

Hibernia College

2024

Annual Quality Report Hibernia College
Reporting Period 2022-2023

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Reporting Period 2022-2023

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 2022 – 31 August 2023**.

It is to be submitted by **Friday, 23 February 2024**.

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.

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 higher education institution (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
- Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Early Childhood Education
- Master of Arts in Inclusive and Special Education
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nursing in General Nursing
- Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Business Data Analytics

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, and the nursing programme is approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI).

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 staff are encouraged to submit relevant information for inclusion. Areas of good practice that may contribute to case studies are identified through the Academic Board and the Academic Leadership Team (ALT), and relevant individuals are asked to collaborate with the Quality Assurance Team in this process. The Quality Assurance Team compiles all 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 Executive Management Team and Academic Board. The timeline of the preparation of this year's report is included here as **Error! Reference source not found.**



Figure 1: AQR Development and Review

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 2 provides a high-level visual overview of the College's governance and management structures.

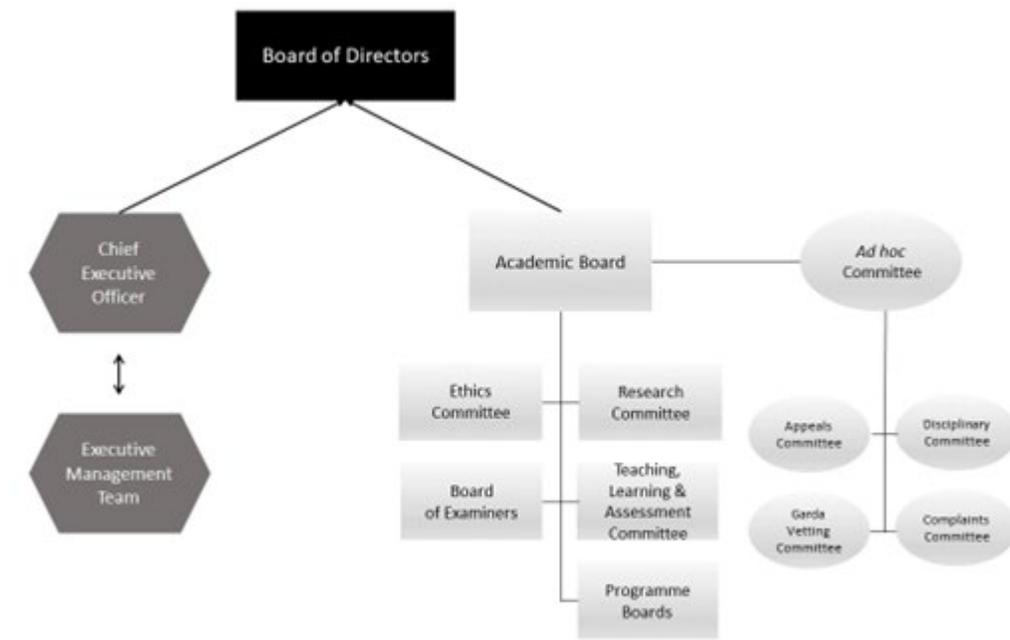


Figure 2: High-level overview of the College's governance and management structures

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>The Hibernia College Quality Framework (HCQF) Policy</u> <u>Monitoring and Review of the Hibernia College Quality Framework Procedure</u> <u>Developing New Elements of the HCQF Procedure</u> <u>Governance and Management Policy</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>Academic Board Terms of Reference</u> <u>Elections and Appointments to Governance Committees Procedure</u> <u>Programme Board Terms of Reference</u> <u>Board of Examiners Terms of Reference</u> <u>Erasmus Policy Statement</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; 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. Furthermore, a detailed due diligence and risk assessment must be undertaken as part of the development process for any collaborative programme.

Summary of relevant QA documentation		
No change during review period	Documents reviewed during this period	New documents approved during this period
<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>Full Development and Final Approval of a New Programme Procedure</u> <u>Obtaining Initial Approval to Develop a New Programme Procedure</u> <u>Ongoing Monitoring of Online or Blended Learning Programmes Policy</u> <u>Public Information, Promotion and the Recruitment of Students Policy</u> <u>The Hibernia College Quality Framework (HCQF) Policy</u> <u>Engagement and Management of Adjunct Faculty Policy</u>		

Furthermore, the College Academic Board has recently given conditional approval to a Framework for Collaborative and Transnational Provision that will govern Collaborative, Online, International and

Collaborative Provision. This will be subject to approval by QQI as part of a planned new Programme Validation for submission in 2024 including an application for extension of scope of Provision for the College.

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>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>Full Development and Final Approval of a New Programme Procedure</u>		
<u>Obtaining Initial Approval to Develop a New Programme Procedure</u>		
<u>Ongoing Monitoring of Online or Blended Learning Programmes Policy</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.

During this period, a new procedure, Appealing a College Admissions Decision Procedure, was introduced to clarify the distinct routes of appeal available to applicants and those available to registered learners.

Please also see Case Study 2.

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

	<p><u>Grade Moderation Procedure</u></p> <p><u>Grading Student Effort Procedure</u></p> <p><u>Student Initiated Withdrawals Procedure</u></p> <p><u>Temporary Suspension and Deferral of Studies Policy</u></p>	
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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 was undertaken in the area of Academic Integrity and Good Practice. This has resulted in a major revision to a policy previously termed Academic Good Practice Policy and now termed Academic Integrity and Good Practice Policy. In addition, a new policy termed Principles for the Acceptable use of Generative AI in the Assessment Process was developed and approved. Please also see Case Study 1 and 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>Engaging in Online Communication Guideline</u> <u>Regulations for Written Examinations</u> <u>Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy</u>	<u>Appeals Policy</u> <u>Assessment, Grading and Certification 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>Principles for the Acceptable use of Generative AI in the Assessment Process</u>

	<p><u>Review of a Provisional Assessment Decision Procedure</u></p> <p><u>Regulations for Oral Examinations (Online or In Person)</u></p> <p><u>Regulations for Synchronous Online Examinations</u></p>	
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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.

A new resource was developed during this reporting period to enhance the, extenuating circumstances forms, appeals forms and deferrals forms have been reviewed for plain English and accessibility.

Summary of relevant QA documentation		
No change during review period	Documents reviewed during this period	New documents approved during this period
<u>Implementing Data Protection Principles in Research Guidelines</u>	<u>Acceptable Use of ICT Policy</u>	

<p><u>IP Policy (non-HCQF)</u></p> <p><u>Engaging in Online Communication Guideline</u></p> <p><u>Public Information, Promotion and the Recruitment of Students Policy</u></p>	<p><u>Change of Personal Details Application Form</u></p> <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 and Records Policy</u></p> <p><u>Personal Data Security Breach Management Procedure</u></p> <p><u>Personal Data Security Breach Report Form</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
Governance and Management Policy Ethics Committee Terms of Reference Research Committee Terms of Reference Implementing Data Protection Principles in Research Guidelines	Academic Board Terms of Reference	Open Access Self-Archiving of Research Policy Procedure for Open Access Self-Archiving of Research

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>Engagement and Management of Adjunct Faculty Policy</u>		
<u>Erasmus Policy Statement</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
<u>Public Information, Promotion and the Recruitment of Students Policy</u> IP Policy (non-HCQF) <u>Engaging in Online Communication Guideline</u> <u>Implementing Data Protection Principles in Research Guidelines</u>	<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 and Records Policy</u> <u>Personal Data Security Breach Management Procedure</u>	

	<u>Personal Data Security Breach Report Form</u>	
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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, Twitter 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>Public Information, Promotion and the Recruitment of Students Policy</u>	<u>Acceptable Use of ICT 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>Ensuring and Maintaining the Quality of Physical Learning and Assessment Environments Policy</u>	
<u>Periodic Review of Academic Programmes Procedure</u>		
<u>Cyclical Review of Hibernia College — An Institutional Review Policy</u>		

<p><u>Cyclical Review Procedure</u></p> <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>Preparing for External Quality Assurance Peer-Review Panel Reviews Guidelines</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	2
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 – 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
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	

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	1
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

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

2024

Annual Quality Report Hibernia College
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2022-2023

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

A number of key strategic developments took place during the reporting period, contributing to the overall quality assurance and enhancement of the learning environment and experience for staff and learners at Hibernia College. Importantly the learner voice has played a central in a number of these undertakings, including the HCQF Review and a series of Internal Reviews. This section outlines several developments in these areas, including:

- HCQF Review
- College Validation Activity
- Internal Review
- SOP Review
- Institutional Review

HCQF Review

A comprehensive review of the HCWQF was commenced in this reporting period, representing the largest single piece of work related to the HCQF since its development and approval during 2019. The strategy for this review can be viewed [here](#). Review cluster themes were formed around the following areas:

- Quality assurance, its governance and management
- Design and approval of programmes
- Undertaking research
- Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
- Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
- Staff, Faculty and Adjunct Faculty recruitment, management and development
- Student supports and the provision of learning resources
- Information and data management
- Public information and communication to stakeholders
- Collaborative and transnational education
- Online and blended learning

A three-phase approach was adopted and briefly was as follows:

1) Invitation to join a cluster group was issued by the Quality Assurance Team;

2) Cluster Group meets and addresses these questions:

- Is the text still up to date?
- Is the document implemented as written?

- Is the document relevant and useful?
- Are there other improvements or edits that could improve the document?

3) Regulatory and Legal review by the QAE Team and Registrar identifies any statutory changes required.

4) QAE Team and Registrar develops an Academic Memorandum for Academic Board to present and explain any changes required.

Cluster groups were formed from a cross-section of Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and Staff. In addition, a focus was placed on learner engagement in this process, and focus groups were conducted during the review of policies related to Academic Integrity and Good Practice. Learner representatives were offered the chance to discuss and comment on reviews on two more occasions during the process.

Originally a half-way point was planned for July 2023. The content of the review clusters lends themselves to this 're-visit' as there is a natural delineation of content as the review proceeds from Cluster A - E (Phase 1) to Cluster F onwards (Phase 2). A period of reflection between Phase 1 and Phase 2 in July and August allowed for preparatory work to be undertaken in advance of Phase 2 commencing. This preparatory work included the background review of relevant documents by the QAE team and the gathering of relevant updated external guidance to aid the cluster teams to perform a thorough revision of policies and procedures.

College Validation Activity

Professional Master of Education (PME) in Primary and Post-Primary Education

QQI and the Teaching Council reviewed and subsequently validated and accredited the two programmes above during the reporting period. These validation and accreditation reports detailing the review of the two reimaged programmes are noted above in Part A Section 9.0 and the composition of the panels involved in the validation process is shown in Part B Section 1.4.2. These are also summarised in Section B 2.1 below.

Internal Review

Several internal reviews were commenced and completed during this reporting period, with further details below. This represented an important development in the embedding of a culture of enhancement within the College, with scope of review extended beyond direct teaching provision. These reviews resulted in several changes to internal functions, such as the highlighting the need for redundancy across functional teams and therefore resulting in the expansion of training offered to members of those teams, and increasing shadowing opportunities for members of other teams. These

reviews were performed using mixed methods and incorporated both quantitative and qualitative approaches involving student feedback gathered via existing survey methods.

A review of the reasonable accommodation applications received by the Student Support Team has resulted in the Academic Board triggering a review of all student support across the College. Finally, the scope of the review for the School Placement Team has been expanded and will continue into the next reporting period.

SOPs

A College wide process of reviewing and updating the Standard Operating Procedures for all units within the College began in Q4 of the reporting period. This exercise is a joint undertaking between the QA Team and the Academic Operations Team. This work has involved undertaking a census of all existing SOPs, identified of gaps where no SOP exists and a prioritisation exercise to develop those high priority SOPs first. Existing SOPs have been subject to review, and update where necessary, and all existing SOPs have been edited to a single uniform format.

Institutional Review

At the end of the current reporting period, the College began engagements with QQI in preparation for the commencement of its first Institutional Review. Further details of this engagement will be reported separately via the CINNTE process itself but also in the subsequent AQR.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR)	Update on Status
1	Academic Integrity	<p>The first phase of this work has concluded with three definitive outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of an Academic Integrity Champions Network • Academic Integrity Homepage • Academic Integrity Community of Practice <p>Please see case study 1.</p>
2	HCQF Review and Development	<p>As extensive consultative process has been undertaken to review and update the HCQF. A strategy to guide this process is available here. The College has adopted a reflective approach to this mindful of Staff workload and College commitments to other ongoing review processes. As such a bi-phasic approach has been adopted and is due to conclude in Spring 2024. This will also provide evidence and resources for the planned Institutional Review.</p>
3	College Strategy	<p>Development of the College Strategy is overseen by EMT and has been informed by changes in the overarching corporate structure of Hibernia College as part of the Folens Group. A wide consultative process was undertaken during July 2023 and feedback from this has been incorporated into a live document. This approach will form part of the evidence base for the planned Institutional Review.</p>
4	Implementation of new approach to Academic Board work plan	<p>This has been positively received by members of Academic Board and the wider Academic Community. A Board-wide process is planned for the drafting and agreement of the workplan for 2024, please note the Academic Board cycle is based upon calendar years.</p>
5	QA Staff Survey	<p>A staff survey was undertaken by the QAE Team. The outcome is reported here and several bespoke training solutions have been developed in response to the needs identified in the survey responses. This approach will form part of the evidence base for the planned Institutional Review.</p>
6	Performance Development Plan	<p>Work is ongoing to finalise a performance development plan approach fit for purpose. Work has been slowed by changes in the overarching corporate structure of Hibernia College as part of the Folens Group.</p>
7	Digital Learning Architecture	<p>This is overseen by the Digital Learning Department. Research and implement of digital technologies required to support the College vision of teaching, learning and assessment in the coming 5–10 years. This is an ongoing project with a long-term reporting window.</p>

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Academic Board	<p><u>2022:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13SEPT22 • 22NOV22 • 15DEC22 <p><u>2023:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 07FEB23 • 07MAR23 • 03MAY23 • 06JUN23 • 15AUG23
Ethics Committee	<p><u>2022:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20SEPT22 <p><u>2023:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24JAN23 • 28FEB23 • 30MAY23
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee	<p><u>2022:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 07SEPT22 <p><u>2023:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 01FEB23 • 02MAR23 • 21JUN23
Research Committee	<p><u>2023:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24JAN23 • 21FEB23 • 30MAY23 • 22AUG23
Erasmus Committee	<p><u>2022:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17NOV22 <p><u>2023:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28FEB23

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30MAY23
Ad Hoc Committee	<p><u>2022:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garda Vetting Committee — November 2022 <p><u>2023:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garda Vetting Committee — January 2023 and June 2023.
Board of Examiners	<p><u>2022:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMEPP 20 Supplemental 14DEC22 • PMEPP 20 Supplemental 14DEC22 <p><u>2023:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMEPP AU21 08AUG23 • PMEPP SP21 10MAY23 • PMEPP AU21 09AUG23 • PMEPP SP21 24MAY23 • Nursing 18JAN23 • Nursing Supplemental 10FEB23

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

A number of changes took place in academic and governance structures during this reporting period. These changes took place, where appropriate, within the limits of the College Governance and Management Policy and Corporate Governance Code.

Key academic appointments include:

- Dr John Mescal was appointed as PME Primary Programme Director in March 2023.
- Dr Philip Hardie was appointed as General Nursing Programme Director in April 2023.

Key staff appointments include:

- Elva Casey was appointed as Registrar in October 2022.
- Dr Robin Flynn was appointed as Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager in May 2023.
- Mark Williams was appointed as Academic Operations Manager in April 2023.

The Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager oversees the Quality Assurance and Enhancement activities of the College and is supported by a Quality Assurance Administrator.

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 Admissions Team</p> <p>A review of the functioning of the Admissions Team was undertaken to ensure that the team's decision-making was based upon published policies and procedures, and that decisions were consistent and timely.</p>	Complete	Please see below for further details
<p>The outcomes of Reasonable Accommodation applications managed by Student Support Team</p> <p>A review of the volume, nature and outcome of reasonable accommodation applications was undertaken in response to changing staff and student perceptions of the process.</p>	Complete	Please see below for further details
<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 is currently underway and is initially focused on the allocation of school placements.</p>	Ongoing	N/A
<p>Erasmus+ Programme</p> <p>The College reported on Erasmus activities in July 2023 to the HEA. The external expert report is provided. A new process for reviewing expressions of interest was developed and approved.</p>	Complete	Erasmus Project External Report

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels¹ involved in IQA

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

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

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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

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

The table below represents the composition of the revalidation panels that undertook review and assessment of the PME Primary and PME Post-Primary programmes as referenced in Part A, Section 9.

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			1			1					1
Secretary		1							1	1	
Academic/Discipline Specific		1	3			2	1		1		4
Student Representative		1	1			2					2
QA											
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry/ Third Mission		1				1					1

2.0 IQA System: Enhancement and Impacts

2.1. Programmes of Education and Training

The College successfully engaged in the revalidation of its two key programmes — the PME in Primary and PME in Post-Primary Education. The outcome reports from the QQI validation process and the Teaching Council Accreditation process are linked above. The process of self-reflection, assessment and reporting allowed the Faculty teams to work closely with Colleagues across the College Digital Learning and Design Team in addition to the Department of the Registrar. In doing so, a revised conceptual framework and Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy were developed. The principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) were more clearly embedded in the programme content, which has been completely rewritten and redesigned. The themes of inclusivity, global citizenship and cultural diversity were expanded across the curriculum.

2.2. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

Key staff positions recruited to during the reporting period are detailed above and, in addition to ongoing existing staff and faculty training, there have also been a number of staff wellbeing developments. A monthly staff lunch initiative was begun in 2023. This offers an opportunity to foster collaboration across the College in an informal setting while also helping to focus on wellbeing and a healthy work-life balance.

2.3. Supports and Resources for learners

The College is committed to providing a holistic support experience to its learners. To facilitate this, the College has engaged in a project to implement a CRM system that captures learner-College interactions from the beginning to the end of the student journey. The implementation of Microsoft Dynamics is ongoing within the College and is led by the IT and Systems Department with support from within the Department of the Registrar through the Academic Operations Manager. The endpoint of the project will enable any member of the College to view prior communications, excluding confidential/sensitive information, with any student to provide the best support while ensuring the security of student data.

2.4. Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

A series of internal reviews were conducted and a summary of these is provided below.

As part of the internal quality assurance process, two internal reviews were undertaken and these were in the area of Admissions and Reasonable Accommodations. The scope of the admissions review was as follows:

- The scope covers the entire admissions process, i.e. open to programme commencement, including the issuing of student cards, for both the PME Primary and Post-Primary Programmes for the Spring 2023 cohort.
- The audit determined if during the Admissions life cycle, from application to offer, adequate controls are in place:
 - To monitor processes
 - To support decision-making conducted in real-time compared with relevant policies and procedures
 - To ensure decisions are issued in a timely fashion
- The audit should determine the measure of agreement where similar processes exist for both programmes in the discharge of these processes.
- The audit should determine what, if any, redundancy exists amongst Admissions team members.

The outcome of the review can be found here but the findings can be summarised as follows:

A review of the redundancy within the Admissions team demonstrates that there appears to be little redundancy within the team. This is evidenced through monitoring the interactions between applicants to specific programmes and members of the Admissions Team.

Recommendation 1: Targeted efforts should be made to ensure all members of the Admissions Team are trained in and facilitated in opportunities to gain experience in the basic functions of all admissions processes across the PME programmes. This can be achieved without loss of specialised knowledge amongst team members.

Timeframe: To be completed by the Admissions Manager; September 2023 – April 2024.

There was no opportunity to review the controls on the conversion of conditional offers to unconditional offers during this current audit. However, it would be prudent to review this process and the related controls at a future date focusing in this area.

Recommendation 2: A supplemental follow-up examination focusing on Autumn cohorts and conditional offers to the PME programmes.

Timeframe: To be completed by the QA Administrator; September 2023 – December 2023.

A review of compliance with established procedures and policies suggests that those examined clearly demonstrate a culture of compliance. However, it should be noted that minimum eligibility criteria used in decision-making are not contained specifically within the approved policy or procedure.

Recommendation 3: Review the location of where approved and necessary eligibility criteria are stored and made available to all relevant stakeholders.

Timeframe: To be completed by the Admissions Manager; September 2023

Recommendation 4: A documented QA Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) should be developed in line with the College SOP review project to monitor the inputting of interview scores/outcomes onto the SIS. This should enable regular review of outcomes before issuing to applicants.

Timeframe: To be completed by the Admissions Manager; September 2023

There was no evidence of a failure in procedure when measured through receipt of appeals related to the sample applications reviewed. However, it was noted that the appeals process for applicants referred individuals to the appeals process for students.

Recommendation 5: A review of the appeals process in place for applicants either further developing the current student-based appeals process to explicitly include applicants or to develop a separate process suitable for applicants.

Timeframe: To be completed by the Admissions and QA Teams; August 2023 – September 2023

The scope of the reasonable accommodations review was as follows:

- Seek to assess the number of contacts for support the team received from students. Including a quantification and categorisation of the applications (e.g. request for reasonable accommodations (RA)) for support made to the team, a breakdown of outcomes (e.g. granted) and where relevant the associated cost.
 - Where possible and, within a subset of these applications not more than 10% of all applications, a quantification of the number of individual communications between a student and the student support team.
- Where available track the success of interventions of the student support team within an academic context or, where appropriate and possible, through a narrative exploration of student feedback.
- Examine the return to studies support provided by the team.
- Contextualise the activities of the Student Support Team with the wider pool of College structure and examine the means of communication with other stakeholders within the College.
- Identify trends related to the Student Support Team if evident in prior HCQF Student Surveys, either within existing quantitative and/or qualitative data.
- Ascertain the comparability of the student support structure with a minimum of one appropriate comparator.

The findings can be summarised as follows:

From the findings of this audit, the Hibernia College Student Support Team is embedded across multiple processes that students utilise throughout their studies. There are clear lines of communication across these processes, and this is evidenced through student feedback.

The multiple points of contact for students can be viewed as both positive and negative. While it offers the potential for redundancy, which is received positively by students, it may also lead to confusion over who has ownership for a process, which is perceived negatively by students.

Recommendation 1: The potential to embed the reasonable accommodation application in an online format should be investigated and implemented if possible.

Timeframe: To be completed by the QA Team; September 2023 – March 2024

An in-depth analysis of the reasonable accommodation cases and applications received by the Student Support Team was conducted. It is clear that not all cases regarding disability/long-term illness result in an application for reasonable accommodation. While the number of individual supports accommodations may be high, there is significant overlap in the students who are receiving these.

Recommendation 2: There should be clear communication within the College accurately reflecting the burden of support carried by the College.

Timeframe: To be completed by the Student Support and QA Teams; September 2023 – July 2024

A comparison of the final award grades of students approved compared with those who did not apply despite having ground revealed there was no difference in the grade or the completion rate.

Recommendation 3: A longitudinal analysis of student experience following approval of a reasonable accommodation application is undertaken to determine the impact on the lived experience of the student while on programme.

Timeframe: To be completed by the Student Support and QA Team; September 2023 – July 2024

Finally, a comparison with two independent HE institutions demonstrated that the range of services offered by the Student Support Team varied but was largely common, indicating that the types of services provided by the College are in line with the sector. Also, the proportion of applications for reasonable accommodation per student number, 6%, is in line with proportions across the sector both nationally and internationally.

2.5. Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes

Members of the Department of the Registrar have made multiple contributions to and attended National Academic Integrity Network including:

- Membership of NAIN Working Group 5 — the Registrar
- NAIN Plenary Meetings
- QQI Lets Talk About Assessment Conference, January 2022
- A Masterclass in Assessment with Philip Dawson, July 2023
- Members of both the Nursing Faculty and the QAE Team have also been participants in a series of meetings hosted by NMBI on the topic of RPL.
- The Registrar has presented on the topic of academic integrity at the European Conference on Ethics and Integrity in Academia, July 2023.

2.1 Initiatives Within the Institution Related to Academic Integrity

Since 2022, the College has redesigned its approach to Academic Integrity, and this has been informed by the advent and evolution of Generative AI. The College has recently completed a review of the cornerstone Academic Integrity and Good Practice Policy. This policy was informed by the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, the Irish University Association Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland and the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. Furthermore, the language and definitions of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) have been adopted and incorporated through the College's approach to Academic Integrity. This updated policy makes special reference to assuming a proactive position on supporting students to make good decisions regarding academic integrity but also to support those who engage in academic misconduct in a remediation process.

A practical framework has been established to enable this environment of support, including the establishment of a Community of Practice (CoP) based upon academic integrity as the first pillar of support. This CoP led the review of the College Academic Integrity and Good Practice Policy through a student co-creation model. The same group has also developed the recently approved College PRINCIPLES FOR THE ACCEPTABLE USE OF GENERATIVE AI IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS. As a second pillar of support, the College has developed a dedicated web resource for both staff and students — the Academic Integrity Homepage. This web page has a variety of resources ranging from background introductions to the concepts through to examples and ideas on good and bad academic practice. This web page also hosts an introduction to the third pillar — the College's Academic Integrity Champions Network. This third pillar engages Faculty specific to each programme to act as touch points for students who seek support and guidance in making good decisions regarding academic integrity but also for those students who may engage in academic misconduct.

Further development on the College approach to Academic Integrity is planned through the second phase of the CoP. This will be informed by continued engagement and participation with NAIN and NAIN working groups and through peer-to-peer learning by presentation at conferences, such as:

- European Network for Academic Integrity (ENAI) (Derby, 2023)
- Academic and Research Integrity Conference Ireland (Galway, 2023).

Peer learning and dissemination of information are further supported through use of the Cohort App and the setting up of a staff AI Insight Exchange Forum.

Please also see Case Study 1, Section 4.0.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE Supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

The table below offers an overview of the planned strategic QA and QE objectives for the coming reporting period.

No.	Relevant objectives <i>Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable</i>	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.	Review of the Student Complaints Process	This review will examine the entire student complaints process, including the underpinning policy and procedure, communications, associated SOPs and outcomes. The review will be led by the QAE Team with support from the Assessment and Awards Office within the Department of the Registrar. This work and its conclusions, due to finish in Q2 of the next reporting period, will form part of the ISER response under the heading of Support for Learners required during Institutional Review.
2.	The HCQF Review Process	Phase 2, led by the QAE Team and the Registrar, of this process will conclude during the coming reporting period. Final amendments to existing policies and newly approved policies will be published via the HCQF in the coming reporting period. This work and its conclusions, due to finish in Q2 of the next reporting period, will form part of the ISER response under the heading of Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review required during Institutional Review.
3.	Implementation of the NAIN Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management	An existing Community of Practice and working group are actively working to implement the NAIN Framework for Investigation and Case Management. This working group represents a cross-section of the College Community and is actively engaging with College Learners. The working group aims to report on its outputs in Q4 of the next reporting period and would also form part of the ISER response, under the heading of Assessment of Learners, required during Institutional Review.

4.	QA Survey Students	As part of the ongoing effort to enhance student engagement and ensure that the College policies and procedures are accessible and fit for purpose, the annual survey of student perceptions of the HCQF will continue. This is due for completion in Q3 of the next reporting period and may form part of the ISER response, under the headings of Support for Learners and Governance and Management of QA, required during Institutional Review.
5.	IEM	<p>Items 5 and 6 are linked; these meet part of the College strategic plans to develop a wider International Profile, expand its scope of provision and begin to deliver programmes in a fully online mode to national and international learners.</p> <p>A gap analysis and self-assessment of the College QA Framework will be undertaken to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses with regard to online provision, with work being undertaken to remedy areas of weakness. In preparation for an application for IEM, work has started on the student support framework.</p> <p>While elements of Item 6 will form part of the ISER response under numerous headings, the timeframe is likely to not coincide with the timing required for ISER submission but will inform discussions during the proposed panel visit in October 2024.</p>
6.	Expansion of Scope/Validation of Online QA Processes.	Please see above.
7.	Review of the Student Support Framework	This review will examine the entire student support framework, including the underpinning policy and procedure, communications, associated SOPs and outcomes. Importantly, this review will aim to determine if the current framework is fit for purpose in the face of changing student needs. The review will be led by the Student Support Team supported by the QAE Team. This work and its conclusions, due to finish in Q2 of the next reporting period, will form part of the ISER response under the heading of Support for Learners required during Institutional Review.
8.	Institutional Review	At the end of this reporting period, the College began to engage with QQI on the process of undertaking an Institutional Review. The submission of the Institutional Profile and ISER response are due for Q2 and Q3 of the next reporting period.

9.	Programme Validations	The College will continue to explore new potential collaborations and develop new programmes for validation, where appropriate, and in discipline areas aligned with the College strategy, for example, Corporate Governance.
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3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

The process of Institutional Review had informally begun in September 2023 through engagement with QQI. Please provide a composite update on new and continuing objectives arising from previous reviews here.

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
NMBI Site Inspection	2024	N/A
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nursing in General Nursing — Periodic Review of Programme	2024	N/A
CINNTE Institutional Review	2024	N/A
Expansion to Scope of Provision — Fully Online Learning	2024	N/A
International Education Mark	2024	N/A
School Placement Team — Ongoing (Please see above.)	2024	N/A

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nursing in General Nursing revalidation	2025	2017
Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Early Childhood Education revalidation	2025	2020
Annual Quality Review	2024	2023

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

In this section, three case studies are presented that reflect activity within the College related to developments in Academic Integrity, Implementation of UDL Principles and Advancements in the Area of Access Transfer and Progression.

Case Study 1: Academic Integrity Community of Practice and Champions Network

Case Study 2: Enabling Access to Nursing Training via a Mature Student Pathway

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1. Introduction

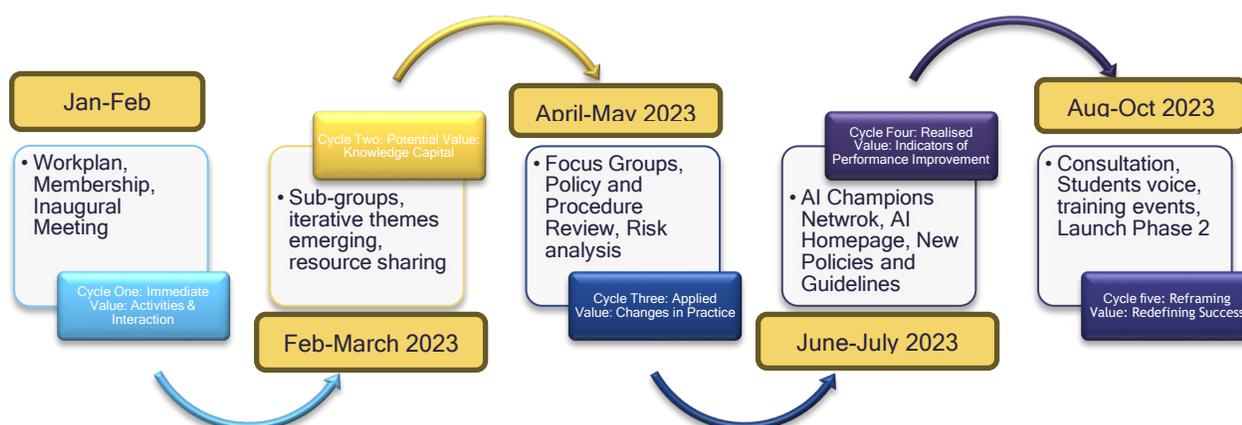
This case study charts the establishment of the Academic Integrity Community of Practice (CoP) and subsequent launching of the Academic Integrity Champions Network (AICN) from initial proposition through to consultation and enactment and into the review and redevelopment phases. The CoP was created in acknowledgement of rapid developments in Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) capabilities and the applicability of Large Language Models (LLMs), most notably heralded by the public launch of ChatGPT in November 2022. It was, however, more specifically guided by the context of the immediate concerns regarding assessment validity and assurance and, from inception, it was motivated by a shared desire to avoid a reactionary and reductionist response to GenAI. The CoP also represents a response to the European Commission's stance that states two fundamental risks of AI are underuse and overuse (Digital Strategy: AI Act-Regulate the Use of AI in the EU, proposed by European Commission, 2021). This informs the decision to create a community with the purpose of keeping the conversation open, informed and progressive while enabling this to happen in a safe and participatory space (Lave and Wenger, 1991). The CoP also sits within the national context of considering how AI can be incorporated into (digital) learning and planning for the major role it will play in shaping the national economy, society and education (AI Here for Good: National Artificial Intelligence Strategy for Ireland, 2021).

2. Literature Review

While HEI policies are broadly aligned in their educative and punitive approaches to academic integrity, access to and supports around those policies are often less well developed (Möller, 2022). In acknowledgement of this, Möller (ibid.) calls for a continued internal review process to improve Academic Integrity cultures within institutions. Kaposi and Dell (2012) highlight the transitional nature of the HEI sector as focus starts to move away from punitively penalising academic misconduct and towards improving progressive supports. Bretag et al. (2013) find that while variances exist across student cohorts in levels of confidence on how to avoid academic misconduct, with students across all cohorts indicating a need to move beyond the basic provision of information and towards more holistic approaches that authentically engage students with Academic Integrity practices. Bretag et al. (2011) go on to identify five core elements of an exemplary policy: access, approach, responsibility, detail and support. Reedy et al. (2021) find that policy analysis and development is most effective when it involves a CoP approach.

3. Timeframe and Phases

The timeframe for the CoP is broadly outlined as followed (guided by the Value Creation Framework of Wenger et al. (2011):



4. Structure of the CoP

The CoP initially comprised staff and faculty across College departments, with the aim of including students for consultations purposes in Phase 1 and expanding student participation in Phase 2. Meetings are held online (via Zoom) every 6–8 weeks as a full group and more regularly in sub-working groups. The potential spectrum of interest in the area of Academic Integrity is vast and the establishment of knowledge capital for values to be realised at a later date subsequently emerged as a priority for the CoP. Consequently, sub-working groups were established on the following areas initially identified through an early review of National Academic Integrity Network resources (QQI and NAIN 2021a, 2021b):

- Upholding Academic Integrity
- Preventing Academic Misconduct
- Detecting Academic Misconduct
- Dealing with Academic Misconduct

Each sub-group conducted a literature review and presented their findings for discussion within the CoP, with the construction of iteratively emerging themes (Braun and Clarke, 2022). Key emerging themes included addressing the prevalence of punitive outcomes, supporting students authentically, collaborative policy review and improving accessibility. Preliminary findings indicated a specific gap in providing structured and aligned supports to students identified as engaging with academic misconduct to prevent re-occurrences. In tandem with this finding was a developing awareness of a need for more specific guidelines on what constitutes misconduct and how it can be ranked or classified at different levels.

5. Consultation

Focus groups were conducted with students across programme to ensure a collaborative approach to identifying the priorities of the CoP, with further student involvement including direct participation in the CoP anticipated for Phase 2. Similar to the findings of Chan (2023), students expressed generally positive or neutral attitudes towards GenAI in teaching and learning but had some concerns regarding the potential for over-reliance, ethical implications and the potential for cheating.

6. Outputs and Learning

While a valid and primary purpose of the CoP is the facilitation of ongoing communication; key priorities for attaining tangible outcomes in Phase 1 were identified as collaborative policy review and development, establishing supports for students found to have engaged with academic misconduct and finally creating an accessible and shared space for all staff, faculty and students to access reliable information and supports.

Policies:

A sub-working group took special responsibility for reviewing the existing policies on Academic Integrity and developing a proposal (ratified by Academic Board) for an Academic Integrity and Good Practice amended policy, which includes the principle of support as fundamental to engagements with students found to have conducted misconduct and, specifically, notes the challenges of GenAI to sustainable assessment. A new policy outlining the principles for acceptable use of GenAI in an assessment response was also developed.

AI Homepage:

The need to provide simple, high quality, informative and accessible supports for students and staff alike was clearly identified by the CoP. This led to the creation of a homepage on Academic Integrity that employed a UDL informed approach by including resources in a variety of formats (written, visual and audio): <https://home.hiberniacollege.com/registrars-office/academic-integrity/>

Academic Output:

The establishment of a collaborative space enabled faculty to engage in research in this area, including presentations at the European National Academic Integrity Conference, the Academic and Research Integrity Conference and HECA.

Academic Integrity Champions Network:

This network has the dual function of keeping GenAI training, challenges and assessment on the agenda at programme level and providing students found to have engaged in misconduct with a one-to-one mentoring service.

Training:

The CoP enabled participants to openly express their concerns regarding how to engage with students and faculty on the rapidly changing challenges of GenAI. It was felt that a centralised approach facilitated through Registry engagements with members of the extended college community (through webinars, conference presentations and tutorials) would ensure consistency and provide faculty with the confidence to further disperse accurate messaging at programme level. A number of such events have been facilitated across programmes.

Assessment Design Process (ADP):

A new ADP follows accepted best practice regarding addressing GenAI concerns by ensuring students are well informed of the terms with which they can engage with GenAI in assessments. The ADP includes a robust peer review of the assessments process.

The CoP's collective voice informed an institutional decision to conduct a comprehensive review of Academic Integrity policies and procedures, commencing with data generation through four student focus groups, aiming to include student voice. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021) was employed to identify themes and patterns from the focus groups

7. Conclusion

The last cycle of value creation occurs when social learning causes a reconsideration of the learning imperatives and the criteria by which success is defined (Wenger et al., 2011). This has resulted in some reframing of strategies, goals and values regarding academic integrity. Literature speaks to a situation whereby university policies are broadly aligned in their educative and punitive approaches to academic integrity, however, where scope exists for development in terms of policy access and supports (Möller, 2022). The next phase of the CoP is, thus, directed towards the need to co-create student supports, resulting in an in-depth review and redevelopment of the College AI Strategy.

References

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Case Study 2: Enabling Access to Nursing Training via a Mature Student Pathway

Theme: Access, Transfer, Progression (ATP): exploring pathways and innovations from FE to HE

1. Introduction

Hibernia College successfully validated a BSc Nursing in General Nursing in 2020 and admitted the first cohort of nursing learners in 2022. A feature of the Hibernia College programme was the demarcation of three entry pathways:

1. Leaving Certification Pathway
2. Further Education Pathway
3. Mature Learner Pathway

These pathways were a proactive response to the need to diversify the nursing profession (Fleming and McKee, 2006) through the expansion of access pathways to formal training. However, the experiences of mature learners in a standard undergraduate learning environment differ from those of traditional school age entrants to the same undergraduate learning environment. This is reflected within the Nursing Education, also, as approximately 15% of the general nursing intake is comprised of Mature Learners (NMBI, 2005, cited in O'Brien, Keogh, & Neenan, 2009).

The blended learning model adopted by Hibernia College is supported by strong underpinning principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). We sought to examine if the alternative mode of delivery appealed to a greater number of Mature Learners and whether this was evident in the proportion of Mature Learners applying to the Hibernia College programme and the proportion of Mature Learners being admitted to the programme.

The Admissions Process

At the beginning of the process, when seeking access to the programme, applicants must identify their preferred entry pathway as above. Further to that, all applicants seeking admission to the programme must undergo an interview with a panel composed of two qualified nurses and, subsequently, undertake an aptitude test. Scores are combined to produce admission points and applicants are ranked and offers made based upon admissions points.

2. Hibernia College Nursing Programme Demographics

Mature Learner Applications

The proportion of applicants who identified as Mature Learners from the entire applicant pool during the admissions process for entry to the class of 2022 was 84%. This proportion was lower during the admissions process for entry to the class of 2023 at 51%. However, across both admissions cycles, the Mature Learner pathway remained the dominant admissions path.

Mature Learners Admitted to Programme

The proportion of Mature Learners admitted to the for 2022 was 35% increasing to 48% in 2023. If taken as a proportion of the total number of Mature Learners who applied for the programme, those proportions are 15% for 2022 and 55% for 2023 (Figure 1).

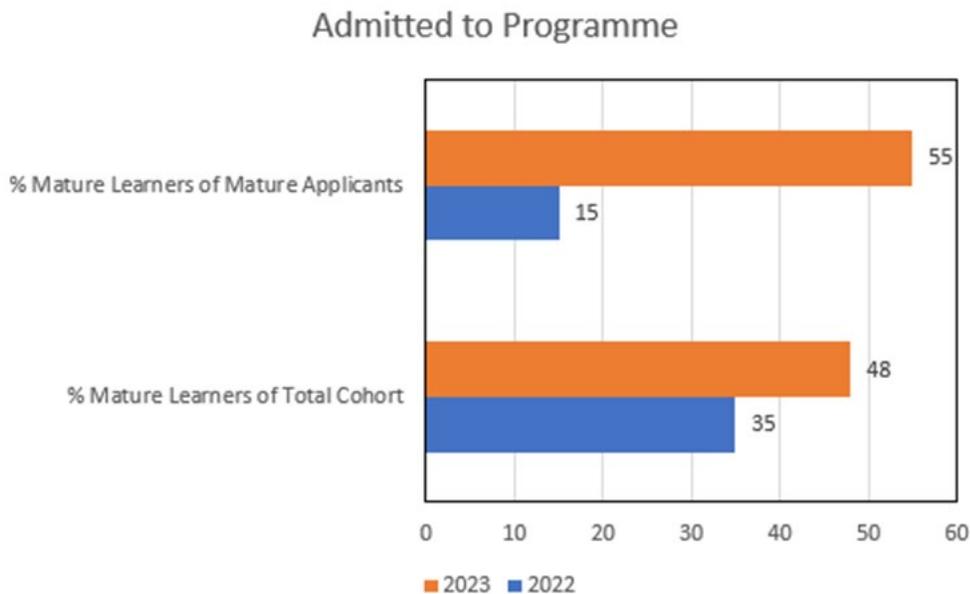


Figure 1: Mature Learners Admitted to Programme

3. Findings

Our findings highlight that the proportion of mature learners comprising the cohort for two separate intakes, 48% and 35%, was significantly higher than the previously reported average, 15%, for the General Nursing specialty. Moreover, the proportion of the cohort composed of Mature Learners was higher than the overall participation rate for public HEIs recorded in 2018/2019, which was between 8–10% (Higher Education Authority, 2021). Publicly available figures suggest that for mature learners' financial costs, family responsibilities and commitment, and timing of study are the top three barriers to engagement with participation in education. The implementation of a blended learning programme is likely an intervention to circumvent this last barrier while also aiding in overcoming issues arising from family responsibilities and commitment. Further evidence in support of blending learning modes of delivery in improving access to education stems from findings that suggest that 47% of Mature Learners found online/distance learning a suitable or very suitable option (Higher Education Authority, 2021). The blended learning model offered by Hibernia College may be an attractive means to improve access rates of Mature Learners to programmes of higher education and, specifically, for General Nursing education in comparison to existing National access rates.

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