

Hibernia College

2025

Annual Quality Report Hibernia College
Reporting Period 2023-2024

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Reporting Period 2023-2024

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

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

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for Hibernia College for the reporting period **1 September 2023 – 31 August 2024**.

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

The AQR has been approved by the College Academic Board and is submitted by Dr Robin Flynn, Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager.

Hibernia College was founded in 2000 to meet the growing demand for flexible, lifelong learning that would not be restricted by location or time. The College is driven by a passion to provide equal education opportunities to learners — particularly those who may have been excluded from various programmes or professions previously due to geography or life circumstances. It does this by delivering technology-enhanced and flexible programmes that are built around an e-learning model and that prepare students for today's complex professional roles. Today, the need and demand for access to flexible learning has never been greater, and Hibernia College is uniquely positioned to continue to respond to social and employment needs, offering learners flexible opportunities to study.

In 2024, the College undertook two milestone engagements, including an application for an extension of scope for fully online provision and our first CINNTE review (details on the preparation for both are included within).

The College's offerings have had a strong focus on professional education and practice-based learning for regulated professions, with a particular focus on teacher education and, more recently, nurse education. Since its establishment, it has grown to a position where its Professional Master of Education programmes now provide a significant proportion of Ireland's teacher education, and Hibernia College graduates the largest number of primary school teachers annually from any HEI. The College also offers an extensive suite of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes for education professionals.

To date, there have been approximately 12,000 graduates of the College and, currently, there are an estimated 2,200 students enrolled across the programmes. Hibernia College is approved by QQI for the provision of a range of validated programmes leading to QQI awards at NFQ Levels 8 and 9. The following Hibernia College programmes are currently validated by QQI:

Professional Master of Education in Primary Education

Professional Master of Education in Post-Primary Education

- Master of Science in Corporate Governance
- Master of Arts in Inclusive and Special Education
- Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Inclusive and Special Education
- Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Business Data Analytics

Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nursing in General Nursing

Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Early Childhood Education

Hibernia College initial teacher education (ITE) programmes are accredited by the Teaching Council of Ireland. The early childhood education Bachelor of Education programme is accredited by the Qualifications Advisory Board (QAB) for the early learning and care (ELC) sector; the nursing programme is approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI); and the corporate governance programme is accredited by the Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland (CGIUKI).

Process for Development and Approval of the AQR

Preparation for the submission of this AQR is ongoing throughout the year and is a standing item for all Quality Assurance Team meetings. This includes provision of regular briefings to the Academic Board, the Executive Management Team (EMT) and senior academic staff or faculty about the preparations required for annual engagement with the process. Cross-institutional engagement supports the gathering of required data, and all staff are encouraged to submit relevant information for inclusion. Engagement with the case study process is continuous, as potential areas for reporting are identified through meetings of the Academic Board and its subcommittees. Furthermore, the Academic Leadership Team and other managers are asked to collaborate with the Quality Assurance Team in the process of developing case studies. The Quality Assurance Team assumes responsibility for compiling available information to produce the report for submission to QQI. The final report is

reviewed internally by the Quality Assurance Team and the Registrar. The final report is approved by the College's EMT and Academic Board. This process is illustrated in Figure 1.

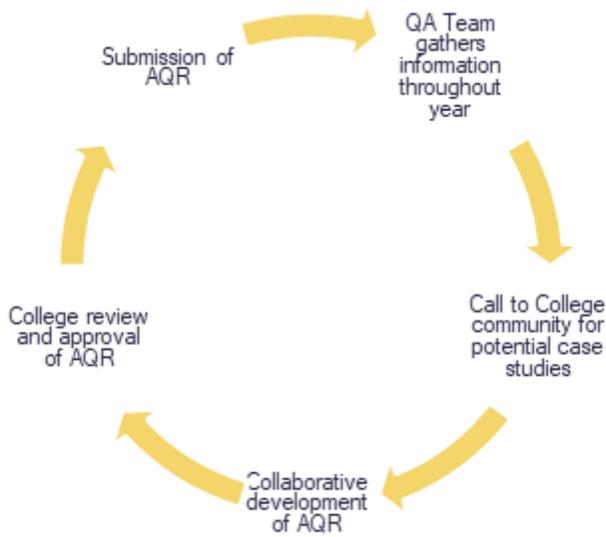


Figure 1: AQR Development Life Cycle

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

The Hibernia College Quality Framework (HCQF) is the single true source of all Hibernia College quality assurance documents. This framework reflects the College's ongoing commitment to international best practice through a range of mechanisms that seek to continually monitor, review and enhance the College and its programmes. The HCQF is regularly reviewed for its effectiveness. Input from key stakeholders, such as students, staff and adjunct faculty, is an important dimension of the Framework. This ongoing involvement of internal and external stakeholders in various processes is emphasised throughout the policy and procedure documents.

The Hibernia College Quality Framework (HCQF) Policy sets out the principles and standards for the creation and maintenance of the HCQF. It establishes the College's policy for building and distributing a quality culture throughout all its activities.

The Governance and Management Policy describes the Hibernia College management structure and outlines the structure in place to effectively enable the interrelationship between corporate and academic governance. It articulates the principles by which the College is governed and identifies the key boards, committees and positions and their regulatory context. The Board of Directors formally delegates all authority for academic decision-making to the Academic Board.

Within the HCQF, terms of references are set out for each subcommittee of the Academic Board; these set out the functions, responsibilities, logistics and membership, including representation of external stakeholders and learners. Figure 1 provides a high-level visual overview of the College's governance and management structures.

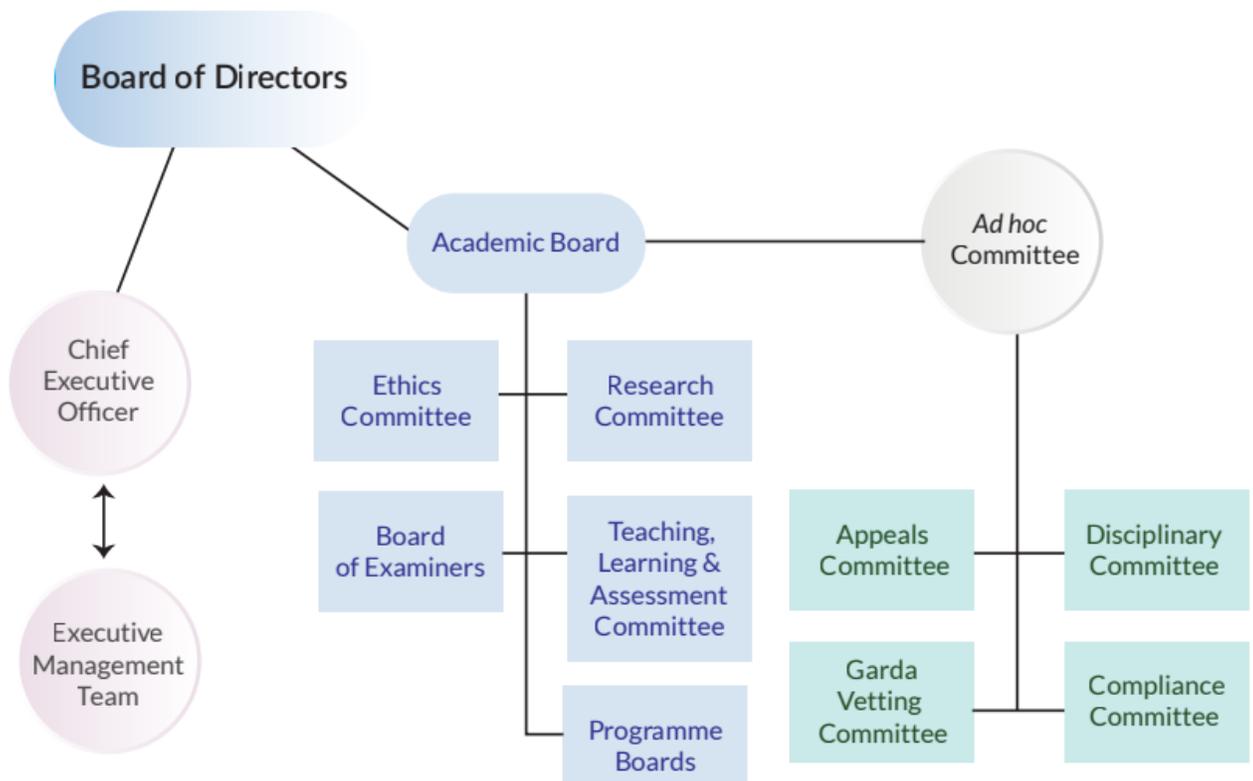


Figure 1: High-level overview of the College's governance and management structures

The table below indicates the policies and procedures relevant to the governance and management structures of the College.

Summary of relevant QA documentation		
No change during review period	Documents reviewed during this period	New documents approved during this period
<u>Corporate Governance Code</u> <u>Monitoring and Review of the Hibernia College Quality Framework Procedure</u> <u>Developing New Elements of the HCQF Procedure</u> <u>Ethics Committee Terms of Reference</u> <u>Research Committee Terms of Reference</u> <u>Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee Terms of Reference</u> <u>Conceptual Framework</u> <u>Fitness to Practice Policy</u> <u>Fitness to Practice Procedure</u> <u>Board of Examiners Terms of Reference</u> <u>Elections and Appointments to Governance Committees Procedure</u> <u>Erasmus Policy Statement</u>	<u>Academic Board Terms of Reference</u> <u>Governance and Management Policy</u> <u>Programme Board Terms of Reference</u> <u>The Hibernia College Quality Framework (HCQF) Policy</u>	

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

Quality assurance requirements for collaborative provision are integrated throughout the HCQF and are subsequently accounted for in the documents outlined in the following table. Principles for engaging in collaborative provision include alignment with College strategy; a demonstrable societal, educational and professional need; ensuring sufficient resources are in place to implement the programme; the programme curriculum aligns with the College Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and student support mechanisms are in place. A detailed due diligence and risk assessment must be undertaken as part of the development process for any collaborative programme. Following approval of any collaborative programme, a programme-specific terms of reference for a joint programme committee must be developed and agreed.

Summary of relevant QA documentation		
No change during review period	Documents reviewed during this period	New documents approved during this period
<p><u>Full Development and Final Approval of a New Programme Procedure</u></p> <p><u>Obtaining Initial Approval to Develop a New Programme Procedure</u></p>	<p><u>Design of Programmes and Curricula for a Blended or Online Environment Policy</u></p> <p><u>Development and Approval of Programmes for a Blended or Online Environment Policy</u></p> <p><u>Ongoing Monitoring of Online or Blended Learning Programmes Policy</u></p> <p><u>Public Information, Promotion and the Recruitment of Students Policy</u></p> <p><u>The Hibernia College Quality Framework (HCQF) Policy</u></p> <p><u>Engagement and Management of Adjunct Faculty Policy</u></p>	<p><u>Collaborative and Transnational Provision Framework</u></p> <p>Master of Arts in Inclusive and Special Education – Joint Programme Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>MSc in Corporate Governance – Joint Programme Committee Terms of Reference</p>

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

The HCQF was developed in the context of current QQI policy related to the validation and review of programmes, for example, QQI's Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training. The development of new programmes is conducted systematically in line with the College's approved HCQF policies and procedures, including mechanisms for timely consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

Summary of relevant QA documentation		
No change during review period	Documents reviewed during this period	New documents approved during this period
<u>Full Development and Final Approval of a New Programme Procedure</u> <u>Obtaining Initial Approval to Develop a New Programme Procedure</u>	<u>Design of Programmes and Curricula for a Blended or Online Environment Policy</u> <u>Development and Approval of Programmes for a Blended or Online Environment Policy</u> <u>Ongoing Monitoring of Online or Blended Learning Programmes Policy</u>	<u>Collaborative and Transnational Provision Framework</u>

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

The HCQF includes an Access, Transfer and Progression (ATP) Policy, a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and an Assessment, Grading and Certification Policy. These are supported by various procedures that support matters related to admission, progression, deferrals and withdrawals. Widening participation through ensuring inclusivity and equality of opportunity for prospective and current students and alumni is an explicit aim of the College's Access, Transfer and Progression Policy and is facilitated also through the College's RPL Policy and Procedure.

Summary of relevant QA documentation		
No change during review period	Documents reviewed during this period	New documents approved during this period
<u>Recognition of Prior Learning Policy</u> <u>Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure</u> <u>External Examining Procedure</u> <u>Student Charter</u> <u>Reasonable Accommodation Application Form</u> <u>Admission Offers Procedure</u> <u>Withdrawal from Studies Policy</u> <u>Admission Interviews Procedure</u> <u>Assisting Failing Students to Exit Programmes Procedure</u> <u>Appeals Policy</u> <u>College Initiated Withdrawals Due to Non-Engagement Procedure</u> <u>Garda Vetting Procedure</u> <u>Grade Moderation Procedure</u> <u>Grading Student Effort Procedure</u> <u>Student Initiated Withdrawals Procedure</u> <u>Temporary Suspension and Deferral of Studies Policy</u> <u>Appealing a College Admissions Decision Procedure</u>	<u>Access, Transfer and Progression Policy</u> <u>Public Information, Promotion and the Recruitment of Students Policy</u> <u>Orientation Policy</u> <u>Admissions Policy</u> <u>Admission Application Procedure</u> <u>Assessment, Grading and Certification Policy</u> Terms and Conditions (non-HCQF)	<u>Posthumous Award Policy</u>

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2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

Not applicable

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The HCQF includes a range of policies, procedures and additional resources to ensure the ongoing quality assurance of the teaching, learning and assessment environment.

During this period significant work continues to be undertaken in the area of Academic Integrity and Good Practice, supported by the Academic Integrity and Good Practice Policy. In addition, to the Principles for the Acceptable use of Generative AI in the Assessment Process . Please also see Part B Section 2.1.

Summary of relevant QA documentation		
No change during review period	Documents reviewed during this period	New documents approved during this period
<u>Regulations for Written Examinations</u> <u>Appeals Policy</u> <u>Academic Misconduct Investigation in Coursework Procedure</u> <u>Academic Misconduct Investigation in a Formal Examination Procedure</u> <u>Discussion of Examination Scripts (or Equivalent) with Assessors Procedure</u> <u>Grade Moderation Procedure</u> <u>Grading Student Effort Procedure</u> <u>Review of a Provisional Assessment Decision Procedure</u> <u>Regulations for Oral Examinations (Online or In Person)</u> <u>Principles for the Acceptable Use of Generative AI in the Assessment Process</u>	<u>Engaging in Online Communication Guideline</u> <u>Assessment, Grading and Certification Policy</u> <u>Regulations for Synchronous Online Examinations</u> <u>Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy</u>	

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

Learner support and the College's commitment to students are fundamentally underpinned by the Student Charter and the College's Student Support Policy. Student conduct is also related to the Student Charter and, consequently, standards for student conduct are also dealt with in this group of HCQF policies and procedures. Additional supports for students are provided through formal College processes such as those for extenuating circumstances, reasonable accommodation, appeals and complaints. Administrative support is provided by programme administrators for each programme and additional central administrative support is provided by the Assessment and Awards Office.

The College also has a full-time Student Support Officer who provides pastoral support to students as required throughout their studies. Furthermore, students have access to a professional counselling service. The College has also undertaken a review of current student supports offered to students during this period and drafted a new Framework for Supporting International Students.

Learners and staff are additionally supported by an established Technical Support Team who control and administer access, content, calendars and technical support. The College continuously invests in applications and infrastructure to enhance the learning environment. Existing infrastructure includes MyHELMS (virtual learning environment (VLE)), InPlace (Student Placement Management System), Quercus (Student Information System), the Cohort messaging app, Dynamics CRM, Office 365, Zoom and Access Dimensions. Data resilience and security are supported by regular off-site backups, full replication of internal infrastructure, centralised AV/malware protection and advanced email protection. Programme delivery is supported by the College's VLE, which features access to media-rich digital learning content; discussion forums; blogs and other collaborative tools; personalised calendars and submission deadline countdown timers; announcement feeds; facilities for uploading, grading and providing feedback on assessments; text-matching software; access to administrative, placement and support resources; the digital library; and a live chat facility for technical support. Live programme delivery is facilitated via Zoom professional accounts for all students and faculty. Hibernia College students have access to an extensive digital library integrated into the VLE, which provides them with secure, direct access to all resources through a discovery search engine.

A major library upgrade was completed in 2020, facilitating further personalised access to online resources. The College subscribes to an ever-increasing electronic resource collection that is regularly reviewed by the Librarian and faculty members. Students receive support and training from the Librarian. New students receive library induction training at the beginning of their programme, and all students have access to one-to-one support from the Librarian when they have specific library-related queries.

Summary of relevant QA documentation		
No change during review period	Documents reviewed during this period	New documents approved during this period
<u>IP Policy (non-HCQF)</u> <u>Acceptable Use of ICT Policy</u> <u>Change of Personal Details Application Form</u>	<u>Implementing Data Protection Principles in Research Guidelines</u> <u>Engaging in Online Communication Guideline</u>	<u>Framework for International Student Support</u> <u>Library Collection Development Policy</u>

<p><u>Change of Personal Details Procedure</u></p> <p><u>Data Protection and the Handling of Student Data Guidelines</u></p> <p><u>Data Subject Access Request (DSAR) Management Procedure</u></p> <p><u>Data Subject Access Request Form</u></p> <p><u>Personal Data Security Breach Management Procedure</u></p> <p><u>Personal Data Security Breach Report Form</u></p>	<p><u>Public Information, Promotion and the Recruitment of Students Policy</u></p> <p><u>Personal Data and Records Policy</u></p>	
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4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

The Research Committee is a subcommittee of the Academic Board that guides the Academic Board and the College community in strategy, policy and the approach to research activity in the College. Research Activity is supported and overseen via the College's overall academic governance system. The Ethics Committee is an additional subcommittee of the Academic Board that provides guidance on approaches to ethical teaching, research and scholarship. The Ethics Committee grants ethical approval for research to staff, faculty and third parties seeking to conduct research in the College community. Data collected during the course of research activities is managed according to the principles set out in the Implementing Data Protection Principles in Research Guidelines.

Outputs or artefacts arising from research activities can be self-archived in the Hibernia College Institutional Archive of Scholarly Content (IASC). The new policy and procedure that govern this ensure that an appropriate licence is in place to allow self-archiving and a complete set of metadata accompanies each submission.

Summary of relevant QA documentation		
No change during review period	Documents reviewed during this period	New documents approved during this period
<u>Ethics Committee Terms of Reference</u> <u>Research Committee Terms of Reference</u> <u>Open Access Self-Archiving of Research Policy</u> <u>Procedure for Open Access Self-Archiving of Research</u>	<u>Governance and Management Policy</u> <u>Academic Board Terms of Reference</u> <u>Implementing Data Protection Principles in Research Guidelines</u>	

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

The majority of College documentation in this area is managed within the remit of Human Resources and related documents are therefore published internally on the College's intranet. Human Resources policies are written with regard to the Employment Equality Act, 1998, as amended, and the Equal Status Act, 2000, as amended. In accordance with relevant legislation, the College is committed to creating an environment that promotes equality, where all members of the College community are treated equally regardless of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Travelling community.

The College has a detailed recruitment and selection procedure, which is implemented and monitored by the Human Resources Manager. All staff are required to comply with this in seeking to fill posts within the College.

All managers and personnel likely to be involved in the recruitment and selection of staff and faculty are required to complete the appropriate training provided by the College to ensure suitable and consistent practice in the selection of applicants and making offers of appointment. The Human Resources Manager also participates in recruitment and selection activity to ensure consistent practice and compliance with College policy.

All new staff are inducted into Hibernia College by the relevant manager or Academic Lead (depending on the role) in conjunction with the Human Resources Manager. As part of this process, staff and faculty are introduced to the key aspects of their role and any associated documentation, databases and systems, as necessary. An induction period is set aside to allow the new recruit sufficient time to familiarise themselves with relevant policies, procedures, working practices, role requirements and so on, and also to assure the College that each employee has been appropriately advised to enable them to work in a safe and secure manner. The Human Resources Manager facilitates regular induction days at which new employees have the opportunity to meet representatives from all College departments and senior management.

The College's Staff Development & Continuing Education Policy sets out Hibernia College's commitment to the development of its staff. As an educational institution, learning is seen as a core value within the College. It is recognised that continuous learning and development of staff offers benefits to both members of staff and to the College as a whole, which ultimately contribute to the future growth of the College. The overall aim is to achieve a positive, innovative working environment where employees are encouraged to develop their skills so that they may improve their performance and/or prepare for future career progression. The College VLE hosts a dedicated Staff Learning Hub, which includes the Employee Orientation Programme, online learning opportunities, inhouse training courses, information about international opportunities (such as Erasmus+), staff training and shadowing opportunities, staff wellbeing and a knowledge sharing hub.

Summary of relevant QA documentation		
No change during review period	Documents reviewed during this period	New documents approved during this period
<u>Erasmus Policy Statement</u>	<u>Engagement and Management of Adjunct Faculty Policy</u>	

6.0 Information and Data Management

The quality assurance of information and data management is supported through the HCQF policies, procedures and resources related to personal data, appropriate use of ICT and public information. The College prioritised the review of existing documentation and the development of additional documentation in these areas during this reporting period.

The information and data management infrastructure includes MyHELMS (VLE), InPlace (Student Placement Management System), Quercus (Student Information System), Dynamics CRM and Access Dimensions. The Records and Data Manager is responsible for managing compliance with data protection legislation, overseeing record management, and providing data and statistics to support decision-making. The Data Protection Officer (DPO) holds responsibility for managing the training of staff in the associated areas of information and data management; the College engages with PrivacyEngine for the provision of training and data management support. Data collected as part of Research Activities is managed via the Implementing Data Protection Principles in Research Guidelines.

Summary of relevant QA documentation		
No change during review period	Documents reviewed during this period	New documents approved during this period
IP Policy (non-HCQF) <u>Acceptable Use of ICT Policy</u> <u>Change of Personal Details Procedure</u> <u>Change of Personal Details Application Form</u> <u>Data Protection and the Handling of Student Data Guidelines</u> <u>Data Subject Access Request (DSAR) Management Procedure</u> <u>Data Subject Access Request Form</u> <u>Personal Data Security Breach Management Procedure</u> <u>Personal Data Security Breach Report Form</u>	<u>Public Information, Promotion and the Recruitment of Students Policy</u> <u>Engaging in Online Communication Guideline</u> <u>Implementing Data Protection Principles in Research Guidelines</u> <u>Personal Data and Records Policy</u>	

As a private institution the College does not operate a Freedom of Information (FOI) policy.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

The College has an explicit policy related to public information and communication, which sets out the principles for the ethical and effective public communication about and promotion of Hibernia College and its programmes, as well as for the recruitment of students to Hibernia College programmes. Information related to evaluation and findings from quality assurance evaluations is also clearly referenced and linked on the College website and the HCQF website itself. Quality assurance policies and procedures are accessed on this dedicated website.

The Marketing Director oversees the management of the College website and social media channels, including Facebook, LinkedIn, X and Instagram. The Marketing Director regularly liaises with the Registrar, Programme Director, and Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager when drafting communications. During this reporting period, open days were held online; therefore, all College communications with potential learners was conducted online, via messaging or by telephone.

Summary of relevant QA documentation		
No change during review period	Documents reviewed during this period	New documents approved during this period
<u>Acceptable Use of ICT Policy</u>	<u>Public Information, Promotion and the Recruitment of Students Policy</u>	

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

The HCQF sets out the principles and purposes surrounding the periodic review of Hibernia College and its activities, specifically the effectiveness of its quality assurance policies and procedures and how the College's internal quality assurance system engages with external quality assurance. Furthermore, it details the principles and requirements for the formal periodic review of academic programmes. Critical self-evaluation underpins all of these processes.

Summary of relevant QA documentation		
No change during review period	Documents reviewed during this period	New documents approved during this period
<u>Periodic Review of Academic Programmes Policy</u> <u>Periodic Review of Academic Programmes Procedure</u> <u>Cyclical Review of Hibernia College — An Institutional Review Policy</u> <u>Cyclical Review Procedure</u>	<u>Preparing for External Quality Assurance Peer-Review Panel Reviews Guidelines</u>	<u>Collaborative and Transnational Provision Framework</u>

<p><u>Approval, Monitoring and Review of Venues Procedure</u></p> <p><u>External Examining Procedure</u></p> <p><u>Monitoring and Review of the Hibernia College Quality Framework Procedure</u></p> <p>End-of-Programme Report of the Programme Board to the Academic Board</p> <p><u>Ensuring and Maintaining the Quality of Physical Learning and Assessment Environments Policy</u></p>		
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9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	3
Awarding bodies	1
QA bodies	1

1. Type of arrangement	QA body
Name of body:	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Reengagement took place December 2018 with recommendation to Programme and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) 7 February 2019
Date of accreditation or last review	07/12/2019
Date of next review	

2. Type of arrangement	Awarding body
Name of body:	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Early Childhood Education – 10/09/20 Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nursing in General Nursing – 19/07/17 Professional Master of Education in Post-Primary Education – 19/11/14 Professional Master of Education in Post-Primary Education – 08/06/2023 https://qsdocs.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-42582_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25173_C.pdf Professional Master of Education in Primary Education – 19/11/14 Professional Master of Education in Primary Education – 13/07/2023 https://qsdocs.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-42562_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25153_C.pdf Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Business Data Analytics – 19/10/21 Master of Arts in Inclusive and Special Education - 14/07/2022 Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Inclusive and Special Education - 14/07/2022 Master of Science in Corporate Governance Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Corporate Governance https://qsdocs.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProgID-43187_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25761_C.pdf
Date of accreditation or last review	13/07/2023
Date of next review	

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Teaching Council
Programme titles and links to publications	Professional Master of Education (PME) in Primary Education Final report – July 2014 (https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/_fileupload/updated-reports/13_-hibernia-pme.pdf) Progress report – April 2016 (https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/_fileupload/teacher-education/completed-reviews/april-2016-update-to-website-/09_-master-of-arts-in-primary-education-hibernia-college.pdf) Teaching Council Accreditation Report 2023 - https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/assets/uploads/2023/09/Professional-Master-of-Education-primary-14-April-2023.pdf Professional Master of Education (PME) in Post-Primary Education Final Report – May 2014

	(https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/_fileupload/updated-reports/13_hibernia-pme.pdf) Progress report – April 2016 (https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/_fileupload/teacher-education/completed-reviews/april-2016-update-to-website-/13_hibernia-pme.pdf) Teaching Council Accreditation Report 2023 - https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/assets/uploads/2023/09/Final-Report-PMEPP.Hibernia-post-primary.pdf
Date of accreditation or last review	07/07/2023
Date of next review	

4. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nursing in General Nursing
Date of accreditation or last review	22/07/2020
Date of next review	

5. Type of arrangement	QA body
Name of body:	Department of Education and Qualifications Advisory Board for the Early Learning and Care Sector
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Early Childhood Education Published list of approved programmes for adherence to the Professional Award Criteria and Guidelines available on gov.ie (https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/d6685-professional-award-criteria-and-guidelines/)
Date of accreditation or last review	29/05/2020
Date of next review	

6. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in Corporate Governance and Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Corporate Governance https://www.cgi.org.uk/professional-development/study/validated-postgraduate-courses
Date of accreditation or last review	18/01/2024
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	2
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

1. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	The Institute of Child Education and Psychology, ICEP
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Arts in Inclusive and Special Education
Date of last review	14/07/2022
Date of next review	01/12/2026

2. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	The Accountancy School
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in Corporate Governance (PG25761) https://qsdocs.qqi.ie/sites/docs/PanelReportsLibrary/ProglD-43187_Certificate_of_Validation_PG25761_C.pdf
Date of last review	30/09/2024
Date of next review	30/09/2028

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	0
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Hibernia College

2025

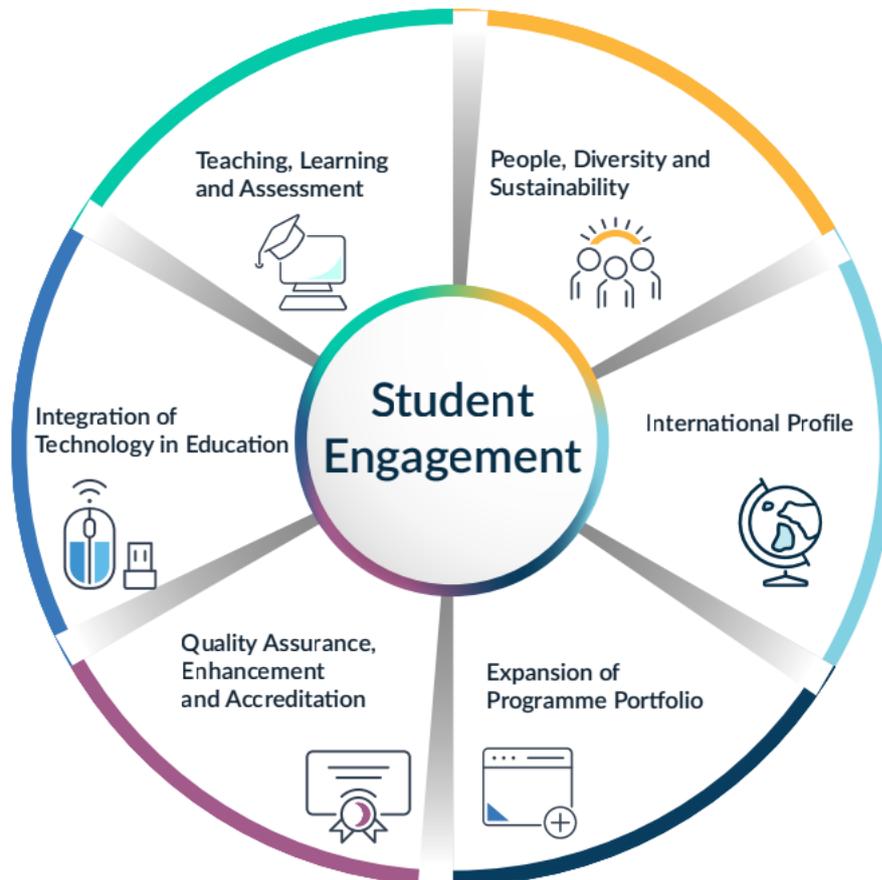
Annual Quality Report Hibernia College
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2023-2024

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

During this reporting period, there were several key developments in the College QA framework and its implementation that aligned with the strategic areas as restated within the College Institutional Profile published as part of the College's CINTE review within the reporting period. These developments continue to contribute to the overall quality assurance and enhancement of the learning environment and experience for staff and learners at Hibernia College. The College and the QA team have endeavoured to capture the learner voice in undertakings, and the following reporting demonstrates two examples of this in terms of a continuing



review of student support services and student engagement in academic governance structures.

The College has a number of strategic areas of focus, which are restated and accessible in the College Institutional Profile.

These are Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Integration of Technology in Education; Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Accreditation; People, Diversity and Sustainability; International Profile; and Expansion of Programme Portfolio. The College views student engagement as central to the achievement of these goals.

The QA team's contributions were instrumental in driving forward the College's strategic objectives. The actions listed here impacted several strategic areas as follows:

Extension of Scope to Fully Online Provision

- Quality Assurance
- International Profile
- Integration of Technology into Education
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Validation of the MSc in Corporate Governance

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Quality Assurance
- Expansion of Programme Portfolio
- Quality Assurance

Review of Academic Board Efficacy

- Quality Assurance
- Enhancement and Accreditation
- People, Diversity and Sustainability

Review of Student Engagement in Academic Governance

- Quality Assurance
- People, Diversity and Sustainability
- Student Engagement

Review of Reasonable Accommodation Support and Policy

- Quality Assurance
- Student Engagement

- Enhancement and Accreditation
- Development of Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management
- Quality Assurance
 - Student Engagement
 - Enhancement and Accreditation
 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

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.
1	Implementation of the NAIN Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management	The College Academic Integrity working group (WG) continued to meet throughout the reporting period with a specific aim of translating the NAIN guidance for misconduct investigation and case management into actionable policy for approval and adoption into the HCQF. Please also see below for further information.
2	The HCQF Review Process	The scheduled review of the HCQF was completed in May 2024. This was scheduled as detailed in the previous AQR report and was extended to incorporate a gap analysis of the framework to ensure compliance with QQI guidance for the provision of fully online programmes.
3	QA Survey Students	This was completed in March 2024 and the scope of the survey was expanded to include all student-facing support services. An update on the findings and actions will be provided in the next AQR as part of a review of the College's CINNTE report.
4	Expansion of Scope/Validation of Online QA Processes.	This action has now been completed as of July 2024; the College was successful in its application for an extension of scope for fully online provision. This involved the development of two new frameworks and an extensive review of the HCQF. The College arranged an independent review and site (virtual) visit before receiving a report and producing an action to respond to recommendations within. An update on these actions will be provided in the next AQR.
5	Review of the Student Support Framework	This work was completed in August 2024. The review is reported as detailed below, and the student reasonable accommodation policy has been updated as a result.
6	Institutional Review	Commencing in September 2024, the College began preparations for CINNTE review. This culminated in the publication of the Institutional Profile and Institutional Self-Evaluation Report. The QA Team undertook extensive consultation and preparation exercises for the site visit. Both the site visit and the delivery/publication of the CINNTE report are outside of the current reporting period and will be reported on in the next AQR period.
7	Review of the Student Complaints Process	This work is ongoing. The review has been expanded to include the Fitness to Practice policy and the Student Code of Conduct policy. An element of the student lived experience will be incorporated into the report and an update will be provided in the next AQR period.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Academic Board	04/09/23, 12/12/23, 23/01/24, 13/02/24, 09/04/24, 11/06/24
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee	29/11/23, 20/02/24, 21/05/24
Research Committee	27/11/23, 27/02/24, 09/07/24
Ethics Committee	20/09/23, 29/11/23, 19/03/24, 23/04/24
Erasmus Committee	22/02/24, 10/05/24
Garda Vetting Committee (<i>ad hoc</i>)	12/10/23, 16/05/24, 23/08/24
Board of Examiners	PMEP: 07/12/2023, 22/05/2024, 08/08/2024 PMEPP: 07/12/2023, 08/05/2024, 30/07/2024 BUS D.A: 10/10/2023 NURS: 24/01/2024, 28/08/24 MAISE: 28/02/2024, 04/06/2024

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

In April 2024 of this reporting period, the College appointed a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) following the retirement of the previous incumbent. Further to this, a new manager of the Assessment and Awards Office was appointed during the reporting period, with an expanded brief to include academic integrity and the role renamed to “Academic Integrity and Assessment Manager” to reflect this.

There were also two changes in the Governance and Management Policy of the College approved by the Academic Board that impacts on two units of governance within the College. Firstly, the Board of Directors of the College now includes the Academic Dean as non-voting member. This amendment is intended to enhance communication between the Academic Board, the wider academic community and the Board of Directors. Secondly, the Registrar role was included within the membership of the EMT. This amendment was made with a view to increasing the academic voice within the EMT but also to augment guidance on regulatory or compliance issues that may impact the College.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

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
<p>The School Placement Team</p> <p>A review of the role, responsibility and function of the school placement team has begun. During the consultation process, to scope the terms of reference for this review, it was decided to undertake a multistage review covering the end-to-end process of school placement to meet the requirements of all stakeholders. The first stage of this review was completed; however, in light of work conducted for CINNTE Institutional Review and subsequent recommendations from the CINNTE panel, the work of this review has been extended.</p>	Ongoing	
<p>MSc in Corporate Governance</p> <p>Successful QQI Validation report and successful partner and programme accreditation with CGIUKI undertaken in February 2024</p>	February & August 2024	<p>Validation Report</p> <p>Accredited Partner of CGIUKI</p>
CINNTE Institutional Review	<p>Institutional Profile and ISER were published in May 2024.</p> <p>The review report and institutional response will be published within the next reporting period.</p>	<p>Institutional Profile</p> <p>ISER</p>
<p>Expansion to Scope of Provision – Fully Online Learning</p> <p>As detailed in the attached case study, this was successfully awarded following an in-depth review of the College HCQF system.</p>	Independent Review Panel – July 2024	Please see Case study #2.

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels¹ involved in IQA

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

Guide

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	2				1		1
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes							
Desk reviews							
Virtual processes	2				1		1
Average panel size for each process type*					7		5

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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

¹ QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

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	2	1	1		0	2					2
Secretary	2	1	1		0	1					2
Academic/Discipline Specific	3	2	1		0	2	1				3
Student Representative	2	1	1		0	2					2
QA					0						
Teaching & Learning	2	1	1		0	1	1				2
External Industry /Third Mission	1		1		0	1					1

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

In preparation for CINNTE review, an application for an extension of scope of provision and preparations for the submission of TrustEd several internal reviews and exercises were conducted that have identified QA enhancements that have been implemented or have a timescale for implementation as detailed below.

2.01 Governance and Management of Quality.

2.01.1 Academic Board Self-Assessment

Introduction

In addition to changes outlined in 1.3.2, the Academic Board undertook a self-assessment of its efficacy between March and April 2024. As per Section D of the terms of reference, the Board must undertake an evaluation and review exercise on a three-yearly cycle. As part of this, a survey instrument was designed for completion by members of the Academic Board based upon a toll published by the IUA and HEA. The survey was distributed via MS Forms, and Board members were given a two-week period (7-21 March 2024) to complete it. This survey period coincided with the election of new members to the Board; as a result, both these members stepping down from seats and those assuming new seats were surveyed along with those members remaining in place, the survey achieved a 32% response rate. Board members were asked to anonymously rate their satisfaction or perception of effectiveness with the Academic Board across 24 statements covering the following areas:

- Role and Function of the Academic Board
- Oversight by the Academic Board
- Effectiveness of the Academic Board

Role and Function of the Academic Board

Generally, Academic Board members were largely satisfied with the role and function of the Board, with responses ranging from 77% to 100% of members being either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the role and function of the Academic Board.

Members of the Board expressed a level of dissatisfaction with the Academic Board in relation to 4 of 11 statements covering the communication of the College's missions and vision (11% somewhat dissatisfied; 11% satisfied nor dissatisfied; 22% somewhat satisfied; 56% very satisfied), clear establishment of the roles of the Chair of the Academic Board and the College CEO (11% somewhat dissatisfied; 11% somewhat satisfied; 78% very satisfied), the setting of a strategic plan (12% somewhat dissatisfied; 44% somewhat satisfied; 44% very satisfied) and the means of communication between the Chair of the Academic Board and the Board of Directors (22% somewhat dissatisfied; 11% somewhat satisfied; 55% very satisfied).

In relation to 4 of 11 statements, members of the Academic Board were either somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with the role and function of the Academic Board. This included the proportion of time spent on strategic versus day-to-day management activities (67% very satisfied; 33% somewhat satisfied), that members of the Academic Board are aware of and have accessed relevant information to perform their duties (56% very satisfied; 44% somewhat satisfied), that the Academic Board set a formal schedule, workplan and these are reviewed regularly (89% very satisfied; 11% somewhat satisfied) and that the Academic Board has a clear terms of reference and set of matters reserved for its consideration (89% very satisfied; 11% somewhat satisfied).

For 3 of 11 statements, members of the Academic Board expressed both satisfaction and were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. These three statements could be connected to the understanding of the external environment and its risks (11% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 67% very satisfied; 22% somewhat satisfied), the operation of the College risk register (11% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 67% very satisfied; 22% somewhat satisfied) and the role of the Academic Board in terms of its stewardship responsibilities (11% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 55% very satisfied; 33% somewhat satisfied).

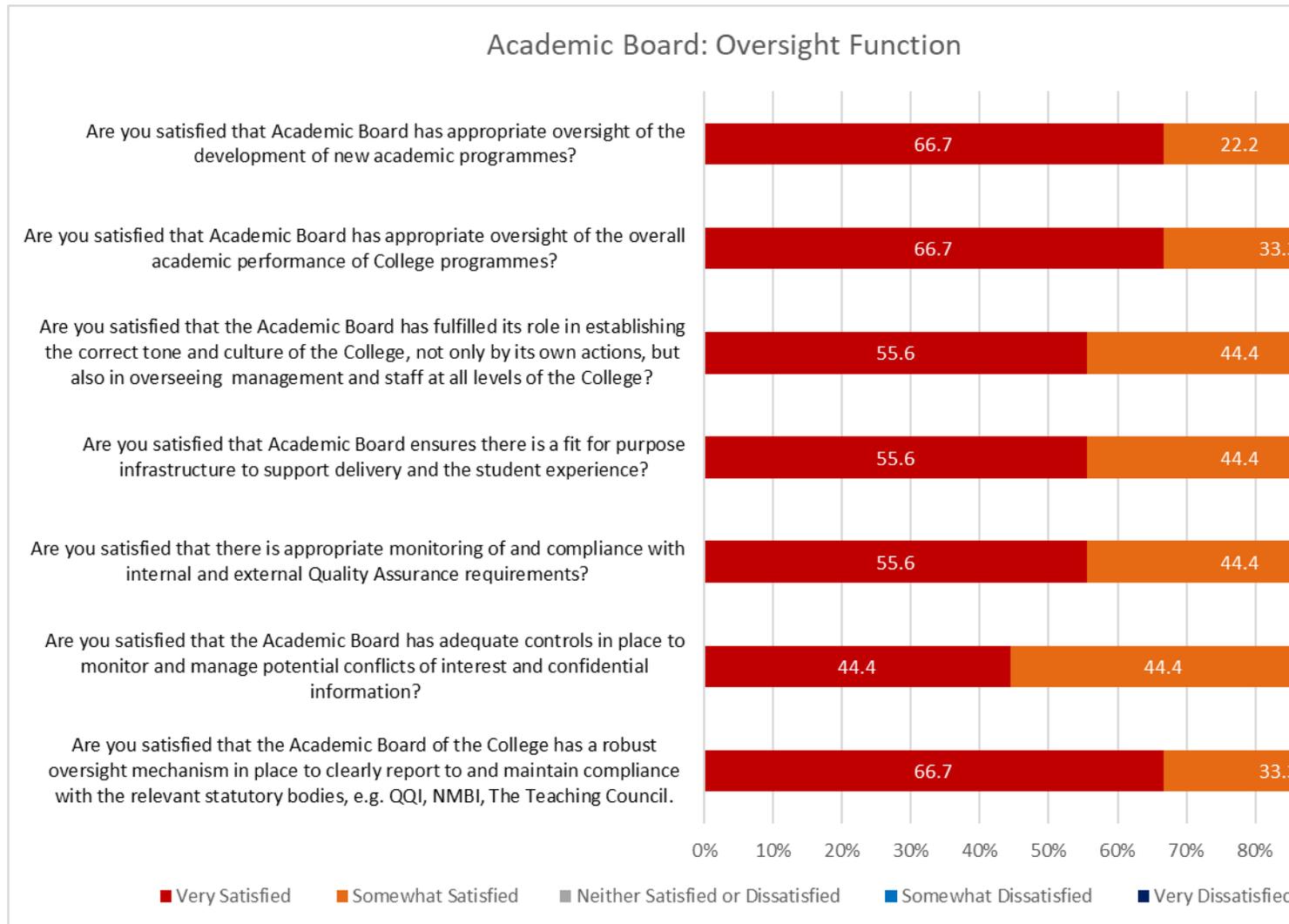
On balance, the operation of the Academic Board was well perceived, while the role of the Academic Board in relation to other senior leaders, the College strategy as well as risk and compliance measures were less well perceived.

Oversight by Academic Board

Satisfaction among the members of the Board with the oversight function that the Academic Board provides was assessed by a rating of 7 statements (Figure 2). Overall, 100% of Board members were satisfied with 5 of 7 statements. Specifically, this relates to ensuring compliance with statutory bodies, compliance with internal and external QA requirements, delivering a fit-for-purpose student experience, establishing the tone and culture of the College, and provision of oversight of the College's overall academic standards and its programmes.

In relation to 2 of 7 statements, 11% of members were neither satisfied or dissatisfied with the oversight the Academic Board provided in relation to managing potential conflicts of interest (44% very satisfied; 44% somewhat satisfied; 11% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) and the oversight of the Academic Board in the development of

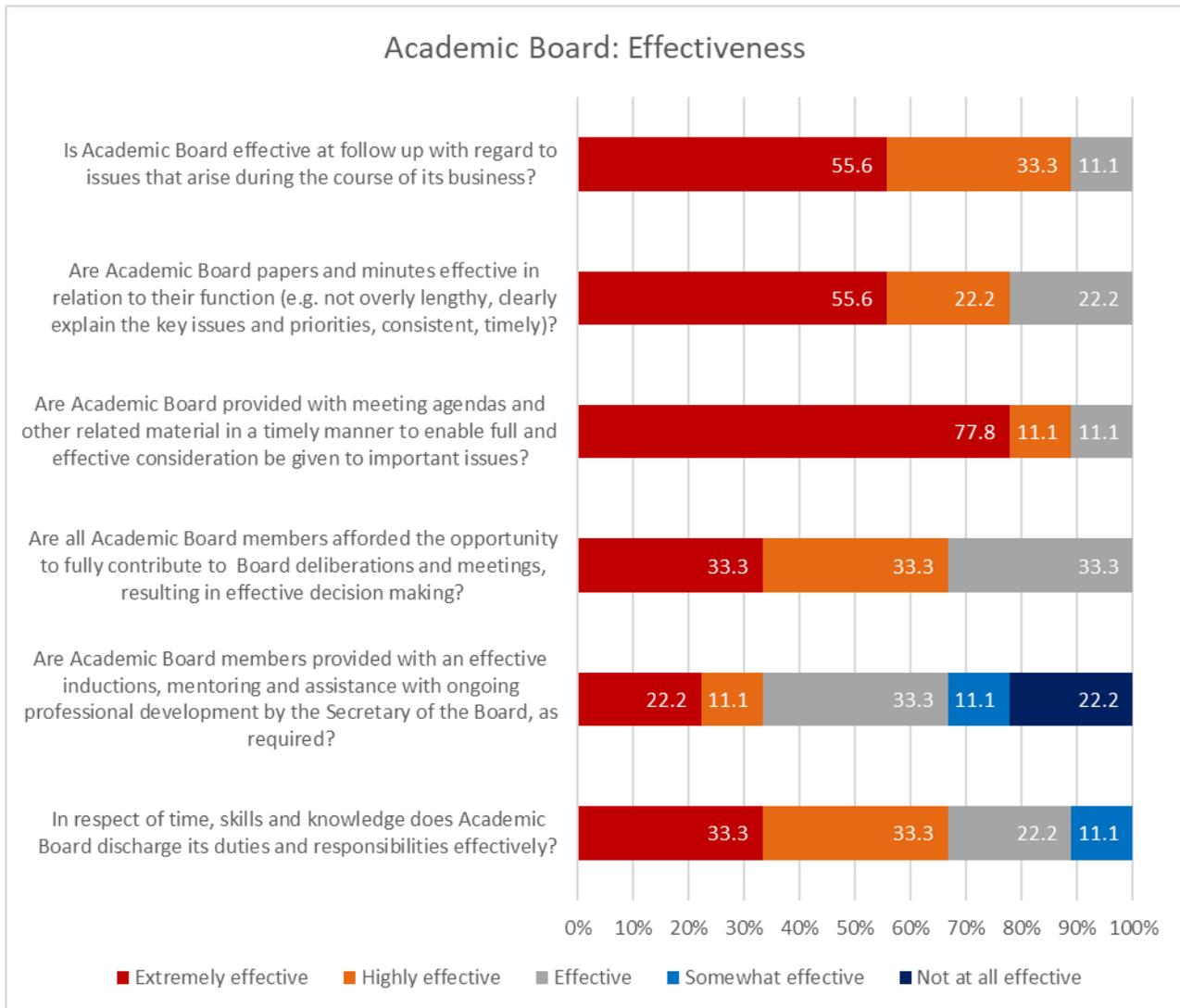
new programmes of study (67% very satisfied; 22% somewhat satisfied; 11% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). There was a 100% overlap between those expressing neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction with these two statements. On balance, members of the Academic Board were satisfied with the oversight the Board provided on a variety of academic matters, but there is perceived scope for improvement in relation to the development of new programmes and managing conflicts of interest.



Effectiveness of the Academic Board

Finally, the members of the Board were asked to rate their perception of the effectiveness of the Academic Board, ranging from not at all effective to extremely effective over 6 statements. Members found the board to be effective in relation to 5 of 6 statements. In relation to the discharge of its duties and responsibilities, members found the board to be extremely effective (33%), highly effective (33%), effective (22%) or somewhat effective (11%). In relation to Board members' opportunity to contribute to effective decision-making, it was found to be extremely effective (33%), highly effective (33%) or effective (33%). Board members felt the Board itself was extremely effective (77%), highly effective (11%) or effective (11%) in terms of access to materials to support decision-making. Board members found the quality of the materials to support decision-making to be extremely effective (55%), highly effective (22%) or effective (22%). They found follow-up regarding issues that arise during the course of its business to be extremely effective (55%), highly effective (33%) or effective (11%). When asked to rate effectiveness of induction, mentoring and professional development support from the Secretariat, the Board members found this to be extremely effective (22%), highly effective (11%), effective (33%), somewhat effective (11%) or not at all effective (22%).

Respondents who found the support, mentoring or provision of professional development from the Academic Board to be not at all effective had not recorded dissatisfaction with other elements of the Academic Board. However, providing effective support and induction is essential to ensure full participation from all in collective academic governance.



Conclusion

The overall survey response rate was modest, and future iterations could seek to survey Academic Board members outside of the period when new members join or members vacate seats. Furthermore, the individual questions in the survey instrument can be refined to avoid overlap between or within areas, e.g. the access to and quality of materials to support the Board in making effective decisions. The anonymous nature of the survey was chosen to maximise uptake and encourage frank, honest responses to the questions themselves; however, it should be noted that this also prohibits follow-up with members who have yet to respond (see also Action 1 below).

Overall satisfaction was high, with 100% of Board members expressing their satisfaction with 9 of 18 statements relating to the function of, role of and oversight that Academic Board has. Areas where the Academic Board functions appropriately and were recognised as positive include:

- Follow-up by the Academic Board in relation to matters or issues that arise during Academic Board business
- Awareness of relevant internal and external information to support Academic Board decision-making
- Compliance with both internal and external QA requirements
- Maintenance of academic standards and quality in existing programmes
- Delivery of appropriate student experience
- Setting and maintaining the correct tone and culture of the College

Areas identified less positively, or as requiring improvement, include the:

- Delineation of the Academic Board's function regarding the role of the CEO/EMT
- Demarcation of the modes of communication between the Academic Board and the Board of Directors

- Role of the Academic Board in overseeing the development or approval of new programmes of study
- Role of the Academic Board in setting, promoting and implementing the College strategy, mission and vision

These areas are interconnected and highlight opportunities for improvement in the Board's interaction with higher strategic decision-making and decision-making bodies.

While members of the Board felt that an appropriate and not excessive amount of time was dedicated to decisions involving day-to-day operations of the College, this was countered by the sentiment that the Board could, and should, have a stronger role to play in setting the College strategy. The readiness or capacity of the Board to do so is supported by the finding that the Board sets the correct tone and culture in relation to College life. However, there is a clear need to assess the skill set currently available to the Board and supplement this as appropriate. This specifically related to the oversight of the development of new programmes; Academic Board members felt there was a clear need for greater involvement in this process. This could be related to the previously expressed desire for the Academic Board to have a greater say in the setting of the College strategic plan and direction.

Actions

At the time of approval of the report, the Academic Board also approved the actions detailed below. The original timeframe for completion is included along with an update on progress since approval. The owner for each action is indicated below.

Action 1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE): An induction session will be held annually moving forward for new or continuing Board members, and the relevant material will be available to all Board members through the appropriate SharePoint site.

Time Frame: Annually in February – completed for 2024

Action 2 (QAE): Development needs assessment to be undertaken with a view to identifying specific areas in which Board members may feel they are lacking certain skills and arrange for outsourced training where skills are absent and essential to the performance of the Board.

Time Frame: Development needs assessment September - October 2024, now completed; Skills training November - December 2024, ongoing throughout current and next reporting period. Key areas identified for further training of board members include risk management.

Action 3 (Chair of AB/Registrar): Prepare a comprehensive introduction to the Academic Board and its functions, and this report for the new incoming CEO of Hibernia College. This should include what is currently outlined within the Terms of Reference regarding communication, feedback and oversight between the CEO, the Academic Board and the Board of Directors. It should also include the proposed changes that arise from 3.1.

Time Frame: July 2024 – completed as per 1.3.2 above

Action 3.1 (QAE): Continue the planned HCQF review and conduct a comprehensive review and consultation of the Management and Governance Policy as it relates to higher-order decision-making and delineation of the interaction of the Academic Board with other College decision-making bodies. In line with this, the Academic Board Terms of Reference will be amended if required.

Time Frame: September - December 2024 – completed as per 1.3.2 above

Action 3.2 (Chair of AB): Constitute an independent advisory board that acts to offer external guidance and independent advice to the Academic Board and provide an annual report to the Board of Directors; the board will be composed of a minimum of three individuals whose appointment is approved by EMT.

Time Frame: September - November 2024. Ongoing identification and recruitment of these individuals is partially completed and will be finalised in line with the next reporting period.

Action 3.3 (CEO/Chair of AB): To ensure compliance with existing academic standards by the Academic Board, establish a routine feedback mechanism for the Digital Learning Department (DLD) to the Academic Board.

Time Frame: September 2024 – completed; DLD feedback and reporting now occurring through two standing items on the academic board agenda

Action 3.4 (CEO/Chair of AB): Provide a regular written and oral report from the Chair of the Academic Board to the Board of Directors. To facilitate this, the Chair of the Academic Board will join the Board of Directors as a non-voting member.

Time Frame: August 2024 – completed as outlined in 1.3.2 above

Action 3.5 (CEO/ Chair of AB): Provision will be made for the Registrar to join the EMT.

Time Frame: July 2024 – completed as outlined in 1.3.2 above

Action 4 (Chair of AB): Ensure appropriate participation of the Academic Board at strategic planning sessions, and ensure that the mission of the Academic Board is included and represented in the Hibernia College's Group Strategy.

Time Frame: Commencing October 2024 to May 2025. Ongoing and to facilitate this the CEO will receive regular reports from the Academic Dean and the Academic Leadership Team.

2.01.2 Student Engagement in Academic Governance

Background

There are many differing understandings of student engagement, with phrases such as ‘student voice’ and ‘students as partners’ being used as related phrases and sometimes interchangeably. Therefore, it is more effective to look at the results of student engagement. Ultimately, positive and effective student engagement creates an open and honest relationship between students and staff, leading to collaboration (National Student Engagement Programme. (2021). *Steps to Partnership: A Framework for Authentic Student Engagement in Decision Making*).

Student engagement is a whole institute issue and as such requires a whole institutional response. It is not solely based in the classroom, nor in committees, nor in feedback processes. The process of student engagement requires a commonly agreed framework to be most effective, this is underpinned by a shared understanding by both staff and students.

Student engagement is also vital for building a sense of belonging to the institution; this is underlined by the outcomes of the Higher Education Authority(HEA)/NStEP-funded project exploring student wellbeing, belonging and engagement (final report due 2025). However, preliminary results indicate that students who are viewed and view themselves as members of an academic community gain not only rights but also accrue responsibilities to that institution.

“Authentic Education is not carried out by A for B or by A about B, but rather by A with B, mediated by the world - a world which impresses and challenges both parties, giving rise to views or opinions about it.” (Friere, 1972)

It must also be noted that the view of the student as a consumer may place the student outside of the college community while enshrining their rights within it (Working Group on Student Engagement in Irish Higher Education. (2016). *Engancing Student Engagement in Decision Making*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority). This tension must be considered when discussing student engagement, especially in the context of a private college.

NStEP has created [A framework for Authentic Student Engagement in Decision-Making](#), which is worthwhile further reading.

While student engagement is acknowledged as being valuable to both the student population as a whole and the institution, it should be noted that some difficulties may arise, especially with students in governance roles. Staff should be cognisant of the power balance, or imbalance, in the student-teacher relationship and that committees, especially programme-based ones, can represent intimidating environments for many student representatives. This stems from the perception, real or not, that a student representative may be penalised as a result of their actions in this setting. Essentially, whether this occurred or not, the student's perception of the risk of it occurring was a major factor in their engagement (Carey, P. (2013). *Student engagement: stakeholder perspectives on course representation in university governance*. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1290-1304).

Continual evaluation of student engagement in academic governance structures is essential to ensure that these structures remain relevant to the student body, are fit for purpose and meet their designated functions.

Hibernia College Context

Two approaches were taken to assessing the standard of student engagement in the academic governance structures. Staff were surveyed using an instrument adapted by the QAE team in Hibernia College, based on a [tool](#) from the National Union of Students (NUS) UK and the Association for Managers in Students' Unions (AMSU). It assigned a description to each potential response, which forms the basis of the analysis below.

This survey was sent to academic faculty, committee members (including adjunct faculty), student support staff and programme administration. Colleagues were given a 2-week period to respond to the survey. A response rate of 29.7% was achieved.

Alongside this, the QAE team carried out interviews with student representatives via Zoom and also sent out a Microsoft form to obtain feedback on the experience of student representation in the College. A total of eight students were either interviewed or completed the online form.

Findings

This exercise demonstrates that there are mixed perceptions of the student representation systems in the College; however, some high-level findings can be drawn from this exercise.

Generally speaking, students and staff are satisfied with the early stages of the student representative process, with elections being broadly acknowledged as fair, transparent and democratic. Concerns were raised by student representatives on the low turnout of these elections; however, this is a common issue in the Irish HE sector, where elections for full-time sabbatical roles in institutions with well-established students' unions rarely exceed 15-20%.

According to the survey responses, reps are contacted in advance and information is collected on their training requirements, which is positive. Representatives felt that more advance communication would be beneficial, and this could involve individual training needs identification.

It is noted that the College relies on NStEP to provide training for student representatives. In interviews with students, it was noted that this training falls short of acknowledging the Hibernia College context, given that it diverges from a traditional HEI. This may link into the responses in relation to guidance for student representatives, which both students and staff identified as an area for improvement. Opinions of the impact of student representatives were also mixed. This may be due to the varying responsibilities of the staff respondents but also could be reflective of a deeper issue around the impact that student representation has on the College more broadly.

One of the key roles of a student representative is to represent their peers. Both staff and students identified that this is an area that they sometimes struggle with. Students noted that it can be difficult to obtain authentic feedback from their peers due to the nature of our course offerings, as well as perceived privacy concerns around using College systems (such as the Cohort app) to obtain feedback. Students also noted that they do not receive sufficient training for this. The same sentiment was reflected in the question relating to student reps feeding back to their peers.

Staff seem satisfied with the current state of ownership of the representative system, with it being a partnership between multiple departments. This collective ownership could be enhanced by a policy or set of SOPs in relation to the system to clarify specific roles and responsibilities.

Staff and students both noted the need for improvement in recognition and reward of student representatives. Further study should be done into the most effective way to recognise and reward representatives for the work they do, which is in addition to their studies and life commitments.

Overall, it can be said that the College has a developing to developed student representative system, with the system being at its strongest in the early stages of the life cycle of a student representative (recruitment, elections etc.), with improvements to be made in the mid to later parts of their term (representativity, feeding back to peers, recognition and reward).

This report should provide a starting point for enhancing our student representation systems to ensure that the student voice is not only being captured and acted upon but is also valued.

Proposed Actions

Action	Timeline
1. Develop a common College understanding and definition for student engagement.	March 2025
2. Develop a system to recognise and reward the work of student representatives in the College.	June 2025
3. Develop a policy or set of SOPs related to the student representative system, clearly outlining the roles and responsibilities of each unit in relation to the system.	March 2025
4. Provide clear, up-to-date role descriptors for the role of student representative before elections take place.	January 2025
5. Develop a suite of training for student representatives that is designed specifically with the College context in mind, as well as the role of the student representative within the College.	
6. Provide more opportunities for student representatives to work together across cohorts and programmes. This peer learning could benefit both the representatives and the College because common issues can be explored through one group as well as more experienced reps giving advice to newer ones.	March 2025
7. Provide further information to students on the Cohort app and common situations when staff will access messages sent on the app to improve student trust in the app.	March 2025

2.02 Programmes of Education and Training.

In collaboration with the Accountancy School, the College developed, validated and launched a new programme. The Master of Science in Corporate Governance is a Level 9 NFQ award and is validated with QQI while also receiving professional accreditation with the Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland.

In September 2022, through informal discussions with those in the profession, the programme director became aware of the increased demand, post-economic crash recovery and post-Brexit, for training graduates in this

field. After initial research, it became clear that a potential market for a blended part-time programme existed. In March 2023, a meeting was held between the Programme Lead, the Managing Director of Accountancy School and the Hibernia College CEO and Academic Dean, to discuss potential collaboration between the two institutions; this is depicted in Figure 1. It was agreed that the proposal was worthy of further research and a decision was made to engage with industry and the professional body (the CGIUKI). An initial programme team of the programme director and deputy programme director, and the managing director of Accountancy School was established. In April 2023, initial meetings were held with participants in industry and practice and with representatives of the CGI. In July 2023, following further research and development, the programme team submitted, as per Hibernia College's academic procedures, an application to the EMT of the College for 'Initial Approval for the Development of a New Programme'. In August 2023, approval for the further development of the programme was granted in principle. An MOU and collaborative agreement between the two institutions were prepared and the programme team was expanded.

The separation of responsibilities with respect to governance is important to ensure that the Academic Board remains focused on delivering the academic and educational mission of the College, while the Board of Directors and the EMT remain focused on the corporate and fiscal responsibilities of the College. During the establishment and delivery of the above programmes, especially through collaborative provision, there will be a need for regular and clear communication to ensure operation tasks can be completed in a timely fashion. The Joint Programme Committee (JPC) enables shared decision-making across the corporate and academic spectrum and was established in response to the development of the MSc in Corporate Governance programme. In preparation for a validation panel review and in advance of the admissions cycle commencing for the first cohort, the JPC met and confirmed the membership. At the first meeting of the Corporate Governance JPC, co-Chairs were elected, terms of reference were discussed and approved, a schedule of meetings was agreed and a committee work plan was agreed and approved. A clear remit and function of the committee have been established to enshrine shared governance for the programme between the two partners and to ensure that the balance of academic autonomy and corporate responsibility is fair, honest and transparent. The committee meets on two occasions every semester and agrees a workplan at the commencement of each academic year.

2.04 Supports and resources for learners

Following a previous report on the number and nature of cases handled by the Student Support Team, as reported in the College AQR 2024, and the outcomes related to students receiving reasonable accommodations, a further review of the lived experiences of students with reasonable accommodations and their utility was requested at the College Academic Board.

The Student Support Team issued an invitation to all students receiving reasonable accommodations. Six students responded and four students were interviewed over a two-week period in May 2024. Students were provided with five questions and asked to discuss their experiences of studying with reasonable accommodations with reference to these questions. Questions were asked in an open-ended fashion, and students were only prompted to answer further should they not have addressed a specific area or question.

1. *Did you feel well informed on the RA process itself and how to apply/who to apply to/when to apply?*

Interview responses: Participants felt well informed on the process of applying for reasonable accommodation. They identified the Student Support Team as being approachable and contactable. All participants identified their experiences at undergraduate level as being a factor here, providing them with confidence in applying and accessing support. However, it was identified here and below that dealing with professionals in a professional setting was a barrier not previously encountered. Several participants identified a lag in the time between application and outcome in terms of their reasonable accommodation application. There was an identified gap in communication between the Student Support Team and the placement team or wider programme team. This was extended to the school placement tutor and identified in more detail below.

Potential Actions:

Review communication between support and PA or placement teams, such that tutors or placement tutors are aware of potential support requests in relation to placement or F2F days.

2. *Did you feel the RA awarded supported you during the programme/study?*

Interview Responses: All participants identified a moderate positive effect on knowing that supports had been awarded even where participants did not access supports on all occasions. Participants naturally focused on two areas – technological support and other aspects of support. Of those participants who addressed technological support, they identified these as useful but not contributing significantly to their ability to engage with the programme.

In terms of non-technological supports, participants focused on placement/Gaeltacht and the relationships involved in these. Participants were clear in identifying that supports awarded to the student do not necessarily change the nature of the relationship between student and the School Placement Tutor (SPT), and that this can be positive but also negative. Where this relationship was identified as negative, it was deemed to have a negative impact on the student's experience of placement and their own assessment of their effort and performance on placement. Students identified a need for a follow-up to check if accommodations were useful or being implemented.

Participants felt that many or the majority of the supports identified in the certificate of support were not related to or useful to placement or Gaeltacht. Some reported that having submission timeframes extended for a number of hours had a negative effect when they were required to be in classroom the next day for a full teaching day. This was identified as having both a negative physical and mental effect on student health. This was evident in several participants who identified as having chronic physical conditions but may also be generalised to those students with conditions that impact time management and organisational abilities. Half of participants independently identified that accommodations should be individualised and not generic; they need to account for the particular circumstances of the student and where the student is in the life cycle of the programme.

Potential Actions:

- Identify what, if any, potential additional accommodations can be made for students with placement requirements as part of their programmes.
- Should accommodations be reviewed in advance of placement? Or, can separate accommodations for placement be identified?
- Review and implement training, where necessary, for all placement tutors or staff involved in assessment of students on placement to educate all staff on the responsibilities of the College to those students with reasonable accommodations.
- Provide an opportunity for a welfare check-in for those students requiring additional support during placement.

3. *Did you feel confident/comfortable speaking about your RA with faculty, tutors, co-operative teachers or SPT/Clinical Placement Co-ordinators?*

4. *Are there circumstances when or where you feel the College should be more involved in the disclosure of your needs and awarded RA?*

Note: Responses to Questions 3 and 4 are reported together.

Interview Responses: This was a highly personal issue for participants; multiple participants reported having experience with this from UG studies. Many felt they "had" to make communication with the SPT or tutor, as it was likely to be the case when they were working. However, it was acknowledged that there may be times when the College could make this disclosure on behalf of the student, with their consent, either where supports or RA are above and beyond. This was also dependent on whether the student knew the placement location or Treoraí co-operative teacher or principle themselves. All students highlighting that knowing the tutor in advance or from previous encounters for face-to-face events was important in allowing them to approach tutors to disclose and access their supports. Where the tutor was unknown to a particular participant, they identified a reluctance to approach and access supports.

More than one participant identified a fear of disclosure due to professional implications or the power imbalance. This might align with one participant who identified a lack of peer-to-peer support and felt this might be due to the weak role the College takes in promoting diversity amongst the wider community.

Potential Actions:

Local

- Include in the needs assessments the option for the College to make a disclosure on behalf of the student.
- To what extent are tutors identified to students in advance of the face-to-face days?

Wider

- Reinforce the professional/FtP concept and that disclosure of conditions that impact ability to practice is good professionalism.
- Introduce and expand College efforts to promote acceptance of diversity and improve visibility of inclusion across all levels of the College, e.g. faculty (i.e. professionals) modelling inclusive behaviours.

5. *In relation to your own programme of study, could you identify the main pinch point or two in the programme of study. What supports here would help you over the pinch point?*

Interview Responses: Two participants identified placement as the key pinch point, and one identified final placement as being high-stakes and thus amplifying pressure on students. One other student identified where placement and research overlap, thus resulting in the stacking of assessment requirements, as being a pressure

point. This was highlighted in the context of students with dyspraxia or other conditions that may impact students' ability to organise or carry out time management and time-critical tasks.

A single participant identified the time to feedback as being an issue, given their condition, as it affects the time needed to assimilate feedback and incorporate constructive feedback into future assessments.

Potential Actions:

- Evaluate feasibility of "fast-tracking" feedback to students with reasonable accommodations.
- Review clustering of assessments as related to taught and practice/placement modules.

Outcomes:

A working group to review and respond to the above findings was formed and met between July and August 2024 on six occasions. This WG had two key outputs:

1. The College Reasonable Accommodation Policy has now been updated to reflect the above findings and the need to reinforce the availability of support for all learners including those on placements.
2. Individual programme teams are assembling anonymised examples of supports previously provided with supports for programmes, in particular those who must take part in professional placements.

2.05 Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

The College undertook several major self-evaluation monitoring and review exercises related to:

- An extension of the College scope of provision to fully online
- Preparation and submission of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) for CINNTE

Given the period of time over which the preparations for CINNTE took place, including the dates of the CINNTE review itself, this will be reported on in the subsequent AQR. However, the details of our preparations for an extension of scope to fully online provision are shared via a case study below. The College was successful in this request.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Building on work previously reported on within the last AQR, the College developed and has consulted with the College community on the NAIN Framework for Academic Misconduct, Investigation and Case Management. This consultation was performed with the Academic Integrity Working Group but also through the Academic Integrity Champions network. This material will be brought before the Academic Board for approval within the next reporting period.

The Assessment and Awards Manager role was reimaged to be the Academic Integrity and Assessments Manager; this new enhanced role includes a running brief on the monitoring of instances of academic misconduct. The first formal report of the instances of academic misconduct was provided to the Academic Board within this reporting period. It now forms a part of the annual Academic Board workplan.

In addition to this, the College has continued to conduct research in this area to ensure that our actions are based in evidence but also consider all College community members. This research has included a number of workshops with school pupils and student teachers and a longitudinal survey on the attitudes of learners towards academic integrity.

The findings of the academic integrity survey are partially available and will be reported in the next period. However, a summary of the findings of the workshops is presented below.

Present Day

Participants asked about Generative AI (GenAI) in the current context discussed two issues or questions. Regarding the groups biggest hope for GenAI in the classroom, participants felt as a group that it may be useful in terms of tools for the classroom to aid teaching and to encourage engagement. Participants also alluded to the iterative nature of GenAI and how this could be beneficial as a tool for differentiation of competency amongst learners; an example cited of this was a conversational GenAI tool for use in teaching of foreign language. All participants agreed that more focus may be needed on the lower-order/foundational skills before GenAI could be used to build higher-order skills.

In the same period, the group were asked to consider their biggest fears for GenAI in the classroom. Chief amongst the items raised were questions on how to integrate these tools effectively and properly, how best to educate students in using them and how to assess misinformation. Expanding on these issues, participants pointed to the need for parental support in the use of these tools within the classroom. This led the discussion to a consideration of whether the socioeconomic background of learners, and thus parental engagement, might not lead to the levelled playing field envisaged in a utopian GenAI facilitated future. All participants agreed that the implementation of these tools would be ethically and morally difficult to manage within the classroom and that further guidance was needed from a centralised supporting body.

The use, and fears, of GenAI from a personal perspective emerged from some participants in terms of their own learning or learning of family and friends. These fears centred around the use of GenAI in misconduct. With all participants highlighting that it will be an issue for the integrity of continuous assessments, one participant advocated a return to the use of in-person, closed-book summative assessments as a solution to this. The group were unable to agree on this point.

The group's fears and their willingness to discuss these occupied more time than was spent discussing hopes. Conversation on these questions also suggested that there was a gap in the understanding between participants and a degree of work to reach equal levels of digital literacy would be required.

2024 -2028

Participants were asked to consider two topics within the future context of 2024-2028: In what ways are your students utilising GenAI in your classroom, and what would make an adaptive learning tool compelling? There was alignment in the responses to these topics with a clear need for a tool to be compelling before it would be taken up or engaged with at the student level. Learning tools that could be adopted by students were envisaged to be responsive to individual learning needs and allowed for differentiation of learners and their knowledge levels. Several barriers to update and use were also clearly identified, and these included baseline knowledge and confidence of the learner as well as a reluctance to use GenAI based learning tools if there was no clear means to evidence learning. Barriers at the teacher level were also identified by the group, which included the need for a systemic approach to implementation of these tools. It was identified that teachers would be reluctant to cut time from teaching their curricular subjects to introduce and frame the use of GenAI in teaching or education. Beyond these wide curricular changes to introduce GenAI in a meaningful fashion into each subject, the adoption would be at the level of individual teachers in terms of tools, while adoption by learners would be confined to the use of GenAI in assignments or assessments. This latter point highlighted the need for more scaffolding and structure on the information supplied to learners on academic integrity and how this intersects with digital literacy.

Supporting the call for digital literacy was a feeling that learners already had too much trust and an overconfidence in GenAI tools in the absence of foundational skills.

2028 - 2033

Participants were asked what effects, intended or otherwise, GenAI may have in the classroom of the future and how GenAI has changed the whole-school environment either for better or worse. The effects in the classroom identified by participants aligned with effects on learners, while changes in the school environment focused on teachers and the profession as a whole. Participants expressed fears around the promotion of inequity amongst learners in the classroom, citing a division in access to resources and GenAI tools. Additionally, the influence of parental digital literacy was identified as a factor driving this inequity. Second to this was the loss of interest or enthusiasm for learning amongst learners. There was a fear that weaker learners would lose interest or fail to see the importance of foundational skills should they intend on relying upon GenAI tools to aid their progression through education. This again highlighted the need for an overarching framework on how GenAI is introduced, taught and valued within the classroom, with an aim of promoting a healthy cynicism of GenAI.

Changes across the whole-school environment were focused on impacts on teachers and their relationships. It was felt that teachers may become increasingly viewed as facilitators rather than educators to the detriment of both the profession and student learning. A reluctance to upskill by some teachers was viewed as an accelerating factor in the decay of the potential student-teacher relationship. Participants identified the potential for a gap between learners and teachers, with the potential for this to widen in the absence of teachers who were “digital natives” or “GenAI fluent”. This refusal to upskill or engage with developing technologies was evidenced by all present.

At the foundation of efforts to combat the negatives identified was the need for a national policy to set a framework for the introduction of and use of GenAI. This must cater for a restructure of the curriculum that accounts for the need to integrate academic integrity in its broadest sense at the earliest stages of education, building to a knowledge framework that allows learners to distinguish between information and misinformation and between GenAI tools based upon an understanding of the technology response for them. To ensure that any such efforts are successful parents or guardians of learners must be brought along the same educational journey to ensure that domestic support is aligned with the intentions of any such framework. There was clear optimism for this work and an acknowledgment that while it would be difficult to do correctly, it was necessary. Further seeds of optimism emerged in that one participant reported that discussions on the development of a policy on the acceptable use of GenAI in the classroom had already begun.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

At the time of writing, Hibernia College has submitted the response to the report of the CINNTE review panel. We are awaiting publication of the report. In the meantime, we have commenced our internal processes in relation to the implementation plan for the recommendations of the review panel. The table below highlights our key objectives and areas of focus for the implementation plan as well as our initial planned actions. The full implementation plan will be published within three months of the publication of the Cinnte Review Report.

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.</i> <i>If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i>
1.	Creation of a Hibernia College alumni network	This work will focus on harnessing the large group of past students from the College to deliver a network of engaged and connected professionals. This will endeavour to create CPD and career development opportunities for our graduates. Unit Responsible: Registry/ Academic Dean/ EMT Planned Actions: Alumni survey to be issued to inform design of a alumni network strategy/enactment of alumni network to coincide with 25 th anniversary
2.	Enhance student engagement across governance structures	Based on findings reported here the QA Team will work across the existing student representatives and student engagement committee to implement the actions detailed above. A key measure of our success in this area will be an increase in both the quantity and depth of student engagement. s Unit Responsible: Registry/Academic Dean/Student Affairs Planned Actions: Data gathering on student engagement within governance structures; training for student reps; mentorship programme for student reps
3.	Initiate a plan to increase the research profile for research active staff	In response to ongoing discussions amongst the Faculty and across the College, efforts will be made to increase the amount of time dedicated to research and as a consequence the research profile of Faculty and the College. The Research Committee will revisit and amend the research strategy to empower a research orientated culture across the College. Unit Responsible: Registry/ HR/ Research Committee /Academic Dean Planned Actions: Repository of research conferences for staff; Increase the number of items added to the open-access institutional research repository; Research

		Committee-led initiatives; increase number of staff mobility options; pursue Erasmus+ research projects; pursue tender competitions for research services
4.	Explore ways to create a more supportive, streamlined and efficient learning environment for students	<p>Based on findings from our online extension of scope exercise, we will seek to review the connectivity between platforms deployed to students and where this can be improved to simplify the experience for students using our VLE and associated systems.</p> <p>Unit Responsible: Registry/IT/Student Affairs</p> <p>Planned Actions: Survey student sentiment around platform user experience; map the pathways across IT systems during routine elements of the student journey; review the connectivity of systems with reference to the above data.</p>
5.	Deploy a proactive evidence-based evaluation process, supported by evidence informed data analysis, that facilitates the formal benchmarking of practice and secures sustainable outcomes	<p>As the College increases its participation across the sector, both public and private providers, it will seek to set formal benchmarks based upon measurable, transparent and well-defined data collection. This will involve the development of a consistent internal set of principles related to data analysis, contributing to evidence-informed decision making when considered in the context of peers through the benchmarking process.</p> <p>Unit Responsible: Registry/Academic Dean/IT/DLD</p> <p>Planned Action: Define the internal principles and standards of data analysis that apply to the College; explore and identify key areas in which benchmarking is possible via availability of external comparator datasets; prioritise areas in which benchmarking is to be applied; build a series of internal dashboards to facilitate ease of access to data and analysis for real-time monitoring by end-users.</p>
6.	Conduct a placement review across programmes	<p>As detailed above, an ongoing review into school placements has been subject to an expansion of its terms of reference to encompass all programmes with a placement element. The review will seek to harmonise the processes that support the placement experience for learners and ultimately feed into the development of a work-integrated learning policy.</p> <p>Unit Responsible: Registry/ Academic Dean/ Programme Leads/ Placement Leads</p> <p>Planned Actions: Define terms of reference for the review; feedback gathering; policy review; self-assessment review by programme; national and international comparisons; articulate findings; action planning; implementation planning; presentation to programme boards and the Academic Board; contribute to the development of a College work-integrated learning policy.</p>

7	Review of the code of conduct, complaints procedure and fitness to practice policy	<p>In response to ongoing work as part of a review of fitness to practice policies and procedures the scope was extended to incorporate the code of conduct and complaints policy. This development is a response to the lived experience of those using or subject to these policies. The overall goal is to ensure that these are transparent and provide a fair means of resolution.</p> <p>Unit Responsible: Registry/Student Support Services</p> <p>Planned Action: Working group for review of policies to include student representation; desk-based review and comparison to the procedures of other HEIs and incorporation of guidance from PRSBs; discussion of revised policies at programme boards; approval at the Academic Board</p>

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

Guide:

The unit of review may be a programme [private HEIs], department/school, professional support unit, school, or faculty.

Please delete guide text before submission.

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Please provide a composite update on new and continuing objectives arising from previous reviews here.

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Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Professional/Programme Placement Review	June 2025	N/A
Learner Recruitment - Admissions with Enrolment and Marketing	August 2025	N/A
Identity Verification for the Purposes of Admission, Teaching and Graduation	March 2025	N/A
Periodic Review and Revalidation of the College ECE programme	January 2026	September 2020

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

N/A

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Case Study 1

Title: Mid-programme self-assessment and the consolidation of student learning and assessment through cross-modular teaching and assessment

Keywords: student feedback; periodic review; cross-modular assessment

The mode of postgraduate ITE changed with the introduction of the Professional Master in Education (PME). The first 5-year cycle of this programme concluded in 2023. Thereafter, the College undertook a comprehensive periodic review that resulted in a reimagined PME programme. The College process for periodic review is accompanied by a series of annual programme reports, which inform the self-evaluation of the programme. The reimagined PME in Post-Primary Education was successfully validated and accredited by QQI and the Teaching Council of Ireland, respectively. The reimagining and revalidation of these programmes coincided with the incorporation of updated Céim standards, attainment of which is necessary to ensure professional recognition of graduates.

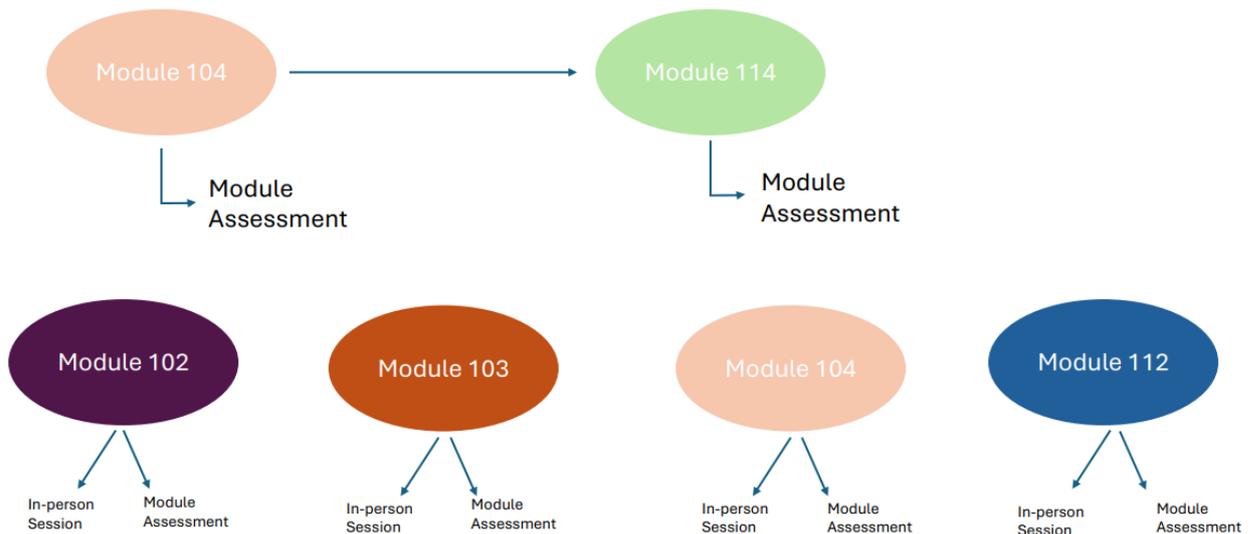
Building on the tradition of programme reports, the PME Post-Primary director and faculty with support from the Office of the Registrar undertook a mid-programme review. It was informed by programme reports collected to date, along with feedback received from learners, faculty and adjunct faculty.

Two key themes emerged during this mid-programme:

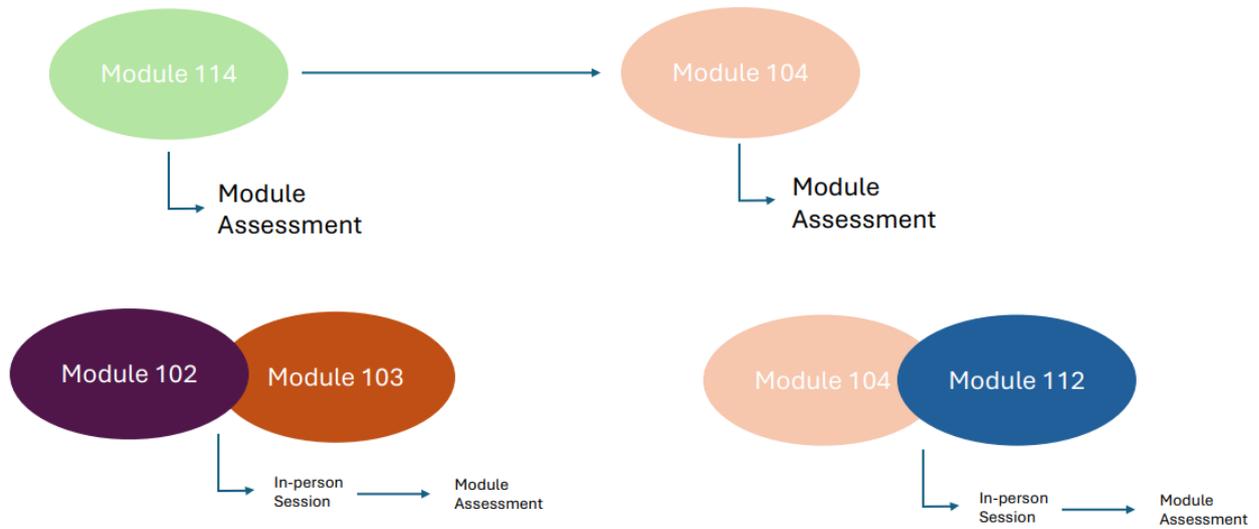
- Sequencing of modules
- Mode of assessment

Attention was focused on the delivery of foundational modules in advance of school placements commencing and the potential for cross-modular delivery and assessment. These changes have the potential to have a multiplier effect on attainment of Céim standards. The proposed changes are illustrated below.

Before Mid-Programme Review



Post Mid-Programme Review



The explicit benefits of cross-modular assessment that could be expected include:

- **Encouragement of Interdisciplinary Thinking and Learning**

By linking different areas of study, critical thinking and problem-solving skills are further promoted in learners, as they are provided with more opportunities to make connections between modules benefiting their overall programme learning and the programme learning outcomes.

- **Reduction in Compartmentalisation**

There is a reduction in the isolation of topics or module content, encouraging students to see the bigger picture and understand how various concepts are interrelated.

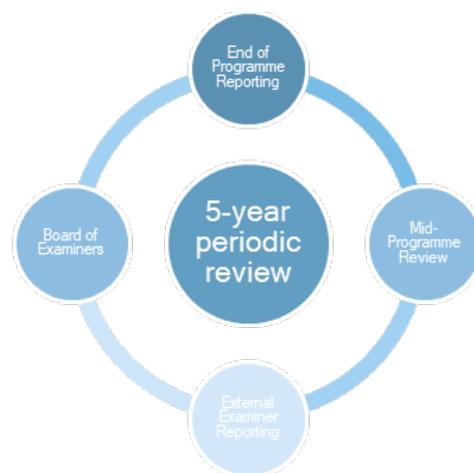
- **Better Alignment with Real-World Applications**

Many real-life challenges or issues encountered on school placement are not confined to a single module (subject) area. Cross-modular assessments prepare students to apply a broader range of skills and knowledge in practical situations and should better prepare learners for school placement.

- **Enhanced Feedback and Improvement**

It provides programme faculty with comprehensive insights into students’ overall progress, enabling more targeted and effective feedback, that may inform not just the module in question but provide feedback on a more programmatic level.

The end of programme report will be tailored to examine if evidence of these benefits is discernible amongst the impacted cohorts of students. These findings will be discussed in a further mid-programme review and can serve as evidence for later periodic reviews as part of wider systematic approach to programme monitoring and improvement.



Case Study 2

Title: College-wide preparation for an extension of scope to fully online provision

Keywords: fully online provision; scope of provision; College QA framework

In 2023, the College indicated its intention to apply for an extension of scope to allow for fully online provision. To commence this work, the QA Team undertook a gap analysis and a self-assessment exercise using the QQI tools provided at the time. The self-assessment and gap analysis was conducted in light of the refreshed guidance on the provision of blended and fully online programmes. A full analysis of every policy and procedure in the existing HCQF QA framework was undertaken. In addition, two new frameworks were introduced to address what were identified as key gaps in the existing HCQF. Importantly, the review of the existing framework and the development of new frameworks were undertaken in a collaborative fashion with multidisciplinary teams, including the Student Support Team, Enrolment and Marketing Team, Digital Learning Department (DLD) and Finance Team (Figure 1).



In tandem, an independent review panel was appointed, and the terms of reference for the review were drafted and approved by both the panel and QQI's QA Division. In June 2024, the panel was provided with a full suite of documentation, with an intended virtual site visit planned in July 2024. The five-person panel met with 16 representatives of the College over the course of six sessions.

The reporting format was agreed with QQI and considered input from the independent panel.

The panel decision was determined on consideration of the following:

The implications of the outcome for each criterion on the College's ability to fulfil obligations if granted extension of scope

The overall balance of outcomes across each of the criterion

Whether on consideration of each criterion below, the panel is assured of Hibernia College's organisational and programme level preparedness for extension of scope

The criteria included:

- Criterion 1: The College has developed a student-centered approach to learning, teaching and assessment that specifically supports the online learner.
- Criterion 2: The College has established suitable Quality Assurance, Governance and

Management policies and procedures.

- Criterion 3: The College Information and Data Management structures are suitably well managed, established and monitored to ensure the data of online learners is protected and secure.
- Criterion 4: Process for admission, progression and recognition and certification are well managed and take into account the needs of online and international learners.
- Criterion 5: Student support and the provision of learning resources are appropriate for online learners.

- Criterion 6: Policies and procedures for the design and approval of online and blended learning programmes ensure the maintenance of appropriate standards in online programmes.
- Criterion 7: Public information and communication with stakeholders are suitable for online learners.
- Criterion 8: Staff, faculty and adjunct faculty recruitment, management and development processes are established to protect standards in an online environment.

Overall, the panel recommended that the College's application for an extension of scope be approved, which was brought forward to the QQI PAEC committee for formal approval. In total, the exercise also

contributed to amendments of 23 pre-existing items in the HCQF framework. Overall, the panel made seven recommendations and five commendations to the College. A number of these recommendations will form part of the work plan for the coming AQR reporting period, including the investigation of identity verification and the development of a policy for testing and deployment of new technologies in education. Progress from these will be the subject of future AQR reporting.

