility at DkIT:** This project supported the implementation of an accessibility toolkit for the VLE. This toolkit was used to conduct an accessibility audit of the VLE and to develop an action plan. The project focused on building capacity among staff and students through awareness raising, training, guidance, and support.

- **PATH 4 Phase 2**: To improve opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to engage in higher education. The Careers and Employability Centre, Disability Service and Sports and Societies are part of the steering committee alongside other student services colleagues and the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Early Years, that secured funding following a competitive call for proposals to enhance the existing DkIT Certificate in Skills for Independent Living programme.

  This project will facilitate the Career Preparation and Work Placement optional modules for the 2024 student intake. This will provide employability skills and workplace opportunities for students thus enhancing their potential to enter the workforce. A dedicated Placement Officer managed through the Careers and Employability Centre will lead out on the employability element of this programme and work with the Centre on supporting placement students registered with the Disability Office in planning, securing and completing their work placement modules.

  The recruitment of a Support and Integration Officer shall further enhance the integration of the students into the DkIT college community and shall provide them with the additional support required to maximise their student experience in DkIT. The Support and Integration Office will develop and implement programs aimed at fostering social integration and inclusion for students registered on the Independent Living programme and those registered with the Disability Service. This enhanced programme shall be evaluated throughout its lifecycle to optimise the delivery and student experience for future student cohorts.

- **Path 5 – Funding to support Traveller and Roma Students in Higher Education:** The Access Office focused in particular on a cohort of Navan-based second level students from the Traveller community. These students availed of structured visits to the DkIT campus and related field trips. A dedicated Traveller and Roma outreach worker has been recruited for the next academic year (2024/2025).

Careers and Employability Service

The Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) works to ensure that graduates of DkIT are self-aware, self-resourceful and work ready. The Centre provides support and informs the employability agenda of DkIT through their work in industry partnerships, research, resource development and participating in local and national employability networks.

The following are the service highlights and enhancements during the report period 2023/2024:

- 2023/2024 was an active year for the Careers and Employability Centre, with the service team continuing to deliver a wide range of student-centred and employability focused services and initiatives. The Annual Careers Fair took place in October 2023 with 70+ companies attending on campus. The lead sponsor for the event was Dole Ireland, and a wide spectrum of local, regional and national companies were in attendance including Combilift, Intact Software,

Controlsoft, UHY Farrelly Dawe White, FitzScientific Prometric, Kaseya, ABP Foods and Grant Thornton. In addition, community and voluntary organisations such as Louth Sports Partnership and Peter McVerry Trust engaged with students.

- **School Specific Careers Events:** In total the Centre had 7 on-campus themed career events in the reporting period 2023/2024 (see below). Whilst these events were led by the Careers and Employability Centre, a key contributor to their success was that each event was developed in partnership with the academic schools and departments. Two of these events were provided with financial support from the N-TUTORR funding (https://www.transforminglearning.ie/), which increased participation and engagement from Schools.

  - DkIT Careers Fair (10th October 2023);
  - Nursing and Midwifery Careers Event (22nd November 2023);
  - Careers and Teaching Event (December 2023);
  - Creative Careers Event (23rd February 2024 – sponsored by N-TUTORR);
  - Business and Humanities Careers Event (27th February 2024 – sponsored by N-TUTORR);
  - Engineering Futures Careers Event (20th March 2024);
  - Tech Careers Event (1st May 2024).

  The Centre also supported a range of employer talks and school led Career and Alumni insights such as the Veterinary Nursing Career Insights Panel, Career Paths in Science, Agriculture Careers Morning, Teacher Training in the UK, Unlock Your Potential Careers in Sport Seminar, Engineering Lunch n' Learns and Tech Masterclass Series.

  The significantly increased number of themed employability fairs, events, workshops was in direct response to the calls from previous student surveys and employers surveys which called for specific events tailored to their areas of study.

- **Student Work Placement 2023/2024:** DkIT's Careers and Employability Centre continued to demonstrate its commitment to supporting student success by adapting to increased demand and providing resources for students navigating the transition back to in-person learning. 745 students across 31 undergraduate programmes, 7 postgraduate programmes (including Springboard courses) prepared for work placement (see DkIT Placement Numbers and Trends in the table below).

  The School of Health and Science supplied the largest number of student placements, with 34.5% (247 students) of total student placements at DkIT. With Programmatic Review there is a strong possibility that additional programmes from the School of Health and Science will have placement modules added. Placement preparation for the first cohort of students due out on Placement on the Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Health commenced in the reporting period.

The School of Business and Humanities supplied the second largest number of student placements with 30% (215 students) of total student placements at DkIT.

The School of Engineering saw 135 students prepared for placement, making up 18.7% of the total DkIT placement numbers. There will be a new intake of students to the BSc Hons in Quantity Surveying who will have placement in Jan 2027. The Placement Office welcomes students from the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Quantity Surveying who will require placement in January 2027 and will cater to the needs of the Built Environment companies currently engaged with the DKIT Placement Office.

The School of Informatics and Creative Arts saw 106 student placements representing 16.5% of total DkIT student placements. Placements in the School of Informatics and Creative Arts will continue to increase in 2024 and 2025 years with two new placement programmes coming on stream, the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mathematics and Data Science and the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computer System Operations. The first set of students due for placement on these programmes are due out in Jan 2025. These new programmes reflect business needs of the workplace as it becomes more tech-driven and fast paced, and skills needed for data analysis are going to play an increasing role in business.

The Centre successfully accommodated a significant rise (almost double) in first-year veterinary nursing students seeking placements during the reporting period.

DkIT Placement Numbers and Trends

School	2023-2024	2022-2024	2021 -2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019
School of Health and Science	287	277	316	303	297	278
School of Informatics and Creative Arts	126	104	137	69	98	95
School of Business and Humanities	203	205	227	222	267	282
School of Engineering	129	124	123	122	64	87
TOTALS	745	710	803	716	726	742

- Further to the Student Services Self-Assessment Report (SAR) in 2023, an extra student engagement session "Post Placement Reflection" has been implemented with the Placement Office for students returning to the campus after placement. This is still a work in progress where first feedback sessions were held in the second semester 2024.

- **Graduate Outcomes Survey 2023 (2022 Graduate Cohort):** The Careers and Employability Centre conducted their Annual Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) between June and July 2023. The Centre employed the skills of a DkIT data analytics graduate as a consultant to build a online,

interactive dashboard to present the GOS data (see images below). This dashboard was developed using Microsoft PowerBi. This work will further enhance quality assurance, programme development, marketing and employability activities. The intention is that this interactive dashboard will be further developed in the next reporting period (2024/2025).

Below are the key data points of the GOS 2023 from the DkIT GOS Dashboard:
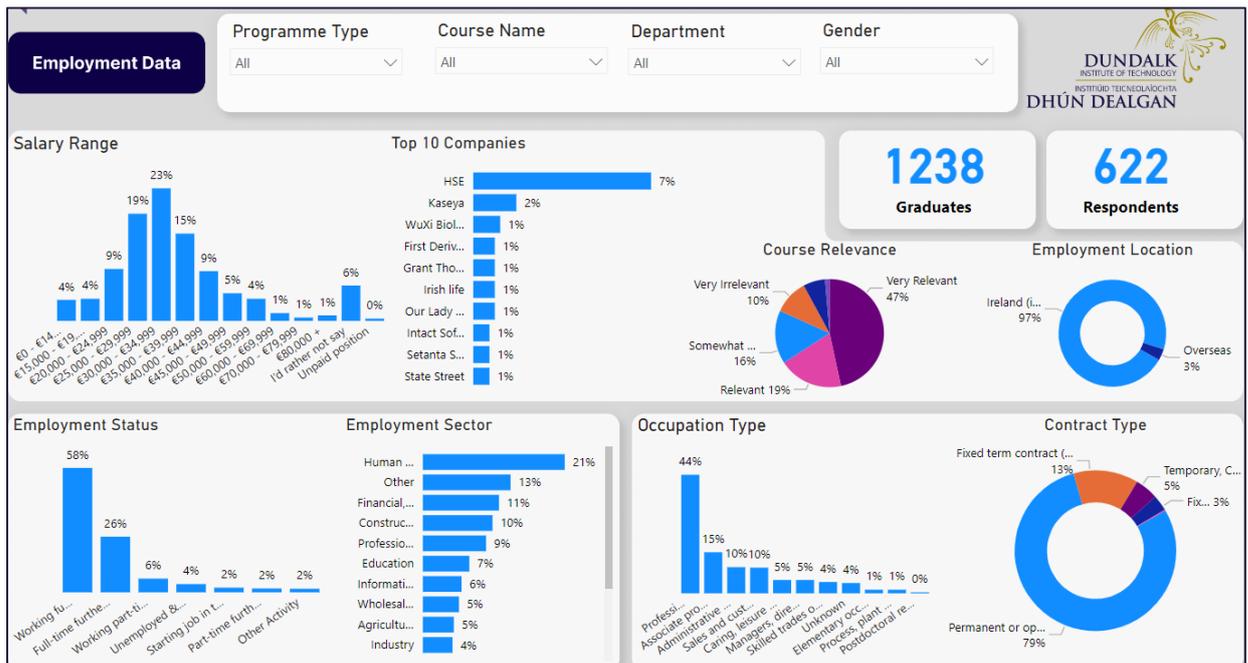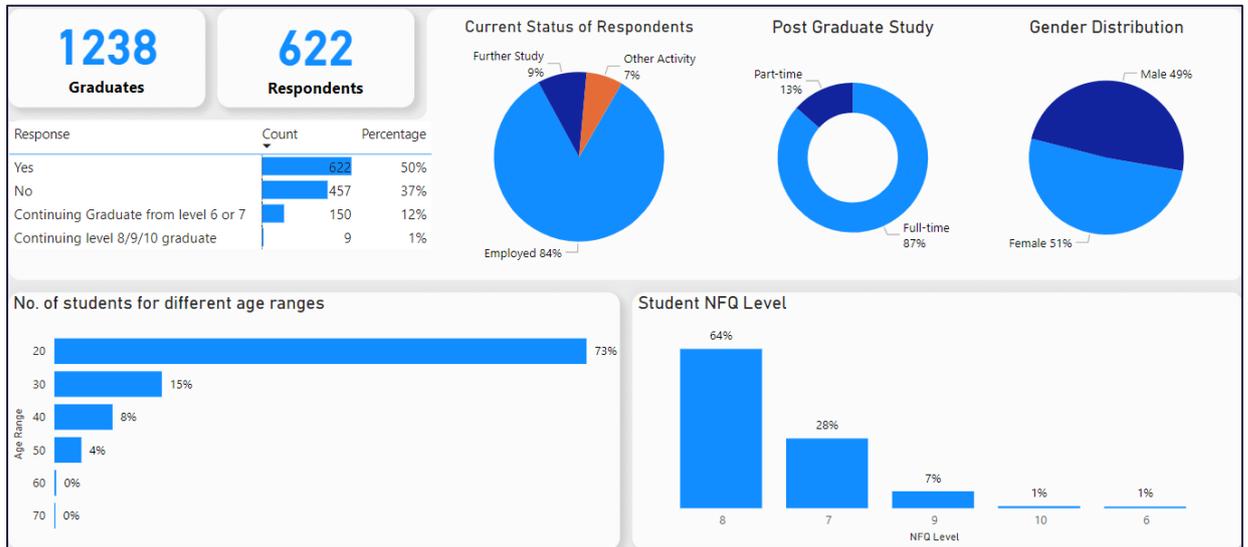
- 93% in employment and/or further study in 2023 (compared to 95% in 2022);
- Response rate of 57.1% (an increase of almost 10% from 47.8% in 2022; equal split female: 51% Female, 49% Male);
- Total of 84% in employment (compared to 89% in 2022);
- Total of 9% in full-time/part-time education (6% in 2022);
- Unemployment was 5% (4% in 2022);
- Average salary remains at approximately €30,000, with the majority of graduates (23%) earning between €30,000 - €35,000;

- 79% of the contracts are permanent;

- Top employment sectors were the Human Health and Social Work (21%), Other (13%), Financial Services (11%) and Construction (10%);

- Majority of graduates are employed within Ireland (97%), and a large majority within the region, 29% Louth, 26% Dublin, 5% Monaghan, 4% Meath;

- 59% would be "very likely" or "likely" to undertake the same course again (compared to 64% in 2022).

The continued high percentage of full-time employment (84%) in the 2023 graduate cohort suggests that the DkIT graduate is successfully navigating the graduate labour market. The Health, Social Care and Construction sectors remain the largest recruiters of DkIT graduates. Securing employment within the region remains a key feature of the DkIT graduate profile and continues to show that DkIT is committed to regional employer engagement and partnership resulting in direct graduate employment.

- **Careers and Placement Appointments, Class Sessions and Resources:** One-to one appointments are in consistently high demand, with a total of 498 career appointments, and 421 placement appointments facilitated in the reporting period (2023/2024). This was an increase of 22% on career appointments in 2022/2023. Careers and Placement one-to-one appointments continue to be in high demand across all stages of programmes. However, awareness needs to be maintained so all students avail of career guidance and coaching as appropriate. The delivery model used to support students was enhanced during the reporting period. The model was shifted to respond to academic and student requests rather than providing a predetermined series of workshops.

  As with previous years the Careers Service had ongoing challenges in engaging students on the DkIT Careers Connect platform and the Careers Hub Moodle resources. The Service made efforts to increase awareness via social media posts, class presentations, and incorporating slides in Placement Preparation sessions. However, student engagement is still falling short of target levels. Awareness raising will continue with academics and class representatives via the Student Union in the academic year 2024/2025.

- **Student Support Hub on the Moodle VLE:** The Student Support Hub on the Moodle VLE is the central repository for all careers information, resources and templates. This comprehensive career toolkit is updated annually to reflect ongoing enhancements in supporting employability skills development. The core portal DkIT Careers Connect and online resources of Shortlist Me Video Interviewing practice platform, Profiling for success - Psychometric Testing, are all accessible via Moodle. In 2023/2024, the Careers Hub on Moodle achieved 550 logins (similar to 2022/2023). Awareness raising will continue in the academic year 2024/2025.

- **Student Appointments**: All student appointments were offered in person, via Microsoft Teams or by phone. In 2023/2024 the Centre facilitated 498 appointments, an increase of decrease of 22%

(385) appointments on 2022/2023. Resource requirements will continue to be monitored in order to continue to provide the required standard of careers services to students.

- **Job Opportunities / Graduate Programmes:** A total of 538 positions were advertised in the academic year 2023/2024 on DkIT Careers Connect portal, by 304 companies (a decrease of 26.5% on the previous year which had 732 opportunities).

  This decrease may be attributed to limited engagement of students and recent graduate on the portal with employers looking to other methods of promoting their opportunities to students and graduates. Student engagement on jobs portal remains an ongoing priority, as well as monitoring alternative promotional and advertising mechanisms.

- **Student Inductions:** The Centre participated in the wider Student Services inductions including the services specific spotlights for first years, advanced entry, international etc. alongside the video inputs for online student resources.

- **Class Sessions and Workshops:** In 2023/2024, the Careers Service enhanced its in-class presence by delivering over 40 career workshops and sessions in response to student survey feedback. This also served as a valuable tool for promoting the Careers services and raising awareness among staff who play a key role in directing students' careers supports and resources.

- **Employability Tools:** The Careers Service renewed licences for online tools including DkIT Careers Connect (Online Portal for job postings, careers appointments, event promotion) Profiling for Success (Psychometric tests and practice tests), Shortlist Me (online video interviewing practice platform). These are central to supporting self-directed research, skills development and greatly enhancing the in-person meetings and workshops delivered by the Careers Service.

- **Social Media and Communications:** The Careers Service developed a targeted social media plan, sustaining focused effort on using the Instagram and Linkedin platforms as the preferred social media platforms. The Service have proactively worked with the wider student services teams and the Student Union to increase awareness amongst students of the Careers Service social media activity. In 2023/24, the Service launched a social media campaign featuring a series of fun, engaging, and informative posts highlighting key career insights and tips which was well received by both students and employers. Additionally, "Jobs of the Month" campaign remains an effective tool for raising awareness and is highly valued by employers.

Overall, the 2023/2024 reporting period saw an expansion and refinement of employability services at DkIT. The Centre remains committed to fostering strong industry partnerships, enhancing career readiness, and responding dynamically to the evolving needs of students, employers, and the labour market. Moving forward, a continued focus on student engagement, work placements, and graduate employability data will further strengthen the quality and impact of careers and employability services at DkIT.

Counselling Service

The Counselling Service has made advancements in improving the quality and accessibility of mental health support for students during the reporting period 2023/2024. A key focus has been expanding service provision, increasing student engagement, and enhancing mental health awareness across campus.

The following are the service highlights and enhancements during the report period 2023/2024:

- In September 2023 a daily drop-in service with team members sharing the responsibility on a rotational basis. The designated 'duty counsellor' is also responsible for addressing any concerns received via the counsellor email throughout the day.

- Recognising the need for greater visibility of the service across campus, information leaflets, webpages, and Moodle VLE resources were updated to enhance accessibility. These updates include key details about the service's nature, purpose, and scope, as well as guidance on how to access appointments.

- In recent years, an increasing number of international students have engaged with the service, highlighting the need for training to support the provision of culturally sensitive care. To address this, staff participated in training sessions provided by the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) (https://www.internationalstudents.ie/) and attended additional training on 'Cultural Humility.'

- A 'Mental Health Awareness Week' was organized in alignment with World Mental Health Day (10th October 2023) in collaboration with teams from Student Services and the Student Union. This engaging, weeklong event featured a variety of workshops, guest speakers on mental health, positive well-being tips, music and mindfulness sessions, on-site support services, and interactive activities for both students and staff. The event also marked the 20-year anniversary of Student Counselling within the Institute.

- A 'task and finish' group was established to develop a 'Student Mental Health' Policy. The policy was completed and will be submitted for approval.

- In Semester 2 of the reporting period, a 'Pride Across the World' - Living Library Event was organised in partnership with 'Dundalk Outcomers' A panel of speakers from various countries shared their experiences and challenges of living as members of the LGBTQ+ community with an audience of 70 students and staff.

- A dedicated Moodle VLE resource, 'Supporting Students as Staff' (SSAS), was created to provide information on the Counselling Service. It includes details on training events, online training modules, informational videos, guidance on accessing the service, and information on additional support services available 24/7.

- Training sessions were organized and facilitated for staff and students to enhance awareness of mental health issues and develop skills in effectively responding to students experiencing distress:

Training	Facilitated By	Delivered	Audience
'Safetalk' Suicide Awareness (Half Day)	HSE	Semester 1 and 2	36 staff and students
Understanding Self - Harm (2hrs)	HSE	Semester 2	5 staff
LGBT+ Awareness' (Half Day)	Dundalk Outcomers	Semester 2	10 staff
'Intercultural Awareness' (Half Day)	ICOS	Semester 1	8 staff
Supporting Students in Distress (Half Day)	Counselling Service	Semester 1 and 2	38 staff

- **Togetherall:** Students continue to have access to 'Togetherall' (https://togetherall.com/en-ie/), an online platform providing a space for anonymous peer support and interaction. Promotion efforts included bespoke emails to all staff and students, strategically placed pull-up banners across campus, a dedicated Togetherall tile on Moodle, a PowerPoint presentation for academic staff to share in lectures, the development of a promotional video, regular visibility on social media channels (e.g., Instagram accounts of Student Services, DkIT, and the Students' Union), and the inclusion of the Togetherall logo in email signatures and 'out of office' replies.

  A total of 100 DkIT students registered with Togetherall in the reporting period, bringing the total number of students who have registered with the platform since it was launched in October 2022 to 191. The main issues addressed related to Anxiety, Stress and Relationships. DkIT students completed 29 courses, with the most popular being 'Managing Depression and Low Mood' and 'Improve Your Sleep'. The platform has been able to reach traditionally underrepresented students (35% identifying as being from an ethnic background and 34% identifying as male). It has supported students who otherwise did not engage with support services (64% reported that Togetherall was the only form of support and 22% reported having had no additional support, including no friends or family). Support was given to students considered to be 'at risk' of harm, with 34% of users reporting having considered suicide in the past 6 months and 34% also reporting having self-harmed. 37% of users were given 1:1 support from online mental health practitioners. Emergency support outside of traditional hours (over a weekend) was reported to be given on one occasion. The student was then signposted to engage with the counselling service and registered with us on the following Monday morning.

- **The Body Project:** The Body Project is a group-based intervention designed to help students challenge unrealistic beauty standards and develop a healthier body image through verbal, written, and behavioural exercises. Promoted as "Body Acceptance Classes", the programme aimed to be facilitated by peer trainers who had been trained the previous year by the student

counselling service. However, due to personal and academic commitments, this was not feasible. Instead, two members of the counselling team successfully promoted and co-facilitated the programme in Semester 2. To support awareness, a promotional video featuring the DkIT Students' Union Vice President for Welfare was recorded on campus. This video was subsequently made available to all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) nationwide for use in their own promotion of the Body Acceptance Classes.

- **Niteline:** A continued partnership with Niteline during the reporting period ensured that students have access to an out-of-hours support service. Niteline is a student-led telephone helpline available from 9:00p.m. to 2:30 a.m. every night during term time. Volunteers receive training and ongoing support from counselling service staff across the country.

These initiatives demonstrate a clear commitment to quality enhancement, ensuring that student well-being remains a priority within the Institute's overall student support framework.

National Framework for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

In the reporting period, the Institute Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework action plan was revised and re-structured to support a more effective implementation process. Four key areas (Live, Learn, Support and Improve) now encompass the key recommended actions from the HEA framework and the working group membership has been expanded in line with this to ensure key elements from the Institute are represented.

The Institute appointed a Mental Health Nurse Advisor in January 2024 on a two-year fixed term contract, funded by the HEA Mental Health Funding, to provide a comprehensive suite of mental health and wellbeing supports within DkIT Student Services.

One of the key actions under the SMH Framework this year has been the partnership with The Jed Foundation (https://jedfoundation.org/), a US based charitable organisation that provides colleges and universities with expert support, evidence-based best practices, and data-driven guidance to promote and support student mental health and work towards reducing rates of suicide within the student population. This is a two-year process, where DkIT will work collaboratively with JED, using an Institute wide approach to create a culture of care where all students feel supported.

National Framework for Consent in Higher Education

- **RESPECT Campaign:** The DkIT Frameworks Manager worked closely with the Marketing and Communications Office to develop the RESPECT Campaign (Responding to and Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment, Promoting Positive sexual Experiences and Changing Campus culture Together) which was launched in March to coincide with RAG Week. A new dedicated RESPECT webpage (https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/respect.html), with information on key messages, training, internal and external supports and pathways to reporting was launched.

Promotional videos were created with students and key members of staff to engage students. A range of resources including badges, lanyards and phone pop sockets have been used both to promote the campaign and as an incentive for staff and students to engage in training.

The following awareness raising and training sessions were provided during the reporting period (2023/2024):

- Induction for first year students outlining the implementation of the Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment Framework in DkIT (RESPECT Campaign) and the key messages of 'Consent'. This included an introduction to online training resources that are available to all students and the 'Speakout' Anonymous Reporting Tool (https://hea.ie/policy/gender/ending-sexual-violence-and-harassment-in-irish-higher-education-institutions/speak-out/).

- Training for Sports and Societies officers and Student Ambassadors including a presentation on ESVH and the RESPECT Campaign in DkIT.

- Presentation for new staff members on the ESVH Framework, Training Commitment by DkIT on ESVH, Online Trainings Available, Speakout Anonymous Reporting Tool, and pathways to reporting incidents.

- Interactive Information Stands at key events including the Health Fair, S.H.A.G week, Sports and Societies Sign up day and RAG Week.

- 'Active Consent' workshops were facilitated for 1st Years in October 2023 (30 students).

- 'Disclosure Training' facilitated by the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre was delivered in Semesters 1 and 2 (20 staff).

- Information on 'Active Consent', 'Bystander Training', 'Speakout' and 'IADT Moving Parts' Videos were made available for students on Moodle in the Counselling Hub.

Disability Service

The Disability Service (DS) provides a wide range of supports and reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. The Service supports students who apply through the DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) scheme (https://accesscollege.ie/dare/)   thus enabling those students who meet the criteria to avail of reduced points places on programmes in DkIT.

The following are the service highlights and enhancements during the report period 2023/2024:

- Accreditation as an Autism Friendly Higher Education Institution (HEI). DkIT was accredited as an Autism Friendly HEI Candidate at the start of the reporting period. As part of that accreditation the Autism Friendly HEI Working Group developed an Action Plan which was presented by the DkIT Disability Officer to AsIAM's Accreditation Panel in June 2024. The Action Plan was accepted and the Institute accredited as an Autism Friendly HEI. The Institute will continue to implement the actions outlined in the plan over the next three years.

- Ongoing availability of an Assistive Technology (AT) Officer providing training to support students with regard to literacy difficulties and AT queries.

- Service facilitated training to new Invigilators and Scribes during the reporting period. These sessions help invigilators and scribes understand the specific guidelines and regulations for supporting students with disabilities during examinations, helping to maintain fairness and compliance. It also ensures that reasonable accommodations are implemented correctly, issues are addressed proactively and the process of invigilation runs smoothly and instils confidence in students and invigilators.

- Ongoing updates and maintenance of website, Autism&Uni website (https://dkit.autism-uni.org/) and the student Moodle VLE Support Hub. A specific staff section was created on the Moodle VLE Support Hub which includes information about supporting many disabilities and providing reasonable accommodations for assessments.

- The Disability Officer joined the HEI committee for the annual Autism Festival of Acceptance which is a series of events aimed at promoting acceptance and understanding of autism. The festival, held from the 4th - 7th March 2024, involved various events and activities across participating HEIs (NCI, DCU ATU Sligo, NCAD, CCT College). The events were designed to raise awareness, provide resources and foster a more inclusive environment for individuals with autism. During the week DkIT made available a space and provided lunch for students to attend the events together.

Overall, the developments and activities reflect ongoing quality enhancement within the Disability Service, ensuring that DkIT continues to provide inclusive, student-centred supports that align with national and sectoral best practices. Looking forward, the service remains committed to further developing resources, expanding accessibility initiatives, and strengthening institutional awareness of disability support to ensure an equitable learning environment for all students.

Pastoral Care

There was increased student engagement with a good level of service awareness during the reporting period. The Service has been very proactive in responding to the needs of students with a variety of well-attended wellness and engagement activities being organized throughout the year to support students' mental health and well-being.

The following are the service highlights and enhancements during the report period 2023/2024:

- During Mental Health Week, a Qi-Gong class with a certified instructor and a hike in the Cooley Mountains were held. A five-week Speechcraft workshop provided students with an opportunity to develop public speaking and communication skills, culminating in certificates of attendance. An Introduction to Yoga and Cocoa session was offered for both staff and students.

- In November, breathwork classes, a form of active meditation, were introduced and offered twice weekly at lunchtime. A Christmas raffle raised funds for the Student Hardship Fund, supporting the food press and students in financial difficulty.

- In February, another Cooley Mountains hike was organized. A Positive Masculinity workshop, the first of its kind at DkIT, provided a confidential space for men to discuss well-being, societal expectations, and mental health, receiving highly positive engagement.

- Pancake Tuesday was a major success, drawing a large student turnout and generating donations for the Student Hardship Fund while fostering a sense of community on campus.

- To encourage social connections, DkIT Student Connect was introduced as a weekly lunchtime gathering where students could connect over tea, coffee, and biscuits.

- In March, a Tribal Drumming Workshop led by facilitator John Bowker explored the cultural power of rhythm, creating a meaningful and interactive experience for staff and students.

- Finally, in April, a Historical Walking Tour of Dublin was arranged with a professional tour guide, providing participants with insights into the city's rich history.

The initiatives during the reporting period reflect a strong commitment to continuous quality enhancement, ensuring that the Pastoral Care Service remains accessible, inclusive, and responsive to student needs. Moving forward, the service will continue to build on these successes, further embedding student well-being, personal development, and peer support within the fabric of the Institute's student experience.

Health Unit

As part of ongoing quality improvement and enhancement efforts within the Institute's quality assurance system, the Health Unit undertook several key initiatives to promote student and staff well-being, enhance engagement with health-related services, and support public health priorities. The Student Health Unit (SHU) team remained committed to enhancing service quality, actively promoting and supporting well-being and positive mental health. This remains an ongoing challenge due to the growing number of students seeking support and the increasing complexity of the issues presented.

The following are the service highlights and enhancements during the report period 2023/2024:

- The second in-person Health Fair since the COVID-19 pandemic was successfully held over three days across various campus locations, engaging students, staff, and external health agencies. The event provided an opportunity to showcase best practices in health promotion and foster cross-departmental collaboration within the Institute. The event focussed on 'General Wellness and Mental Health', 'Healthy Heart Focus' and 'Road Safety and Nutrition'. Additional activities across the three days included breathwork sessions, COVID-19 and flu vaccine clinics, and opportunities to sign up for exercise classes and hikes. The Health Fair demonstrated a

strong commitment to student engagement, public health education, and collaboration with external stakeholders.

- **Vaccine Clinics:** Two Flu Vaccine Clinics were successfully delivered during the reporting period, with significant uptake from both staff and students. DkIT was among the first Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Ireland to host three MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccine clinics in March 2024, in collaboration with the HSE, responding to the increasing number of measles cases in the UK and mainland Europe. This initiative aligned with national public health priorities, given the declining MMR vaccine uptake in Ireland.

- As part of Sexual Health Awareness and Guidance (S.H.A.G.) Week, an HIV and STI awareness event was held in February 2024, featuring the launch of HIV Ireland's 'Equal Check and Chat' initiative. This initiative aims to reach remote communities across Ireland, providing HIV awareness and rapid testing services. Engagement was encouraged through a sexual health quiz, free food, and promotional materials. The event was further enhanced by the participation of HIV and Irish Trans Activist Rebecca de Havilland, adding an important advocacy and awareness-raising element. The initiative demonstrated collaboration with national health agencies while addressing student health and well-being through proactive sexual health education.

- **Making Every Contact Count (MECC) Programme (Guided by the HSE MECC Framework):** The Institute Health Unit is participating in the HSE MECC Programme by helping students who visit the Service make changes to lower their risk of chronic disease. This approach encourages students to make healthy lifestyle choices during this critical period of their lives, with the goal of preventing chronic disease.

These initiatives represent significant enhancements to the Institute's QA system by fostering a proactive approach to student well-being, expanding public health engagement, and strengthening collaboration with internal and external stakeholders. The Health Fair, vaccine clinics, and sexual health initiatives exemplify best practices in quality improvement, student support, and public health advocacy within the higher education sector.

Sports and Societies

The Sports and Societies Office supports over 65+ student-led clubs and societies, offering students opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities, develop leadership skills, and foster a sense of community on campus.

The following are the service highlights and enhancements during the report period 2023/2024:

- **Compulsory Sports and Society Officer Training:** A new mandatory training session for club and society officers was introduced at the beginning of Semester 1, with 68 students in attendance.

This ensured that student leaders were equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to run their clubs effectively.

- **Event Registration System:** A new event registration system was implemented through the Sports and Societies Moodle VLE Support Hub, requiring clubs and societies to register all events in advance. This system allowed for better monitoring, planning, and compliance while providing clubs with a structured event planning checklist covering venue bookings, promotions, and logistics.

- **Mandatory Attendance Registers:** Attendance registers became compulsory for all official society meetings, ensuring better record-keeping, engagement tracking, and accountability within student-led groups.

- **Proposal and Budget Requirement for Event Funding:** To improve financial planning and resource allocation, clubs and societies were required to submit a proposal and budget plan when applying for financial support from the Sports and Societies Office.

- **Committee Member Registration System:** All clubs and societies were required to submit committee member details via a Microsoft Form on the Moodle VLE Support Hub, reinforcing that all groups must remain student-led.

- **Expansion of Lunchtime Classes:** Additional lunchtime activity classes were introduced to increase student engagement, with plans to expand these further in the coming year.

- **Committee Member Training for Sustainability:** Training sessions were provided to assist and support committee members in running their societies effectively. This initiative aimed to ensure continuity and sustainability, preventing societies from dissolving when key members graduate.

- **Gaelic Players Association (GPA) Support:** The GPA held drop-in sessions on campus and provided individual support appointments to county players at DkIT. A total of 22 students availed of this service, which offered financial and career guidance tailored to third-level county players.

- **"Find Your Tribe" Campaign:** The annual Sign-Up Day was supported by a targeted campaign called "Find Your Tribe", utilizing social media and on-campus promotional materials to increase student participation in clubs and societies.

- **Weekly Sports and Societies Group Updates:** Regular updates were provided to ensure administrative processes did not become a barrier to participation for students.

- **Annual Sports and Societies Awards Night:** The annual Sports and Societies Awards Night was held with over 200 attendees at the ceremony. There was strong participation from students, staff, sponsors, and coaches, highlighting the significance of extracurricular activities in student life.

The 2023/24 academic year saw significant quality enhancements in the management and oversight of sports clubs and societies, improving governance, student engagement, and event planning. The

introduction of structured training, event registration, attendance tracking, financial accountability, and committee support mechanisms has strengthened the overall quality assurance of student-led activities. These developments contribute to a more inclusive, well-organized, and engaging student experience at DkIT.

DkIT Elevate Award

The Elevate Framework and Award, now in its fifth year, is the result of a partnership between the Students' Union, the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching and Student Services, and is led by the Careers and Employability Centre. The Elevate Awards are made to students who, through their engagement with DkIT life (a minimum of 45 hours) have contributed significantly to the DkIT community and who have evidenced a range of impressive employability skills through their engagement. Alongside their voluntary work, students must complete a CV, LinkedIn, Graduate Attribute reflection and a recorded Elevator Pitch to meet the award criteria. This event has become a highlight in the Dundalk Institute of Technology calendar.

On June 17th 2024, 22 students across disciplines and stages received this unique award for 2024, the largest number since the initiative began, and an increase of 9 students on previous year. Stronger connections with the Sports and Societies Office in particular has contributed to this increase. The ambition is the grow these numbers by reviewing the process alongside the key stakeholders and adapt the process to increase the level of student awareness and engagement with the award. The award is part of DkIT's commitment to support greater student engagement and partnership within DkIT, but also to empower students to recognise and evidence the employability skills they develop through active engagement.

1.1.5 Professional Support Unit (Library) Activities and Developments

This section provides a summary of the activities and developments in DkIT Library for the reporting period (2023-2024):

- Staff continued to perform at a high level both within the library and online, providing a service to all DkIT library users. Services and content available to students and staff were expanded.

- Towards the end of the reporting period, the library secured funding to install electronic access gates which will provide accurate data on library usage while ensuring a safe and secure study environment for all.

- The library received funding from NTUTTOR (https://www.transforminglearning.ie/) to transform one of the learning spaces in the Slieve Foy room into an Active Learning Digital Collaboration Lab, supporting team, active learning and remote guest speaker/hybrid delivery. In addition, the Avoca room in the library now houses an eLearning pod, and will also contain a 'smart lightboard' which will support people wishing to develop and record engaging content.

- Additional funding enabled the replacement of the computers in the Library Training Room.

- During the reporting period the Library continued building collections to enhance research and teaching at the Institute.

- The Library Provided information skills training and research support sessions in consultation with the relevant academic Departments to support research, teaching and learning (online and in-person) (189 classes were booked with over 1500 students attending).

- Developed targeted training classes and workshops supporting academic integrity and delivered Harvard Referencing lunchtime classes throughout the year to support students.

- Further streamlined services allowing students to self-borrow, book study spaces and computers themselves.

- Highlighted our collections, actively promoting within library through "Quick Pick" book stands, digital screens and on social media platforms.

- Developed classes and training materials to promote and actively engage users of the library with the vast array of electronic content available on Library databases and electronic journals.

- Active involvement with other THEA Libraries to bring IReL (https://irel.ie/) into the Institute to support Research and Innovation. DkIT was involved in the securing of new agreements to ensure equitable access to the same information sources available to other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

- Promoted Open Access Week informing the academic and research community of the benefits of Open Access, using it to share what has been learned with their colleagues and to help initiate a wider participation in academia to make research freely available to all.

- Administered Transformative Agreements with major publishers to enable researchers to use Open Access Publishing routes for their research.

- Maintained and updated the DKIT Library App allowing users to check books out themselves, search the library catalogue and read library e-books.

- Continued our outreach activities with Further Education and Training Institutes such as Cavan and Monaghan Institutes, by visiting and developing guides specific to the needs of their students.

- Continued the Library Book Club to promote inclusion among all staff and students and hosted cultural events.

- Hosted a range of events in the Library to collaborate with other DKIT services and Departments.

- Collaborated with the Irish language officer, Eamonn DeBarra and Conradh na Gaeilge, Dundalk for events in library for Seactain na Gaeilge (lectures, singing circle, conversation circle).

- Expanded our Wellness Area within the Library for students to take a break from studies with puzzles, games and reflective materials by reviving the Library garden. This area was made available to students during assignments and examination phases.

- Joined the DkIT Mental Health Working Group to host the Jed Foundation meeting (between Jed foundation and relevant DkIT staff members) with the aim of implementing ways of improving students' mental health within the Institute and curriculum.

- Continued to offer a space within the library, the Táin Room, to Disability Services for reconfiguration as a low sensory input space for use by students on the autism spectrum.

- Continued to maintain the library's electronic guides, Libguides, to reflect changes to studying methods, new resources, new programmes and general information. (https://dkit.ie.libguides.com/homepage)

- Reviewed and updated Library policies and procedures and created a centralised location for them on the DkIT Library website (this is part of an Institute-wide initiative to improve the availability and accessibility of Institute policies).

- Continued annual introductory meeting with Student Union (SU) leadership and followed up with regular meetings.

- Returns Box available at main Whitaker Building entrance when campus was open.

- Renewed and promoted the online chat service – "Ask A Librarian".

- Extended the range of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) available online (using Springshare LibAnswers software (https://www.springshare.com/libanswers)) as a support service in conjunction with the chat service.

- Continued to use the Moodle VLE Library Hub for Library news and delivery of support, including self-paced learning materials on Academic Integrity, Referencing and Mendeley.

- Daily monitoring of all e-resources to ensure all working as expected to ensure continuity of access / service.

- Daily monitoring of turn-aways from all e-resources to identify any supply issues and opportunities to access new material.

- Continued to create videos on 'How to …' to assist readers working remotely and made these available via LibGuides and the Moodle VLE.

- Hosting online drop-ins for staff and students on topics/supports/issues.

- The Chastelain Library and Louth County Libraries collaborative partnership which provides reciprocal borrowing and access to their libraries for members was resumed and promoted in the community in the reporting period 2023/2024.

- Library staff published in An Leabharlann journal published by the Library Association of Ireland.

These initiatives demonstrate the Library's ongoing commitment to enhancing its services, resources, and learning environments to support students, staff, and researchers, aligning with the Institute's continuous quality enhancement and broader quality assurance objectives. By investing in technology, research support, student well-being, and policy improvements, the Library has further strengthened its role as a central hub for academic success in the reporting period. The expansion of digital resources, self-service options, collaborative learning spaces, and outreach initiatives has improved accessibility and engagement, ensuring that the Library continues to evolve in line with the needs of the DkIT community.

1.1.6 Research Activities and Developments

This section provides a summary of the activities and developments in postgraduate research for the reporting period 2023-2024.

During the reporting period there was a further enhancement of the Institute's reputation as one of the leading research-intensive Institutes of Technology achieving key strategic milestones in research funding, postgraduate education, and researcher training as follows:

- Securing of TU Rise funding (https://hea.ie/policy/he-reform/tu-research-and-innovation-supporting-enterprise-tu-rise-scheme/) to the value of €5M for the CREATE project which will deliver 11 PhD studentships, 2 MSc by research studentships, 4 Postdoctoral Fellowships, 2 Research Fellows and 6 key research and innovation support staff.
- Just over €5M in external income received from both national and international funding sources.
- Further enhancement of the DCU-DKIT Graduate School through increased registrations and research graduations.
- Roll-out of structured training programme for all researchers and staff through the Epigeum platform (https://learningresources.sagepub.com/epigeum/research) .
- Enhanced suite of both online and face-to-face researcher training modules for both staff and postgraduate research students to develop their transferable skills base.
- 165 peer reviewed research publications (SCOPUS) during the calendar years 2023 and 2024.
- Policy developments (See AQR Part A).

These developments illustrate the Institute's commitment to continuous quality improvement, research excellence, and the professional development of its research community. Moving forward, the Research and Graduate Studies Office remains focused on sustaining research growth, enhancing postgraduate research training and strengthening institutional research capacity.

In order to protect the Institute's ability to recruit and retain NFQ Level 10 postgraduate research students the Institute embarked on a series of strategic engagements with Maynooth University

during the reporting period (2023/2024). See AQR Part 1, Section 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes.

1.1.7 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Activities and Developments

DkIT signed up to the Athena SWAN Charter in May 2018 and was awarded an Institutional Bronze award in March 2021 (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/athena-swan-charter.html). The Athena SWAN Charter (https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/) recognises commitment to eliminating gender bias and developing an inclusive culture that values all staff. The assessment process included:

- An assessment of gender equality in the Institute including quantitative and qualitative evidence – identifying both challenges and good practice;

- Preparation of a four-year gender action plan and development of an organisational structure to carry proposed actions forward.

The School of Engineering were awarded a Bronze award in January 2024. The Institute submitted an Institute Bronze renewal application in the November 2024 application round. Results of the application are due in early April 2025.

An update on the planned actions in the Area for the reporting period can be found in section "1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR". Planned actions for the upcoming reporting period can be found in section "3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period".

1.1.8 Professional Support Unit (International Office) Activities and Developments

This section provides an update on the activities and developments in the International Office for the reporting period 2023/2024. The International Office undertook activities to enhance international engagement, student recruitment, mobility, and support services, contributing to the overall quality assurance framework of the Institute.

Enhancing International Engagement

- New Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs): Four new agreements were signed to expand global academic collaboration:
    - **Colleges Ontario (THEA sectoral agreement):** A five-year agreement signed in November 2023, facilitating institutional cooperation and student pathways.
    - **Lovely Professional University (India)**: A five-year agreement signed in April 2024.
    - **Methodist College (Malaysia)**: Established in April 2024, strengthening international linkages in Southeast Asia.

- o **ISDC Global Services Ltd**: Signed in April 2024, expanding industry-academic partnerships.

- **Hosting international delegations (Non-EU Visits to the Institute):** The International Office facilitated visits from several recruitment agencies and partner institutions, further strengthening international partnerships in business, engineering, and nursing.

- **Hosting international delegations (EU):** DkIT hosted several EU delegations in the reporting period (2023/2024), fostering academic partnerships, student exchange opportunities, and programme development. Key visits included:

  - o **Czechia Embassy (May 2024):** Facilitated discussions between Czech students at DkIT and embassy representatives, providing a platform for student feedback and engagement.
  - o **Medical College Prague, Czechia (March 2024)**: Discussions focused on developing nursing exchange opportunities between both institutions;
  - o **University of Western Norway (May 2024)**: Discussions focused on developing music exchange opportunities between both institutions;
  - o **IUT La Rochelle, France (May 2023)**: Discussions focused on developing computing exchange opportunities between both institutions;
  - o **Jagiellonian University Medical College Krakow, Poland (June 2024)**: Discussions focused on developing nursing exchange opportunities between both institutions.

- Participation in European initiatives:

  - o **EU-CrossUniverse Project**: DkIT participated in an Erasmus+ Staff Week coordinated by Hochschule Munich University of Applied Sciences (Germany) in April 2024 as a partner institution in a European University Alliance application (to which the DkIT Department of Business Studies was a lead contributor). This initiative brought together seven universities to foster entrepreneurial skills, start-up incubation, and regional innovation.

  - o **EAIE (European Association of International Education) Expo, Rotterdam**: DkIT's Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator attended this key European event to develop new Erasmus+ partnerships and scoping opportunities for developing new Erasmus+ exchanges.

- Collaboration with Zhengzhou Shengda University of Economics, Business and Management (ZSDU), China: Since an MOU was signed in 2019 with a view to developing teaching and student exchanges, DkIT has strengthened its engagement, with four Business lecturers delivering online teaching to ZSDU undergraduate students in the reporting period 2023/2024.

Student Recruitment

- **International Student Enrolment:** 438 non-EU international students were registered in 2023/2024. An additional 36 EU students were recruited through the DkIT International Office into CAO Year 1 programmes.

- **Market Focus:** DkIT's recruitment activities were primarily focused on India, East and South Africa, South East Asia, and China. There was reduced focus on Pakistan due to high rates of visa refusals.

- **Fee and Scholarship Adjustments:**
  - The undergraduate international tuition fee rate increased by €1,000 to €10,950.
  - The postgraduate diploma tuition fee rate increased to €11,500.
  - A reduction in scholarships saw only one awarded per student (excluding the sibling discount).
  - Accommodation discounts were capped at 150 per annum for new entrants.
  - Management of payments to accommodation providers was ceased.
  - Engineering construction-related programme scholarships were eliminated.
  - The Year 4 tuition-fee discount for new Year 1 entrants (commencing in 2024/2025) was removed.
  - TransferMate payment provider implementation: A new online payment system was introduced in September 2023, streamlining tuition payments for international students and improving financial tracking.

- **Visa Challenges:** The Irish Government introduced a new requirement for visa applicants to provide proof of €10,000 in living fees annually (increased from €7,000 per year), adding pressure to international student recruitment.

- **Annual Business Report submission to Enterprise Ireland:** The International Office submitted a report in February 2024, detailing recruitment income from designated international markets.

- **Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP) Register:**
  - The International Office and the Registrar's Office submitted an application to the Department of Justice in April 2024, seeking approval for new programmes eligible for student visas.

- **Implementation of a new CRM system:**
  - The system was launched in August 2023 for Non-EU students, improving the efficiency of managing international student applications.
  - Weekly meetings with the Institute's CRM Development Team ensured system optimization.

Student Mobility

- **Erasmus+ Inbound Mobility:** 60 students were welcomed across the four Schools at bachelor's and master's levels.

- **Erasmus+ Outbound Mobility:**
  - **Study Abroad (18 students):** Students engaged in semester and year-long study exchanges at institutions in Germany, Portugal, the UK, Estonia, Spain and the Netherlands.
  - **Work Placements (13 students):** Erasmus+ funded placements in nursing, hospitality, engineering, and computing took place in Denmark, Spain, the UK, Germany, Greece and Finland.
  - **One-Week Intensive Programmes (45 students):** Themed projects covered eco-city planning, gaming, web development, digital media (in the built environment), marketing (tourism sector) and international business simulation in Poland, France, and Spain.

- **Erasmus+ Staff Mobility:** 11 staff members participated in Erasmus+ teaching and training mobilities in Poland, France, Spain, Romania and Germany, expanding DkIT's international teaching engagement.

- **New Erasmus+ Agreements:**
  - Hochschule Munich University of Applied Sciences (Germany) – Business and Hospitality exchange agreement signed in 2024.
  - UniLa Salle, Normandie (France) – Applied Sciences exchange agreement signed in 2024.

- **Participation in the Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA):**
  - DkIT successfully hosted 10 fully-sponsored Indonesian students, who studied in the Department of Hospitality Studies for one semester.
  - Students participated in industry site visits in Belfast and Dublin, integrating real-world learning experiences.
  - The International Office provided accommodation assistance, ensuring seamless student transitions.

Student Support Services

As part of its commitment to supporting international learners in accordance with *QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners*, DkIT International Office continued to provide a range of supports to students in the reporting period (2023/2024).

- **International Student Welcome Programme:**
  - o Airport pickup service was provided for incoming students.
  - o International Welcome Days were held in September 2023, ensuring a smooth transition into campus life.
  - o Support services included registration assistance, immigration compliance, and banking setup.
  - o Accommodation support, language support (Mandarin) and intercultural support was provided.

- **Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Support:** The International Office, in tandem with the Institute's Pastoral Care Office, provided the following supports to students during the reporting period, including
  - o 24/7 emergency assistance was made available for international students through International Office out-of-hours.
  - o Hospital visitations, family liaison, and repatriation support were provided for students facing medical emergencies (November 2023).
  - o Excursions and social events helped integrate international students into the campus community.

- **Accommodation Support:**
  - o The Accommodation Officer assisted incoming International, EU (Eastern Europe), and incoming Erasmus students in securing local housing and homestays.
  - o A new student accommodation block was opened in 2024, improving the quality and availability of student housing.

- **Support for Ukrainian Students:**
  - o 20 students with temporary protection status were registered. Students received financial assistance through the framework of the Erasmus+ programme, ensuring access to higher education during displacement.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

This section provides an update on objectives/planned actions for the reporting period 2023/2024 as detailed in the previous AQR (documented for the reporting period 2022/2023).

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.
	Designated Awarding Body (DAB) • Review current Quality Manual to remove reference to QQI with the exception of external cyclical review and Level 10 provision. • Review current policy and procedure on collaborative provision in light of DABS and permission for linked provider status. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Completed during the reporting period.
	Policies and Procedures • Develop quality assurance policies and procedure relating to collaborative partnerships (specifically articulation agreements). • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office.	Completed during the reporting period.
	Policies and Procedures • Review Equal Access and Participation Policy. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Professional Support Unit (Student Services; Access Office).	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025)-under Profession Support Units (Student Services) actions.
	Policies and Procedures • Develop quality assurance Guidelines for the Preparation, Drafting and Transmission of Examination Papers and Solutions. (Recommendation from an external	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025)

	investigator following an examination paper breach). • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office.	
	Policies and Procedures • Commence work for attaining QQI International Educational Mark (IEM). • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. Update provided by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) to the sector during the reporting period with requests for authorisation to use the IEM quality standard in the next reporting period (2024/2025). This action will be included under AQR Part B, Section 3.2 Reviews Planned for the Upcoming Reporting Period.
	Teaching and Learning • To promote more inclusive approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. This includes enhancing digital accessibility and developing capacity in Universal Design for Learning (UDL). • **Responsibility:** Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Teaching and Learning Subcommittee of Academic Council.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025)
	Teaching and Learning • Build capacity in assessment design to promote Academic Integrity. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025)
	Teaching and Learning • Review and update Assessment and Learning Policy. • **Responsibility:** Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).	Completed in the reporting period.

Teaching and Learning • Update DkIT policies and procedures as appropriate to give due consideration to the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes (which will be published by QQI in 2023/2024 following sector consultation). • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025)
Teaching and Learning • Build capacity in programmatic approaches to assessment (generally and directly to support Schools with Programmatic Review). • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Schools.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025)
Teaching and Learning • Support programme teams across Schools to embed Universal Design for Learning (UDL). • **Responsibility:** Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025)
Academic Integrity • Continue to plan, implement and enhance Academic Integrity initiatives at Institute level for students and staff, specifically to develop an Academic Integrity Action Plan. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Library.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025)

	Academic Integrity	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.
	• Update Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures to include Contract Cheating (and other new types of Academic Misconduct that may arise). • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Library.	See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025)
	Academic Integrity	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period.
	• Develop an Institute Register for Academic Misconduct (mixed model between Schools and Registrar's Office currently in operation). • Review and ensure that new forms of academic misconduct (e.g., Contract Cheating) are recorded as appropriate. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office.	See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025)
	Academic Integrity	Completed in the reporting period.
	• Evaluate the Epiguem Academic Integrity support modules for students and staff. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Library.	
	Research and Graduate Studies	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. A draft agreement was developed but not finalised.
	• Complete collaborative partnership agreement with Dublin City University (DCU) regarding the DCU-DkIT Graduate School. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
	Research and Graduate Studies • Develop Research Integrity Policy. • **Responsibility:** Graduate Studies Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).

	Research and Graduate Studies • Adapt and implement the revised Institute Researcher Career Framework across all research centres and groups in line with the National Researcher Career Framework. • **Responsibility:** Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Completed in the reporting period.
	Research and Graduate Studies • Diversify and increase research and innovation funding (ongoing action). • **Responsibility:** Research and Graduate Studies Office, Research Centre and Group Directors.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
	Research and Graduate Studies • Access Intellectual Property Portfolio across research community. • **Responsibility:** Research and Graduate Studies Office, Regional Development Centre (RDC).	Completed during the reporting period.
	Research and Graduate Studies • Revisit and review the context and intent of the collaborative partnership/relationship between DCU and DkIT. There was general consensus from both collaborative partners that this needs to take place as a matter of urgency. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
	Research and Graduate Studies • Broaden the scope of the research collaborations between both partners as envisaged in the initial agreement (MOU	Completed in the reporting period.

2012) when the Graduate School was established • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	
Research and Graduate Studies • Agree a senior management meeting schedule with DCU to cover the duration of the relationship. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
Research and Graduate Studies • Prioritise the addition of one FTE Grade V administrator into the Graduate Studies Office. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
Research and Graduate Studies • Review current library research databases with a view to expansion of same. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Completed during reporting period.
Research and Graduate Studies • Devise and Implement "Research Access Policy" to ensure appropriate access to research facilities for all researchers with ongoing review.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).

	Research and Graduate Studies	
	• Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	
	Research and Graduate Studies • Establish a postgraduate researcher alumni society. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
	Research and Graduate Studies • Develop of a risk mitigation strategy in relation to postgraduate research studies completion by students. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
	Research and Graduate Studies • Reinforce with Institute staff the importance of the role of the DkIT research community in the DkIT registered postgraduate student lifecycle and in the collaborative partnership. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Completed during the reporting period.
	Research and Graduate Studies • Ensure that DkIT GRPB and DkIT GRSB schedule of meetings is published on the DkIT website (part of a wider issue relating to the management of documentation associated with the DkIT Quality System).	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).

	• Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	
	Research and Graduate Studies • Develop a student and staff handbooks specific to postgraduate research provision. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
	Research and Graduate Studies • Ensure DkIT registered postgraduate research students receiving a DCU award are connected to the DCU-DkIT postgraduate researcher community. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
	Research and Graduate Studies • Ensure all postgraduate research students have annual skills training audits with their supervisory teams through provision of training to research supervisors. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
	Research and Graduate Studies • Monitor the annual training audits and link to annual progression.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).

• Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	
Research and Graduate Studies • Review research training programmes for staff and students annually and implement enhancements as required in accordance with best practice and stakeholder feedback. • PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Completed during the reporting period. Action continues annually.
Research and Graduate Studies • Create a centralised postgraduate researcher space. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022 • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
Research and Graduate Studies • Devise and implement detailed guidelines concerning the role of Independent Panel Members in line with DCU policy. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
Research and Graduate Studies • Provide annual training concerning roles and responsibilities. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022.	Completed during the reporting period. Action continues annually.

	• **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	
	Research and Graduate Studies • Monitor the effectiveness of Independent Panel Members and ensure policy is fit for purpose. • Action from PGR Quality Review 2021/2022. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
	Research and Graduate Studies • Develop and implement a policy and associated procedures regarding Exports Controls. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Completed during the reporting period.
	Research and Graduate Studies • Revise current and develop new Standard Operating Procedures regarding postgraduate research. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Completed during the reporting period.
	Research and Graduate Studies • Expand the Epigeum online training platform. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	Completed during the reporting period.
	Research and Graduate Studies • Implement action plan which was developed following an analysis of the postgraduate research student feedback survey (PGRStudentSurvey.ie) 2023 (2022/2023 academic year).	Completed during the reporting period.

• **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.	
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Develop a three-year Action Plan to support the implementation of the Enhancement Plan from the Student Services periodic quality review (took place in 2022/2023). • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-All services).	This work is completed and monitoring will continue over the three-year period post the quality review (2022/2023).
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Update the Student Support strategy in line with the new Institute Strategic Plan. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-All services).	Not completed and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Hold annual planning days to acknowledge achievements and to identify opportunities for Service enhancement. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services All services).	Ongoing and will continue annually.
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Develop an effective mechanism for Student Services to influence Institute decision making and to acknowledge the role Student Services plays in supporting student success. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services All services).	Completed in the reporting period.
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Review budget planning and allocation. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-All services).	Ongoing. Proposals to be submitted to the Executive Board for consideration as required.

Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Develop marketing and communications plan. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-All services).	This work is ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Review content in Student Hub and ensure accessibility for all students. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-All services.	Completed in the reporting period.
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Implement innovative collaboration with students and academic staff to support greater student engagement. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-All services).	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Continue to promote the HEAR Scheme at school visits, open days etc. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Access Office).	Completed in the reporting period.
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Continue to provide information sessions at Further Education Colleges and targeted DEIS Schools (including increasing the number of outreach visits, publicising entry agreements and communicating with FET staff and students). • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Access Office). **Responsibility:** (All services).	Completed in the reporting period.
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Continue to develop Assistive Technology Service.	Completed in the reporting period

	• **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Disability Service).	
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Follow up on recommendations advised in the Accessibility and Sensory Audits and implement improvements where possible. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Disability Service).	Not completed and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Maintain and update physical facilities to facilitate student accessibility and a quality student experience with the implementation of accessibility audits and the continued development of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Disability Service).	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2023/2024).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Develop an action plan to support the Autism Friendly HEI Award with AsIAm. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Disability Service).	Completed and monitoring will continue over the three-year period post the quality review (2022/2023).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Continue to encourage a proactive approach to health with emphasis on Health Awareness and Promotion. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Health Unit).	Completed and will continue as part of Service Work Plans.
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Enhance service provision with specialist health services. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Health Unit).	Completed (Mental Health Nurse Advisor recruited during the reporting period).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Ongoing collaboration for the provision of an outdoor AED near pitches.	Completed.

• **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Health Unit).	
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Continue involvement with the Healthy Campus Steering Committee to help build on existing wellbeing initiatives and assist with the integration of new ones. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Health Unit).	Completed and work will continue through the Healthy Campus Steering Committee.
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Widen promotion of services to promote and maintain mental health at challenging times. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services- Counselling Service).	Completed and will continue as part of Service Work Plans.
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Provide 'drop in' sessions daily to identify needs and sign post resources and supports. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services- Counselling Service).	Completed.
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Develop section on the DkIT website with relevant information for parents/concerned others. • **Responsibility:** PSU (Student Services-Counselling Service).	Completed.
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Provide training to support culturally sensitive care. • **Responsibility:** PSU (Student Services-Counselling Service).	Completed.
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Develop a standard mechanism to embed a formal post-placement evaluation. This will require support from Academic Leads	Completed as part of formal session delivery by the Placement Office.

to advise/adapt for programme specific requirements. • **Responsibility:** PSU (Student Services-Careers and Employability Centre).	
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Establish Alumni Steering Group (chaired by a member of the Executive Board with representation from Student Services). • **Responsibility:** PSU (Student Services-Careers and Employability Centre).	Not completed and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2024/2025).
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Work with DkIT Teaching and Learning Research Group to establish a specific research specialism in Embedding Employability. • **Responsibility:** PSU (Student Services-Careers and Employability Centre).	Completed. Explored and was incorporated into activities to support Programmatic Review (periodic review).
Professional Support Unit (Student Services) • Improve both the indoor and outdoor facilities in DkIT so that we can continue to meet the growing needs of the students. • Install multi-purpose floor in DkIT Sports with sports capital funding. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services-Sports and Societies).	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2023/2024).
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) • Implement the Athena Swan action plan (as detailed in DkIT's Athena Swan Bronze award application). • **Responsibility:** Head of School of Engineering and VP for EDI in conjunction with the EDI officer and Athena Swan Coordinator.	• Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. • The Athena Swan Bronze renewal application was submitted by DkIT in the November. The SAT will monitor the action plan. • See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2023/2024).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) • Adopt the HEA Anti-Racism Principles (planned for October 2023). • Establish Race Equality Working Group to develop and consider actions for inclusion in the Institute's Race Equality Action Plan. • Establish College of Sanctuary Working Group to review current initiatives underway in the Institute and to consider the preparation of a submission for College of Sanctuary. • Deliver TY STEM outreach workshops to increase female representation on STEM programmes. • Implement Cross Sectoral Mentoring platform to be implemented which is in line with DkIT's commitment to Professional Development. • Review all Family Leave Policies to ensure compliance with EDI language and terminology. • Develop a Gender Identity and Expression Policy. • Develop a Recruitment and Selection Policy. • Review gender balance in the membership of Governing Body and Land and Buildings Committee. • Amend Academic Council Constitution to include a requirement of gender balance (minimum 40% of either gender). • Prepare Athena SWAN renewal application (submission in November 2024). • **Responsibility:** Office of the Vice-President for Finance, Resources and Diversity.	• HEA Anti-Racism Principles adopted and signed in October 2023. • Race Equality Working Group establish in January 2024 to develop and consider actions for inclusion in the Institute's Race Equality Action Plan. • RACE Equality Action Plan to be delivered by Q4 2025. • College of Sanctuary Working Group established in January 2024 with the aim of working towards attaining University of Sanctuary Status. • DkIT TY STEM outreach is currently in its fourth year. In 2024, visits to schools attended by 500 female students and 100 of these were invited to attend STEM taster workshops on campus. The aim is to increase female representation on STEM programmes. In January 2025, 5 school visits attended by over 500 students took place. • DkIT implemented the Staff Development Network Mentoring Programme in 2024 (25 staff members participated). This is in line with DkIT's commitment to Professional Development. • EDI data related to staff and students is collected and analysed annually and presented to the Executive Board and Governing Body (report presented in October 2024). • Family Leave Policies are reviewed annually to ensure compliance with EDI language and terminology. • Second version of the Gender Identity and Expression Policy was developed and is currently with Institute management and unions for approval. • Recruitment and Selection Policy published in 2024. • Gender balance attained in the membership of Governing Body and all sub-committees.

		• The School of Engineering attained an Athena SWAN Bronze award during the 2023/2024 reporting period. • Institute submitted an Athena SWAN Bronze renewal application in January 2025. Currently awaiting results. • DkIT awarded Autism Friendly Campus in 2024. • DkIT appointed a Sexual Violence & Harassment Prevention Manager in 2024.
	Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) • Review Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedures. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2023/2024).
	Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) • Document and record RPL applications in a structured, standard format to allow for the development of an RPL precedence database. Manual system implemented with incorporation into the Institute's CRM system to be investigated. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office (RPL Lead, HEA HCI Pillar 3 Project).	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2023/2024).
	Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) • Provide professional development and supports. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office (DkIT RPL Lead).	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2023/2024).
	Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) • Engage with enterprise and employers to explore the potential for RPL for access and progression in areas of skills needs. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office (DkIT RPL Lead).	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2023/2024).

	Institutional Review (CINNTE Review) • Review Institutional Review Action plan and identify priorities as appropriate. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office with other functional areas as appropriate.	Ongoing/in progress and will continue into the next reporting period. See AQR Part B: Section 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period (2023/2024).

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

The section provides the meeting schedules for all significant academic governance bodies for the reporting period 2023/2024 (See AQR Part A for DkIT governance structures). Institute governance meetings continued to be conducted in blended mode (face-to-face and/or remotely using web conferencing software (Microsoft Teams) during the reporting period 2023/2024. A summary of items/issues discussed at the meetings is provided in support of the meeting schedule listings (cross referenced with other sections of the AQR, if appropriate).

Body	Meeting Dates
Academic Council (AC)	29th September 2023
Academic Council (AC)	16th October 2023 (Special Meeting)
Academic Council (AC)	24th November 2023
Academic Council (AC)	7th February 2024 (Special Meeting)
Academic Council (AC)	23rd February 2024
Academic Council (AC)	26th April 2024
Academic Council (AC)	24th May 2024
Academic Council (AC)	20th June 2024
Standing Committee (SC)	13th October 2023
Standing Committee (SC)	19th October 2023 (Special Meeting)
Standing Committee (SC)	25th October 2023 (Special Meeting)
Standing Committee (SC)	31st October 2023 (Special Meeting)
Standing Committee (SC)	27th November 2023 (Special Meeting)
Standing Committee (SC)	8th December 2023
Standing Committee (SC)	26th January 2024
Standing Committee (SC)	22nd March 2024
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	6th October 2023
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	1st December 2023
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	9th February 2024
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	12th April 2024
Learning and Teaching Sub-committee (LTSC)	31st May 2024

Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC)	1st September 2023
Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC)	20th October 2023
Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC)	15th December 2023
Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC)	16th February 2024
Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC)	19th April 2024
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	22nd September 2023
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	17th November 2023
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	2nd February 2024
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	15th March 2024
Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC)	17th May 2024
Research Sub-committee (RSC)	15th September 2023
Research Sub-committee (RSC)	10th November 2023
Research Sub-committee (RSC)	19th January 2024
Research Sub-committee (RSC)	8th March 2024
Research Sub-committee (RSC)	10th May 2024
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	8th September 2023
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	27th October 2023
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	12th January 2024
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	1st March 2024
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	3rd May 2024
DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB)	14th June 2024
Executive Board	6th September 2023
Executive Board	20th September 2023
Executive Board	4th October 2023
Executive Board	18th October 2023
Executive Board	1st November 2023
Executive Board	15th November 2023
Executive Board	22nd November 2023

Executive Board	29th November 2023
Executive Board	10th January 2024 (Reconvened 17th January 2024)
Executive Board	24th January 2024
Executive Board	7th February 2024
Executive Board	21st February 2024
Executive Board	6th March 2024
Executive Board	20th March 2024
Executive Board	10th April 2024
Executive Board	8th May 2024
Executive Board	22nd May 2024
Executive Board	5th June 2024
Executive Board	19th June 2024
Executive Board	3rd July 2024
Governing Body	3rd October 2023
Governing Body	7th November 2023
Governing Body	12th December 2023
Governing Body	30th January 2024
Governing Body	27th February 2024
Governing Body	9th March 2024
Governing Body	30th April 2024
Governing Body	11th June 2024
Governing Body	23rd July 2024
Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)	5th October 2023
Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)	21st November 2023
Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)	7th March 2024
Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)	16th May 2024
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	17th October 2023
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	30th November 2023
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	4th March 2024
Academic Heads Forum (AHF)	7th May 2024

Academic Council

There were eight meetings of Academic Council and eight meetings of the Standing Committee held during the reporting period 2023/2024. There were six scheduled meetings and two special meetings of Academic Council. There were four scheduled meetings and four special meetings of the Standing Committee.

Standing Items and Topics discussed: Regular items for Academic Council meetings include: Reports and approval of minutes from sub-committees; Policy approvals (new and amended; see AQR Part A); Ratification of programme validations; Annual monitoring (External Examiner Reports Analysis and Action Plan); Periodic Reviews (Professional Support Units (Student Services); Approval of External Examiners; Ratification of student assessment results; The Student Voice is also a standing item on the agenda for Council. In addition, topics discussed included: Academic Integrity Updates; Programmatic Review; Register of Prizes; Academic Council Constitution; Academic Council Consultation; Strategic Plan 2024-2028; Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure-Panels; Student Retention Working Group; Formation of Micro-credentials Working Group; Student Feedback Summary and Action Plan(s). Vacancies on Council and sub-committees were filled as appropriate. A student expulsion was also considered and forwarded to the Governing Body in the reporting period.

Academic Council Sub committees

A total of 26 Academic Council sub-committee meetings took place during the reporting period 2023/2024, this included five meetings of the Learning and Teaching sub-committee (LTSC), five meetings of the Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC), five meetings of the Research Sub-committee (RSC) and six meetings of the DkIT Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB). The Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC) also met on five occasions.

Executive Board

There were twenty meetings of the Executive Board held during the reporting period 2023/2024 (see Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule).

Topics discussed: TU Rise; TSAF (Technological Sector Advancement Fund); Mazars Report; Sustainability Plan; Finance; Strategic Planning Process; Recruitment; Operations; THEA Working Groups; Capital Projects; Devolved Grant; Tuition Fees; DkIT/Maynooth Strategic Collaboration; Governance; Human Resources; Information Technology (IT); N-TUTORR; Athena SWAN; Stage 1 Programme Proposals.

Governing Body

Nine scheduled meetings of the Institute Governing Body were held during the reporting period of 2023/2024 (see Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule).

Topics discussed: HEA Annual Governance Statement; Executive Board Report; Finance and Audit Risk Committee (FAR); Land and Buildings Committee (L&B); Strategic Planning 2024-2028; New HEA Compact Process; Climate Action Plan; Appointment of Chairs to subcommittees; Recruitment; Funding the Future; Capital Projects; Programme Fees; System Performance Framework; Governing Body Membership.

Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC)

Four meetings of the Institute Management and Planning Committee (IMPC) were held during 2023/2024 (see Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule).

Topics discussed: IT Update; Student Lockers; Car Parking for Major Events; Calendar of Outreach Events; Strategic Plan; Review of Ticketing Systems; Dashboard for staff access to systems; Academic Calendar.

Academic Heads Forum (AHF)

Four meetings of the Institute Academic Heads Forum (AHF) were held during 2023/2024 (see Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule).

Topics discussed: IT Update; Strategic Plan Consultation; Space Utilisation Survey; PEC Submissions; Academic Heads Workload; Micro-credentials Policy; Timetabling System Upgrade; Family Leave Entitlements; Student Retention and Progression; HEA Student Survey Review.

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

This section details changes to units of governance, and to leadership/management (e.g., members of senior management; heads of schools; heads of professional support units) that occurred during the reporting period 2023/2024 and are directly concerned with the maintenance and enhancement of quality in the institution.

The Institute appointed a Mental Health Nurse Advisor in January 2024 on a two-year fixed term contract, funded by the HEA Mental Health Funding, to provide a comprehensive suite of mental health and wellbeing supports within DkIT Student Services. This role goes beyond immediate assistance, adopting a holistic approach to student well-being. DkIT also appointed a Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention Manager in the reporting period (2023/2024).

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

This section discusses internal monitoring activities and periodic reviews including reviews that have been completed or are in progress during the reporting period 2023/2024.

1.4.1 Annual Monitoring

Internal monitoring is a core part of the Institute's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework (see AQR Part A). The following internal monitoring activities are completed on an annual basis (with other monitoring for particular purposes being completed if applicable and as appropriate):

- Annual School Monitoring (Programme Board Reporting (including PSRB reporting as appropriate), External Examining, Student Feedback, Programme Changes.
- Annual Postgraduate Research (PGR) Monitoring.
- Annual Professional Service Unit Monitoring (Student Services) Monitoring.

1.4.1.1 Annual School Programme Monitoring

Programme Board reports are the primary output of the academic programme monitoring activities that take place annually across all Schools and are integral part of the Institute's academic quality assurance and enhancement framework. In the reporting period, taught programmes were reviewed by the Programme Boards in each School (Business and Humanities, Engineering, Health and Science, Informatics and Creative Arts) and reported in the Annual Programme Board Reports for 2023/2024. Schools were required to submit reports to the Registrar's Office in December 2024 (for 2023/2024). Reports are submitted using a standard template which has been adopted by Academic Council. The Registrar's Office support the Schools and provide sources of evidence for consideration by Programme Boards and subsequent inclusion as appropriate in the reports (admissions data, student feedback data, progression data, external examiner reports, graduate outcome survey data (if available for the period) and other relevant information). A consolidated summary of the Programme Board Reports is normally presented, with recommendation(s) and action(s), to the May/June meeting of the Academic Council.

One of the sources of evidence used to compile Programme Board Reports are the annual reports submitted by External Examiners (the report contains the following sections: "Information Provided to the External Examiner", "Assessment Process", "Standards", "Examination Board Meeting", "Action Taken on Previous Reports" and "Further Comments. The Registrar's External Examiner Reports Analysis and Action Plan for a particular academic year is presented to the Academic Council. The report, which is an indicator of how the External Examining system is operating generally, provides a qualitative analysis of External Examiner reports submitted to the Registrar's Office for a particular academic year. The purpose of the analysis is to determine if the External Examining system as a whole

is enabling the Institute to assure the standard of assessments and thus contribute to the maintenance of the integrity of DkIT's awards. This analysis compliments the External Examiner Report analysis conducted by Heads of Department and Programme Boards at Department level within Schools.

Methodology for Reporting Period: The analysis of the External Examiner Reports for the reporting period (2023/2024) had not been fully completed before the submission of the Annual Quality Report (AQR) but will be completed before the end of the academic year 2024/2025. Qualitative comments provided under each section in the External Examiner Reports submitted by External Examiners will be analysed and categorised under the headings "Strengths", "Recommendations for Improvement" and "Overall Effectiveness". An action plan will then be developed using the aggregated recommendations for improvement under the following headings "Information Provision to External Examiner", "Assessment Process" and "Preparation and Guidance for External Examiner Role" (sections in the External Examiner Report). The actions will then be considered and prioritised by the Academic Quality Sub-committee (AQSC) of the Academic Council before subsequent implementation.

Findings for Reporting Period: Overall, based on the initial analysis of the External Examiner Reports, the external examining system at DkIT was found to be effective and fit-for-purpose. The quality of the assessment processes continues to assure the standard and integrity of the awards made at DkIT. The feedback provided by the External Examiners indicates a strong commitment by DkIT to delivering a high-quality educational experience to students on their programme of study.

The School of Health and Science submitted its Annual Report to the Veterinary Council of Ireland (PSRB) for the *Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Nursing* programme.

Student Feedback

As mentioned previously, student feedback is one of the sources of evidence provided by the Registrar's Office, in collaboration with the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), to academic Schools for discussion and action by Programme Boards. There are two Institute-level student feedback instruments: *StudentSurvey.ie* and the programme-level student feedback survey (QA3).

DkIT participates in *StudentSurvey.ie*, the national student experience survey (first year, final year undergraduate students and taught postgraduate) in Ireland. However, the student feedback survey did not take place in the 2023/2024 reporting period due to a strategic review initiated by the StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group. This review, informed by stakeholder feedback and two external consultancy reports (by MI: Lab and Crowe), identified the need to revisit the governance, strategic objectives, and impact of the survey. As a result, a decision was made to pause the survey in 2024 to facilitate a comprehensive review process.

A dedicated Working Group, with representation from key stakeholders, is currently redesigning the survey instrument, refining survey questions, improving accessibility, and transitioning from the current indicator scoring to a simpler method. The goal is to ensure that the feedback survey remains relevant and impactful in capturing the student experience in the evolving higher education landscape. It is anticipated that fieldwork will resume in 2026 (academic year 2025/2026) with a revitalized survey framework.

The programme-level (QA3) student feedback survey was administered in semester 1 and semester 2 of the reporting period by the Registrar's Office and was the main student feedback mechanism for 2023/2024.

Programme Changes

Programme changes are considered by the Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC) of the Academic Council as part of the Institute's quality assurance and enhancement annual monitoring activities. There were five meetings of the Programme Evaluation Sub-committee (PEC) of the Academic Council in the reporting period 2023/2024 (See AQR Part B, Section 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule). Submissions were assessed by PEC during the reporting period 2023/2024 and were classified as "Minor", "Structural" or "Major" changes in accordance with DkIT's Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes. Minor changes did not affect the programme learning outcomes of a programme and were approved by PEC. Structural changes that do not compromise the programme's stated aims, objectives, and intended learning outcomes are required to undergo a differential validation. Major changes that change a programme learning outcomes (POLs) must undergo a full (re)validation.

The following types of amendments were approved or discussed:

- **Assessment Modifications:** Changes in assessment structure, weightings, and types of assessment (e.g., shift from final examinations to continuous assessment).

- **Structural Changes:** Reallocation of modules between semesters.

- **Indicative Content Revisions:** Updates to module content, including addition/removal of skills and realignment with industry or accreditation requirements.

- **Programme Delivery Adjustments:** Changes in delivery mode (e.g., from on-campus to online or adjustments to lab/practical formats).

- **Entry Requirement Modifications:** Updates to admission criteria to increase student eligibility for programmes which were determined to be beyond the sub-committee's scope and was referred to the Academic Council.

PEC had the following impact on programme quality:

- Maintained academic standards by carefully evaluating proposed programme changes.

- Encouraged alignment of assessment types with the student learning experience, industry needs and recommendations of External Examiners.

- Facilitated improvements in programme structure to support the student learning experience.

The Registrar's Office noted that there is no evidence of PEC exceeding its authority or making decisions outside its designated role. Instead, the sub-committee demonstrated sound governance and adherence to quality assurance policy and procedures.

1.4.1.2 Postgraduate Research (PGR) Monitoring

The Research and Graduate Studies Office conducts quality assurance and enhancement monitoring activities annually in accordance with the DkIT Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework. DkIT submits an Annual Postgraduate Research Report (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/professional-services/registrars-office/quality-office/) to Dublin City University's (DCU's) Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) as part of the Collaborative Partnership Agreement which is an integral part of the DkIT quality assurance and enhancement framework relating to internal monitoring. Annual Reporting for the collaborative partnership arrangement is through the DCU Graduate Research Studies Board (GRSB) and DCU Academic Council. DkIT submits the Annual Postgraduate Research Report to DCU in October annually. The Annual Report is informed by student feedback (DkIT Postgraduate Research Student Feedback Survey and the national *PGR StudentSurvey.ie* Feedback Survey (https://studentsurvey.ie/) which are core quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms for postgraduate research provision (See AQR Part A, Section 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review). The DkIT Postgraduate Research Student Feedback Survey is administered when they PGR StudentSurvey.ie does not run nationally.

DkIT Postgraduate Research Student (PGR) Feedback Survey

Postgraduate research students were surveyed from the 21st August 2024 to 13th October 2024 and responses were anonymous for the academic year 2023/2024.

The questions in the survey were organised under the following categories (aligned to the categories in the *PGRStudentSurvey.ie* student feedback survey):

1. Research Infrastructure and facilities
2. Supervision
3. Research Culture
4. Progress and Assessment

5.   Development Opportunities

6.   Research Skills

7.   Other Transferable Skills

8.   Responsibilities and Supports

9.   Personal Outlook

10.   Motivations and Career

11.   Overall Experience

Within each of these categories the postgraduate research students were asked a series of questions resulting in a mixture of both quantitative (using a number of different Likert Scales) and qualitative feedback for the Institute to consider and to develop an action plan where improvements in its provision of postgraduate research education could be implemented.

The response rate for the PGR student feedback survey was 46% (40 responses of a possible 87 participants) (this compared to a response rate of 36.6% in 2022/2023 with the *PGRStudentSurvey.ie*).

The breakdown/demographic of respondents was as follows:

Programme of Study

● Doctorate (PhD)	39
● Masters by Research	1

98%
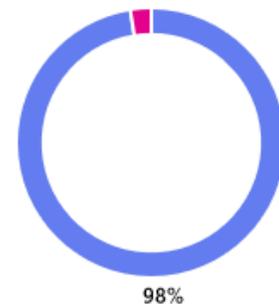
Year of Study

|	
● 1st Year	5
● 2nd Year	8
● 3rd Year	16
● 4th Year	4
● 5th Year	6
● Other	1
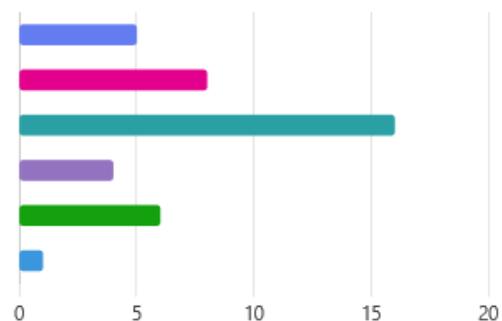
Study Status

- ● Full-time   37
- ● Part-time   3

8%

93%
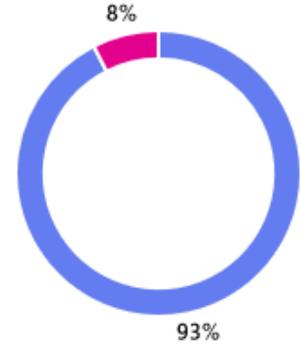
The following is a summary of the quantitative and qualitative findings from the PGR feedback survey.

Overall Satisfaction with Research Programme- *How satisfied are you with your overall experience in the research programme?*

- ● Very satisfied   5
- ● Satisfied   19
- ● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied   9
- ● Dissatisfied   5
- ● Very dissatisfied   2

5%   13%

13%

23%

48%
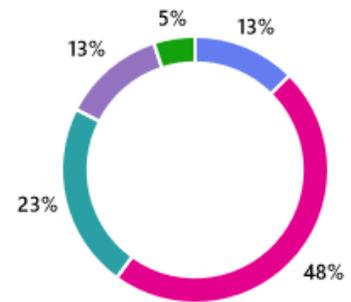
61% of respondents were either "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with their overall postgraduate student experience. 18% of respondents were either "Dissatisfied" or "Very Dissatisfied" with their overall student experience. Students expressed overall satisfaction with their postgraduate research experience, indicating that while challenges exist, they appreciate the support and opportunities available within the Institute.

Category: Research Infrastructure and Facilities

Access to Research Facilities- *How satisfied are you with the research facilities and resources available to you?*

- ● Very satisfied   2
- ● Satisfied   21
- ● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied   8
- ● Dissatisfied   9
- ● Very dissatisfied   0

5%

23%

20%

53%
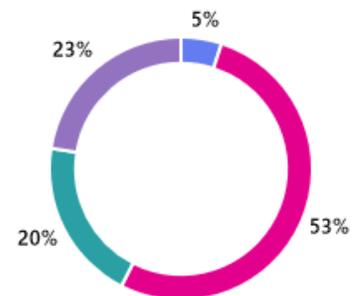
Library Resources- *How satisfied are you with the library resources (e.g., books, journals, databases) available to support your research?*

|	
● Very Satisfied	10
● Satisfied	21
● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6
● Dissatisfied	3
● Very dissatisfied	0

8%
25%
15%
53%
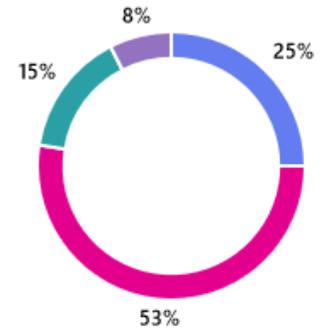
Laboratory and Equipment Access- *If applicable, how satisfied are you with access to laboratories and research equipment?*

● Very Satisfied	2
● Satisfied	12
● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20
● Dissatisfied	6
● Very dissatisfied	0

15% 5%
30%
50%
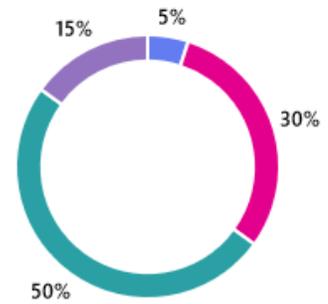
Workspace Availability- *How would you rate the availability and quality of your workspace (e.g., office, desk)?*

● Excellent	7
● Good	14
● Fair	13
● Poor	6

15% 18%
35%
33%
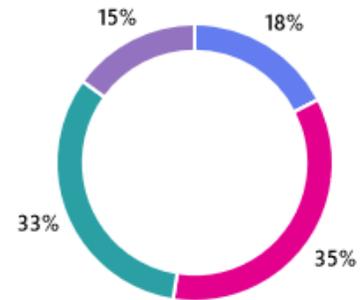
Category: Supervision

Frequency of Supervision Meetings- *How frequently do you meet with your supervisor(s)?*

● Weekly	15
● Bi-weekly	15
● Monthly	5
● Less Frequently	5

13%
13% 38%
38%
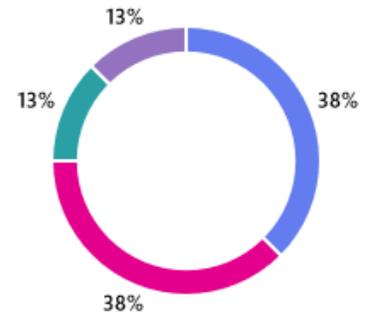
Quality of Supervision- *How would you rate the quality of supervision you receive?*

● Excellent	21
● Good	8
● Fair	7
● Poor	4

10%
18%
53%
20%
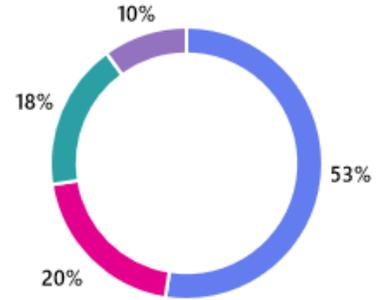
Supervisor Accessibility- *How accessible are your supervisors when you need assistance?*

● Very accessible	28
● Somewhat accessible	8
● Not very accessible	4
● Not accessible at all	0

10%
20%
70%
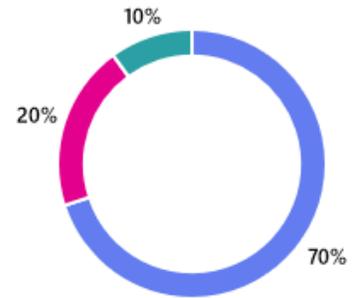
Timeliness of Feedback- *How timely is the feedback provided by your supervisors?*

● Always timely	22
● Usually timely	10
● Sometimes timely	5
● Rarely timely	3

8%
13%
55%
25%
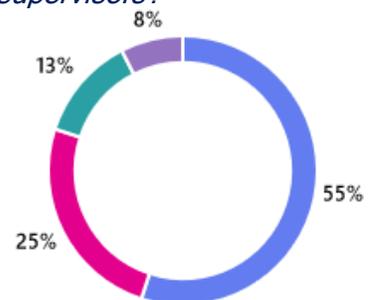
Supervisor Expertise- *How would you rate the subject matter expertise of your supervisors?*

● Excellent	16
● Good	18
● Fair	4
● Poor	2

5%
10%
40%
45%
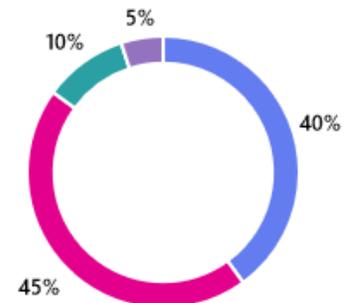
Supervisory Relationship- *How would you describe your relationship with your supervisors?*

|		
●	Very supportive	28
●	Supportive	3
●	Neither supportive nor unsupportive	5
●	Unsupportive	2
●	Very unsupportive	2
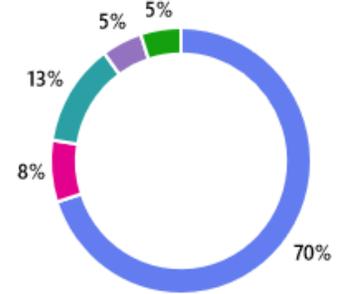
Category: Research Culture

Opportunities for Collaboration- *How would you rate the opportunities for collaboration and networking within your research community?*

|		
●	Excellent	2
●	Good	11
●	Fair	13
●	Poor	14
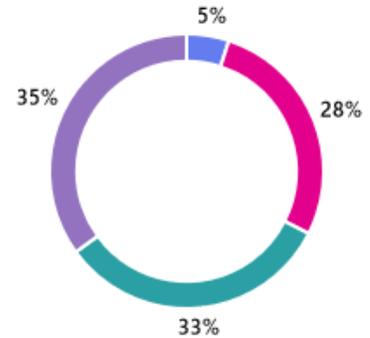
Sense of Community- *How would you rate your sense of community within your department and among other research students?*

●	Very strong	3
●	Strong	13
●	Neither strong nor weak	9
●	Weak	11
●	Very weak	4
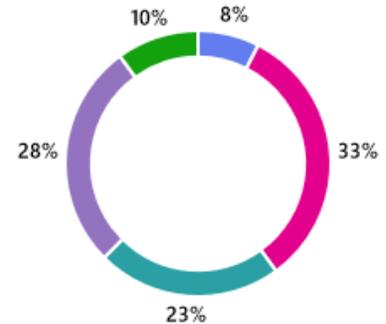
Support for Conference Attendance- *How satisfied are you with the support for attending and presenting at conferences?*

●	Very satisfied	9
●	Satisfied	11
●	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8
●	Dissatisfied	5
●	Very dissatisfied	7
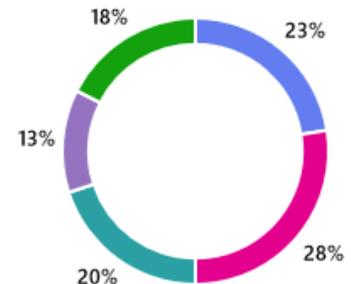
Category: Progress and Assessment

Clarity of Progress Requirements- *How clear are the requirements and milestones for your research progress?*

|	
● Very Clear	13
● Clear	16
● Somewhat Clear	6
● Not Clear	5

13%
33%
15%
40%
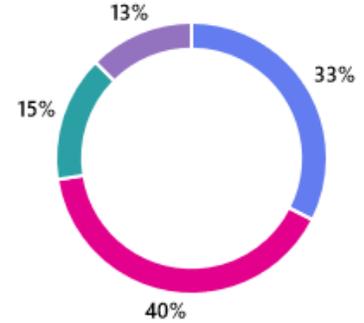
Effectiveness of Progress Reviews- *How effective are the progress reviews and assessments in providing constructive feedback?*

● Very effective	11
● Effective	15
● Somewhat effective	7
● Not effective	7

18%
28%
18%
38%
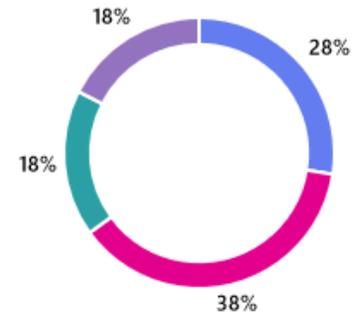
Timeliness of Progress Feedback- *How timely is the feedback provided during progress reviews and assessments?*

● Always timely	21
● Usually timely	7
● Sometimes timely	8
● Rarely timely	4

10%
20%
53%
18%
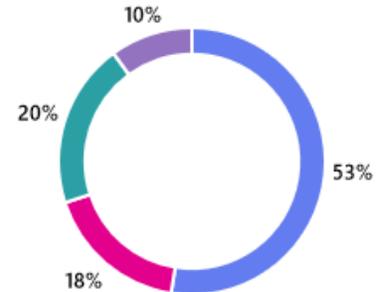
Category: Development Opportunities

Availability of Training - *How would you rate the availability of training relevant to your research?*

|	
● Excellent	2
● Good	13
● Fair	13
● Poor	12

5%
30%
33%
33%
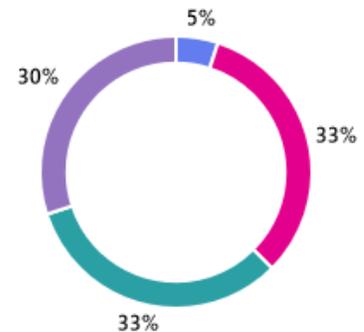
Effectiveness of Professional Development Workshops - *How effective are the professional development workshops in enhancing your skills?*

● Very effective	5
● Effective	8
● Somewhat effective	20
● Not effective	7

13%
20%
50%
18%
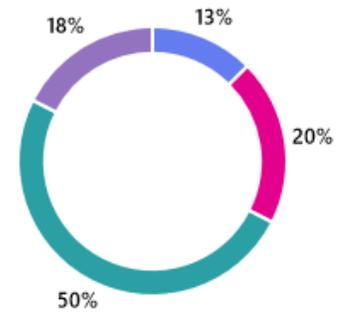
Career Development Support - *How satisfied are you with the career development support offered (e.g., job placement services, career counselling)?*

● Very satisfied	3
● Satisfied	10
● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	16
● Dissatisfied	4
● Very dissatisfied	7

8%
25%
40%
10%
18%
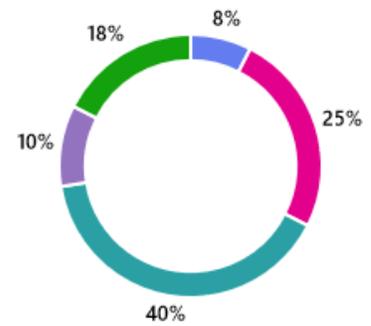
Category: Research Skills

Research Methodology Training- *How would you rate the training provided on research methodologies?*

● Excellent	3
● Good	16
● Fair	10
● Poor	11

8%
40%
25%
28%
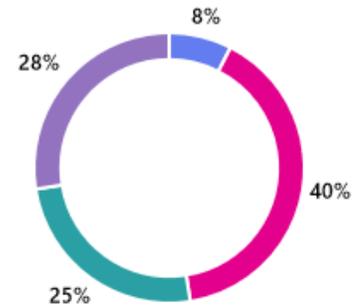
Research Ethics and Compliance Training- *How effective is the training on research ethics and compliance?*

● Very effective	7
● Effective	17
● Somewhat effective	14
● Not effective	2

5%
18%
43%
35%
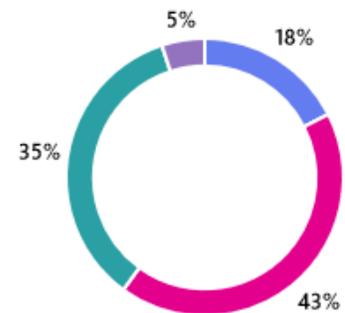
Data Analysis Skills- *How satisfied are you with the support and training on data analysis skills*

● Very satisfied	2
● Satisfied	14
● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11
● Dissatisfied	9
● Very dissatisfied	4

10% 5%
23% 35%
28%
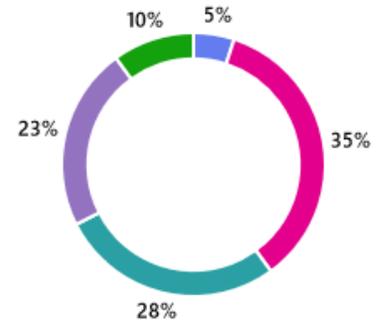
Category: Other Transferable Skills

Writing Skills- *How satisfied are you with the support and training on academic writing skills?*

● Very Satisfied	4
● Satisfied	12
● Neutral	17
● Dissatisfied	4
● Very dissatisfied	3

8% 10%
10%
30%
43%
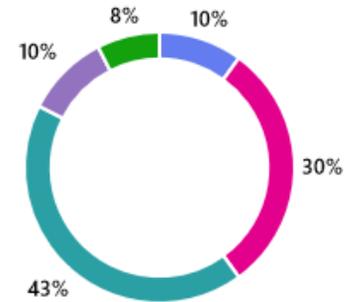
Presentation Skills- *How satisfied are you with the support and training on presentation skills?*

● Very satisfied	7
● Satisfied	12
● Neutral	14
● Dissatisfied	3
● Very dissatisfied	4

10% 18%
8%
30%
35%
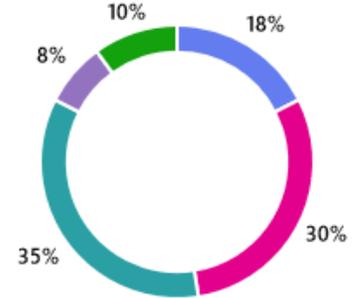
Project Management Skills- *How would you rate the training and support for developing project management skills?*

● Excellent	4
● Good	12
● Fair	18
● Poor	6

15% 10%
30%
45%
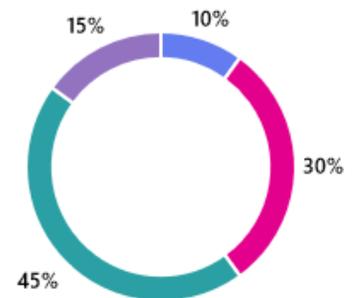
Category: Responsibilities and Supports

Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities- *How clear are your roles and responsibilities within your research programme?*

- Very clear — 14
- Clear — 18
- Somewhat Clear — 4
- Not Clear — 4

10% / 10% / 35% / 45%
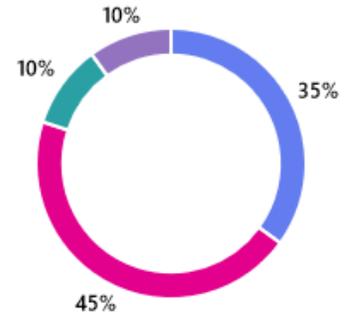
Administrative Support- *How satisfied are you with the administrative support provided (e.g., registration, thesis submission)?*

- Very satisfied — 7
- Satisfied — 22
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied — 8
- Dissatisfied — 3
- Very dissatisfied — 0

8% / 18% / 20% / 55%
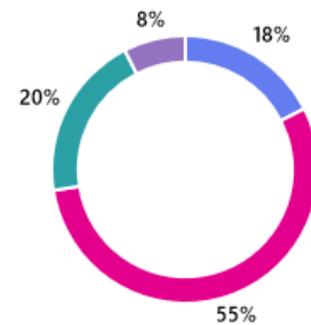
Helpfulness of Administrative Staff- *How helpful are the administrative staff?*

- Very helpful — 15
- Helpful — 18
- Somewhat helpful — 7
- Not helpful — 0

18% / 38% / 45%
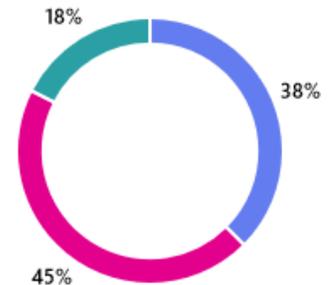
Financial Support Services- *How satisfied are you with the financial support services (e.g., scholarships, grants, assistantships)?*

- Very satisfied — 7
- Satisfied — 16
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied — 7
- Dissatisfied — 5
- Very dissatisfied — 5

13% / 18% / 13% / 18% / 40%
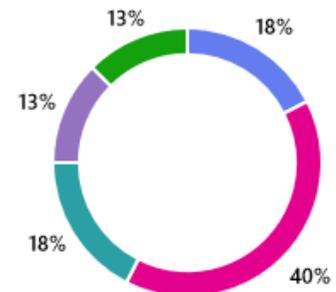
Category: Personal Outlook

Work-Life Balance- *How would you rate your ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance during your research programme?*

- ● Excellent   8
- ● Good   16
- ● Fair   11
- ● Poor   5
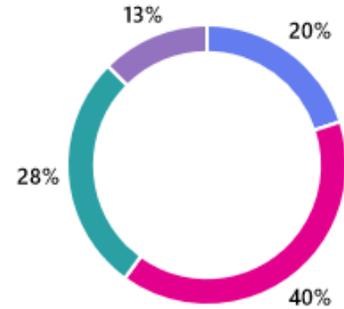
Mental Health Support Services- *How satisfied are you with the mental health support services available to you?*

- ● Very satisfied   7
- ● Satisfied   16
- ● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied   12
- ● Dissatisfied   4
- ● Very dissatisfied   1
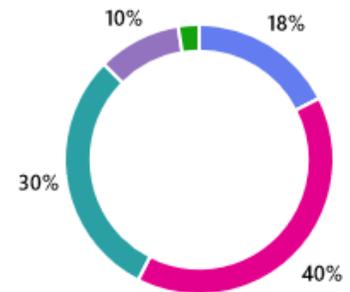
Career Aspirations- *How clear are your career aspirations and goals post-research program?*

- ● Very clear   7
- ● Clear   15
- ● Somewhat clear   12
- ● Not clear   6
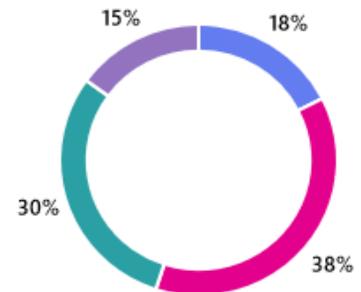
Career Development Opportunities- *How satisfied are you with the career development opportunities provided by the institution?*

- ● Very satisfied   3
- ● Satisfied   8
- ● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied   17
- ● Dissatisfied   6
- ● Very dissatisfied   6
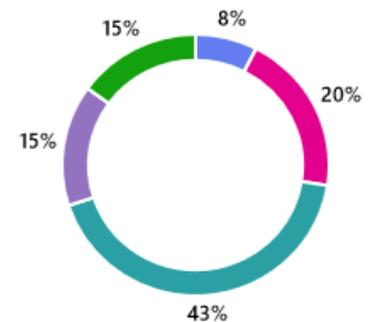
Beneficial Aspects- *What aspects of your research experience have been most beneficial?*

Student feedback on the most beneficial aspects of their research experience highlights several key themes, encompassing skill development, supervisory support, community and networking, research opportunities, institutional support, flexibility, and overall positive reflections. Overall, postgraduate research students expressed a strong appreciation for their research journey, acknowledging both the challenges and rewards it brought. Many described the experience as transformative and fulfilling, with some explicitly stating that undertaking a PhD was an invaluable opportunity for their personal and professional development. This feedback underscores the multifaceted nature of the research experience and highlights the importance of continued institutional support, supervisor engagement, and opportunities for skill development to further enhance the postgraduate research environment.

Challenges Faced- *What are the main challenges you have faced during your research journey?*

Feedback was collected from postgraduate research students regarding the main challenges they encountered/are encountering during their research journey. The responses revealed several key themes reflecting both institutional and external challenges, as well as personal, academic, supervisor and career-related difficulties. These findings will inform future actions/initiatives aimed at enhancing the postgraduate research student experience, including efforts to improve access to facilities, strengthen community engagement, enhance supervisor support, and provide greater career guidance.

Suggestions for Improvement- *What suggestions do you have for improving the research programme and support services?*

As part of the Institute's commitment to continuous improvement, postgraduate research students were invited to provide feedback on areas for enhancement within their research programme and associated support services. The responses highlighted several key themes, including Financial Support, Training and Development, Career Support, Community and Networking, Supervisory Oversight, Administrative Support, Research Infrastructure and General Satisfaction.

See AQR Part B, "3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period" for planned actions relating to the postgraduate research experience for the reporting period 2024/2025.

1.4.1.3 Annual Professional Support Unit (Student Services) Monitoring

Student services request feedback from service users as part of their annual monitoring activities. Feedback is reviewed on an ongoing basis with service providers and annually as part of the Service Annual Report (https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/institute-reports-and-publications/student-services-annual-reports/student-services-annual-reports.html). Service Providers participate on national

committees and review their service in line with national standards and best practice. Work plans and resources are reviewed in line with feedback, best practice and the Institute's strategic plan.

A Quality Enhancement Plan was developed by the Services in September 2023, to support the implementation of the recommendations from the periodic quality review which took place in 2022/2023. This plan was approved by the Institutes Executive and workplans developed by the individual services.

The following is a summary of the data and monitoring activities for the individual services for the reporting period 2023/2024:

Disability Service

A student disability survey was distributed to 320 students, but unfortunately, only 33 responses were received. A specific question aimed at first-year students sought to gauge their experience of induction. Among the 17 first-year respondents, all reported being satisfied with their transition to DkIT, with most having contacted the Disability Service prior to commencing their studies. A key theme emerging from the survey is the need for additional social spaces and seating in main reception areas, particularly for students with physical or mobility challenges while waiting for lifts. Additionally, students highlighted the importance of greater empathy and enhancements to programmes to improve inclusivity, particularly in areas such as projects, group work, and deadlines.

As members of the Disability Advisory Workers Network (DAWN), we actively engage in benchmarking our services, staying informed on legislative developments, and keeping up to date with advancements in technology, resources, and best practices for supporting students with disabilities. This ongoing engagement serves as a key mechanism for quality improvement and enhancement within our Disability Service (DS). DAWN provides a structured forum for Disability Officers to share expertise, develop knowledge and skills and collaborate on policies and procedures for supporting students with disabilities in higher education. It works towards developing professional standards and best practices for student inclusion and professionalises the role of the Disability Officer. The collaboration among all the Disability Officers across HEIs allows DkIT to share knowledge and helps strengthen the Service. DAWN also influences the allocation of and criteria for the Fund for Students with Disabilities. Being part of DAWN provides the Service with professional development opportunities, helps establish standards, promotes inclusive education, enables knowledge sharing and gives a collective voice to advocate for and support students with disabilities.

Counselling Service

An institute wide student survey was conducted to gather feedback in relation to students' awareness, understanding and experience of the counselling service.

50 of 189 respondents (26%) reported having attended the student counselling service. The main reason cited for not accessing the service was not having felt in need of the service (35%) while others availed of supports from other services, including the online platform 'Togetherall', family or friends (21%). 16% cited lack of time as a barrier to engaging and 11% reported either not being aware of the service or not being sure of what attending would involve.

80% of students who reported attending the service were 'very' (60%) or 'somewhat' (20%) satisfied with their experience. 12% were either 'very' (4%) or 'somewhat (8%) dissatisfied' with their experience and 8% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Unfortunately, these students did not provide additional comments, making it difficult to identify the specific factors that negatively impacted their experiences.

Students indicated multiple primary benefits from their contact with the service, including feeling listened to, heard and understood (56%); being helped to understand and manage the difficulties they were having (50%), reducing levels of distress (34%) and importantly, helping students to remain in college (28%). These are considered core outcomes in relation to service objectives.

The following statistics are drawn from CIAO, a standardised measure of 'Counselling Impact on Academic Outcomes' used across colleges in the UK.

Question	Responses	Pre-intervention	Post-intervention
To what extent are you considering leaving your course because of your problems?	Not at all Only occasionally Sometimes Often Most of the time	20 (44%) 9 (20%) 10 (22%) 4 (9%) 2 (4%)	23 (51%) 13 (29%) 7 (16%) 1 (2%) 1 (2%)
To what extent would you say your problems are affecting your study?	Not at all Only occasionally Sometimes Often Most of the time	1 (2%) 8 (18%) 12 (27%) 15 (33%) 9 (20%)	5 (11%) 14 (31%) 12 (27%) 11 (24%) 3 (7%)
To what extent would you say your problems are affecting your overall experience at university?	Not at all Only occasionally Sometimes Often Most of the time	1 (2%) 4 (9%) 14 (31%) 18 (40%) 8 (18%)	2 (4%) 19 (42%) 11 (24%) 10 (22%) 3 (7%)

The responses indicate improvements across all areas of academic engagement.

A further six questions were asked as part of the post-intervention CIAO measure. Responses to these questions are summarised below:

- 86% said that counselling helped them stay in college. For 15% it was an important or the most significant factor in helping them stay in college.

- 96% said it helped them do better in their academic work. For 21% it was an important or most significant factor in doing better at their academic work.

- 93% said it had improved their overall experience of college/university. For 21% it was an important or the most significant factor in helping them stay in improving their college experience

- 96% said counselling has helped them develop skills that might be useful in obtaining future employment. For 34% it was an important or most significant factor.

- 96% said that counselling has improved their self-esteem. For 34% it was an important or most significant factor in improving their self - esteem.

- 94% said that counselling had helped them feel more positive about the future. For 28% this was an important or most significant factor in feeling more positive about the future.

These figures demonstrate the impact of counselling not just on well-being and self-esteem but on retention and their performance in college, both of which are key factors associated with longer term well-being as well as being key performance indicators for the Institute.

In addition to the use of outcome measures to assess level of progress made by students in relation to presenting issues and impact of counselling on academic outcomes, the service utilised feedback surveys to gather data on service user experience. During the reporting period (2023/2024), 23 students completed the service feedback survey. This low response rate highlights the need to explore ways to increase participation and improve feedback collection. The key findings/responses from the survey were as follows:

Attending the Counselling service helped me to feel listened to and supported.

Chart Title

5 18

- Completely   - Very much
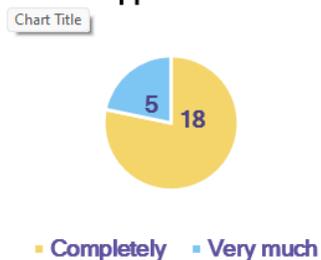
Attending the Counselling Service helped me to understand my difficulties better

10   11

2

- Completely
- Moderately
- Very much
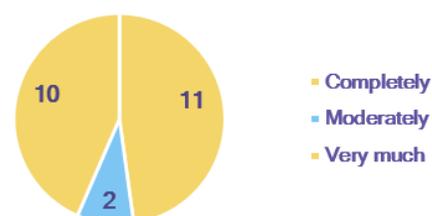
Attending the Counselling Service helped me to manage my difficulties better

- A little
- Completely
- Moderately
- Very much

2

7

12

2
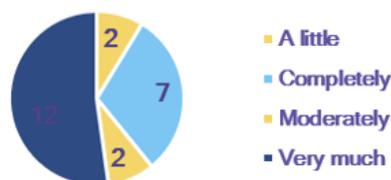
How likely is it that you would use the service again if you felt in need of support?

- Somewhat likely
- Very likely

3

20
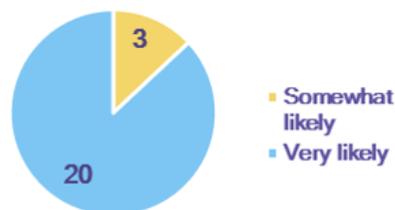
Pastoral Care

A Student Services Survey was distributed in the reporting period to gather students' perspectives on both the overall Student Services experience and specific services, including Pastoral Care. A total of 190 students responded, and a summary of their feedback is provided below:

- **Awareness of the Pastoral Care Service:** 125 students were aware of the service, while 65 were not. This is a positive outcome, reflecting the efforts made to increase awareness and engagement with the service.

- **Usage of the Pastoral Care Service:** The majority of students who engaged with the service did so for advice and guidance (13) or to participate in events (15), while 6 students indicated they used it for financial support. However, this may not accurately reflect the overall number of students who accessed the service, given the relatively small survey response rate.

- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Students provided several recommendations to enhance the service, including:

  o Increased promotion and clearer communication about the service and its purpose.

  o More frequent trips and activities such as hiking and tours.

  o Scheduling workshops and wellbeing sessions after 5 PM to accommodate students with limited daytime availability.

  o Additional talks on wellbeing and stress management.

The feedback gathered highlighted opportunities for further development and greater student engagement with the Pastoral Care Service.

Student Health Unit (SHU)

During this academic year, the Student Health Unit (SHU) invited service users to complete an anonymous online survey (via MS Forms) to assess their overall experience with the service. The responses were collected and reviewed, revealing the following key findings:

- **Overall satisfaction:** 95% of respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with the treatment received at the SHU.

- **Experience with staff:** 97% had a positive experience with the nurse, while 86% reported a positive experience with the doctor.

- **Likelihood to recommend:** 97% of students said they would recommend the service to a friend.

- **Satisfaction with virtual appointments:** 69% were satisfied with online/virtual consultations.

Some students expressed dissatisfaction with the limited scope of services available compared to General Practice, particularly regarding the availability of blood testing. Additionally, concerns were raised about the limited number of doctor consultation hours on campus.

Findings from the recent end-of-year Student Services Survey indicated that 68% of the overall student population had attended the SHU and reported a high level of satisfaction with the service. However, 8% of students were unaware that the service is free of charge, highlighting a need for improved communication on service accessibility.

Sports and Societies

During the reporting period feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 80% of students who completed the general Student Services survey having engaged in sports and societies. The primary reasons for participation were social interaction and enjoyment. Among the 20% who did not participate, the most commonly cited barriers were academic workload, part-time job commitments, and a lack of follow-up from clubs, highlighting an area for improvement. While efforts have been made to expand lunchtime activities, feedback indicates further enhancements are needed in this area.

Qualitative feedback was gathered using Microsoft Forms following sign-up day, the sports and societies officer training event, and the end of the academic year (during the reporting period). Students were encouraged to participate by scanning QR codes at events and on posters around the DkIT campus. A total of 1,773 students signed up during sign-up day and the following two weeks. Additional sign-ups were facilitated on a weekly basis for latecomers, addressing concerns raised in the previous reporting period. This resulted in 32 extra sign-ups, though overall figures were slightly lower than the previous year.

68 sports and society officers attended the office training day, with overwhelmingly positive feedback. A key area identified for improvement was role-specific training, particularly social media training for Public Relations Officers (PROs), which will be introduced in future sessions. Scholarship students (93 in total) found bi-annual meetings with staff highly beneficial, as they provided additional guidance and referrals to key support services, including disability services, physiotherapy, and career support. In response to positive feedback, the retention rate of scholarship students was monitored, revealing that their retention rate is higher than that of the general student population.

The Sports and Societies Office experienced high demand throughout the year, striving to maintain efficient response times despite staffing constraints. A Student Sport Ireland Self Assessment Report (SAR) highlighted key areas for improvement. DkIT's current scholarship funding is significantly lower than that of other institutions. DkIT lacks adequate indoor sports facilities compared to other institutions, although it ranks well for outdoor sports and gym facilities. Also, staffing levels remain low, with only one full-time staff member, below higher education institutions such as Technological University Dublin (19 full-time staff) and Maynooth University (7 full-time staff).

In terms of sports achievements and team development, DkIT continues to support a diverse range of competitive sports teams, with several notable achievements during the reporting period: DkIT Freshers GAA team won Division 2, Ladies Gaelic team won Division 3, Fiachra O'Dhuill won the College Handball Open, Dearbhla Tinnelly secured the National Colleges Boxing title. Encouragingly, athletics, table tennis, and fencing teams returned to competition, having not participated in recent years.

See AQR Part B, "3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period" for planned actions relating to the Professional Support Unit (Student Services) for the reporting period 2024/2025.

Careers and Employability

The Service uses annual Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS), feedback from employer events (via Microsoft Forms), and feedback from students on careers appointments, workshops and events to inform career engagement action plans. The Placement Office also uses feedback from surveys with students and employers to inform placement support and development. Placement Officers are invited to sit on Programme Boards / Placement Working Groups within academic departments across the four schools in the Institute. The key findings from these feedback mechanisms can be found below.

Student Service Survey 2023/2024 (Careers and Employability)

The survey indicates a moderate level of student awareness of the service; however, with engagement at just over a third of the student body, there is significant potential for improvement.

- 41% outlined they did use the Careers Service and the reason for not using the service included; lack of awareness, did not feel they needed the support and too early in my studies.

- The top 3 resources that students are availing of include; Careers Fairs, Careers Workshops, Careers Hub on the Moodle VLE.

- Of those who did use the Careers Service 91% were either very satisfied (55%) or satisfied (36%) with their experience.

- The top 3 benefits identified by students using the Service included: "Gained more information/awareness on my career/study options", "Gained practical skills/knowledge on careers tools including CV, interviews, etc.", "Felt more prepared to achieve career goals".

Careers 1-to-1 Appointments

- 100% agreed scheduling their appointment was easy, (matching previous two reporting periods, 2022/2023 and 2021/22).

- 100% agreed their Careers Advisor paid attention to their query (an increase of 4% on previous reporting period).

- 100% agreed their Careers Advisor was knowledgeable and 95% stated their expectations were met based on their conversation with their career advisor.

- 70% agreed they were able to identify what their next steps would be, which is a minor decrease of 4% on the previous reporting period. Again 100% took action based on the conversation with their careers advisor which has been maintained from previous year.

- 100% agreed that talking to Careers Advisor was valuable and would return if further assistance was required, retaining this from the previous reporting period.

CIBYL Survey

The CIBYL survey (https://www.cibyl.com/) is a national Student and Graduate Survey of all Higher Education Careers Services in Ireland and the United Kingdom. For 2024, the research was conducted between September 2023 – January 2024, with 13,895 total responses, 789 of which were DkIT respondents. DKIT participate in this survey, as part of national benchmarking and as a student feedback mechanism specific to the Careers and Employability service. The key findings were as follows:

Engagement:	2 in 3 students expressed that they are confident that they know where to go for careers advice. Interestingly, those who have not used careers are slightly more confident, indicating that this cohort are aware of services and this is not a barrier for engagement. • 56% of your students have used their careers service, when they have engaged, they are most likely to have attended a careers event. • 44% have not used the career service, a significantly higher proportion of students when compared to the national average. • Reasons cited for non-engagement include being too early in their studies or them being too busy, a trend that has increased since 2023.
Service Satisfaction:	Overall student satisfaction with the careers service has increased by 6% during the reporting period, with 61% indicating satisfaction (2023 - 55%; 2022 - 54%; 2021 - 44%; 2020 - 74%). • First-year students are your most satisfied cohort, where your finalist students are the most likely to select neutral. • Among various service aspects, your students express the highest satisfaction with the usefulness and availability of face-to-face appointment – more so than the national average. • Similarly, to the national average, virtual career fairs received the lowest satisfaction ratings from your students

DkIT student feedback on how to persuade students to engage with the Careers Service included:

• "Argue reasons why early engagement is useful to me."

• "Have open days for each department of classes in college and interact with discussions"

• "Make events with career support after class time or make them a part of my study modules."

• "Make more tailored content within emails and success stories from past students"

• "Offer activities to win prizes or awards. Make social media posts to entice you. Put up posters to raise awareness."

• "I will engage when I have progressed far enough in my course."

• "Enough awareness but not relevant to me"

• "Send emails or mention the benefits of such service in lectures or announcements

The personalisation and specific targeting of student groups, together with embedding career learning into the curriculum is the recurring theme on how best to engage students.

Placement Office Feedback

The Placement Office surveyed student and host sites (using Microsoft Forms) during the reporting period. The key findings for students and employers was as follows:

Students:	• "My work placement experience was extremely positive. It was something I was excited and nervous about. In the first two or three days I was extremely nervous but before the end of the first week I was fully settled in. Seeing people be enthusiastic to have me around and be willing to teach me was a very encouraging thing for me" (3rd Year Audio and Music Production student). • "My placement at "The Pet Hospital" in Waterford City couldn't have been better. I was supported and helped every day and gently encouraged to learn new skills under supervision. The staff clearly love their job and were so good at teaching/helping me as well. It was a pleasure to work with people who love their job" (1st Year Veterinary Nursing). • "I greatly enjoyed my time working with the Careers and Employability team, […the team] were very supportive. Any ideas I had were backed and I was allowed to run with them. If changes were needed during my time, we had a meeting to discuss and adjustments made efficiently and effectively. I look forward to utilising their services while deciding on next steps for September and returning for 4th year" (3rd Year Business and Technology student).
Host Sites:	• "We highly recommended the DKIT Placement Programme. It is very well run and organised by the Faculty. The students are skilled, hardworking and creative. They have made a valuable contribution to the organisation and have fit in well with the team at Photo Museum Ireland" (Photo Museum Ireland). • "We are delighted to have developed a strong link with DkIT in relation to their work placement student programme. The students are always very motivated, keen to learn and make a positive contribution to the programmes they assist in delivering. We look forward to further develop this link in the future" (Monaghan GAA Coaching and Games Department). • "All students we've had to date from DkIT across two courses have been first class. We've had placement students from Ulster University/St Mary's College/Stranmillis/SRC and the DkIT students we've had are as good as any we've had over the last number of years" (Healthy Kidz).

1.4.2 Overview of Periodic Reviews

This section includes reviews completed or in progress during the reporting period 2023/2024. As indicated in the Institute's quality assurance and enhancement framework (AQR Part A), internal periodic reviews can be School Programmatic Reviews (including PSRB accreditation reviews), Postgraduate Research Reviews, Professional Support Unit Reviews and Thematic Reviews. The review cycle typically runs over a five-to-seven-year period and all units should be encompassed over the full period of the cycle. The Institute's review schedule from the previous AQR is provided in Section 1.4.2.2 below (taken from Section 3.2 Reviews Planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods in the previous AQR).

1.4.2.1 Periodic Reviews for Reporting Period

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
Not applicable. No review took place during the reporting period (2023/2024)	• Planned for 2023/2024. However, QQI not in a position to initiate the IEM process due to legislative issues.	• Not applicable.

Note(s):

- Planning and preparations for Programmatic Reviews for the academic years 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 took place during the reporting period 2023/2024.
- See Section 3.2: Reviews Planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods for future reviews.

1.4.2.2 Periodic Review Schedule

The following is the schedule of reviews from the previous AQR (2023/2024; Section 3.2 Reviews Planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods)

Year	2023/2024
Areas/Units	**Professional Support Units (International Office)** • DkIT priortised the authorisation to use the International Education Mark (IEM) when QQI begins accepting applications. The IEM self-assessment process will substitute for the normal periodic review of a Professional Support Unit.

Year	2024/2025
Areas/Units	**Programmatic Reviews:** • School of Engineering; • School of Health and Science; • Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). **Research and Graduate Studies Office:** • HR Excellence in Research Award (externally reviewed).

Year	2025/2026
Areas/Units	**Programmatic Reviews:** • School of Informatics and Creative Arts; • School of Business and Humanities.

Year	2026/2027
Areas/Units	Professional Service Unit (Registrar's Office): • Admissions. • Examinations Office. • Schools Liaison.

Year	2027/2028
Areas/Units	Professional Service Units (Student Services): • Library

Year	2028/2029
Areas/Units	• To be determined.

1.4.3 Expert Review Teams/Panels[3] involved in IQA

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

The table below provides information of review/evaluation processes that were conducted during the reporting period 2023/2024:

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	31	0	0	0	31	0	0
of those:							
On-site processes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Desk reviews	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Virtual processes	31	0	0	0	31	0	0
Average panel size for each process type*	5	0	0	0	5	0	0

excluding secretary if not a full panel member

Note(s):

- Under "Number of review/evaluation processes", "Programme Approvals" refer to either new programme validations or differential programme validations. Exit or Embedded Awards are treated as separate approval processes.
- "Approval/Review of Linked Provider" refers to approval of off-campus venues for programme delivery.
- Under "Number of review/evaluation processes", "Other" refer to module validations.
- Virtual processes continued in the reporting period, 2022/2023.

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[3] 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

The table below provides information in respect of the composition of panels convened by the institution for review/evaluation/approval processes that concluded during the reporting period 2023/2024 (Note: 'Similar institution' denotes an institution with a similar scope and mission – for an IoT, this might be another IoT or a university of applied science, for example):

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	10	4	6	0	0	10	0	0	0	10	0
Secretary	2	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Academic/Discipline Specific	21	9	12	0	0	15	6	0	0	21	0
Student Representative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
QA	3	2	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0
Teaching & Learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
External Industry /Third Mission	10	8	2	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	10

Note(s):

- Figures above are based on counting a panel member only once even if they reviewed more than one programme or chaired more than one panel.
- Panels are gender balanced where possible.
- The Registrar or Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance act as Secretary for all programme validation panels.

- In accordance with the Institute's Policy on the Design and Approval of Programmes (See AQR Part 1) the composition of programme validation panels is as follows:

Major Awards	Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards
- External Chair; - At least two external academics who are acknowledged nationally and/or internationally as academic experts in the field of study; - One practitioner or industry representative; - Representative from the Registrar's Office. - For NFQ level 9 programmes, there must be one academic from outside the State.	- External Chair; - Two external discipline experts; - Representative from the Registrar's Office.

- When programme validation panels are being constituted the Registrar's Office ensure that panel member(s) have Teaching and Learning and Quality Assurance expertise as appropriate (as per "Type of Expert" in the Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA above).

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

This section provides an overview of developments and enhancements during the reporting period 2023/2024.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

The Institute continued its work enhancing supports for Academic Integrity in the reporting period 2023/2024. The Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and the library work collaboratively on academic integrity activities and initiatives. The Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC) (https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/study-experience/student-learning-and-development-centre/) provides scheduled tutorials and one-to-one support on academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism. Tutors also work with lecturers to deliver bespoke classes for specific student groups on many aspects of academic writing, study skills and academic integrity. The SDLC provides a range of resources to support academic integrity and these resources are available to students in the Moodle VLE. The library runs class, drop-ins and provides 1:1 referencing and information literacy support for students (including the provision of Libguides, https://dkit.ie.libguides.com/). The Registrar's Office also provides support sessions on Academic Integrity policy and procedures. This was complemented by inputs from the N-TUTORR project, as academic integrity is one of the project themes (see below for further information).

DkIT continued to provide the Epigeum Academic Integrity suite of modules (https://www.epigeum.com/courses/studying/academic-integrity/) to students and staff, having piloted the modules in academic year 2021/22, following subscription to the modules and commenced planning for the pilot in May 2021. The Academic Integrity modules from Epigeum support institutions in implementing a consistent and unified approach to academic integrity training for both students and staff. The online programme, which is deployed in the Moodle VLE, ensures that every member of the HEI community understands what constitutes best academic practice in their role, substantially reducing the risk of academic misconduct. A number of HEIs across Ireland have adopted the support modules and through Epigeum a community of practice has been established where collaborating partners can share their experiences with the academic integrity modules. In 2022/2023, the Epigeum student module was adopted as the basis for the N-TUTORR student Academic Integrity Digital Badge, as part of a sector-wide, N-TUTORR student digital backpack (see below for further information).

Academic Integrity support sessions were held for staff on the 3rd October and 16th October 2023 covering staff and student guidance on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) for assessments (including the NAIN guidelines for educators) (see AQR Part A), the digital badge developed as part of the N-TUTORR project (https://www.transforminglearning.ie/), Academic Integrity student supports available in the library and general updates on resources for students. A feedback

survey relating to the GenAI guidelines for staff and students was circulated to all staff in semester 2 2023/2024 (there were 33 responses) with a view to inform improvements/enhancements to the guidance and identify training and support needs generally for GenAI. Feedback was gathered to assess the guidance (both staff and student) usefulness and to identify areas for improvement.

Overall, the staff guidance was received positively by staff, particularly for its clarity and flexibility in defining AI use within assessments. The structured approach, which allows staff to either prohibit, restrict, or permit AI usage, was highlighted as especially helpful in formulating assignment briefs. Staff appreciated the practical applications of the guidance in supporting assessment design, including useful templates and scenario-based examples. The guidance also played a key role in raising awareness, with some academic departments organising meetings to discuss its integration into their assessment practices. Several recommendations for improvement emerged from the feedback. These include the need for workshops and training on assessment design to mitigate AI misuse, clearer investigation protocols, and regular policy updates to reflect emerging best practices. Staff also suggested providing alternative assessment models that integrate AI constructively, such as reflective assessments, process-based assignments, and vivas. Improved communication was also emphasised, with calls to simplify policy language, add case study examples, and establish mechanisms for ongoing staff feedback and cross-departmental discussions. Looking ahead, the Institute will consider these recommendations to further refine the guidance on generative AI use in academic settings. Efforts will focus on strengthening policy clarity, supporting staff with enhanced training and resources, and ensuring that academic integrity remains a cornerstone of assessment design in an evolving technological landscape.

The feedback on the student guidance indicated both positive and negative perspectives. Staff who found the guidance useful praised its clarity and accessibility, noting that it provided a clear framework for students on the ethical use of AI. Additionally, some staff highlighted that the guidance was practical for teaching, as it helped integrate AI ethics discussions into class activities and assessments, with structured templates proving particularly useful.

Despite these positive aspects, several challenges were identified. A significant concern was the lack of student awareness and engagement with the guidance, with many students reportedly unfamiliar with its content or relevance. Some staff noted difficulties in enforcing AI-related policies, as students continued to use AI tools inappropriately or misinterpreted the acceptability of certain tools such as Grammarly and Quillbot. In some disciplines, particularly in software development, there were concerns that restricting AI use was unrealistic given its increasing integration into industry practices. There were also reports that students who were less engaged with course materials or missed classes were particularly unlikely to be aware of the guidance.

To enhance the effectiveness of the guidance, staff recommended several improvements. A key suggestion was the introduction of targeted training and awareness initiatives, such as mandatory AI ethics and academic integrity training through Moodle VLE modules, induction sessions, and short educational videos. Social media campaigns with clear messaging were also proposed to increase student engagement. Staff also suggested simplifying the language of the guidance and incorporating illustrative examples, such as explainer videos or chatbot-based tools, to make the policy more accessible and engaging. Improved communication strategies were recommended, including more prominent promotion of AI policies through classroom discussions, admission processes, and visible institutional messaging across Departments. Another significant recommendation was the provision of clearer examples of appropriate AI use to help students navigate ethical AI integration in their studies. Additionally, there was a strong call for clearer policies outlining the consequences of AI misuse. Staff also emphasised the need to encourage the structured and ethical use of AI in assessments, particularly in disciplines where AI is an industry-standard tool.

In response to this feedback, DkIT will explore ways to improve awareness and engagement with GenAI ethics through structured training initiatives, targeted communication strategies, and clearer disciplinary guidelines. There will also be a focus on ensuring that AI policies reflect both academic integrity principles and real-world applications, particularly in disciplines where AI is integral to professional practice. These actions aim to support both staff and students in navigating the evolving landscape of AI in higher education while upholding the highest standards of academic integrity.

The SATLE funded 'Assessment for All' and 'Programme Design in a Time of Change' projects, which spanned the academic year 2023-2024, included a range of measures to promote student engagement with academic integrity. This included support for an Academic Integrity Support Tutor (one day per week) in the SLDC. This increased capacity both to provide 1:1 support to students and to develop resources, including a guide for all first years (https://www.dkit.ie/study/for-students/information-for-new-students/your-induction/learning-at-dkit/academic-integrity.html).

The range of academic integrity guides and resources, created by students interns in 2023 for students are available via the Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC) Student Support Hub on the Moodle VLE. Some of the guidance has been included in the guide for first year students. In addition, the video on artificial intelligence and assessment created by the 2023 interns, continues to be used in the N-TUTORR Academic Integrity Digital Badge, which was further updated to include a broader consideration of issues raised by Generative AI. This badge offered to students across the entire Technological Sector, with an increasing number of DkIT lecturers integrating it into their modules and continuous assessment. In addition, DkIT provided a range of activities in the area of Academic Integrity aimed at promoting best practice in scholarly communication:

The Institute continued to be an active participant, represented by the Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (Registrar's Office), in the QQI National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) (https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/engagement-insights-and-knowledge-sharing/national-academic-integrity-network). NAIN is a peer-driven network, established in November 2019, which is coordinated and supported by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). The Network is focused on actively supporting higher education institutions to (1) effectively engage with the challenges presented by academic misconduct, (2) embed a culture of academic integrity among providers and (3) develop national resources and tools for providers to address the challenges presented by academic misconduct. The Network comprises membership from all public higher education institutions universities and institutes of technology, as well as private independent providers, students and student representatives from the Union of Students Ireland.

A number of NAIN plenary meetings and Working Group meetings were held during the reporting period (2023/2024). The resources of the NAIN continue to inform Academic Integrity policy and procedures, activities and initiatives within the Institute, specifically the following resources: "Academic Integrity National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms", "Academic Integrity Guidelines", "NAIN Generative AI Guidelines for Educators" and the "NAIN Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management". Also, dedicated Academic Integrity updates on the work of the network were disseminated regularly by the Registrar's Office during the reporting period (2023/2024).

The Institute participated in *National Academic Integrity Week 2023* which took place from 16th October to the 20th October 2023.

The National Technological University Transformation for Recovery and Resilience (N-TUTORR) Programme

DkIT is a partner in this significant collaboration across the Technological Higher Education Sector. The N-TUTORR programme (https://www.transforminglearning.ie/company/about-us) is designed to transform learning, teaching and assessment by enhancing the student experience and developing staff capabilities within an enabling digital ecosystem. The project is funded (€40 million in total) under the EU NextGeneration Fund, and National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP). The project is a collaboration between DkIT, ATU, IADT, MTU, TUD, TUS and SETU, coordinated by THEA and supported by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). It addresses six core themes: Academic Integrity; Digital Transformation; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Employability; Universal Design for Learning; and Education for Sustainability.

The project originally had three streams: Student Empowerment; Developing Staff Capabilities and Digital Ecosystems – with a fourth stream coming on board this academic year to look to the future, and focus on sustaining progress. Two members of DkIT's CELT staff (Dr Moira Maguire and Dr Gerry

Gallagher) were part of the working group that developed the initial proposal in 2022. Dr Maguire, co-leads the Student Empowerment Project stream with Dr Carina Ginty of Atlantic Technological University (ATU). In DkIT, Dr Ronan Bree was appointed as Institutional Project Lead in 2023 and established the local project team. Dr Bree and the local core team are responsible for the implementation of the programme, completing the associated work packages, and meeting the project deliverables across DkIT.

While the project has a large collection of elements and deliverables, one highly impactful N-TUTORR initiative thus far has been the Partners in Innovation and Change Fellowships. This scheme was designed to foster a culture of partnership in enhancement, providing up to €5,000 for teams of staff and students to work together to achieve a concrete enhancement to learning, teaching and/or the student experience, aligned to N-TUTORR themes. The Fellowships launched in 2023 and 175 fellowships were awarded nationally. DkIT supported 14 Fellowship projects overall, with most of the DkIT projects included in the collection of impact case studies (https://issuu.com/atlantictechnologicaluniversity/docs/20241111_fellowship_impact_book_with_digital_cover).

The N-TUTORR project also recruited fourteen DkIT Student Champions, who actively worked on project theme-centred initiatives across the Institute. The first cohort joined in June 2023 and initially focused on reviewing digital badges that addressed the project themes. These badges were then launched on the Student Digital Backpack in Autumn 2023. The second cohort joined in June 2024, and continued the impact of the digital badge courses, as well as supporting events and activities locally which again, centred on N-TUTORR's project themes.

Following on from an all-staff training needs analysis and as part of the "Developing Staff Capabilities" stream, a series of online Masterclasses were launched and were opened across the sector – which included academic integrity. In DkIT, all staff and students were provided with access to Linkedin Learning, DCM Learning, and AdvanceHE this year. These platforms provide flexible engagement with online training courses, an element introduced to support staff and students with their skill development around their schedules. Complementing these were in-person training events throughout the year. For example, 'N-TUTORR Week' in Feb 2024 hosted 10 events for DkIT staff and students, while throughout the rest of the year, various training events were hosted and facilitated by staff and/or expert speakers across the DkIT campus. Expanded access to IReL journal databases was also made possible via N-TUTORR, widening the availability of peer-reviewed and high-quality publications. In addition, several software platforms are being explored which have the potential to positively impact the students' learning experience – and promote accessibility (for example, a video management system is currently being reviewed, in addition to continuing support for an accessibility toolkit within the Moodle VLE).

Separately, N-TUTORR was guided to develop a 'Sustainable Higher Education Futures' Curriculum Framework, Guiding Principles and a supporting Staff Toolkit. Nationally, project leads and teams, and certain institutional stakeholders, inputted into this with the outputs available on our DkIT N-TUTORR Project website (https://www.dkit.ie/p/n-tutorr/about.html#framework). This framework informed the DkIT Programmatic Review process, ensuring alignment between local and sectoral strategies. Complementing this further, a national 'Sustainable Higher Education Futures Community of Practice (CoP)' was established to focus on developing staff capabilities, gathering key stakeholders across the TU/IoTs to contribute.

During this reporting period (2023/2024), the Digital Ecosystem efforts further built on initial work around institutional digital campus and ecosystem needs, identifying potential areas for enhancement within the local context. Complementing this, the N-TUTORR Programme Management Office and Steering Board approved proposals submitted by DkIT in late 2023 for a series of local pilots to be completed. Here, DkIT received financial support for N-TUTORR efforts around CRM Recruit, Moodle development, an Academic Integrity Chatbot, further digital space enhancements as well as a strategic data analyst support role. These pilots, identified via agreement with the local level steering group, will mean DkIT will be able to drive enhancement of local needs and priorities aligned with the project.

In terms of N-TUTORR advances and support for Academic Integrity within DkIT, the section below outlines the scale and breadth of impact on this important project theme during the current reporting period (2023/2024):

N-TUTORR:NAIN Working Group	N-TUTORR established a national Academic Integrity working group, comprising many NAIN members. Representing DkIT is Dr Brendan Ryder, Head of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance.
DkIT Student Champion on Academic Integrity	As part of the N-TUTORR project, a student from the School of Health and Science was appointed as an N-TUTORR Student champion, who elected to focus on the area of Academic Integrity. As part of her role, she sat on an N-TUTORR national online masterclass panel during Academic Integrity week. Here, several students champions from across the N-TUTORR network discussed the area of academic integrity and GenAI, with the session chaired by N-TUTORR'S national coordinator Dr Sharon Flynn.
GenAI:N3 N-TUTORR National Network	N-TUTORR has received funding to develop a GenAI:N3 network across the 7 partnering HEIs, including DkIT. Here, Dr

	Hazel Farrell of SETU lead the network initially with dedicated staff from across each college joining the team to roll out a series of staff workshops, and hackathons. The focus of the workshops was to support staff and build confidence in the use of AI tools. Dr Ronan Bree represented DkIT on initial meetings with the intention of other staff members joining in September 2024.
AI Mate to Support Academic Staff	N-TUTORR colleagues in SETU were kind to share their 'AI Mate' platform which was developed in-house. This tool is now available to DkIT staff via the Programmatic Review hub on the Moodle VLE. It allows lecturing staff to answer a series of questions around the scale and level of AI permitted within their module with the output being a formal PDF produced that can be shared with students. An all-staff session was hosted by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) to support DkIT staff in using the tool during the reporting period.
Originating detection, training and feedback support	To ensure tools are in place to uphold academic integrity, N-TUTORR has provided DkIT with support for Turnitin, a platform that combines originality reports with integrated digital feedback provisions. This tool supports students with their assessments which includes academic integrity. Our students have access to the platform outside of their assignments, via the Student Learning and Development Centre in CELT. As part of the platform, there is also enhanced academic integrity functionality around its' 'authorship' tool.
Academic Integrity Chatbot for DkIT Students	To further complement policies and procedures around Academic Integrity in DkIT, N-TUTORR supported the development of a chatbot to support students in this area. This work is part of a pilot project with colleagues in ATU, who are developing their own chatbot to focus on examinations. In DkIT, the chatbot is currently under development and will support students with queries on academic integrity. It is anticipated the chatbot will be located on DkIT's Moodle VLE, and will be launched in the 2024/2025 academic year (next reporting period).

Contract Cheating Detection	With the potential of contract cheating going undetected globally, N-TUTORR has been collaborating with international experts on the development of a tool designed to address this issue. The tool is called 'WIROO' and has been developed by Academic Integrity experts based in Australia. Each N-TUTORR partner was invited to engage with piloting and implementing this tool in their institution in the next reporting period (2024/2025).
Student and Staff Training on Academic Integrity	To support student and staff training around Academic Integrity, N-TUTORR rolled out its Academic Integrity focused Digital Badge course as part of *MyDigitalBackpack.ie*. Here, those who complete the short course receive a digital badge and will have been recorded as having undertaken the training. This student-centred support is seen as a means to ensure students can learn about academic integrity at an early stage of their college journey. It is hoped several year 1 lecturers will embed this course as part of certain modules. Since its initial roll out in the reporting period (2023/2024), there has been a significant uptake and will be an aspect that will continue to be promoted in the next reporting period (2024/2025). From a staff point of view, as well as this Digital Badge referred to here, N-TUTORR also explored a case management framework and a suite of TEQSA training modules. Locally, all staff and students have access to Linkedin Learning thanks to N-TUTORR support, with numerous courses available around relevant topics, such as Artificial Intelligence.

The N-TUTORR masterclass series continued on a monthly basis, with certain sessions focusing on the theme of Academic Integrity. These masterclasses brought expert speakers (normally three per masterclass) to present on their area of expertise under a dedicated N-TUTORR theme. Colleagues from across the TU/IoT sector were invited, with the sessions being very well received.

In June 2024, DkIT staff in the School of Business and Humanities held an N-TUTORR supported session around academic integrity, and the use of AI in the humanities/arts discipline area

An update on the planned actions related to Academic Integrity for the reporting period can be found in section "1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR". Planned actions related to

Academic Integrity for the upcoming reporting period can be found in section "3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period".

2.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

This section discusses enhancement in the area of teaching, learning and assessment in the reporting period (2023/2024).

2.2.1 Staff Training and Professional Development

Accredited CPD in Learning and Teaching

The accredited programmes in the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) (Master of Arts in Learning and Teaching, Certificate in Learning and Teaching and Certificate in Assessment and Feedback) continued to be successful in the reporting period 2023/2024. The programmes attract learners from among DkIT staff and colleagues from Further Education and Training (FET), primary, post-primary, and private companies across the region. There was an intake of 23 students in September 2023, which included 19 DkIT staff members. A further cohort completed the final modules of the programme in 2023-2024 and graduated in November 2024., A total of 78 DkIT staff members have now completed the Masters programme and one the Postgraduate Diploma in Learning and Teaching. 21 staff members have completed the Certificate in Learning and Teaching and two have completed the Certificate in Assessment and Feedback.

Unaccredited CPD in Learning and Teaching

A varied programme of seminars and workshops was offered in 2023/2024 including sharing practice events, masterclasses and short workshops, with a strong focus on inclusive practices and assessment. There was a blend of online and face-to-face provision addressing a wide range of issues and topics, including assessment and feedback, inclusive learning and teaching, UDL, digital accessibility, interactive teaching, use of Moodle VLE. In preparation for the upcoming Programmatic Reviews, there was an increased focus on providing workshops and resources to support colleagues in this process. In addition, a Programmatic Review hub, accessible to all staff, was created on Moodle to provide a range of resources as a further support.

The schedule of CPD events for the reporting period 2023/2024 was as follows:

Event Title	Date
Staff Induction: Learning, Teaching and Assessment at DkIT	11th September 2023
Staff Induction: Introduction to Moodle	11th September 2023
Webinar: Getting Started with Vevox	5th October 2023
Webinar: UDL – An Introduction	5th October 2023

Workshop: UDL Learner Variability - Meeting the Needs of All Learners	12th October 2023
Workshop: Implementing UDL in Teaching & Learning	19th October 2023
Workshop: Introduction to Vevox	19th October 2023
Workshop: Introduction to Vevox	24th October 2023
Workshop: Introduction to Vevox	25th October 2023
Workshop: UDL & Assessment	26th October 2023
Workshop: UDL Checklists	2nd November 2023
Workshop: Using the Accessibility Toolkit on Moodle	6th November 2023
Workshop: Module Design (Department of the Built Environment)	8th November 2023
Workshop: Evaluating the effectiveness of UDL	9th November 2023
'Assessment for All': Sharing Practice (from SATLE 2022)	16th January 2024
Workshop: Brickfield Accessibility and UDL Awareness	16th January 2024
Webinar: Getting Started with Vevox	31st January 2024
Webinar: Getting Started with Vevox	6th February 2024
Workshop: UDL Rubric and Checklist	6th February 2024
Presentation: Embedding UDL (School of Informatics and Creative Arts Sharing Practice)	29th February 2024
Workshop: Moodle & Digital Accessibility	10th April 2024
Masterclass: Programme Assessment and Feedback Presenter: Dr Geraldine O'Neill, UCD	8th May 2024
Workshop: UDL Support Session for Programmatic Review	23rd May 2024
Workshop: UDL Support Session for Programmatic Review	13th June 2024
Presentation: UDL and Programmatic Review (School of Informatics and Creative Arts)	18th June 2024

2.3 Supports and Resources for Learners

The Student Support Hub on the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) was developed as part of the 'Gateway to Success' project, funded under the Higher Education Authority (HEA)'s 2018 Innovation and Transformation Fund (https://tinyurl.com/383jt3yz). The Hub is a virtual one-stop-shop for academic support and support for health and wellbeing – all student support functions are represented on the Hub, which is available on the Moodle Dashboard and visible on logging into Moodle. Launched in January 2021 and was shortlisted for the 2022 Education Awards in the 'Best Use of Educational Technology/ICT Initiative' category, the Hub has now been in operation for three academic years. Ongoing evaluations and usage statistics indicate a high level of use and positive feedback from students. Staff from the support services involved continue to endeavour to raise awareness of the Hub through information

campaigns for students and staff. These included activities included general collaborative promotions such as 'roadshows' in all the main buildings, promoting the hub with Programme Directors and First-year Convenors and the Students' Union, and service-specific efforts.

National Forum SATLE (Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement) 2022 Projects

SATLE (Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement) is a non-competitive fund from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, coordinated and supported locally by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). DkIT was awarded €142,000 under SATLE 2022 and a further €111,000 under SATLE 2023. The SATLE 2022 funding supported the enhancement theme, 'Assessment for All: Designing Assessment for Inclusion', building on DkIT's record in enhancing assessment and feedback. This theme sought to address the SATLE 2022 priorities of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Digital Transformation and Academic Integrity. Taking a more programmatic approach to enhancement and conscious of the ongoing Programmatic Review process, the enhancement theme for SATLE 2023 evolved to 'Programme Design in a Time of Change'. Activities under this theme focused on the SATLE 2023's key priorities of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), including UDL, Digital Transformation and Academic Integrity. As with SATLE 2022's theme of 'Assessment for All', the SATLE 2023 project consisted of three streams as shown below. The SATLE project worked in tandem with initiatives under the PATH 4 and N-TUTORR projects due to the synergies with these projects. As in previous years, this funding also facilitated enhancement studentships in summer 2024 to support students as partners in enhancement. These enhancement studentships have been very effective and DkIT hopes to sustain the scheme into the future.

Programme Design in a Time of Change Project Streams

Stream	Education for Sustainable Development and UDL	Using digital technologies to enhance assessment	Promoting a culture of Academic Integrity
Co-ordinated By	CELT, Inclusive Learning and Teaching Working Group	E-Learning Unit, CELT	Registrar's Office and CELT
Activities			
Training and professional development	• Seminars, workshops and resource development focused on UDL and other aspects of inclusive Learning and Teaching.	• Seminars, workshops. • Piloting assessment tools. • Development of guidelines to support lecturers and programme teams,	• Seminars, workshops and resource development • Development of guidelines to support lecturers and programme teams, with a focus on Programmatic Review.

	• Development of guidelines to support lecturers and programme teams, with a focus on Programmatic Review. • E-book 'You can UDL it' finalised. This is a collection of stories of how colleagues and students in DkIT are implementing UDL principles in practice	with a focus on Programmatic Review. • Vevox rollout for interactive teaching through polling and Q&A. • Digital Accessibility.	• Additional support for students. • Development of guidelines for students. • Guidelines incorporating appropriate use of Artificial Intelligence. • Workshop – Designing Assessment in the context of AI (including addressing Academic Integrity issues).
Student Internships	June 2024 - Eight student interns developed resources for students. These included: • "Class Rep Handbook", a guide to becoming a successful class representative (class rep); • "Stepping into Dundalk!", guide for our new international students. By providing tips on life on campus and in the locality, it aims help students ease the transition to a new country and the culture. • Assisting in the creation of an employability digital badge; and • Collaboration with the Disability office in developing resources.		
Open Resources Project	• Work continued on developing Open Educational Resources for the Scholarship of Learning and Teaching (DOERs in SoTL) is a collaboration between DkIT, TUS, SETU and Maynooth University that aims to address both institutional and individual barriers in order to build capacity and develop an OER/P-enabled pedagogy.		
Local Enhancement Projects	• 10 small-scale enhancement projects were support (up to €5,000), each of which addressed one or more of the SATLE themes.		
Sharing Practice	• UDL e-book resource developed, to be published Spring 2024. • 'Assessment for All' Sharing Practice Event, 16th January 2024.		

2.5 National Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Project in Higher Education

This is a national collaborative initiative (https://www.priorlearning.ie/) between the Institutes of Technology, the Universities and Technological University (TU) Dublin which seeks to build a consistent and coherent approach to RPL within and across the nineteen publicly funded higher education institutions. Funded under the Irish Government's Human Capital Initiative (HCI) Pillar 3 (Innovation and Agility) (https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/4b006-minister-harris-announces-22-innovative-projects-

to-be-funded-under-human-capital-initiative/), the project will see HEIs engineer a significant shift in RPL policy, procedure and practice, that has transformative potential for Ireland's education system to become an international leader in the field. The project continues to play a crucial role in delivering on a range of national and European policy objectives in lifelong learning and meeting skills needs. The vision is that RPL will be an integral part of the higher education system, widely understood, celebrated and utilised as a flexible pathway to further learning, certification and professional development. The DkIT RPL project lead was appointed in 2021 and work on in the project action plan continued.

An update on the planned actions in the Area for the reporting period can be found in section "1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR". Planned actions for the upcoming reporting period can be found in section "3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period".

2.6 Enhancements arising from Institutional Review (CINNTE Review)

No progress was made on implementing the action plan that resulted from the Institutional Review that took place at DkIT in 2018. This work is ongoing and will continue into the next reporting period.

An update on the planned actions in the Area for the reporting period can be found in section "1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR". Planned actions for the upcoming reporting period can be found in section "3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period".

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

This section describes quality assurance and enhancement activities for the upcoming reporting period 2024/2025 which are aligned to the institute's strategic objectives). The section should be read in conjunction with 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR. Actions/activities not completed in reporting period 2023/2024 are carried over to the next reporting period 2024/2025.

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).*
	Policies and Procedures Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Develop quality assurance Guidelines for the Preparation, Drafting and Transmission of Examination Papers and Solutions. (Recommendation from an external investigator following an examination paper breach). • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office.
	Teaching and Learning Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Complete collaborative partnership agreement with Dublin City University (DCU) regarding the DCU-DkIT Graduate School. Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.

	Teaching and Learning Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Build capacity in assessment design to promote Academic Integrity. Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
	Teaching and Learning Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Update DkIT policies and procedures as appropriate to give due consideration to the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes (which will be published by QQI in 2023/2024 following sector consultation). • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
	Teaching and Learning Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Build capacity in programmatic approaches to assessment (generally and directly to support Schools with Programmatic Review). • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Schools.
	Teaching and Learning Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Support programme teams across Schools to embed Universal Design for Learning (UDL). • **Responsibility:** Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)
	Teaching and Learning	• Build capacity in assessment design in the context of developments in Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI). • **Responsibility:** Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).
	Teaching and Learning	• Review and update Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

		• **Responsibility**: Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Teaching and Learning Subcommittee of Academic Council.
	Teaching and Learning	• Review and update Student Voice Policy • **Responsibility**: Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Teaching and Learning Subcommittee of Academic Council.
	Academic Integrity Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Continue to plan, implement and enhance Academic Integrity initiatives at Institute level for students and staff, specifically to develop an Academic Integrity Action Plan. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Library.
	Academic Integrity Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Update Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures to include Contract Cheating (and other new types of Academic Misconduct that may arise). • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), Library.
	Academic Integrity Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Develop an Institute Register for Academic Misconduct (mixed model between Schools and Registrar's Office currently in operation). • Review and ensure that new forms of academic misconduct (e.g., Contract Cheating) are recorded as appropriate. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office.

	Academic Integrity	• Pilot the WIROO tool (https://www.wiroo.com.au/) that facilitates the detection of contract cheating and collusion. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Complete collaborative partnership agreement with Dublin City University (DCU) regarding the DCU-DkIT Graduate School. Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office
	Research and Graduate Studies Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Develop Research Integrity Policy. • **Responsibility:** Graduate Studies Office. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office
	Research and Graduate Studies Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Diversify and increase research and innovation funding (ongoing action). • **Responsibility:** Research and Graduate Studies Office, Research Centre and Group Directors.
	Research and Graduate Studies Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Revisit and review the context and intent of the collaborative partnership/relationship between DCU and DkIT. There was general consensus from both collaborative partners that this needs to take place as a matter of urgency. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies	• Agree a senior management meeting schedule with DCU to cover the duration of the relationship.

	Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Prioritise the addition of one FTE Grade V administrator into the Graduate Studies Office. • **Responsibility:** Executive Board, Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Devise and Implement "Research Access Policy" to ensure appropriate access to research facilities for all researchers with ongoing review. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Establish a postgraduate researcher alumni society. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Develop of a risk mitigation strategy in relation to postgraduate research studies completion by students. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Ensure that DkIT GRPB and DkIT GRSB schedule of meetings is published on the DkIT website (part of a wider issue relating to the management of documentation associated with the DkIT Quality System). • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Develop a student and staff handbooks specific to postgraduate research provision. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.

	Research and Graduate Studies	• Ensure DkIT registered postgraduate research students receiving a DCU award are connected to the DCU-DkIT postgraduate researcher community.
	Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies	• Ensure all postgraduate research students have annual skills training audits with their supervisory teams through provision of training to research supervisors.
	Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Academic Schools, Research Supervisors, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies	• Monitor the annual training audits and link to annual progression.
	Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Academic Schools, Research Supervisors, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Create a centralised postgraduate researcher space. • PGR Quality Review 2021/2022 • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies	• Devise and implement detailed guidelines concerning the role of Independent Panel Members in line with DCU policy.
	Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies	• Monitor the effectiveness of Independent Panel Members and ensure policy is fit for purpose.
	Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies	• Develop and expand institute policies governing research in line with national and European legislation and policy. • **Responsibility:** Research Sub-committee, Research and Graduate Studies Office.

	Research and Graduate Studies	• Increase the critical mass within the institute's research centres in terms of career researchers (i.e., Postdoctoral and Research Fellows) • **Responsibility:** Academic Schools, Research Centres, Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies	• Establish three research institutes across the campus aligned to the research centres and groups • **Responsibility:** Research and Graduate Studies Office, Academic Schools.
	Research and Graduate Studies	• Mandate training for all researchers in selected topics (i.e., export controls, state aid, research integrity) • **Responsibility:** Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies	• Devise an all-Institute strategic research funding strategy annually • **Responsibility:** Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Research and Graduate Studies	• Strategically align with national research centres. • **Responsibility:** Research and Graduate Studies Office.
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Update the Student Support strategy in line with the new Institute Strategic Plan. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Develop marketing and communications plan. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Implement innovative collaboration with students and academic staff to support greater student engagement. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Services).

	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Follow up on recommendations advised in the Accessibility and Sensory Audits and implement improvements where possible. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Disability).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Maintain and update physical facilities to facilitate student accessibility and a quality student experience with the implementation of accessibility audits and the continued development of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Disability).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Develop Disability Policy. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Disability).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Develop Reasonable Accommodations and support for Disability Service students on placement where placement is part of their programme in collaboration with Careers and Employability Centre. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Disability).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Progression of the Autism Friendly Campus Action Plan. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Disability).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Establish Alumni Steering Group (chaired by a member of the Executive Board with representation from Student Services). • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Careers and Employability).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Develop an Equal Access and Participation Policy.

		• **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Access).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Develop and Access Forum with community groups in the region. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Access).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Share the annual Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) data with key internal stakeholders via the newly developed online Dashboard (developed in Microsoft Power Bi). • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Careers and Employability).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Support students registered with the Disability Service with their specific careers queries. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Careers and Employability).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Increase rates of completion of outcome measures for Counselling Service evaluation. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Counselling).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Introduce measures to reduce cancellations and missed appointments with the Counselling Service • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Counselling).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Review location and opening hours of Student Health Unit (SHU). • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Student Health Unit).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Create an Interfaith Centre.

		• **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Pastoral Care).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Provide more events that will allow student to connect – launch DkIT Student Connect. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Pastoral Care).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Enhance the activities which are on offer during lunchtimes for students. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Sports and Societies).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services)	• Support the establishment of a neurodivergent society for students • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Sports and Societies).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Install multi-purpose floor in DkIT Sports with sports capital funding. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Sports and Societies).
	Professional Support Unit (Student Services) Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Improve both the indoor and outdoor facilities in DkIT so that we can continue to meet the growing needs of the students. • **Responsibility:** Professional Support Unit (Sports and Societies).
	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	• Implement the Athena Swan action plan. • **Responsibility:** Head of School of Engineering and Vice-President for EDI in conjunction with the EDI Officer, Athena Swan Coordinator.

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Review Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedures. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office.
Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Document and record RPL applications in a structured, standard format to allow for the development of an RPL precedence database. Manual system implemented with incorporation into the Institute's CRM system to be investigated and progressed. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office (RPL Lead, HEA HCI Pillar 3 Project).
Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Provide professional development and supports. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office (RPL Lead, HEA HCI Pillar 3 Project).
Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Engage with enterprise and employers to explore the potential for RPL for access and progression in areas of skills needs. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office (RPL Lead, HEA HCI Pillar 3 Project).
Institutional Review (CINNTE Review) Action carried forward from previous reporting period (See AQR Part B, 1.2: Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR)	• Review Institutional Review Action plan and identify priorities as appropriate. • **Responsibility:** Registrar's Office with other functional areas as appropriate.

3.2 Reviews Planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

This section provides a composite update on new and continuing objectives arising from reviews for the next reporting period, 2024/2025. The unit of review may be a Department/School or Professional Support Unit or School. See Section 1.4.2 Overview of Periodic Reviews.

3.2.1 Reviews Planned for Next Reporting Period

The review schedule for reviews for the upcoming reporting period (2024/2025) is as follows:

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Programmatic Review: • School of Engineering.	Semester 2 2024/2025	2018/2029 (programme validations were extended by one year by Academic Council)
Programmatic Review: • School of Health and Science.	Semester 2 2024/2025	2018/2029 (programme validations were extended by one year by Academic Council)
Programmatic Review: • Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).	Semester 2 2024/2025	2018/2029 (programme validations were extended by one year by Academic Council)
Professional Support Units (International Office) • DkIT has prioritised the authorisation to use the International Education Mark (IEM) when QQI begins accepting applications. The IEM self-assessment process will substitute for the normal periodic review of a Professional Support Unit. • Planned for 2023/2024 but QQI not in a position to initiate the IEM process due to legislative issues.	Semester 2 2024/2025	Not applicable as the IEM quality standard will be authorised for use for the first time in 2024/2025.

3.2.2 Reviews Planned beyond Next Reporting Period

The schedule for reviews beyond the upcoming reporting period (2024/2025) is as follows:

Year	2025/2026
Areas/Units	**Programmatic Reviews:** • School of Informatics and Creative Arts; • School of Business and Humanities.

Year	2026/2027
Areas/Units	• To be determined.

Year	2027/2028
Areas/Units	• To be determined.

Year	2028/2029
Areas/Units	• To be determined.

Year	2029/2030
Areas/Units	• To be determined.

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

This section provides a case study undertaken by DkIT during the reporting period 2023/2024.

CASE STUDY 1

Title: *Focus on Feedback: Stories of what works and why*

Theme: Assessment and Feedback

Keywords (2-3 words): Feedback; Assessment

Short Abstract:

The book, *'Focus on Feedback: Stories of what works and why'* was developed as part of the 'Focus on Feedback' project, funded under the National Forum's 2020 Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) fund. It built on a previous National Forum project, Y1 Feedback (2016), and aligned with DkIT's ongoing focus on Assessment and Feedback through strategy, policy, professional development. In the book, educators from DkIT and the wider region, and students describe feedback practices and experiences that have worked well, examining why they did.

Having formed a small editorial team, we extended a call for stories of approximately 1,000 words. Prior to the deadline, as a way of encouraging colleagues to begin articulating their stories, we asked colleagues to share their experiences in a short, focused presentation at a sharing practice event organised by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). Many colleagues used this event as a first step in composing their stories. Our intention in asking our colleagues and students to contribute their stories was to develop a practice-focused publication consisting of stories that would be relatively quick to read and, importantly, involve practices that could be used. We asked contributors to frame their stories using a number of questions: What did you do? Why did you do it? How did you do it? How well did it work?

The result was 'Focus on Feedback' (https://eprints.dkit.ie/839/), a collection of 22 stories written by students, and teachers and some by both students and teachers. These stories outline initiatives which brought to life many of the key themes and approaches that we read in the literature around the inextricably linked areas of assessment and feedback. The initiatives used a variety of good practice approaches. Different elements were frequently used to complement each other depending on the context or assessment activity. So, for example, exemplars of work that students had done previously, or sample work, might be accompanied by assessment criteria and rubrics, which, in turn, might be accompanied by a discussion with students or having them review the exemplars and give feedback on it. Alternatively, a video might be used to support and clarify the criteria based on the exemplars.

One might summarise the initiatives as aiming to develop students' assessment and feedback literacy, as the literature might describe it. Essentially, though, they involved is a sharing of the 'rules of the game' with students. While many of those rules are implicit and understood by teachers, they may be much less obvious to students. A number of initiatives enabled students to receive and give feedback, taking responsibility for and learning from that process. Irrespective of the form the initiative took, the focus was primarily on improvement. Ultimately, the goal in developing students' assessment and feedback literacy

through such initiatives is to develop their ability to make judgments on the quality of their work in the same way as we as teachers have learned to do.

The student views that emerge from the stories provide a valuable perspective on the initiatives. As one might hope, students spoke of developing a better understanding of the assessment process and what quality work looked like. They also appreciated opportunities to engage in feedback conversations with their peers and their teachers. The affective dimension was a key element to the feedback process as described in many of the stories. In relation to this, students spoke about growing in confidence, not just in terms of assessment, but in terms of their learning in general. Some described the process as increasing their motivation or developing trust between themselves and their peers or themselves and their teachers.

The 'Focus on Feedback' publication captures real-life stories that describe good practice from the assessment and feedback literature, showing how it can be implemented in classroom situations. Available in electronic and printed formats, it continues to be a valuable resource both within DkIT and beyond, to the extent that a number of its contributors and editors being invited to share their practice at events in other institutions.

Appendix 1: DkIT Organisation Chart (2023/2024)

Dundalk Institute of Technology Organisational Chart

- Governing Body
  - Academic Council & Sub Committees
  - President — Dr Diarmuid O'Callaghan

VP for Strategic Planning Communications & Development — Ms Irene McCausland
- Head of Innovation & Business Development — Mr Aidan Browne
- Estates Manager — Mr Conor Lait
- Head of Lifelong Learning — Mr Anton Barrett
- Head of Marketing & Communications — Ms Lynda McQuaid

VP for Finance & Corporate Affairs — Mr Hugh Nolan
- Finance Manager — Ms Marie Madigan
- Finanical Analyst — Mr Stuart Quinn
- Human Resource Manager — Mr Gerald O Driscoll
- IT Manager — Mr James McCahill

VP for Academic Affairs & Registrar — Dr Sheila Flanagan
- Head of Academic Planning & Quality Assurance — Dr Brendan Ryder
- Academic & Student Affairs Manager — Ms Linda Murphy
- Head Librarian — Mr Frank Brady
- Head of Research & Graduate Studies — Dr Tim McCormac
- Head of Teaching & Learning — Dr Gerry Gallagher
- International Officer — Ms Noreen Carney

Head of School of Business & Humanities — Dr Patricia Moriarty
- Head of Dept of Business Studies — Dr Brian Boyd
- Head of Dept of Management & Financial Studies — Mr Shane Hill
- Head of Dept of Humanities — Dr Annaleigh Margey
- Head of Dept of Hospitality — Dr. Kevin Burns

Head of School of Informatics & Creative Arts — Professor Fergal McCaffery
- Head of Dept of Computing & Mathematics — Dr Fiona Lawless
- Head of Dept of Creative Arts, Media & Music — Dr Adele Commins
- Head of Dept of Visual & Human Centred Computing — Dr Martin McHugh

Head of School of Engineering — Dr Breda Brennan
- Head of Dept of Electrical & Mechanical Engineering — Dr Paul MacArtain
- Head of Dept of Built Environment — Ms Denise Quigley
- Head of Dept of Engineering Trades & Civil Engineering — Mr Pat McCormick

Head of School of Health & Science — Dr Moira Maguire
- Head of Dept of Life & Health Sciences — Dr Gillian Lambe
- Head of Dept of Agriculture, Food & Animal Health — Dr Siobhan Jordan
- Head of Dept of Nursing Midwifery & Early Years — Dr Briege King

DkIT-Maynooth University Executive Project Lead — Dr Edel Healy