

Munster Technological University (MTU)

2025

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**Annual Quality Report**  
**Munster Technological University**  
**Reporting Period 2023-2024**

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**Annual Quality Report**  
**Munster Technological University (MTU)**  
**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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## Guidelines on Completing the Report

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

### Submission Process and Timeline

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

### Completing the AQR

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

### Report Structure

#### Part A: Internal QA System

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

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

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

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

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

#### Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. The institution may also include case studies on topics of their choosing, demonstrating good practice in QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, the institution is encouraged to

reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other HEIs and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

## Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template<sup>1</sup>

### Legislation

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

### QQI Documents

#### Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

#### Other QQI Policy Documents

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

### Other National/International References

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

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<sup>1</sup> These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

## PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

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

## Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for Munster Technological University for the reporting period **1 September 2023 – 31 August 2024**.

It has been submitted on Friday, 14 March 2025.

The AQR has been approved by Professor Christine Cross, Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar of MTU, and has been submitted by Ms Eva Juhl on behalf of MTU.

Munster Technological University (MTU) is a multi-campus technological university, contributing to the South-West region through the provision of academic programmes which support student development and opportunities, education and research. MTU has an extensive and impressive regional footprint with six campuses in Cork and Kerry, a student body of 18,000<sup>2</sup> and over 2,000 staff. MTU supports entrepreneurship, enterprise development and innovation, and serves the community and public interest.

MTU was established on 1 January 2021 through the merger of Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) and Institute of Technology (IT) Tralee. Fusing the individual strengths, extensive experience and passion for education and entrepreneurship of both institutions, the new university has an ethos of excellence, an ambition to serve the needs of its community and region, and a vision of higher education provision that is innovative, responsive, entrepreneurial and forward-looking. The Mission, Vision and Core Values of MTU are set out in Table 1:

<b>Munster Technological University (MTU)</b>				
<b>Values</b>	Inclusive	Engaging	Dynamic	Bold
<b>Vision</b>	To lead transformation through education			
<b>Mission</b>	To lead change and, through education, empower people for a successful future in a globalised world			

Table 1: MTU Values, Vision and Mission. (From: Munster Technological University, *Our Shared Vision. Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027*, p.7, link [here](#).)

The six MTU campuses are centred in two locations in Munster, Cork and Tralee, and encompass the MTU (Cork) Bishopstown Campus, MTU Crawford College of Art and Design, MTU Cork School of Music and the National Maritime College of Ireland, as well as the MTU (Kerry) North Campus and MTU (Kerry) South Campus.

MTU makes major higher education awards at all levels of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) from Higher Certificate (NFQ Level 6) to PhD (NFQ Level 10), as well as minor and special purpose awards. The University also makes joint awards with University College Cork, as well as offering a number of international cotutelle (double) research awards, most at doctoral level.

Building on the statutory functions and historic strengths of the Institutes of Technology, the Technological Universities (TU) Act of 2018 continues to emphasise career education, technology and provision of regional

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<sup>2</sup> Including just under 4,000 learners availing of conservatoire provision at the MTU Cork School of Music and short courses offered by [NMCI Training Services](#).

offerings as distinctive traits of the technological university sector in Ireland, marrying this with a strengthened focus on international research excellence, research-informed teaching and postgraduate provision.

MTU's professional focus is reflected in the broad spectrum of its provision which encompasses both academic programmes and craft and degree apprenticeship programmes leading to both further and higher education awards. This is further reflected in the remarkable extent of professional recognition and accreditation achieved by MTU programmes across all discipline areas and is also obvious in the manifold professional development offerings for mature, work-based learners, be it through bespoke delivery of modules and short courses at company premises or through the broad and varied portfolio of part-time and evening programmes. Continuous industry input was, and continues to be, a feature of programme design and emphasis on work placement in many higher education programmes across all academic fields.

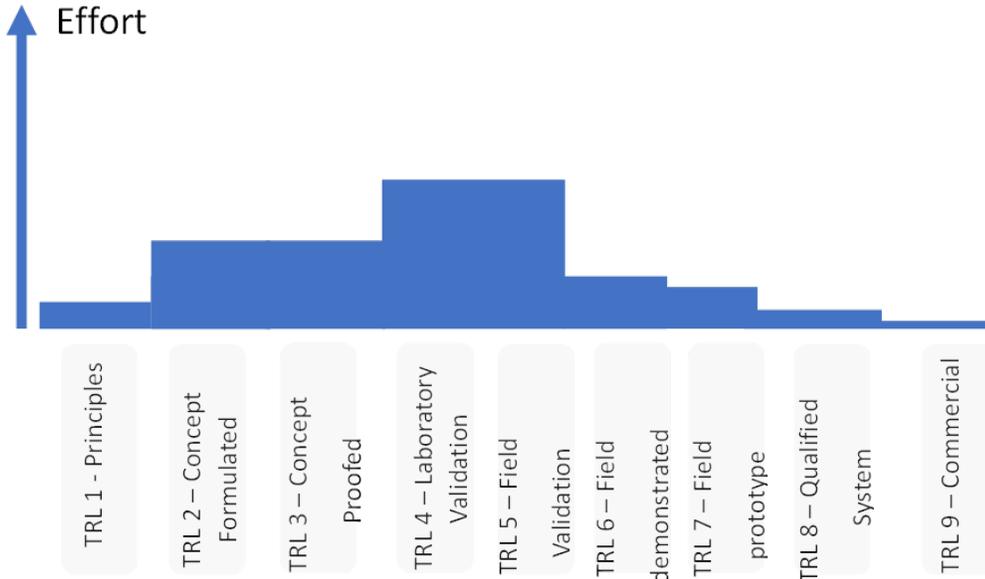
Driving forward internationalisation is central to MTU's ambitions for the future. The University's vision for internationalisation is to develop its graduates as global citizens with the necessary abilities and confidence to live, work, achieve and participate fully in an international environment. In order to continue to attract engaged, high-calibre applicants from across the globe onto its educational offerings and to provide an excellent education to each and every learner, national or international, MTU is currently finalising its application for TrustEd Ireland, the new statutory quality mark for Irish providers of international higher education.

Last but certainly not least, MTU's research has achieved significant national and international impact, as evidenced by a range of recognised key performance indicators including success rates in competitive funding calls, citation rates of scholarly outputs, profile of international collaborators and number of research contracts with industry. The impact profile (see [Table 2](#) below) affirms the excellence of MTU's research activity across the continuum from fundamental to commercialisation. And while MTU focuses on mid-Technological Readiness Level (TLR) activities, MTU research covers the full continuum from fundamental to spin out (commercialisation) (see [Graph 1](#) overleaf).

Impact Parameter (Bold)	MTU Performance	Source / Comment
<b>Scale of Research</b>		
Research Expenditure	Circa €30.3m	KTI survey 2023 / largest amongst TU's
PhD students	178	PRB annual report 2024
<b>Knowledge Dissemination</b>		
Field-weighted Citations	2.08	Bibliometric analysis from HEA using Scival / Publications cited approx. 100% more frequently than global average in 2022 / highest amongst all universities in Ireland
<b>Knowledge Transfer</b>		
Direct Industry Funding	€1.998m	KTI survey 2023 / largest amongst TU's
H2020 (2014-2020)	15.2% application success	EU / Third highest success rate in Ireland
H2020	€16m	MTU / More than double predecessor FP7 programme
Horizon Europe (2021 – 2027)	€23m to date	EU funding portal as of Dec. 2024
<b>Supports for Companies</b>		
Total Number of Collaboration, Innovation Voucher and Consultancy Agreements with industry	145 contracts signed	KTI / 2023

[Table 2](#): Research Impact Profile for MTU.

*Legend: KTI = Knowledge Transfer Ireland*



**Graph 1:** Effort expended across the MTU R&I ecosystem as per relative amount of research expenditure (“effort”) across the Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs).

While editorial oversight was applied to maximise overall coherence, focus and flow, this report represents the views of MTU as a whole on its quality systems and activities, as expressed by those of its members responsible for and most familiar with the implementation of the relevant University functions. Special mention must however go to Dr Áine Ní Shé, Head of Department of Mathematics, who supported compilation of Part B for this AQR update, as the reporting period still fell under her aegis as Registrar on the MTU (Cork) campuses, during which time Dr Ní Shé also acted as Institutional Coordinator for the CINNTE Review.

As for all previous AQRs for MTU since its inception, intensive work on the development and implementation of new MTU structures, policies and processes has been ongoing during the drafting of this AQR update. In addition, the first CINNTE Institutional Review for Munster Technological University took place during the reporting period, with the main review visit in March 2024. AQR 2025 therefore aims to present the most up-to-date and accurate snapshot possible, both of the new governance and executive structures introduced during the reporting period, and of any remaining elements of the inherited quality frameworks and procedures of CIT and IT Tralee. With further changes to MTU’s quality framework continuing during drafting and following submission of the report, however, certain features described may have been superseded when the report is published.

# 1.0 Internal QA Framework

## 1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

### 1.1.1 Governance and Quality Management in the Post-Establishment Period

On 1 January 2021, Munster Technological University (MTU) was established under the TU Act 2018 through the merger of Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) and Institute of Technology (IT) Tralee. With establishment of the new technological university, IT Tralee and CIT stood dissolved.

While MTU is a new legal entity with a separate statutory role and a different governance and management structure, the TU Act 2018 provides for an initial transfer of functions (Section 37), programmes of education and training (Section 59), quality assurance procedures and access, transfer & progression procedures (both Section 61) from the dissolved component institutions to the new technological university on designation day.

#### a. Governing Body

Under Section (11) of the TU Act 2018, a Technological University “shall have a governing body to perform the functions of the technological university” under the Act.

The first meeting of the Governing Body of Munster Technological University took place on 1 January 2021. At that inaugural meeting, MTU was formally established and Prof Maggie Cusack was appointed as President.

Other items addressed at the inaugural Governing Body meeting included staff and student representation on Governing Body; approval of the Governing Body Standing Orders; approval of the MTU Code of Governance; establishment of an Audit and Risk Committee (to independently ensure proper corporate governance of the University and the management of a Risk Register for the University); and approval of the MTU Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedure. The MTU Code of Governance provides the framework for the application of best practice in corporate governance by MTU and is published on the MTU website, as is the MTU Dignity and Respect Policy; both documents may be accessed [here](#).

The MTU Governing Body furthermore ratified the continued application of the legacy regulations, policies and procedures of the dissolved institutions to the respective MTU campuses to which they applied immediately before establishment of MTU, in accordance with the TU Act (2018). These legacy regulations and policies will remain in place until such time as they are formally amended or replaced by MTU.

Soon after designation, MTU Governing Body, in accordance with the Technological Universities Act 2018, commenced the process of expanding its membership from the inaugural five members to enable the appointment of MTU student and staff members, as well as further external members. The expanded Governing Body first met on 30 June 2021 and concluded its first two-year term of office at the end of the academic year 2022/23. A newly constituted Governing Body took up office on 6 July 2023.

In the months following designation, two further Committees were also set up by Governing Body, namely a Nominations Committee and an Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Committee. Following its expansion in June 2021, Governing Body finalised its committee structure and approved the Terms of Reference and workplan for each Committee. In total, Governing Body established six Committees as follows:

- Arts, Sport & Culture Committee
- Audit & Risk Committee
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Committee
- Finance Committee

- NMCI Committee
- Strategic Development Committee

Documentation on the membership and meetings of the current Governing Body and its Committees and Governing Body Committee terms of reference are made available on the [Governing Body page](#) of the MTU website.

## b. Transitional and Steady-State Academic Council

The Academic Council is the second statutory body of Munster Technological University. Under Section (17) of the TU Act 2018, the Academic Council controls the academic affairs of a technological university, including its curriculum and the instruction and education provided by the university.

At its inaugural meeting, MTU Governing Body ratified the establishment of a small Academic Council to meet the legislative requirements for an Academic Council to be in place from Establishment Day. The membership and responsibilities of this small Academic Council were legislated for under the TU Act (2018) also.

Subsequently, the Governing Body agreed on the establishment of a ‘transitional’ MTU Academic Council. This transitional Academic Council, which commenced on 7 May 2021 and continued in existence until early 2024, had a larger membership with a majority of elected members. Several Academic Council Committees were also established to support the transitional Academic Council in the discharge of its functions, including the development of new, common academic policies and procedures for MTU.

The committee structure of the transitional Academic Council of MTU comprised an Executive Committee and six ‘Integration & Development Committees’. Two Academic Legacy Committees (the former Academic Councils of CIT and ITT) were also in operation up to the end of 2021/22. The Academic Legacy Committees dealt with legacy processes already in train and local operational issues and had significant delegated authority from the MTU Academic Council to manage quality assurance within the pre-existing QA frameworks. Following completion of the legacy processes and adoption of a number of university-wide QA policies and procedures, including for new programme approvals, the two Academic Legacy Committees were stood down.

Following approval of the Membership Regulations for a new, ‘steady-state’ Academic Council by Governing Body in May 2023 and adoption of thoroughly revised and expanded Standing Orders by Academic Council in June 2023, the initial step in implementation was the appointment of ex-officio members by the President. The new Membership Regulations are based on the new Executive Structure, but as recruitment of the eleven executive posts had not commenced, provisions were invoked whereby the President appointed ex-officio members on an interim basis in November 2023. Elections for the elected constituencies commenced in December 2023, and the first meeting of the newly constituted Academic Council took place on 9 February 2024. As with the previous ‘transitional’ Academic Council, the new Standing Orders provide for an Executive Committee, which assists Council in ordering and discharging its business, and six further Committees whose remit is focused on specific areas of academic operations, as follows:

- Academic Planning & Review Committee;
- Admissions & Student Affairs Committee;
- Learning Resources/Infrastructure & Student Supports Committee;
- Regulations, Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee;
- Research & Innovation Committee;
- Standing Orders Committee.

Apart from the Executive Committee (chaired by the President), all Committee Chairs are elected and appointed from and by the membership of Academic Council. Elections for the members and chairs of the six topical Academic Council Committees took place in March 2024.

The current Academic Council membership is published on the [Academic Council](#) page of the MTU website. For details on Governing Body and Academic Council activity in the reporting period, see [PART B Section 1](#).

### c. Commencement of MTU Regulations, Policies and Procedures

At its inaugural meeting, 4 January 2021, the MTU Academic Council agreed a number of principles in relation to the status and interpretation of the saved quality assurance procedures of the former Institutes of Technology which were subsequently ratified by Governing Body.

The core academic regulations, policies and procedures of MTU which applied at the Institutes immediately before the establishment of the University were to remain in place until they were amended or replaced by MTU. MTU (Cork) or MTU (Kerry) Regulations would continue to apply to the modules and programmes to which they applied immediately before the establishment of MTU. Any students on those modules and programmes were to be subject to the MTU (Kerry) or MTU (Cork) regulations in respect of any matters covered by those regulations.

Oversight of the regulations specific to MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) and their implementation was to lie with the Kerry Academic Legacy Committee and the Cork Academic Legacy Committee respectively. Any uncertainties or apparent conflicts as to the particular regulation, policy or procedure applicable to a given case would be resolved by a consensus decision of the two Vice-Presidents responsible for academic affairs.

Since its establishment, MTU has been working at pace to develop and extend its portfolio of university-wide regulations, policies and procedures for all operational areas, including academic quality assurance, governance and administration. Upon coming into force, new MTU policies and procedures replace saved local policies and procedures in all campus locations, normally with immediate effect.

The academic regulations, policies and procedures approved by Academic Council during the reporting period are listed in [PART B Section 1](#) of this quality report.

All current MTU regulations, policies, and procedures are published on the MTU website at [MTU Policies and Publications](#). Any local academic regulations and policies which remain in force pending completion and approval of common MTU policy are published at [MTU \(Cork\) Academic Regulations and Policies](#) and [MTU \(Kerry\) Quality Assurance Procedures](#) respectively.

**PART A Sections 2 – 8** below provide further details on specific elements of the MTU academic policy framework.

### d. MTU Executive

Immediately on establishment of MTU, all members of the former executives of CIT and ITT retained their portfolios. A small Operational Executive and a separate Planning Group were formed to support the President in day-to-day operational and planning activities in the first few months post-designation. At the end of the first semester, the two groups were amalgamated to form the first University Executive.

The MTU Executive is a non-statutory committee of the University, and as such its membership and functions are determined by the President. The overall remit of the MTU Executive, as outlined in its current Terms of Reference below, is to assist the President with operational direction, oversight and decision-making in relation

to any MTU activities which come within the scope of the President’s statutory functions under the TU Act 2018. Executive matters considered by the MTU Executive thus include, amongst others:

- Academic and Student Activities
- Corporate Systems
- Finance and Resourcing
- Staffing and Industrial Relations
- Strategic Planning and University Performance
- Research
- Engagement with Statutory Bodies and other stakeholders
- Transformation Activities
- Building, Estate and Capital Projects
- Marketing and Media/PR.

The MTU Executive meets on a fortnightly basis, and its Terms of Reference are to:

- Review and monitor the status and performance of key operational plans and provide information for the President to report on to the Governing Body as necessary and appropriate;
- Ensure that risks are identified, managed and reviewed as relevant and appropriate, and provide information for the President to report on to the Governing Body as necessary and appropriate;
- Ensure delivery of MTU’s strategic vision through projects and initiatives to deliver MTU transformation via the Project Initiation Request process (PIR), and act as champions for the process and the outcomes;
- Communicate the outcomes of University Executive deliberations to all relevant stakeholders, including staff and students;
- Other matters as deemed appropriate by the President.

The design of the new MTU Executive Structure, one of four Technological University Transformation workstreams, was completed in June 2022, at which time it was approved by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). A business case was submitted to the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform (DPENDPDR) which approved the new Executive structure in December 2023 when it provided approval for recruitment of the first six members of the new University Executive. Approval for the remaining five posts in the new University Executive was received in January 2025, and recruitment is underway.

As the members of the new University Executive are taking up their positions, the attendant changes to the composition of the MTU Executive reflect the transition from the interim ‘designation day’ structure to the final executive structure approved by DFHERIS, with holders of both new and legacy executive functions currently still on the Board.

As of January 2025, the membership of the MTU Executive Board is:

Professor Maggie Cusack	President
Mr Simon Jennings	Chief Corporate Officer
Professor Christine Cross	Vice-President Academic Affairs and Registrar
Professor Hugh McGlynn	Vice-President Research & Innovation

Mr Paul Gallagher	Vice-President Finance & Operations
Mr Tim Daly	Head of Strategy*
Mr Michael Loftus	Vice-President External Affairs*
Ms Ciara Looney	Vice-President Corporate Affairs*
Professor Alistair Payne	Dean of Faculty of Creative & Performing Arts and Media
Dr Seán McSweeney	Dean of Faculty of Engineering
Dr Brendan O’Connell	Head of Faculty of Engineering & Science*
Mr Gerard O’Donovan	Head of Faculty of Business & Humanities*
Dr Séamus O’Shea	Executive Head of School of Health & Social Sciences*
Ms Mary Rose Stafford	Executive Head of School of Business, Computing & Humanities*
Professor Joseph Walsh	Executive Head of School of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics*

Legend: \* = Legacy executive positions

Figure 1 just below presents the final MTU Executive Structure following full implementation:

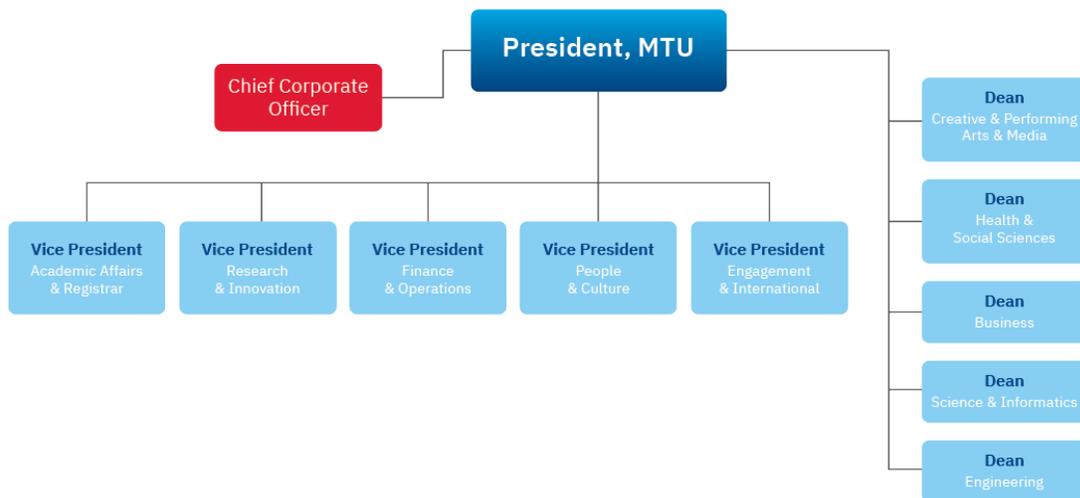


Figure 1: Final MTU Executive Structure

e. Academic Operating Model

Constituting the fourth TU Transformation workstream, a high-level design of the Academic Operating Model was completed in June 2023. This followed a highly consultative process facilitated by KPMG and supported by the Academic Operating Model Working Group of diverse cross-institutional membership.

Key to the early deliberations was work previously done by the MTU Academic Domains Working Group, established during the final stages of the TU application process in 2019. Through this, five academic domains were decided upon and the existing academic departments were aligned to these. Subsequently, the elected

membership of the 'transitional' Academic Council was organised by these domains, and, following further review, the identified domains were also used to form the basis of the elected academic constituencies of the 'steady state' Academic Council model. The domains were formally agreed by the University Executive as academic faculties in June 2022, and the alignment of the academic departments was validated in early 2023.

The Academic Operating Model that emerged as the preferred option is a two-tier model wherein Heads of Department report directly to the Deans of the five Faculties (Creative & Performing Arts and Media; Health & Social Sciences; Business; Science & Informatics; and Engineering).

Once the model has been fully implemented, the Faculty Deans will sit on the University Executive; other faculty-based senior staff will only join the Executive when deputising for the Dean. Faculties will span multiple campuses and faculty leadership roles will be cross-organisational. New senior leadership roles of Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and Vice Dean for Research & Engagement will be created in each faculty; these will be faculty-based, rather than associated with specific academic departments.

Programmes and academic departments will remain as they are currently set out against the alignment to the academic domains. Detailed design and implementation of the Academic Operating Model will be a multi-year project, completed by the faculties on a phased basis.

A representation of the new Academic Operating Model is presented in [Figure 2](#) overleaf:

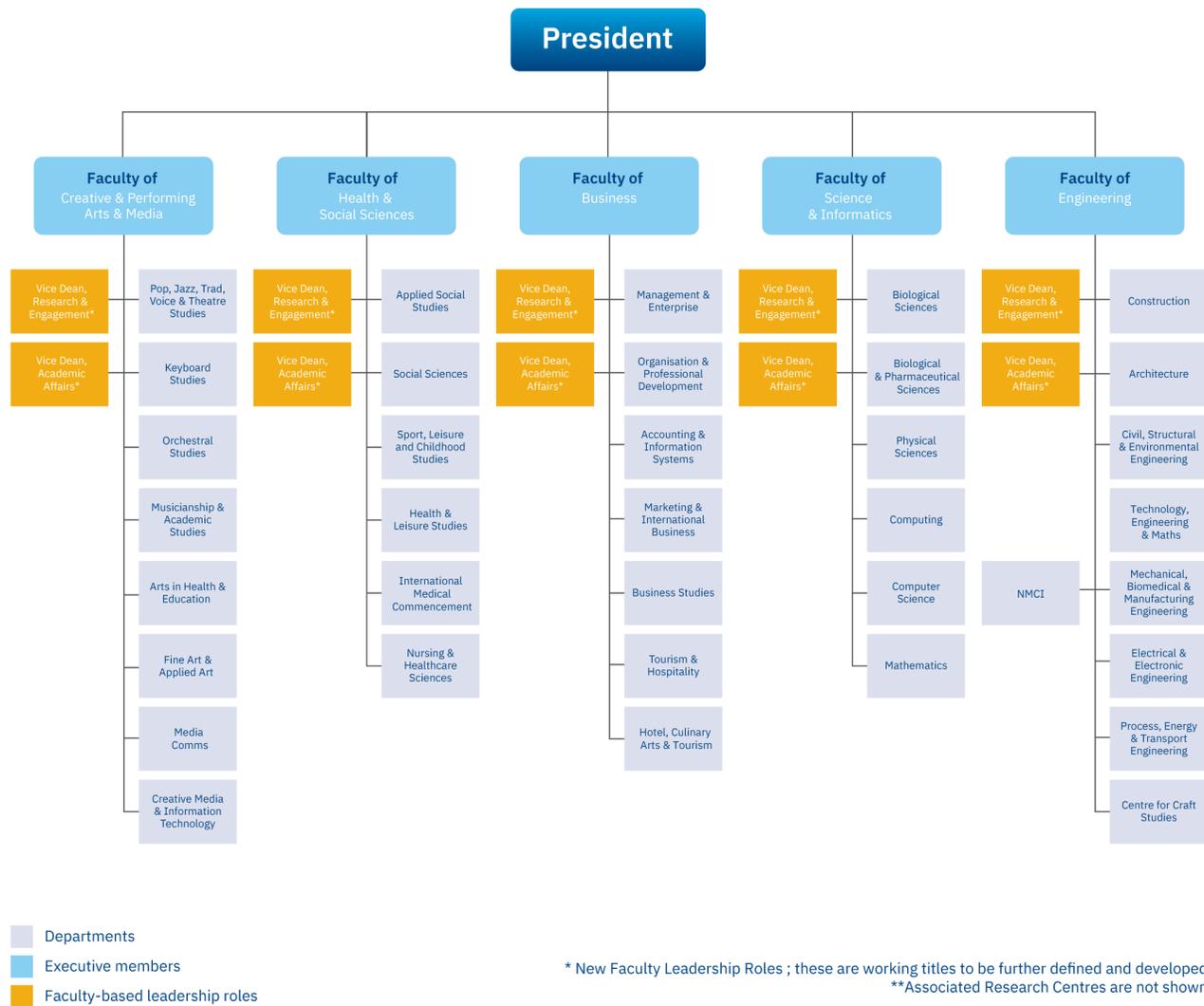


Figure 2: New Academic Operating Model for MTU, approved June 2023 (implementation ongoing)

Figures 3 and 4 on this and the following page visualise the MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) campus organisational structures as of February 2025, which are being replaced by the new academic structures in an iterative fashion.

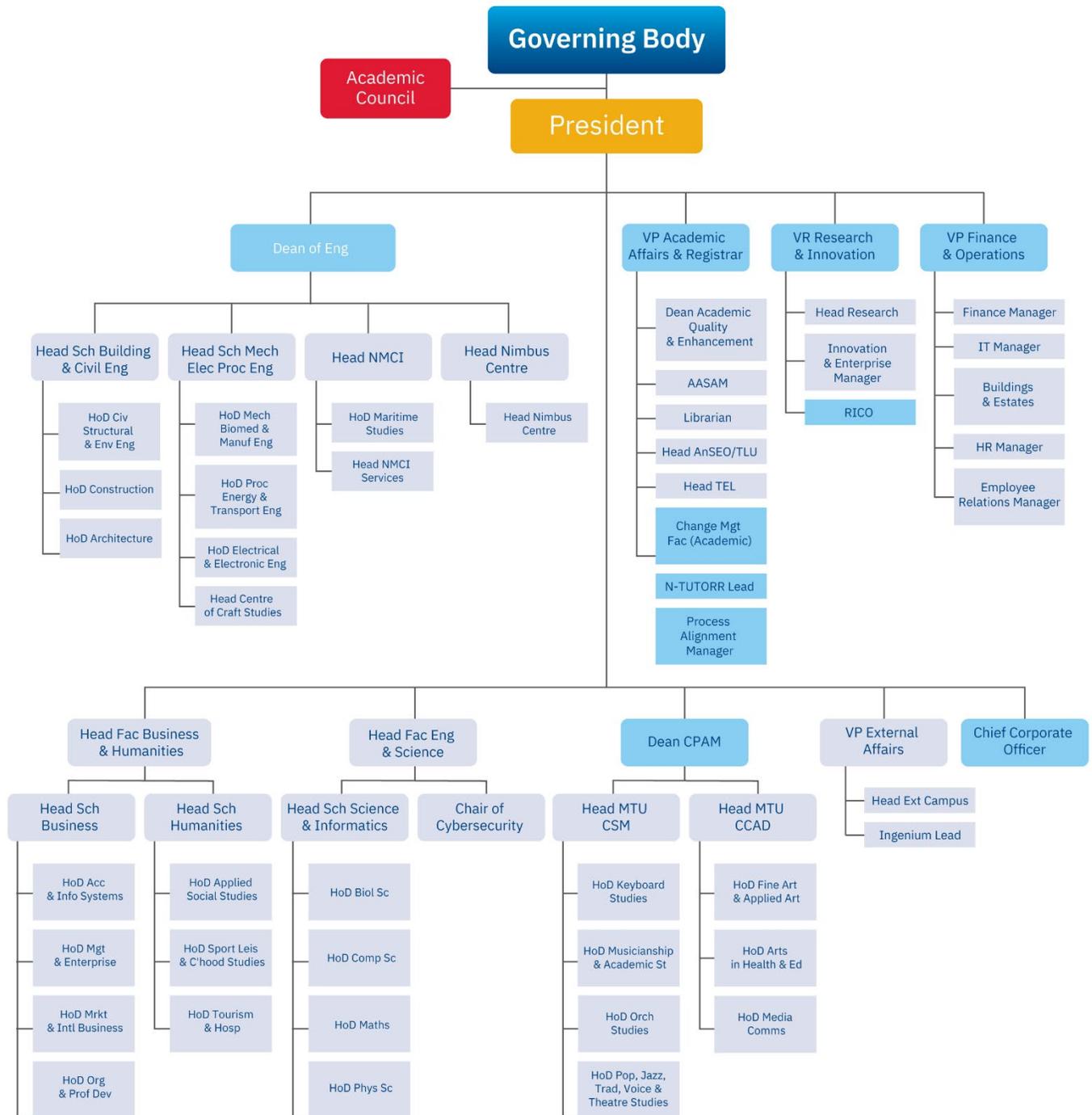


Figure 3: MTU (Cork) Organisational Structure as of February 2025. NB: Fields underlaid in mid-blue represent cross-university positions.

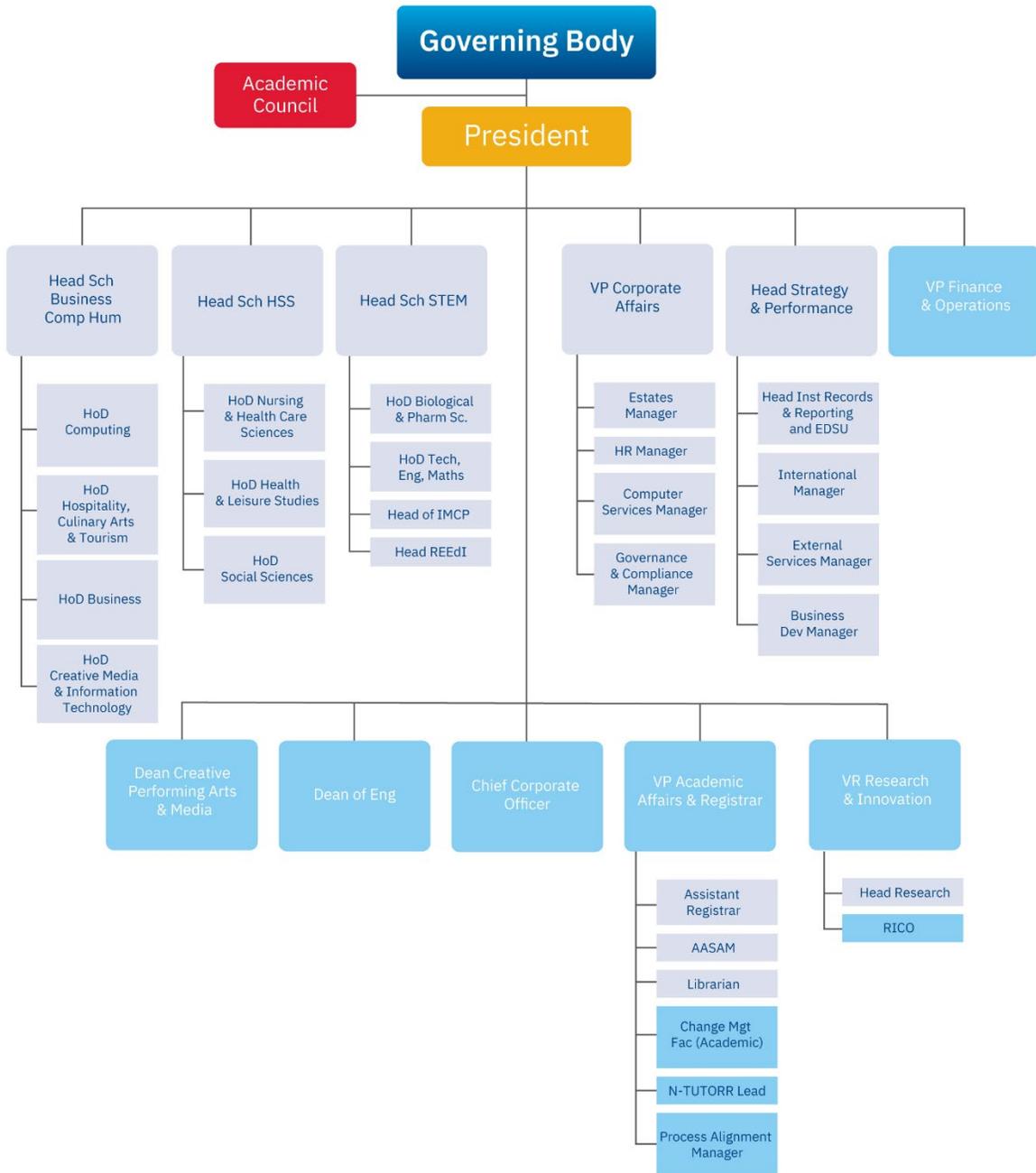


Figure 4: MTU (Kerry) Organisational Structure as of February 2025. NB: Fields underlaid in mid-blue represent cross-university positions.

### 1.1.2 MTU Strategic Plan

Following broad-based stakeholder engagement and a period of intensive development, the first Strategic Plan for MTU was completed in June 2022 and formally launched by Minister for Higher Education Simon Harris in October 2022.

MTU's "Our Shared Vision. Strategic Plan 2022-2027" is published on the MTU website and is available [here](#).

The Strategic Objectives of "Our Shared Vision" flow from five thematic priority areas which were developed through extensive engagement and consultation. The key strategic themes for MTU's first five years will be:

- To deliver outstanding learner education and experience to produce work-ready graduates;
- To increase investment in MTU's staff and the communities within which MTU is embedded;
- To achieve significant growth and impact across MTU's research, innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem;
- To lead regional development; and
- To adopt a global outlook across all of MTU's activities.

To achieve its strategic outcomes, MTU has identified key Strategic Enablers which will ensure the ongoing success of the University. These are

- The proactive pursuit of equality, diversity and inclusion across all of MTU's activities;
- Embracement of the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the creation of a sustainability culture across all campuses;
- Collective commitment to a multi-campus technological university;
- Strategic investment in a high-performing digital infrastructure and capabilities ("Digital-by-default");
- Development of a state-of-the art physical infrastructure and capabilities across MTU's campuses.

For further detail on the MTU Strategic Plan implementation process during the reporting period see [PART B, Section 1](#) of this report.

### 1.1.3 Academic Governance and Quality Assurance Framework

As set out in the Technological Universities Act (2018), it is the responsibility of MTU Governing Body to regulate the MTU Academic Council. Pursuant to Section 9 (7) of the Act, MTU Governing Body has delegated to the MTU Academic Council the function of approving all regulations, policies and procedures concerning the academic affairs of the technological university, over and beyond Academic Council's statutory control of the academic affairs of MTU. In accordance with the TU Act 2018, Academic Council may delegate the discharge of any of its functions to any of its committees, as it sees fit. Governing Body reserves the right to revoke any delegated authority provided for under these regulations at any time.

MTU is committed to the highest quality standards, to continuous quality improvement and enhancement and to the creation of a quality culture. The development of an integrated Academic Quality Assurance Framework for the University is being progressed as a matter of high priority. Much of this work is carried out by the Committees of the Academic Council (respectively the Integration & Development Committees of the

transitional Academic Council in the immediate post-designation period). Responsibility for ensuring implementation and compliance with academic QA policies and procedures rests ultimately with the MTU Executive and particularly within the remit of the Vice-President Academic Affairs and Registrar.

At Faculty and Department level, Heads of Faculty, Heads of Department and Programme Boards have local responsibilities for implementing and monitoring of quality assurance policies and procedures. (In the three-tier model currently still in place on the MTU (Cork) campuses, this also applies to the School level and the Heads of School.) The academic management of a department's programmes is the responsibility of Head of Department and the respective Programme Boards.

Information on the evolution of the MTU framework for academic governance and the management of academic quality assurance during the reporting period is provided in [PART B Section 1](#) of this report.

The academic regulations, policies and procedures of MTU cover all aspects of its academic activities, including the quality assurance of MTU's programme provision and of its research, knowledge transfer and innovation activities; academic and research integrity; access, transfer and progression; and student and staff welfare.

For further information on MTU academic policy development in the post-establishment period, see [PART A Section 1.1.1. c](#) above. For details on the quality assurance of research activities and postgraduate research degree provision specifically, see [PART A Section 4](#) below.

#### **1.1.4 Learner Representation in Governance and Quality Assurance**

Learner representatives are systematically included in MTU governance and management structures at all levels. MTU's active and engaged Students' Unions on the Cork and Kerry campuses are the main vehicle through which learner representation is organised. While separate Students' Unions are still in place in Kerry and Cork at the time of writing, a single Students' Union structure for the whole of MTU is a requirement of the TU Act 2018, and an MOU has been signed by MTU and the two existing Students Unions to address a merger process and the creation of that single entity. In the meantime, and pursuant to the same MOU, the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) of the two Students' Unions has been recognised by the Governing Body for the purposes of representation as per the Act. The two Students' Unions are also working on the alignment of business processes ahead of the merger.

The membership of the MTU Governing Body, appointed in accordance with the TU Act 2018, includes both Students' Union Presidents and the SU Vice-President Welfare on the Cork campuses. The – then – two Students' Union Presidents were also members of the 'Establishment Day' Academic Council. On the 'transitional' Academic Council, they were joined by the two SU Vice-Presidents for Education and a postgraduate representative. The Membership Regulations for the new 'steady state' Academic Council were based on the new Students' Union structure. Governing Body has approved an addendum to the Regulations to enable a full complement of student members to be determined through the JEC. The two Students' Union Presidents also sit on the Executive Committee of Academic Council, and all other Committees of the Academic Council also include student members.

Learner representatives ('Class Reps') act as the main spokespersons for their cohort at Programme and Stage level. Class reps are elected at the beginning of each academic year to act as principal spokespersons for their cohort and liaise with academic and support staff on its behalf. Each class rep is a member of the Students' Union Council and reports back to the SU Executive at Union Council Meetings on issues of concern to the group.

All new programme validation panels at MTU include external learner representatives. MTU students themselves are systematically enabled to contribute to programme development and monitoring through programme board participation. MTU class reps regularly meet class tutors/programme coordinators and attend academic workshops with programme coordinators or Heads of Department to facilitate continuous monitoring of programmes with regard to issues of concern to learners. During the exploratory phase of new programme development, departments will often consult with existing students and recent graduates on various aspects of the prospective programmes. Student involvement in academic review is being further strengthened in the development of new policy.

In addition to Governing Body, Academic Council and its Committees, and Course Boards, ca. 60 university committees and boards include student representation.

### **1.1.5 External Stakeholder Representation in Governance and Quality Assurance**

Over half the membership of the MTU Governing Body are external stakeholders from a variety of sectors and organisations, including regional education & training boards, the community, industry organisations, enterprise and government.

In relation to programme provision, a key mechanism for ensuring that external peer perspectives feed into academic quality management is the external examiner system. External examiners are approved by MTU Academic Council and provide oversight in relation to learner assessment and monitoring of programmes. Additionally, all core processes for the approval and review of modules and programmes incorporate external stakeholder representation. A further layer of externality is added by the fact that many MTU programmes are professionally recognised, accredited or regulated.

Lastly, MTU's inaugural Strategic Plan, "Our Shared Vision. Strategic Plan 2022-2027" was developed through a consultative and collaborative approach that sought the views of MTU's external community as well as those of students and staff.

The development of mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders in the Southwest Region is also at the core of the Strategic Priority Area "Leading Regional Development". The Strategic Objectives in this area include, amongst others, that "MTU will encourage, support and initiate collaborations towards mutually beneficial goals". (MTU, "Our Shared Vision. Strategic Plan 2022-2027", p. 19).

For further details on the MTU Strategic Plan, see [PART A Section 1.1.2](#) above. The MTU Strategic Plan is available [here](#).

## 1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

With regard to collaborative and transnational provision, the saved policies and procedures of CIT and IT Tralee currently remain in force in the respective campus locations until such time as the legacy policies are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU.

To date, MTU has not designated any linked providers.

Under Section 9 of the TU Act 2018, the functions of MTU include collaboration with higher education providers within and outside of Ireland, including on joint research projects and the provision of taught programmes, as well as collaboration with business, enterprise, the professions, the community, local interests and related stakeholders in the region. Promotion of stakeholder involvement in programme design and delivery is also a function of the University under the Act. Governing Body has delegated authority to the President (and other members of the MTU Executive authorised by the President) to sign off on collaborations or agreements related to contracts with external parties on behalf of MTU. Governing Body has however reserved approval for any high-profile matters and/or matters associated with a high level of cost or risk.

Formal Joint Awarding Agreements are in place for all joint awards made by MTU. All collaborative programmes, irrespective of whether they lead to an MTU award or a joint award, are subject to detailed consortium agreements governing the arrangements for provision and quality assurance of the programme, including assessment standards, learner protection, and the making of the award.

Under the existing quality processes, each joint awarding and consortium agreement made in relation to a collaborative programme to be offered by MTU (Cork) requires prior approval of Academic Council and Governing Body before the collaborative programme and, where relevant, joint award can be validated. Formal agreements made in relation to MTU (Kerry) programmes require approval from the President and University Executive, alongside validation of the programme specification by Academic Council.

With regard to the long-standing overarching joint awarding agreement between MTU and UCC, the institutions operate well-established joint mechanisms for the validation, operation, ongoing monitoring and periodic review of the relevant programmes. These include a Joint Board which has oversight of academic, management and resource issues for all joint programmes and makes recommendations to the MTU Academic Council and UCC Academic Board. A (Joint) Board of Studies is also in place for each of the joint programmes.

Refer to the following sections for the applicable QA procedures:

- [MTU \(Cork\) Academic Regulations and Procedures](#), Section Collaborative Provision, “Academic Policy on the Quality Assurance of Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards”;
- [MTU \(Kerry\) Quality Assurance Procedures](#), Section A15: Collaborative Provision.

## 2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

### 2.1 Programme Development and Approval

#### 2.1.1 Evolution of the MTU Programme Quality Assurance Framework

At the time of writing, the programme quality assurance system of Munster Technological University is undergoing rapid development. Building on the quality assurance procedures of MTU's predecessor institutions, but developing these further to reflect the broader reach, scope and ambitions of a technological university in an evolving higher education environment, the University is engaged in an intensive programme of academic policy review and creation. Driven by Academic Council and its Committees and relevant central academic functions of the University, this programme aims to create and implement a comprehensive framework for academic quality assurance and enhancement for the whole of MTU.

As new, university-wide quality assurance procedures are being approved by Academic Council, they supersede the relevant legacy procedures of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) across all MTU campuses. In the interim, to accelerate implementation of a common quality framework, a number of saved legacy policies and procedures of one MTU campus location have been adopted by the campuses at the other location also, pending policy redevelopment on a whole-of-MTU basis.

#### 2.1.2 Policies and Procedures for Programme Development and Approval

The core MTU policy documents regulating the design and approval of new programmes are the [Policy for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards](#) and associated [Procedure for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards](#).

The MTU programme design and approval policy came into effect in September 2022, replacing a number of separate legacy policies which had continued to govern programme approval processes on the MTU (Kerry) and MTU (Cork) campuses respectively up to the end of the 2021/2022 academic year.

The Policy sets out the parameters and guiding principles for curriculum development and programme approval and regulates the credit profiles of degree programmes at different NFQ levels under MTU's framework for modular programme provision. The accompanying Procedure specifies the procedural steps involved in new programme development and validation review at MTU, as well as the required sequence of approvals.

In line with the MTU mission and profile, the University's programme design process ensures that programme structure and delivery are informed by engagement and connectedness with industry, business, the professions and the community.

The University's approach to programme design has also long been informed by Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Sustainable Development principles. This was further developed and formalised in the adoption of a new integrated curriculum framework, [An Inclusive Curriculum for a Sustainable Future](#), in 2023/24, one of the outputs of the N-TUTORR project at MTU. Using a student-centred approach, the framework articulates eight interlinked educational pillars intended to guide programme teams in the design and delivery of programmes and modules. The interlinked pillars are Academic Integrity; Digital Transformation; Entrepreneurship; Employability; Equity/Equality, Diversity & Inclusion; Universal Design for Learning; Research & Innovation, and Education for Sustainability. In addition, the framework formulates a set of programme attributes underpinning the eight pillars and a set of graduate attributes founded on them. On the development of this Curriculum Framework, see [Part B Section 2.3 a](#).

Prior to approval and validation, every new programme and module undergoes a rigorous, thorough, multi-step review process which draws on both internal and external expertise. The selection of independent internal and external experts is subject to the [MTU Policy on Conflict of Interest or Commitment and External Work](#).

The design and approval of programmes leading to non-major awards is guided by the supplementary procedure for the [Validation of Special Purpose, Minor and Supplementary Awards](#). This MTU (Cork) legacy procedure was also adopted by MTU (Kerry) at the end of 2021/2022 pending approval of new common MTU policy.

Amendments to existing programmes and modules are also subject to review and approval. Any major or critical changes to programmes give rise to a differential validation process, which is treated as a new validation of a programme element or elements and – like all new validations – requires Academic Council approval. Module changes are carried out in accordance with the procedures laid down in the new [MTU Policy](#) and associated [Procedure for the Design, Amendment, Review, and Approval of Modules](#). Programme changes, for the time being, follow the MTU (Cork) legacy [procedure for module and programme changes](#), which was adopted by the MTU (Kerry) campuses at the end of 2022.

At the time of writing, programme development procedures governed by saved policy continue to be published on the legacy websites under [MTU \(Cork\) Academic Regulations and Procedures](#) and [MTU \(Kerry\) Quality Assurance Procedures](#), even where relevant processes have been adopted across MTU.

Newly (re)developed and approved common MTU academic policies and procedures are published in the Policies and Publications section of the MTU website and may be accessed [here](#).

### 2.1.3 Professional Requirements and Programme Quality Assurance

As a public provider of higher education and training, MTU's primary obligation is to achieve excellence in programme provision and research against the academic standards and criteria defined in higher education legislation and academic and research quality frameworks.

At the same time, the TU Act 2018 lists among the functions of a technological university the provision of programmes that reflect the needs of “business, enterprise [and] the professions” and enable graduates to “excel in their chosen careers” (TU Act 2018, Section (9) (1) (b) and (c) respectively).

MTU delivers on these functions by offering a broad portfolio of degree programmes and CPD courses which aim to anticipate the requirements of business, industry and the professions regionally and nationally, delivered flexibly and with curricula designed to develop work-ready graduates at any NFQ level.

Through its programme approval process, MTU ascertains itself that proposed new programmes indeed address the current and developing professional requirements of their respective field and meet the needs of both graduates and employers. The periodic review of existing programme provision, which involves amongst others a scrutiny of graduate performance and industry/employer feedback, confirms that programme curricula have been updated as necessary to keep step with any significant changes in the professional environment.

### 2.1.4 Programme Validation and Professional Accreditation

In addition to academic validation, where fields of employment are subject to professional regulation or where successful professional practice is predicated on professional registration, academic programmes generally need to achieve recognition or accreditation from professional bodies or statutory regulators such as CORU, the

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI), or the Marine Survey Office (MSO) in the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport.

MTU strives to facilitate and support academic units required or wishing to undergo external professional programme accreditation processes in any way feasible. To support units in minimising unnecessary reduplication of effort, the University may allow for elements or outcomes of a professional review to be recognised against some or all academic (re)validation requirements, provided there is sufficient alignment between the professional and academic review procedures and criteria.

Conversely, the University endeavours to familiarise relevant professional organisations with its academic quality assurance procedures and criteria whenever an opportunity offers. In addition to inviting engagement in the context of various industry liaison fora, MTU may arrange for representatives of regulatory or professional bodies to sit in on academic review panels as observers or, for certain areas, invite them to participate in academic review as panel members. MTU programmes are currently recognised by over 30 separate professional organisations.

## 2.1.5 Apprenticeship Provision and Work-Based Learning

### a. Overview of Apprenticeship Provision

In keeping with the long-standing focus on career-oriented education and training of its predecessor institutions, MTU continues to offer both traditional craft and new ('post-2016') apprenticeship programmes. Information on these can be accessed through the [Apprenticeship](#) page on the MTU website.

MTU delivers craft apprenticeship training for a number of different trades. Apprenticeship programmes for the larger trades, such as plumbing or carpentry & joinery, are delivered by multiple providers, while other apprenticeships are delivered in one location only. MTU continues to be the sole provider for apprenticeship programmes in construction plant fitting, pipe fitting (Phase 6), plastering and agricultural mechanics.

Degree apprenticeships in the area of hospitality (NFQ L7 Chef de Partie and NFQ L8 Sous Chef) were introduced at IT Tralee and CIT in 2018 and continue to be provided by MTU. MTU also provides several other consortia-led apprenticeship programmes at NFQ Levels 6 to 8 in the areas of logistics, manufacturing engineering, and laboratory technology.

Some of MTU's degree apprenticeships feature novel delivery modes. The *Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering Services Management*, for which MTU is the coordinating academic provider, is a part-apprenticeship programme led by the Confederation of Irish Industry (CIF) that affords craftspersons the opportunity to gain an NFQ Level 7 degree. The *MSc in Software Architecture & Design* has a hybrid delivery model: through a differential validation process, a 2-year part-time apprenticeship pathway was added to the previously existing full-time Masters programme which parallels the capstone project with workplace learning. The novel HEA/SOLAS-funded apprenticeship stream arose from efforts made in 2018 by a consortium led by LERO (the SFI Research Centre for Software) in conjunction with the University of Limerick. Coordination of the consortium programme was later transferred to MTU (Cork) as it had an existing matched programme and the experience and expertise to deliver a pathway of this nature.

MTU furthermore participated in the 2022 review of consortia-led apprenticeship commissioned by QQI. The review report, "A Review of Consortia-Led Apprenticeships in Ireland", September 2022, is available [here](#).

## b. Quality Assurance of Craft Apprenticeships under SOLAS

Traditional craft apprenticeships lead to further (rather than higher) education and training awards. At the point of writing, they are subject to a separate national quality assurance framework maintained by SOLAS, the state agency established in 2013 to oversee and manage further education and training in Ireland. The implementation of the National Plan for Apprenticeship (2021) will lead to far-reaching systemic changes which will fundamentally alter the role of SOLAS in the process and will align and integrate the overall approach to the quality assurance of craft apprenticeships with the system for quality assuring higher education provision within the providing institutions.

In terms of curricular structure, craft apprenticeships are delivered in a phased manner over four years. Phases 1, 3, 5 and 7 are work-based, while Phases 2, 4 and 6 consist of ‘off-the-job training’ delivered by regional ETB Training Centres (basic skills training, Phase 2) and associated education providers, predominantly Institutes of Technology respectively Technological Universities. The trades apprentice calendar does not follow the academic year but consists of three terms spread across the calendar year. For that reason, the timetabling of staff lecturing across both further and higher education programmes and managing demand fluctuations for relevant facilities and equipment are some of the endemic challenges of concurrent provision of apprenticeship and academic programmes for the providing institution.

As it stands, the development of, curriculum and assessment design for, and review of apprenticeship programmes lie within the sole responsibility of SOLAS. While individual lecturers are frequently consulted by SOLAS in the context of these QA processes, this is in the capacity of individual subject expert rather than provider representative. The chief vehicle for interaction between SOLAS and the apprenticeship providers on programme quality issues is the – what is still termed – Institutes of Technology Apprenticeship Committee (ITAC), composed of representatives from providing institutions. Normally, SOLAS will first informally advise ITAC members about impending programme changes during tri-annual meetings with ITAC held at the start of each term. These meetings also provide an opportunity for provider representatives to give feedback on and discuss operational or curricular issues arising during the previous term. Subsequently, formal notification about any amendments to apprenticeship programmes is given to the providing institutions by SOLAS. Review of apprenticeship programmes is to take place annually, though for some trades the review intervals – and consequent changes to apprenticeship programmes – can on occasion be longer.

Underneath this top-level structure, cognate trades are organised into Institutes’ Fields of Trades Committees, or ‘IFOTs’. IFOTs are composed of representatives of all providers which offer apprenticeship programmes in the relevant field, and generally also meet once per term to discuss technical issues. Conclusions or suggestions arising from IFOTs meetings are reported onward to ITAC for further transmission to SOLAS.

All assessments are centrally set by SOLAS. While the timing of practical assessments is up to each provider, all written theory examinations are ‘sat’ at the same time nationwide. Marks are determined by local apprentice examination boards based on a common marking scheme set by SOLAS. Recent adaptations of the scheme now allow providers to return marks which represent a more detailed and accurate reflection of apprentice performance in the theory exam. Operationally, the existing, somewhat circuitous processes for apprentice assessment and results processing still present some challenges for providers. Apprentice marks are not released by the providing institutions directly, for instance, but are forwarded to the local Education & Training Boards (ETBs) for release to candidates on behalf of SOLAS. However, assessment appeals are to be dealt with under the appeals procedure of the provider. Where this foresees a specific timeframe for lodgement of an appeal tied to the release date, as is the case at MTU, but the provider is not privy to the release date information when the appeal is lodged, this can make it difficult to determine if an appeal is allowable.

### c. Quality Assurance of Degree Apprenticeship Programmes

'New' apprenticeship programmes leading to higher education awards at Higher Certificate (NFQ Level 6) or Ordinary Bachelor (NFQ Level 7) level have been delivered at both MTU campus locations from 2017 onwards.

The delivery structure of degree apprenticeships varies; some delivery models combine days of workplace-based learning with days of academic study in one and the same week, while others are phased. However, in the case of phased programmes, certain academic projects may continue during workplace-based phases in order to retain apprentices' connection with academic learning throughout.

Degree apprenticeship programmes fall under the academic quality assurance framework for higher education. By default, delivery and assessment, validation, continuous monitoring and periodic review of the new apprenticeships thus follow the standard MTU QA processes as described in this report. However, in the case of consortium programmes (see next paragraph), it is frequently the regulations and procedures of the lead provider that apply, as governed by the individual consortium agreement. The involvement of SOLAS in the operation and quality assurance of degree apprenticeships is far more limited than in the case of trade apprenticeships, being generally restricted to apprentice registration.

Many new apprenticeships are developed for consortium delivery in the Technological Universities and Institutes of Technologies sectors, with professional organisations also often involved in programme development and delivery of work-based elements in particular. The academic lead institution within a consortium normally takes responsibility for validation of the programme specification and for overseeing programme operation across the consortium partners, for instance by facilitating joint programme board meetings involving all participating providers. The arrangements for quality assurance and delivery are specified in a consortium agreement.

While degree apprenticeship is no longer a new model of provision, to date the QA parameters for consortium delivery have been standardised to a degree only. This means, for instance, that the applicable delivery and assessment regulations and ownership of the award are agreed separately for each new degree apprenticeship. The resulting variations, even between apprenticeship programmes offered by one and the same consortium with the same lead institution, add distinct complexity to the institutional processes for delivery, assessment and academic quality assurance, if somewhat tempered by the fact that the quality procedures across the TU (and IoT) sectors are informed by a historically common sectoral framework.

### d. Implementation of the Action Plan for Apprenticeship (2021-2025)

Since the launch of the *Action Plan for Apprenticeship (2021-2025)* by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) in 2021, HE and FET providers have been collaborating on developing a business case for a QA Apprenticeship Project. The joint business case was accepted by DFHERIS in June 2024, and funding was provided to progress this initiative in the budget of October 2024.

The specific objectives of the QA Apprenticeship Project include:

- The development of an Apprenticeship Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) to apply to all apprenticeships. The AQAF will be jointly developed by the providers, with input from their constituencies, industry, employers and other key stakeholders involved in apprenticeship, in particular the National Apprenticeship Office (NAO) and QQI;
- The migration of responsibility for QA for craft apprenticeship from SOLAS to the providers;
- The positioning of awards for craft apprenticeships on the NFQ, with Technological Universities as the awarding body;

- Transitioning the role of Coordinating Provider from SOLAS to the ETB sector; and
- A review of the operation of quality assurance in post-2016 (degree) apprenticeships, to encompass all stages from initial approval of the occupational profile through to implementation.

While the QA Apprenticeship project recognises the autonomy and competence of the HE providers in offering a solution to quality assurance issues which will safeguard the reputation of apprenticeship, there will also be ongoing, strong engagement with industry and employer groupings in the development of the QA processes. This will provide assurance to these critical stakeholders that curricula are kept current and fit for purpose to meet industry needs.

Realisation of the QA Apprenticeship Project will support the implementation of the *Action Plan for Apprenticeship* and provide opportunities to transform the quality assurance of craft apprenticeships and to review and harmonise the QA of existing consortia-led apprenticeships.

Meetings are currently taking place to progress the project, which is intended to commence in September 2025.

### e. Work-Based Learning

In addition to apprenticeship provision per se, a broad – and expanding – range of academic degree programmes incorporate significant work placement, ranging from embedded service learning, a standard 5 ECTS-credit modules to full placement semesters worth 30 ECTS credits.

## 2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

### 2.2.1 Student Lifecycle

#### a. Admissions Policy and Information for Prospective Entrants

The overarching general principles on admission to MTU programmes are set out in the University's [Admissions Policy](#). The Admissions Policy underpins all other policies and procedures relevant to the admissions process at MTU. It is published in the Policies and Procedures section of the MTU website and may be accessed [here](#).

The MTU Admissions Policy sets out the requirements and procedures for admission to all stages of all taught and research programmes offered by MTU. This includes admission to programmes designed and/or delivered with or on behalf of external partners, whether leading to awards of MTU or not. The Admissions Policy also regulates admission to individual modules leading to single subject certification, as well as admission to any other educational and training offerings of the University. Provision is also made for applicants to appeal admissions decisions within a specific period of time, subject to valid grounds being demonstrated.

MTU is committed to having clear, fair, equitable and consistent admissions procedures. As a rule, programme applicants are required to meet minimum entry requirements and participate in a competitive process. The MTU admissions procedures also give due regard to international, national and regional initiatives which are designed to broaden participation in third-level education.

Prospective entrants may obtain information on admission to MTU programmes from the MTU Admissions Office portal (accessible [here](#)). Bespoke access points for undergraduate, postgraduate, international and part-time learners link to sections detailing entry requirements and application procedures and providing contact information for different types of applicants, including international entrants from EU and non-EU countries, entrants with QQI FET awards, entrants with a disability and entrants from disadvantaged communities.

Comprehensive information on flexible study modes, including the ACCS route and the procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning, may also be accessed through the Admissions Office portal, as can information on MTU’s student supports and services.

Detailed listings for all full- and part-time programmes of MTU are accessible from any part of the MTU website (see [Figure 6](#) just below) and may be found at [this link](#).



**Figure 6:** MTU main website with ‘hamburger’ menu, including ‘Courses’ button

Each programme entry indicates the specific entry requirements and progression opportunities for the programme, provides an online application link where this is possible, and supplies a University contact for further information. For international applicants, each programme entry provides a link to the relevant web pages of the International Offices which outline the entry requirements and application process for applicants of different nationalities resp. countries of residence. While separate – if largely comparable – sets of legacy criteria still apply for international applicants to programmes hosted on the MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) campuses respectively, English language proficiency requirements have now been fully aligned across the University and are due to be published shortly.

The MTU website also offers a Prospectus Builder ([link here](#)) which allows prospective applicants to create and save a personalised, shareable digital prospectus with a bespoke selection of programmes chosen by campus location and field of study. In line with MTU’s sustainability agenda, the University no longer produces full paper prospectuses (or their pdf versions). Quick Entry Guides with summary programme listings for different disciplines are however still available in hard copy and pdf formats.

## b. Entry and New Student Induction

Standard entry into Years 1 – 4 of full-time undergraduate programmes of MTU is through the Central Applications Office (CAO). CAO entrants apply through the CAO website ([www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)). The CAO Hub on the MTU website (linked [here](#)) provides a ‘one-stop-shop’ of resources where Leaving Certificate undergraduate students and their supporters can access information on CAO programmes, Open Days and application procedures as well as on campus life, library offerings and available student services and supports in all MTU campus locations.

Application for entry into all other programmes, including taught and research postgraduate, part-time and Springboard programmes, is made directly to MTU. Mature applicants (23 year and older) and non-EU applicants residing outside of the European Union apply directly to the University for entry to any programme.

Building on a second chance mathematics opportunities for Leaving Certificate students offered on both Kerry and Cork campuses for many years, a single MTU August Mathematics Examination for Leaving Certificate students is now offered across MTU campus locations.

On the MTU (Cork) campuses, the registration and induction of all incoming first year students is coordinated by the Student Services and Admissions Offices. Students get their student card, receive an academic induction and are brought on a tour of their campus. In parallel, the [AnSEO Student Engagement Office](#) organises an annual student-run [Good Start](#) programme which provides new MTU students with a variety of social, sporting, study and support sessions and events to integrate and induct them into life on MTU (Cork) campuses.

Resources for new students starting at the MTU (Kerry) campuses can be found via the [Kerry Campus Orientation Information](#) webpage or, currently still, via the [New and Continuing Students](#) webpage on the legacy MTU (Kerry) website. The respective pages provide or link to campus-specific information on MTU (Kerry) orientation and induction events and registration procedures as well as on campus life and student services.

Bespoke induction and orientation programmes are organised for Access students, i.e. mature students, students with disabilities, and students who receive HEAR and DARE merit and reduced points offers.

### c. Stage and Programme Progression

Having come into effect in September 2023, the MTU [Policy Regulations for Modules and Programmes \(Marks and Standards\)](#) regulate progression and award classification in taught programmes across all University campuses.

Prior to this, legacy regulations of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) had continued to apply to MTU students enrolled in the respective campus location, albeit with certain local adaptations for the 2022/23 academic year to remove any semblance of differential treatment of students based on campus location.

Some supplementary local policy elements regarding progression still remain in force at the time of writing. In MTU (Kerry), this concerns the [Policy for Determining the Order in which Eligible Candidates are made Offers on Add-On Ordinary/Honours Degree Programmes](#) (Section 14.4 of the MTU (Kerry) QA Procedures).

MTU (Cork) currently retains its legacy [Academic Policy for Admission to NFQ Level 8 Programmes Post Level 7](#), available from MTU (Cork)'s Academic Regulations and Policies page (link [here](#)), amended by annually updated [supplementary policy](#) regulating progression of Level 7 cohorts graduating since the Covid-19 emergency. In practice, continued application of the supplementary provisions has meant that the same standard threshold of 40% for progression to the award stage of a Level 8 degree has been in place on all MTU campuses since TU designation, irrespective of a learner's entry route. (See also [Part B Section 2.1 b \(ii\)](#).)

Eligible continuing full-time students are automatically progressed to the next academic stage and year by the Student Record System. Any full-time students in programmes with streaming options and graduates progressing to follow-on programmes at the next-higher NFQ level (e.g. Level 7 graduates progressing to an add-on Level 8 degree) are processed through MTU's proprietary online registration system, OLAPPS.

Information on options for progression and transfer between undergraduate programmes at different levels may be obtained from the [programme listings](#) on the MTU website and from the MTU Admissions Office (accessible [here](#)).

MTU's postgraduate transfer procedures are described in [PART A Section 4](#) of this report.

#### d. Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study/Practice

Munster Technological University has achieved national and international recognition for its work in the area of student engagement and communication. These successes are testimony to long-established collaborations between academic departments/schools/faculties and the Student Engagement, Access & Disability and Student Services Offices, as well as ongoing effective partnership with the Students' Union.

A focal area of work in MTU is the First Year Experience. Campus initiatives such as the [Good Start programme](#) and the [Kerry Campus Orientation Programme](#) aim to build engagement and proactively identify and support learners in need of early-stage intervention during their crucial first few weeks in college. New students challenged by the academic environment or the competing demands of study, work and/or their personal life are supported in acquiring tailored personal and academic success strategies through academic success coaching available on both the Cork campuses (ANSEO Academic Success Coaching; further information [here](#)) and the Kerry campuses (through the Academic Success Centre; accessible [here](#)). Unsure or wavering students are supported to systematically explore all available avenues, including alternative programme choices or viable alternatives to academic study, before they continue on a programme to which they are not well suited, limiting their chances of academic success, or else drop out without knowing what to do next.

In relation to learners experiencing other life issues which may fundamentally impede or negate their ability to continue in study or to safely and effectively practice their intended profession, or creating such issues for others, Policies and Procedures to Support and Regulate a [Student's Fitness to Study](#) and a [Student's Fitness to Practice](#) have been implemented MTU-wide. Both policies may be accessed from the MTU website (link [here](#)). The policy frameworks on fitness to study and fitness to practice are complemented by a wide range of well-established academic and welfare supports offered to learners in addressing academic and life issues before they can cause disengagement and, ultimately, failure or non-completion of the academic programme. Targeted supports are furthermore available to international students. The range of MTU student services and supports across all campuses is outlined below in [PART A Section 3](#) of this report.

### 2.2.2 Widening Participation

MTU's commitment to the region and the social and economic welfare of all its people means that fostering inclusive access to higher and further education has always been and remains one of MTU's key institutional commitments and strategic priorities.

For many decades, MTU and its predecessor institutions have offered a broad and varied spectrum of programmes in a variety of delivery modes attracting an ever more diverse learner intake. A comprehensive set of resources and initiatives is in place to proactively widen participation in higher and further education in the region and beyond, and to enable every learner who enters a programme to successfully complete their studies and reach their full academic potential, irrespective of background or circumstance.

#### a. Equity of Access and Participation

##### i. Access and Participation Policies and Universal Design

MTU's [Strategic Plan](#) gives expression to the University's deep commitment to social inclusion and equity of access and participation in all interactions throughout the educational lifecycle of the student. MTU welcomes

students from all backgrounds, preparing and supporting them to participate in activities related to higher education from pre-entry through to graduation and beyond. Central to this is the cultivation of a sense of belonging among all students and alumni. Promoting access to higher education for under-represented groups is a priority. In these endeavours, MTU is guided by the goals and objectives of the [“National Access Plan: A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028”](#) and its obligations under other relevant national legislation and policy documents.

MTU’s many and varied initiatives and activities to foster access and inclusion are underpinned by the University’s core [Equity of Access and Participation \(Student\) Policy](#). This policy commits MTU to providing equitable opportunities for participation in higher education and striving to ensure that the MTU student body reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland’s population. The University will work to achieve these goals by implementing access initiatives and creating alternative pathways to higher education, devised and delivered in partnership with students and stakeholders to incorporate their voices and respond to their needs. MTU further aims to support and enable communities to identify and address issues in relation to access to education in their own areas. The University’s commitments to equity of access are reiterated in the principles guiding the [MTU Admissions Policy](#).

The [Equity of Access and Participation \(Student\) Policy](#) further commits MTU to “embedding universal design and inclusive practice in all its functions across the MTU community” (ibid., Section 5.2, p. 5) to enable creation of an inclusive educational environment that can be accessed by, understood and engaged with to the greatest extent possible by all, regardless of age, gender, size, cultural origin, race, family/marital status, religion, sexual orientation, neurotype, or ability profile.

MTU is taking a whole-university strategic approach to the (re-)design and delivery of its systems under the Universal Design (UD) framework, built of five pillars: Teaching, Learning & Assessment; Student Supports, Services & Social Engagement; Physical Campus and Built Environment; Digital Environment; and Human Resources. To progress implementation of universal design across its systems, the University has established a Universal Design Framework Implementation Steering Committee. This Steering Committee reports directly to the University Executive and is tasked with the oversight, coordination and strategic planning of embedding UD approaches and inclusive practices across MTU, including oversight of all relevant national strategic funding programmes in place to support such activities.

In the area of curricular design, MTU’s commitments to embed inclusion, equity and universal design have found expression in MTU’s N-TUTORR-supported new curriculum framework, [An Inclusive Curriculum for Sustainable Future](#). Amongst others, this framework aims to guide programme teams in designing and delivering programmes underpinned by universal design and EDI principles to enhance the learning experience and accessibility for all students. Further information on the framework is provided in [PART A Section 2.1.2](#).

At the operational level, the [MTU Reasonable Accommodation \(Student\) Policy](#) frames the provision of reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities, learning differences or significant ongoing health conditions studying in MTU. A supplementary [Procedure for Conducting an Oral Examination as a Reasonable Accommodation](#) is also in place.

The MTU policies and procedures governing access and participation are published on the University’s website and may be accessed [here](#).

## *ii. Access Resources and Initiatives*

Spear-headed by the [MTU Access and Disability Service](#) and building on the strong tradition of offering accessible education in both of its founding institutions, MTU continues to provide an extensive range of outreach activities and pre-entry, entry and post-entry support initiatives (including personal, academic, and financial supports) for target under-represented groups. The MTU Access and Disability Service delivers and aims to continually enhance this programme in collaboration with academic departments and various central units of the University, as well as with regional and national community groups, organisations and initiatives.

The Access and Disability Service is dedicated to widening participation, increasing access opportunities and supporting positive educational outcomes for under-represented groups while providing a high-quality, professional and student-centred service. This is achieved by a strong commitment to the principles of social inclusion and by working in partnership with key stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally.

Extensive information on MTU access procedures and supports for learners from under-represented groups, including members of ethnic minorities and learners presenting with disabilities or learning differences, can be obtained through the web pages of the MTU Access and Disability Service (accessible [here](#)).

The [Mature Students](#) section on the MTU Access and Disability Service web pages (link [here](#)) also provides targeted information for prospective mature entrants (i.e. entrants over 23 years of age). While MTU continues to attract a significant number of full-time mature entrants, in line with national trends it has been experiencing a multi-year decline in the intake of this cohort (see amongst others the 2021 [“Study of Mature Participation in Higher Education”](#) commissioned by the Irish Higher Education Authority). MTU is a member of several national higher education admissions schemes, including HEAR (Higher Education Access Route), which offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers under 23 years, and DARE (the Disability Access Route to Education), which can allocate reduced points places to eligible school leavers under 23 years with learning differences, health conditions and disabilities. Information on the HEAR and DARE schemes may also be obtained from the Access and Disability Service web pages.

The University also leads or participates in a number of regional access initiatives.

The Linked Schools initiative works in partnership with school staff, local communities, MTU staff, and students from 27 designated primary and second level schools in the Cork/Kerry region to support greater participation in higher education by students in those schools. Academic, personal or social supports are provided for eligible candidates transferring into MTU from Access Linked Schools. Information on the Linked Schools scheme is available from the MTU Access and Disability Service webpages (link [here](#)).

In general, applicants progressing to MTU from further education must present with a minimum of a full award at minimum NFQ Level 5 or equivalent in order to be considered for admission to a Level 6 or 7 programme in MTU and must present with a full award at NFQ Level 5 or 6 with a minimum of 3 distinctions in order to be considered for admission to a Level 8 programme in MTU. Applicants for advanced entry are considered on an individual basis. Individual programmes may have additional entry requirements of other specific admissions criteria for QQI-FET applicants. These are stated on the MTU website and prospectus.

In addition to these general entry routes, MTU, in each campus location, also operates long-standing supported progression schemes for graduates of Further Education Colleges based in the respective region. This links certain MTU programmes to specific FE courses offered in the region, creating supported progression pathways between the linked programmes/courses. MTU reserves a number of places on these linked programmes for applicants who achieve specified levels and other requirements in their QQI FE award.

Since 2023, MTU has been partnering with UCC, Cork ETB and Kerry ETB on a collaborative FET-HE Pathways Project, *New Horizons*, which is one of the initiatives under the joint SOLAS/HEA National Tertiary Office. It aims to strengthen existing and develop new opportunities for learner pathways and transitions between the sectors in order to deliver on the ambition of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Innovation, Research and Science (DFHERIS), as set out in its vision paper for “*Progressing a More Unified Tertiary System for learning, Skills and Knowledge*” (May 2022). An update on this work during the reporting period is provided in [Part B Section 2.6 b](#) of this report.

The multi-year [SOAR \(Inter-Institutional Collaboration for Access\) Project](#) (funded under PATH 3) brought together the South Cluster (UCC, MTU (previously CIT, IT Tralee) and SETU (previously WIT and IT Carlow) with community partners to collaborate on strategies to increase access to higher education for under-represented groups. The project has enabled the member institutions to build on existing access practice, consolidate community partnerships and develop new initiatives to further the cluster’s collective ambition of widening participation for access target groups. SOAR workstreams are multi-dimensional, including, for instance, [Enabling Transitions](#), aimed at easing the transition of students with disabilities to higher education through use of assistive technologies, and [Travellers in Education](#). MTU Traveller Access Programmes delivered under the Travellers in Education umbrella include MTU (Kerry)’s junior- and senior cycle [Star Pupil Traveller Access to Education](#) programmes as well as [post-entry and early career mentoring for Traveller students and graduates](#) delivered by the Traveller Education Coordinator at MTU (Cork). While national PATH 3 funding is due to expire in May 2025, MTU has approved the mainstreaming of the existing Traveller Education and Transitions support posts to enable continuation of these successful initiatives.

MTU also makes available a range of financial supports to enable students from under-represented groups to enter and remain in higher education. These include the Student Assistance Fund as well as scholarships under the [MTU Sanctuary Scholarship](#) scheme for asylum seeker and refugee students. Under PATH 2, MTU offers [1916 Bursaries](#) to encourage participation by students who are socio-economically disadvantaged. Information on these financial supports is also accessible from the web pages of the MTU Access and Disability Service (link [here](#)). (For further information see amongst others [Part A Section 3.4 b](#).)

### *iii. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy and Resources*

Cognisant of its diverse student population, MTU is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment for all students. The pursuit of equality, diversity and inclusion forms an integral part of the MTU Strategic Plan and is understood as a key enabler for the successful achievement of the University’s strategic objectives (see [PART A Section 1.1.2](#) for further details on the MTU Strategic Plan). Steered and overseen by the EDI Committee of Governing Body, MTU’s activities to foster equality, diversity and inclusion among its students and staff are supported by a number of dedicated University posts, including an EDI Manager and EDI Officer.

The key policy document to enable and ensure implementation of EDI principles across all University activities is the [MTU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) adopted in November 2024. For purposes of confirming compliance with Section 19 of the 2018 TU Act, the EDI policy is accompanied by the [MTU Equality Statement 2024 to 2028](#) which summarises MTU’s public commitments to enabling access and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in line with national legislation and policy, as well as MTU’s own Strategic Plan (link [here](#)).

Equity/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion furthermore forms one of the eight educational pillars of MTU’s new curriculum framework, [An Inclusive Curriculum for a Sustainable Future](#) (see e.g. [PART A Section 2.1.2](#)).

Further details on EDI procedures and supports are given in [PART A Section 3.1](#), Policies and Procedures Related to Student Welfare and Community Standards, and [PART A Section 5](#), Staff Recruitment, Development and Supports, below. For details specifically on gender equality initiatives for staff and students and the Athena Swan Bronze Award, see [Part A Section 5.3 b \(i\)](#).

## b. Flexible and Lifelong Learning Opportunities

One of the actions under MTU's ongoing commitment to inclusive access to education opportunities and a diverse student body is to increase opportunities for mature, work-based, lifelong, part-time and flexible learners through part-time, blended or online programme delivery. MTU already has a sizeable population of learners who avail of learning opportunities later in life, either as returning or as first-time students, and is committed to further expanding its range of options for lifelong access to higher education to optimise opportunities for life-long learners to achieve a third-level qualification whilst recognising the many work, family and life commitments they invariably have.

One means by which MTU has been delivering on this commitment is the strategic expansion of flexible learning opportunities, in particular the distance learning portfolio. Building on e-learning infrastructure and the dedicated pedagogical and technological supports of the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) and the [eLearning Development Services Unit \(EDSU\)](#), MTU offers a significant [portfolio of flexible online programmes](#) at undergraduate and postgraduate level, both degree programmes (many of which Masters) and shorter courses leading to special purpose or minor awards. The significant expertise built up by TEL and EDSU also served MTU well in its move to predominantly or exclusively online delivery of all its programmes for the duration of the Covid-19 restrictions across higher education institutions.

The online provision complements and extends the reach of MTU's traditionally strong suite of continuing education programmes and lifelong learning programmes with access and delivery mechanisms that are tailored to the needs of learners unable to participate in standard full-time programmes. A range of short courses developed in consultation with employers and delivered both online and in more traditional formats is furthermore offered under Springboard or in conjunction with local development projects.

MTU's [Extended Campus](#), based in Cork's Bishopstown campus, works with numerous regional and national organisations interested in developing their workforce and adding to their employees' skills sets. Extended Campus services include Learning Clinics where Extended Campus staff and industry partners together identify organisational learning needs and the programme offerings and delivery strategies best suited to meeting these. Solutions identified may include existing, 'off-the-shelf' programmes as well as collaborative development of customised learning pathways which utilising modular 'building blocks'; workplace or e-supported delivery; and the integration of learning gained at the workplace through MTU's well-established RPL and WBL mechanisms.

MTU is committed to working with regional partners to support lifelong learning for the region.

In Cork, MTU is a member of the Cork Learning City initiative and supports regional initiatives such as the Lifelong Learning Festival, the Music Generation initiative and the Cork Access Network.

The Lifelong Learning Office in MTU (Kerry) is committed to providing a high-quality and relevant education service to all part-time students. Its course offerings allow learners to enhance existing or gain new qualifications to advance careers. A number of courses also offer the opportunity to progress to full-time programmes at the University in future years, gaining exemptions from the modules successfully completed. To support adult learners, an increasing number of programmes are delivered both on and off campus through a combination of online and distance learning. The Lifelong Learning Office also offers programmes under the [Springboard+](#)

[initiative](#), enabling eligible candidates to gain qualifications across a variety of industries and sectors. All programmes selected for funding under Springboard+ are in areas of identified enterprise skills needs.

In areas of high industry demand, Lifelong Learning works with businesses and industry to provide customised company courses and training. Through a process of programme design and development in conjunction with industry partners, these bespoke solutions address challenges and opportunities identified by the employer. Courses are delivered at a time, place and frequency that suits the employer and employee. The Lifelong Learning Office has worked with national and international industry partners based in Kerry to design and delivery custom employee training programmes.

### 2.2.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Candidates wishing to apply for entry, advanced entry, exemptions, module credit or indeed full awards on the basis of prior learning – be that formal or non-formal/informal learning – can do so in accordance with the MTU [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#) published on the University’s website (accessible [here](#)).

RPL can be applied for in any valid MTU programme or module. Recognition of prior learning claims are made against complete modules, and applicants must demonstrate that all learning outcomes have been satisfactorily met to gain exemptions (in the case of prior certified learning) or module credit.

A range of well-established RPL supports are available to candidates and academic assessors across the University through the [MTU RPL Service](#) based on the MTU (Cork) Bishopstown campus and the MTU (Kerry) Registrar’s Office. This positions MTU at the forefront of RPL practice and policy nationally. Potential applicants may access information on RPL processes and supports through the web pages of the [MTU Admissions Office](#).

MTU has also been collaborating in the HCI Pillar 3 RPL in Higher Education and Lifelong Learning project (commenced in April 2021), a collaboration of Institutes of Technology, Technological Universities and Universities to build a consistent and coherent approach to recognition of prior learning within and across the entire public higher education sector. The project, which is due to conclude in 2025, has provided the opportunity to build on the existing extensive expertise of the University in RPL and to identify opportunities for further enhancements, specifically in engagement with enterprise.

MTU has a long-established national and international reputation in RPL policy, process, practice and scholarship. MTU’s RPL activities include engagement with industry for the purpose of customised and collaborative course development incorporating the recognition of informal and nonformal learning acquired within the workplace. In keeping with the development of a coherent tertiary education sector, MTU has engaged with the Further Education & Training sector on RPL CPD, policy, process and practice development to develop a consistent approach to prior learning recognition. The University has invested in RPL since 1999 and has continuously striven to embed the culture of RPL within programmes and modules, working with staff across all University areas to achieve this strategic ambition.

Development of MTU policies and procedures in relation to micro-credentials is underway.

### 2.2.4 Portability of Qualifications and Credit

#### a. Curricular Features Supporting Credit Transfer

MTU’s programmes are designed to ensure maximal portability of credit for their graduates, not just within Ireland, but within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Programme features designed to support

transferability include modularised and semesterised delivery and a standard module credit volume of 5 ECTS credits, as set out in the MTU Policy for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards (available [here](#)). Modules attracting multiples of 5 credits are allowable where the optimal learning experience demonstrably involves integrated learning and assessment, meaning that the learner is required to address complex authentic problems, synthesise previously acquired knowledge and skills, and largely self-direct her or his learning. Typical examples of larger modules are performance-based modules and final year theses or ‘capstone’ projects, which may attract up to 30 ECTS credits.

## b. Alignment of Awards with the National Framework of Qualifications and Irish Register of Qualifications

MTU awards align with the National Framework of Qualifications, as ascertained and confirmed through all standard MTU programme QA processes. This alignment underpins the recognition and thus portability of MTU qualifications within Ireland and – through alignment of the NFQ with the [European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#) under the [Bologna Agreement](#) – within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

All validated awards of MTU included within the NFQ are published on the [Irish Register of Qualifications](#), as per the 2022 [Joint-Sectoral Protocol between Designated Awarding Bodies and \[QQI\]](#). MTU hereby confirms that it continues to endorse this protocol, and states that it is appropriate for its awards to be included in the NFQ.

### 2.2.5. Certification

All student assessment performance and award records of MTU students are securely stored by the Examinations Office in the central student records database, for which strict data access and protection protocols apply.

Achievement of an award of MTU is certified through the issuing of a formal award parchment, bearing the University seal, and of a transcript of award stage results (Diploma Supplement) to the successful graduate by the MTU Examinations Office.

Parchments for major awards record the NFQ level of the award, the named award and detailed programme specialisation, the award classification and the date of the award. Parchments for non-major (special purpose or minor) awards present the same information, together with the credit value of the award and the title of the linked major programme in the case of minor awards.

Parchments for joint awards require the agreement of bespoke parchments formats between the providers respectively awarding bodies, as well as relevant national authorities in the case of international awards. Succeeding long-standing joint awarding arrangements between Cork Institute of Technology and University College Cork and following consultation between MTU, UCC and the National University of Ireland (NUI), an agreed MTU-UCC joint parchment is in place which is awarded to graduates of a range of collaborative programmes leading to joint awards of the two institutions.

The award information on the formal parchment is complemented by the detailed transcript of stage results, recording the academic year and examination ‘sitting’, full award and programme title and programme delivery mode, overall classification of the stage result, and the credit value and percentage grade achieved for each module completed within the stage.

Following the upgrade to Version 9.0 of the Banner student records system, the [Digitary](#) Secure Online Credentials solution, already in place on the MTU (Kerry) campuses, was rolled out on the Cork campuses in 2024. Initially, access has been given to all those registered in 2023/24 and 2022/23, with the intention to make

Digitary available to all graduates as far back as 2001/2. Beyond that, parchments will continue to be manually generated, with a longer lead time. (For further details, see [Part B Section 2.1 c \(ii\)](#).)

Through Digitary, the learner or graduate can securely receive, download and print digitally certified, official documents online and also share these electronic documents with prospective employers or other higher education institutions in a secure and verified manner. The following record types are available:

- Grademailer – an official report of a learner’s grades for a specific term (semester/stage) or examination session;
- Transcript of Results – a detailed statement of the results a learner has achieved during the duration of their studies at MTU, comprising a list of modules completed, the grade awarded for each module, and the student’s overall academic standing;
- [‘Europass’ Diploma Supplement](#) (EDS) – a document available for each graduate, in addition to their parchment and transcript of results, which provides contextual information on the qualification, awarding institution, grading scheme and applicable assessment and award regulations, as well as brief standardised summary of the national higher education and training system.

Together, the award documentation issued facilitates the clear alignment of a graduate’s award with the National Framework of Qualifications and indicates its transfer value for academic progression and, where applicable, professional status of the graduate within the European Higher Education Area.

As per national policy as well as custom and practice, successful graduates of Munster Technological University are formally conferred with their award at a public conferring ceremony at which prescribed academic dress is worn. Graduates of the joint UCC-MTU programmes are all conferred at an annual joint conferring ceremony, with the venue alternating between MTU and UCC.

## 2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

### 2.3.1. Award Standards and Award Titles

The QQI award standards were adopted by the MTU Establishment Day Academic Council as the interim award standards of Munster Technological University, pending adaptation or further development by MTU.

The University’s procedures for programme approval and review ensure that the titles of MTU awards fully align with the National Framework of Qualifications and also reflect the MTU award standard which most accurately describes the principal field of learning (see also e.g. [Part A Section 2.2.4 b](#) and [Part A Section 2.3.2 a](#)).

As part of a multi-annual programme to review and update the national system of qualifications in the context of developing HE structures and awarding practices, QQI in May 2024 requested Irish statutory awarding bodies to indicate their assent to a proposed new sectoral *Convention on the Titling of Minor, Special-Purpose, and Supplemental Classes of Awards*. Noting that the University’s own [Title Convention Policy for Non-Major Awards](#), approved by the MTU Academic Council in the previous academic year, was already in alignment with the proposed convention, MTU on the recommendation of its Academic Council formally agreed to abide by the sectoral convention for the titling of non-major awards.

## 2.3.2. Development and Review of Module and Programme Learning Outcomes

### a. Development of Graduate Profile and Programme Learning Outcomes

The development of a new MTU programme almost always commences with determination of the desired graduate profile and associated programme learning outcomes. The 'Backward Design' process typically employed by the curriculum design team encompasses three major design phases, whereby the team:

1. Researches and describes the desired knowledge, skills and competences to be gained by the learner upon successful completion of the programme or module, taking into account the relevant MTU award standards and criteria of the MTU [curriculum framework](#), such as education for sustainability. These are expressed as intended learning outcomes for the programme or module under development.
2. Develops an assessment strategy to measure achievement of these prescribed learning outcomes. For programmes, a curriculum map is developed which maps intended module learning outcomes (MLOs) to programme outcomes indicating how the achievement of programme learning outcomes is supported. For modules, based on the concept of constructive alignment, module assessment items are mapped to MLOs. Through purposeful design of module assessment strategies, the achievement of MLOs and hence programme learning outcomes is assured.
3. Describes the teaching and learning strategy to be employed in the curriculum unit. For programme design, the strategy will prescribe the approved programme schedule detailing the modules to be undertaken by the learner. For modules, the module descriptor details the balance of directed and independent learning and class contact hours.

When seeking to validate a programme, the proposers are required to undertake consultation with appropriate stakeholders (industry, professional bodies, regulators, alumni, learners) to determine a graduate profile for the programme under development. In revalidation, stakeholder consultation is conducted to ascertain that the graduate profile continues to meet current professional or progression requirements, and furthermore that the level of knowledge and skills shown by graduates in 'real world' contexts reflects the intended graduate profile. Once determined, the intended graduate profile is expressed in terms of intended programme learning outcomes which describe the knowledge, skills, and competences of the graduate of the programme. The intended programme learning outcomes are then mapped to the MTU award standards to ensure alignment with the target NFQ level and award descriptor for the programme. Programme development teams are supported through this process by the Registrars' Offices.

### b. Development of Module Learning Outcomes

The equivalent process at module level sees the module author determine the learning to be achieved by the learner upon successful completion of the module. The learning is described in a set of intended module learning outcomes. Depending on the starting point of module development, the MLOs are then evaluated to either establish the level of the prescribed learning, or to confirm that the volume and complexity of the intended learning as described match the target level of the module. This involves interrogating the learning outcomes to determine the nature of the ability/understanding described and the context in which the learning is to take place. The level of the expected ability/understanding is normally determined from the chosen verbs which are reviewed against appropriate taxonomies. The context is evaluated by considering the inherent complexity of the learning and the degree of autonomy and originality expected of the learner. Module authors are supported through this process by the Registrars Offices.

### c. Review of Learning Outcomes and their Alignment with the Award Standards

As part of the overarching quality assurance system, programme and module learning outcomes undergo both an internal and external review process. Particular attention is paid to the alignment of module and programme outcomes with the award standards in programme design and review in the context of collaborations with providers whose education and training provision is not in itself aligned to the National Framework.

#### 2.3.3 Exit and Embedded Awards

In addition to the target award, many degree programmes offer an exit award or awards. Exit awards may be sought by learners who are not in a position to complete their studies towards the target award due to life circumstances. Depending on the target award programme, exit awards may be offered at Higher Certificate, Ordinary Bachelors or Postgraduate Diploma level.

Many Higher Certificates (120 ECTS credits) embedded as exit awards in long-standing Bachelor programmes were created through conversion of the first target award in a 'ladder' suite of programmes, typical of the programme provision in the Institutes of Technology sector in its early years. By contrast, exit awards offered within more recently validated MTU degree programmes are normally created as such and validated together with the target award. Validation of an exit award entails, as a minimum, submission of a set of programme outcomes and a statement of professional value for the exit award as part of the new programme review documentation for the proposed target award programme.

While most exit awards are embedded into the main programme, use of existing cognate lower-level awards as non-embedded exit awards is also possible. This requires a 'differential validation' based on a detailed demonstration of how the minimum intended outcomes of the exit award programme are met through successful completion of the relevant exit stage of the target programme.

Principles governing the provision, validation and making of embedded and exit awards are set out in the MTU Policy for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards (available [here](#)), with supplementary saved [Policy and Procedure on the Validation of Exit and Embedded Awards](#) of MTU (Cork) (published [here](#)) also remaining in force at the time of writing.

To safeguard the good standing of the University and the excellent reputation of its graduates now and in future, both MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) have in place local legacy policies on the revocation of awards. In MTU (Kerry), this forms part of [Section A5.26](#), Examinations and Assessments Review Committee (EARC) and Examinations and Assessments Appeals Committee (EAAC), of the MTU (Kerry) QA Procedures (accessible [here](#)), while a standalone [Policy on Revocation of \[...\] Awards](#) remains in force at MTU (Cork) (published [here](#)).

#### 2.3.4 Validated Awards Register

A register of all valid taught and research awards made by MTU is maintained by the Registrars' Offices, and is used to support various processes including parchment production and confirmation of programme and award data for the Irish Register of Qualifications (IRQ) and Interim List of Eligible Programmes (ILEP) kept by the Department of Justice.

## 2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

As new, university-wide quality assurance procedures are being approved by Academic Council, they supersede the saved legacy procedures of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) across all MTU campuses. For policy areas and procedures where no common MTU policy has yet been approved, the legacy procedures of MTU (Kerry) and MTU (Cork) continue in force at each campus location as relevant.

### 2.4.1 Teaching and Learning

Core principles governing Teaching, Learning and Assessment are formulated in the MTU [Policy for the Design, Amendment, Review, and Approval of Modules](#), [Policy for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards](#), and associated Procedures, all published on the MTU website (link [here](#)). The application of these principles to module and programme design and development is detailed in the following sections.

#### a. Pedagogical Principles in Module and Curriculum Design

When a new module is developed, the design of the formal MTU module descriptor enforces the systematic capture and constructive alignment of fundamental elements of the module teaching and learning strategy from the outset. The descriptor thus defines, describes and encourages an interlinkage between the module learning outcomes, indicative content, the assessment and re-assessment formats and weightings, and the delivery formats, including the extent of independent learning expected.

At the curricular level, MTU's principles for modular programme design, set out in the [Policy for the Design, Amendment, Review, and Approval of Modules](#) and the [Policy for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards](#), embed a number of precepts fundamental to the mission and pedagogy of the University. The attendant design features appear most pronouncedly in full-time undergraduate programmes, where they are aimed at supporting learners in transitioning from second level to higher education and in taking responsibility for charting and developing their own learning.

The first year of each ab-initio undergraduate degree programme offered by MTU must include a bespoke, University-wide academic skills module to support learners in their transition to third-level education and equip them with the skills and knowledge for successful engagement with their studies and with subsequent life-long learning opportunities. Delivery of this module is adapted by each department to the particular context of the discipline, so that no two instances will be exactly alike. Common to all deliveries however is the focus on developing independent learning, thinking and reasoning skills, team-working abilities, academic integrity precepts and basic academic writing and referencing skills as appropriate to the field of study. Learners also develop a vision of their ideal career path to start them out on the journey of taking ownership of their learning.

In addition, to develop graduates who have the skills, knowledge, and ways of thinking to address the sustainable development challenges posed by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), each new ab-initio programme is required to conduct a mapping exercise at the programme design stage to ensure that SDGs are addressed throughout the lifespan of the programme. A variety of approaches to integrating the SDGs into the curriculum may be considered by programme teams, including interdisciplinary introductory modules; discipline-specific modules with an SDG focus, including project-based; or co-curricular credit-bearing activities. Departments are also asked to consider the development of sustainability competences when reviewing existing curricula and modules. The recently adopted MTU [Curriculum Framework](#) explicitly identifies education for sustainability as one of eight pillars of the MTU programme curriculum (see e.g. [Part A Section 2.1.2](#) above).

To encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning and personal and professional development, ab-initio degree programmes may include 'Free Choice' modules to a maximum of 10 ECTS credits per stage.

In many existing programmes of MTU (Cork), where inclusion of Free Choice has been a long-standing curriculum design principle, most advanced programme stages include both a cognate elective or electives and a Free Choice option. While many learners avail of cognate modules related to their specialism, some opt to broaden their educational experience by taking modules outside their own field. These could be in the form of language or entrepreneurship modules or in pursuit of unique interests, such as when music students choose certain engineering modules. While logistical or resource constraints put practical limits on the accessibility of modules offered by other disciplines, maintaining the principle of choice as an enabler of competence development is an important element of the pedagogy underpinning MTU's modular model.

## b. Quality Assurance of Programme Teaching and Learning Strategies

MTU's [Procedure for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards](#) and supplementary procedure for the [Validation of Special Purpose, Minor and Supplementary Awards](#) require academic departments to comment on the teaching and learning mechanisms for each programme in the programme self-evaluation report submitted to the external expert panel.

The programme document itself provides a curriculum map showing where the relevant award standards are met and how the intended programme learning outcomes are achieved. Peer reviewers are asked to ascertain that each programme outcome is supported by a sufficient number of modules to ensure it can be achieved by the average learner, irrespective of elective choice. Furthermore, an assessment matrix for each programme is reviewed to ensure that the time and nature of the assessment tasks is appropriate. Reviewers will frequently address issues such as assessment clustering or over-reliance on a particular assessment methodology.

The new MTU [Faculty Enhancement Review](#) (FER) requires faculties to present their teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the faculty, including for its blended and online programmes, in the Faculty Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and discuss this with the externally-based FER Panel. Consideration of programme teaching, learning and assessment methodologies is not a new feature of the FE Review, of course; it had been part and parcel of 'programmatic review' at both of MTU's predecessor institutions from the beginning (see also [Part A Section 8.3](#) below). The Faculty SER and the qualitative feedback obtained from panel meetings with learners, graduates and lecturing staff are complemented by quantitative student performance data which give an indication of the success of the programme teaching and learning strategy in relation to the achievement of the learning outcomes by the different cohorts of learners.

In addition to external peer review, MTU's QA procedures also require that each MTU programme and module undergoes a detailed internal moderation process carried out by the Registrar's Office, resp. its Academic Quality Enhancement Unit in the case of MTU (Cork) and Assistant Registrar's Office in the case of MTU (Kerry), before it is proposed for (re-)validation. Internal moderation amongst others aims to establish that the teaching, learning and assessment strategies, both within modules and cumulatively at stage and overall programme level, are pedagogically sound, coherent and optimally support achievement of the intended learning outcomes within the given programme delivery mode; that the individual teaching, learning and assessment elements within each module are consistent with each other and reflect the module level and credit weighting; and that learners receive appropriate formative feedback allowing them to improve their academic performance.

### c. External Stakeholder Input into Development of Teaching and Learning Strategies

To ensure that the programme teaching and learning strategies develop the required professional attributes of the graduate and promote graduate employability, academic units seek advice on their programme proposals from employer groups or industry advisory panels early on in the programme (re-)development process.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies may also be subject to review in professional accreditation or recognition processes. The professional organisation may wish to ascertain if the methodologies employed are suited to helping learners meet the requirements of the workplace in their chosen field, or it may require use of certain – particularly assessment – methodologies to grant exemptions from or admission to professional examinations. In some cases, professional accreditation processes may evince a degree of divergence between the overall pedagogical philosophy of MTU and that of a particular professional body. The University therefore works closely with its professional partners on an ongoing basis to improve the mutual understanding of each other's educational mission and aims, and to advance the development and promulgation of student-centred approaches to teaching, learning and assessment for professionally-oriented higher education, guided by best current pedagogical theory and practice.

### d. Learning through Extracurricular Engagement and Participation

Learning opportunities at MTU are not restricted to the – real or virtual – classroom. In keeping with its institutional mission and ethos, MTU offers learners numerous opportunities to broaden their horizons and to develop their personal and leadership skills through participation in activities and initiatives beyond their academic programme, with online information available through the [Campus Life at MTU](#) section of the MTU website. Both MTU campus locations host many active and popular student societies whose profiles can be accessed through the MTU [Societies page](#) on the website. Likewise, MTU boasts a wide range of [Sports Clubs](#) with access to excellent [Sporting Facilities](#). Entrepreneurship is a central element of MTU's mission, and the University offers many opportunities to incentivise and support student engagement in entrepreneurial activity outside of the classroom. MTU [Student Enterprise](#) initiatives include [Student Inc.](#), Ireland's longest-running student accelerator programme, the annual [MTU Prize for Innovation](#) and the [MTU Innovation Challenge](#). Community engagement opportunities provided by the MTU Societies Office include its long-standing Volunteer Abroad programme (see the [MTU Societies](#) web page). The main conduit for student participation in institutional governance and programme management is the [MTU Students' Union](#).

## 2.4.2 Assessment and Academic Integrity

Assessment is the means by which learners formally demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme, thereby earning academic credit and, eventually, the right to be conferred with a particular award. The quality assurance of assessment – from its design through delivery and operation to the evaluation of its outcomes – is thus critical to establishing and maintaining confidence in the standards of MTU awards.

Equally as important are measures to foster academic integrity, prevent academic misconduct, and address it where it does occur. While academic misconduct is normally understood as dishonesty in completing assessments, academic integrity is far broader than just 'not cheating'. It refers to a set of positive values which inform daily practice in academic endeavour, be it on the part of learners, lecturers or researchers, and which ideally both feed and are nurtured by an institutional culture of 'doing things right'. Recent technological advances, in particular the introduction of generative AI capable of producing ostensibly cohesive and original text and other artefacts that pose particular challenges for technical 'anti-plagiarism' solutions, only strengthen

the argument for an approach which strives to create a whole-University culture of academic integrity and pride in one's own academic accomplishments.

An Academic Integrity Policy for MTU was approved by the Academic Council in May 2023, with publication currently deferred until corresponding implementation procedures have also been finalised and approved.

### a. Assessment Standards

MTU's assessment standards and regulations are rooted in the long-standing sectorial framework for determination of assessment grades and of progression and award standards set out in QQI's *Assessment and Standards* (last revised edition published in 2013) and should be understood before that backdrop.

With effect from September 2023, the applicable standards, regulations and procedures for assessment and the making of awards to students enrolled in all University programmes are set out in the MTU [Policy Regulations for Modules and Programmes \(Marks and Standards\)](#). Regulations specific to the assessment of postgraduate research degree programmes at MTU are set out in the [MTU Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study](#). Both documents are published on the MTU website (link [here](#)). For further details on MTU's quality framework for postgraduate research degree provision, see [PART A Section 4](#) below.

### b. Assessment Design and Review

The format, general design and weighting of continuous assessment tasks and final examinations undergoes rigorous internal and external quality review when modules and programmes are first developed and during each subsequent programme review. This serves to assure assessment quality and the standard of the MTU awards based on these assessments, but also helps ensure that module and programme assessment strategies are student-centred, pedagogically sound and fair. (See [PART A Section 2.1.2](#) and [PART A Section 8](#) below for further details on the quality procedures for new programme approval and programme monitoring and review.) In between cyclical programme reviews, assessment design adaptations are routinely proposed by module lecturers based on the operational experience of delivering and marking assessments or on external examiner feedback. In addition, the review of student progression statistics, which forms an important part of both ongoing programme performance monitoring and programme review, may yield valuable information on the validity and reliability of the assessment instruments as implemented. Assessment design issues identified by the programme boards through programme monitoring activities may thus also lead to assessment design changes between scheduled reviews. (For MTU (Kerry), specifically, see [Section A6.2, Course Boards](#), of the [MTU \(Kerry\) Academic Quality Procedures](#)).

In accordance with its [Procedure for the Design, Amendment, Review, and Approval of Modules](#), MTU requires internal module moderation by a member of the academic quality enhancement staff in the Registrar's Office where the assessment design of an existing module is altered in a significant way between periodic reviews. Major changes to assessment also entail referral of the relevant modules for review by external experts (see also [PART A Section 2.4.1 b](#) above).

### c. Assessment and Examination Procedures

The organisation of the assessment and examination process, the conduct of examination candidates, formal inquiry into allegations of assessment misconduct, and the appeal of assessment and examination outcomes by learners currently still come under the separate legacy policies and procedures of MTU (Kerry) and (MTU) Cork.

However, ‘headline’ standards of good conduct summarising fundamental expectations on learners in relation to academic integrity University-wide are set out in the [MTU Code of Conduct \(Student\)](#) published on the MTU website (accessible [here](#)).

Operationally, the organisation of final examinations and the preparation of stage results, records of achievement and award certificates falls under the remit of the Examinations Offices in each campus location. The web pages of the Examinations Offices provide learners in the respective campus location with extensive information and guidance on the assessment and examination process, assessment regulations, and academic honesty and integrity. The web page for the MTU (Kerry) Examinations Office can be accessed [here](#), while the MTU (Cork) Examinations Office web page may be accessed [here](#).

In MTU (Kerry), the preparation and production of examination and assessment material is subject to [Section A5.3](#) of the [MTU \(Kerry\) Quality Assurance Procedures](#), while [Section A5.4a](#) outlines the procedure for setting projects and dissertations specifically. A range of detailed procedures concerning the implementation of different aspects of the assessment and examination process and the handling of alleged assessment infringements aimed at staff and student-facing procedures regarding the extension and late submission of assignments and gaining access to examination materials are made available as further sub-sections of Section A5, Assessment of Learners, of the MTU (Kerry) QA Procedures (linked [here](#)).

The published policies, procedures and guidelines of MTU (Cork) campuses on the operation and conduct of examinations and continuous assessment are accessible through the web page of the MTU (Cork) Examinations Office and/or the [Academic Regulations and Policies](#) section of the MTU (Cork) website. They include

- Policy on the [conduct of candidates during examinations](#);
- [Policy on academic honesty, plagiarism and infringements](#) (plus a [policy supplement](#) approved in 2020 following the move to emergency remote teaching (‘ERT’) during Covid-19) which focuses on types of academic dishonesty and misconduct specific to the online environment and outlines the follow-up process for potential instances of online misconduct;
- [A process for formal inquiry into allegations of misconduct](#) related to examinations and assessment, and a [supplemental ‘ERT’ procedure for online hearings of the Assessment Infringements Board](#); and
- A process for submission of [extenuating circumstances](#) related to non-completion of examinations and assessment tasks.

Candidates are furthermore furnished with a published [process for appealing the outcomes of assessment and examinations](#) and notifying correction errors.

#### d. External Moderation of Assessment in Taught Programmes

A key piece of the quality assurance of assessment is the external examiner system which ensures external moderation of both the design and the outcomes of assessment and examinations.

With effect from September 2023, external moderation of assessment and examinations in taught provision is regulated by the MTU [Policy on External Examination of Taught Programmes](#) and its associated [Procedures](#). The Policy specifies the role of module and programme ‘externs’, the criteria for their appointment, and the general principles underpinning external examination, while the nomination and appointment processes as well as the specific functions and reporting requirements of external examiners are detailed in the Procedures document.

The procedures for selection and duties of external examiners in research degree programmes are incorporated in the [MTU Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study](#).

Currently, taught MTU programmes whose curriculum is largely anchored in a single discipline or a small number of cognate fields of study are moderated on a per-programme basis, with two 'externs' – one academic and one professional examiner – normally appointed for each programme. Assessment in service-in areas such as mathematics, languages or business skills, by contrast, is moderated by 'subject externs' who review modules in a particular specialism delivered across a variety of programmes. Selection of external examiners for multi-disciplinary programmes looks to ensure reasonable coverage of the main disciplines represented.

Nominations for external examiner are formally approved by the MTU Academic Council for a three-year term, following vetting by the Office of the VP Academic Affairs & Registrar which considers the proposed extern's experience and expertise as well as any potential conflict of interest issues. Re-nomination is possible where a suitable new extern is not available but is not encouraged.

External examiners are responsible for reviewing all draft examination materials, including marking schemes and model solutions, to determine whether the applied procedures for assessment are valid, reliable, fair and consistent. Programme externs also form a view on the overall appropriateness of the programme assessment strategy and the range and type of assessment procedures.

On completion of the assessment processes, external examiners consider the appropriateness of the internal marking in a representative sample of submitted learner work. In some subjects the latter function may also encompass presence during a percentage of oral or performance examinations. Externs are normally expected to conduct at least one visit to the institution to coincide with the meeting of the Progression & Awards Board (Cork) and the Examination Boards (Kerry) for the respective programme. Each external examiner is also required to provide an annual summary report of observations and recommendations to the Registrar which feeds into ongoing programme monitoring and programmatic review.

On the MTU (Cork) campuses, the bespoke MAX<sup>e</sup> digital exam paper management system introduced in 2018/19 has simplified communication and reduced the administrative load for both externs and MTU (Cork) staff in relation to scheduled final exams. Ways of obtaining maximum utility from MAX<sup>e</sup> to support the external review of continuous coursework, now the dominant form of assessment in many programmes and with an increased adoption post the onset of the pandemic, are being actively explored. Due to the diversity of disciplines and assessment formats, which amongst others include artefacts and recordings, and the sheer volume of assessment, the external moderation of 'continuous assessment' remains subject to greater local variation than is the case for final examinations.

For an outline of the role of external reviewers in postgraduate research study, see [PART A Section 4](#).

#### e. Academic Integrity

All MTU students are expected to approach their academic work with honesty and integrity. Fostering academic integrity and the prevention of academic misconduct, or its detection and the implementation of appropriate consequences, are the cornerstones of maintaining trust in the assessment system of a higher education institution and the awards that are founded on this.

### *i. Policy and Public Information*

With the new MTU Academic Integrity Policy awaiting finalisation of associated implementation procedures at the time of writing, separate legacy policies regarding academic integrity and the prevention and investigation of academic misconduct remain in force in MTU (Kerry) and MTU (Cork) for the time being.

MTU (Cork)'s core policies and procedures governing academic integrity and the investigation of academic misconduct are published in the [Academic Regulations and Policies](#) section of the MTU (Cork) website. For further details, see [PART A Section 2.4.2 c](#), Assessment and Examination Procedures, of this report.

The key academic integrity principles and procedures are widely and repeatedly promulgated to learners and staff via emails from the Registrar's Office and academic departments, communications from the MTU Students' Union, and through the [MTU \(Cork\) Academic Honesty and Integrity webpage](#) on the Cork Campuses Student Portal. The portal also has information on different supports available to students in this area.

In MTU (Kerry), the following policies and procedures concerning academic integrity and the avoidance and investigation of academic misconduct are currently in place:

- [A5.2: Anti-Plagiarism Policy and Procedures](#);
- [A5.13: Processing of Alleged Infringements related to Examinations](#) organised by the Examinations Office;
- [A5.14: Processing of Alleged Infringements of Examination Regulations Relating to Continuous Assessment \(CA\) and Final Examination Other \(FEO\)](#);
- [A5.25a: Guide to Citations, Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism](#);
- [A5.25b: Request for Approval to Depart from Institute Referencing System](#);
- [A5.26: Examinations and Assessments Review Committee \(EARC\) and Examinations and Assessments Appeals Committee \(EAAC\)](#).

These policy documents are published in Section A.5, Assessment of Learners, of the MTU (Kerry) Quality Assurance Procedures (link [here](#)).

In addition, [Section B, Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) of the MTU (Kerry) Student Handbook provides learners with comprehensive information on good academic conduct, forms of plagiarism and other academic misconduct, and appropriate referencing (Sub-Section 2.1, Academic Integrity). It also outlines expectations about satisfactory attendance and performance (Sub-Section 2.2, Attendance and Class Participation).

### *ii. Academic Integrity Training and Prevention of Academic Misconduct*

While currently remaining under separate – if comparable – legacy policy, on the operational level, MTU has long taken a multi-faceted, whole-University approach to the creation of an academic integrity culture and the prevention and detection of academic misconduct.

Learners have their attention drawn to the requirement for academic honesty at various points of their academic journey, starting with the common foundational University-wide academic skills module included in standard undergraduate degree programmes. The key academic integrity principles and procedures are furthermore continually and repeatedly promulgated to learners and staff via communications from the Registrar's Office, academic departments and the MTU Students' Union. Students submitting final theses/dissertations or projects, whether at undergraduate or postgraduate level, are required to sign a declaration confirming the originality of their work and the absence of unauthorised collusion, but module lecturers often require similar declarations to

accompany other coursework submissions as well. MTU (Cork) introduced a standard declaration of originality for all written submissions after the move to fully remote online assessment during the Covid-19 emergency.

To raise overall awareness of academic integrity and good academic practice, the University has made online training courses on academic integrity available to students and staff across MTU, with the support and advice of the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) in MTU (Cork), the [eLearning Development Services Unit \(EDSU\)](#) in MTU (Kerry), and the [MTU Students' Union](#).

The courses have been developed by HE online learning provider [Epigeum](#), part of Oxford University Press. The student-facing course consists of five units/modules and is available to all undergraduate and postgraduate students via the Canvas Learning Management System. Students who successfully complete this course receive an MTU digital badge for academic integrity. The staff-facing modules, also available via Canvas, address key issues such as contract cheating, dealing with breaches of academic integrity, assessment design, technology, and the promotion of a culture of academic integrity.

The Epigeum staff training complements the assessment design workshops for staff jointly provided by [the MTU Teaching & Learning Unit \(TLU\)](#) and the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#). These workshops aim to support staff in reducing the incidence of academic misconduct from the first by, amongst others, demonstrating ways in which careful assessment design can minimise opportunities for 'cheating'. The TLU also collaborates with the MTU Library in offering 'disseminator' training for lecturers to help their students avoid plagiarism and access useful online referencing resources.

Developed by MTU, the MTU Library [Assignment Toolkit](#) includes a suite of modules that guides undergraduate and postgraduate students through the assignment completion process and provides a grounding in academic integrity by using best practice guidance at every stage. The MTU Library Assignment Toolkit is hosted on Canvas. Click [here](#) to access the toolkit directly.

Practical advice and training for students at all levels on assessment literacy, good academic writing and referencing practice and the avoidance of plagiarism is also offered by several other MTU services, such as the Academic Learning Services provided as part of the University's [Student Services](#), the [Academic Success Coaching](#) service and the [MTU Library](#). The annual "[Just Ask! About Results](#)" campaigns of [AnSEO, the Student Engagement Office](#) also aim to raise awareness of poor assessment practices.

MTU is well-represented on QQI's National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), and an MTU staff member chairs one of its Working Groups. NAIN updates, alerts, and related communications are circulated by Registrar's Office via a dedicated email address set up for this purpose. This ensures a consistent and visible approach.

### *iii. Detection and Investigation of Academic Misconduct*

MTU uses plagiarism detection software TurnItIn, which is fully integrated with the Virtual Learning Environment. Not least given the variety of assessment types and purposes, use of plagiarism detection software is not mandatory in MTU, though department-level usage policies are in place in several academic departments. Many academic staff members use plagiarism detection software not just to support the detection and confirmation of plagiarism in submitted work, but also to prevent plagiarism in written coursework by encouraging students to check drafts for similarity matches and/or requiring submission of assignments through the software. In addition to staff training opportunities, the offerings of MTU include a staff 'knowledge base' maintained by the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) and the [eLearning Development Services](#)

[Unit \(EDSU\)](#) with help articles which provide essential information on how to set up assignments, interpret originality reports, and more. These offerings can be found at the following links:

- [TEL Knowledge Base](#)
- [EDSU Knowledge Base](#)

Minor instances of academic misconduct are dealt with at the level of the individual academic department respectively Module Examination Board (MEB). Suspected infringements of a serious nature or repeat infringements are referred to the [Assessment Infringements Board \(AIB\)](#) on the MTU (Cork) campuses and the [Examinations and Assessments Review Committee \(EARC\)](#) on the MTU (Kerry) campuses.

Each board reviews the evidence in each case, hears from the students and staff members concerned, and determines an appropriate course of action in line with applicable policy. The AIB reports to Academic Council on its activities and also makes recommendations on the further development of academic integrity and misconduct procedures.

Should credible suspicion of serious academic misconduct on the part of an MTU graduate arise post- graduation, to the extent that this casts doubt on the entitlement of the graduate to their award, the award may be revoked under [Section A5.26](#) of the [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#), respectively MTU (Cork)'s saved [Policy on Revocation of \[...\] Awards](#). The latter foresees an investigation of the suspected historic misconduct by a high-level institutional committee with the primary aim of determining if, on balance of the evidence, the award conferred upon the graduate was deserved, or was not deserved and should be revoked. The final decision on revocation lies with the Governing Body of MTU.

(With regard to integrity and ethics in postgraduate research education, see also [PART A Section 4](#) of this report.)

## 3.0 Learner Resources and Support

MTU is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, welcoming and inspiring academic environment which enables and encourages all learners to reach for and achieve their full academic and personal potential. This section describes the policies, structures and services in place to support both the individual learner and the student community as a whole to thrive and succeed.

### 3.1 Policies and Procedures Related to Student Welfare and Community Standards

Key policies regarding student welfare and community standards at MTU are published in the Policies and Publications – Academic – Student Policies of the MTU website (link [here](#)).

#### a. Community Standards and Student Discipline

The [MTU Student Charter](#) sets out the general principles of the partnership between students and the University to enhance and support the learning and teaching experience for all. These principles are built on the premise that all members of MTU should be able to coexist in an environment which allows for freedom of thought and free expression of opinion within a framework of respect for each other.

The Charter sets out the undertakings made by the University to its students and those expected of the students in relation to the teaching and learning environment, equity of participation, dignity and respect, and wellbeing.

The [Code of Conduct \(Student\)](#), published [here](#), is a companion policy to the MTU Student Charter. It details the obligations of students regarding compliance with MTU policies and regulations and specifies the standards of behaviour expected by the University, contrasting standards of good conduct with examples of behaviour that contravenes these standards.

The rules of good conduct and discipline set out in the Code are intended to apply equally to individual students and student organisations. They apply when students are on campus, off campus representing the University, or engaged in a placement or in study abroad.

In line with the precepts of the MTU Student Charter, the standards of good conduct in the Code of Conduct are built on the principles of respect, responsibility and academic integrity. Reported breaches of the Code of Conduct lead to a disciplinary process overseen by the Student Disciplinary Panel. An illustrative table of possible breaches and penalties is provided in an appendix to the Code.

#### b. Dignity and Respect, Wellbeing and Mental Health

Based on previous work done by the founding Institutes, the first common policy approved by Munster Technological University following designation was its [MTU Dignity and Respect Policy](#) and associated [MTU Dignity and Respect Procedure](#). These documents form part of a linked set of policies and procedures which also include the Student Charter and the Code of Conduct (see **Part A Section 3.1 a** just above).

The MTU Dignity and Respect Policy aims to foster a positive culture which values the contribution of each member of the MTU community, be they staff or student, promotes respectful and professional behaviour, fosters inclusion, and addresses bullying and harassment where it does occur.

The Dignity and Respect Procedure gives members of the University recourse to a sequence of informal and formal steps to resolve complaints in relation to dignity and respect issues. The complaints process in relation to these issues does not distinguish between staff and students.

The principles of the Dignity and Respect policy and procedure are now complemented by the [MTU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#), approved in November 2024. The EDI policy aims to ensure that the University community is representative of all sections of society and that each member of the community is respected and valued and able to give their best as a result, thus supporting the University to fulfil its legal obligations and public sector equality and human rights duty. (For further details, see [Part A Section 2.2.2 a \(iii\)](#).)

MTU has furthermore published a [Grievance Policy and Procedure \(Student\)](#). This covers general grievances in relation to module or programme delivery, resources or supports; research degree supervision and monitoring; and general student services and facilities. Not included in the policy are matters related to assessment, appeals or exam board decisions (which are covered under the MTU Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure as applicable); the policy also does not cover academic difficulties experienced by students on an individual basis in specific modules. Grievances under the policy may be raised by individual students or class representatives.

The Grievance Policy and Procedure (Student) foresees one informal and two formal grievance resolution stages. The informal stage allows for the involvement of the MTU Student Ombudsman, whose terms of reference and powers in the context of the grievance resolution procedure are also set out in the policy.

The appointment of a [Student Ombudsman](#) has proven to be a critical element of resolving student grievances particularly at informal stage. The post holder will normally be a retired member of academic staff. The Student Ombudsman now operates on a pan-University basis, having been originally in place in MTU (Cork). The purpose of the post of Student Ombudsman is to advise and assist students with the resolution of difficulties, complaints or grievances involving staff or services of the Institute in an informal manner. The services provided by this post are complementary to a range of existing student services and the Student Ombudsman may refer relevant student issues for resolution by those services as appropriate.

Appeals and grievance procedures for MTU postgraduate students are set out in the MTU Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study. For further details on these, refer to [Part A Section 4](#) below.

Where a member of the University has a concern over the fitness of a student to safely follow their course of studies, or to practice their chosen profession following graduation, the MTU [Fitness to Study Policy](#) and [Fitness to Practice Policy](#) may be invoked (see also [PART A Section 2.2.1 d](#) above).

An MTU-wide [Protocol for Dealing with Death of a Student](#) has been adopted and published on the MTU website (link [here](#)), with an associated Procedure for Dealing with Death of a Student for internal publication only.

A small number of legacy policies relating to welfare and community standards also still remain in force at the time of writing, to the extent that matters covered therein have not been superseded by common MTU policy. These include the [Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy](#) of MTU (Cork), which aims to direct and inform learners registered on the MTU (Cork) campuses looking for mental health supports, as well as staff members concerned about learners with acknowledged or suspected mental health issues. This is published in the Academic Policies and Regulations section of the MTU (Cork) website (link [here](#)). Through the HEA Mental Health

Funding, a Mental Health Framework Coordinator has been appointed in MTU and work on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy is progressing.

MTU (Kerry) still retains its [Substance Abuse Policy \(Drugs and Alcohol\)](#), published as Section A13.2 of the MTU (Kerry) Quality Assurance Procedures (link [here](#)).

Section A13.9 of the MTU (Kerry) Quality Assurance Procedures (link [here](#)) furthermore sets out the [Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy](#) in force on the MTU (Kerry) campuses pending adoption of a common set of cross-campus EDI policies for the University.

## 3.2 MTU Libraries

### a. Library Policy and Infrastructure

MTU Library significantly contributes to the achievements of MTU's education, research and lifelong learning strategies by offering exceptional expertise, scholarly resources, spaces and technologies to all MTU's community, regardless of location or mode of learning. Ensuring equality of access to, and full use of, all library resources and facilities is a critical aspect in the role of library services, and especially in the context of a new Technological University. Standardizing policies, procedures, and practices across MTU Libraries to ensure parity of user experience has been a key priority since University designation. Key MTU policies since approved include the [Membership and Lending](#), [Collection Development](#), [Library Usage](#), and [Inter-Library Loan](#) policies. A policy regulating [Library Access by Children Under the Age of 16](#) has also been approved. The MTU library policies are published in the Policies and Publications section of the MTU website (link [here](#)).

Physical library facilities are spread across MTU six campuses and are designed to enhance opportunities for study and reflection while efficiently housing over 190,000 print items and several key collections of artefacts held in the [Special Collections](#) category. The library materials cover all subject areas represented in MTU and provide access to titles in Science, Engineering, Business, Social Studies Nursing & Health Care and Humanities. All physical library material is publicly searchable by using the [Online Public Catalogue](#) module of *Koha*, the Library Management System.

A variety of over 1,300 well-proportioned, abundantly lit study spaces are available across all the MTU libraries, with WIFI access throughout. Libraries offer flexible and inclusive social learning spaces that provide users with comfortable areas for collaborative and group study. In addition to 'hot desk' study spaces for short-term occupancy, PC workstations and a number of height adjustable motorised desks, students can avail of bookable group study hubs, an Audio-Visual Resource room, and an Assistive Technology room with specialized hardware and software. RFID technology has been implemented throughout, enabling all MTU libraries to provide access to their holdings and services through self-service kiosks.

As outlined in the Library's Collection Development Policy, MTU Library seeks to be a hybrid library, i.e. having the optimum combination of varied and in-depth in-house collections while delivering access to premium online resource content to all MTU staff and students. Both physical and electronic materials are mapped to a sophisticated discovery layer, a mega-aggregate of disparate content. This surfaces results of all the library's indexable content into a single search box, retrieving a broad scope of material via a faceted and relevancy-ranked search functionality with ability to drill down instantly to any native database.

The physical library holdings are complemented by a range of digital resources, encompassing 250,000+ e-books accessible through [Ebook Central](#) and a significant collection of both broad-based and specialist [e-journal and standards databases](#), with identical peer-reviewed teaching and research e-content now available across all campuses. The multi-disciplinary databases provided currently include Science Direct, Emerald-Premier and

EBSCOhost (with subsections Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, CINAHL Ultimate, MEDLINE Complete, APA PyscArticles, OmniFileFull-Text Mega, SportDiscus, SOCINDEX, and MathsciNet). Subject-specific databases include ACM, Bloomsbury Applied Visual Arts, IHS Markit, SAI Global (NSAI, ISO, EN Standards), ARTSTOR, ASABE, Digital Theatre+, Drama Online, IEEE, iSurv, Proquest Health Research Premium Collection, Medici TV, Nexis Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM), SAGE Business Cases, Sage Research Methods, Scopus, and Westlaw.

MTU's e-resource portfolio expanded with membership of the [Irish Research eLibrary](#) (IReL). A subset of eight IReL resources were made available to MTU-affiliated staff and students in March 2023; Cambridge University Press, JSTOR, Oxford University Press, Sage Premier, AAAS Science Online, Proquest Social Science Premium, Taylor and Francis<sup>3</sup>, and Wiley Online. This resulted in 10,000+ new online journals added to MTU Library's e-collection portfolio, with over half of the publishers offering a variety of Open Access Publishing opportunities for MTU researchers. A further five IReL resources have been made available during this reporting period; further details are provided in Part B.

## b. Library Services and Supports

As student learning modes expand and diversify, the Library resources continue to adapt and grow in response to developing user expectations. The Library websites, with integrated mobile device compatibility, offer a continually expanding range of instructional guides and online [subject guides](#) created by library staff in collaboration with academic staff from relevant departments. Library staff have created their own dedicated [YouTube channel](#) which hosts a large selection of instructional videos designed and produced by members of the library team.

The Library also utilises a '24/7' Virtual Assistant Chatbot built on IBM's [Watson Assistant](#) platform. Implementation of this AI support tool has allowed the Library to build, train, and deploy conversational interactions with immediate responses to the most frequently asked library queries, regardless of time and user location. Library staff are able to regularly update conversation starter topics, a feature which proved especially useful during the rapidly evolving pandemic crisis as the chatbot can immediately reflect operational changes and new services, such as ['Click & Collect'](#).

Lib Chat service is also available on the Springshare platform. This allows Library staff to interact online with library users and answer questions in real-time via the Lib Chat interface on the Library website. The service was particularly useful during Covid-19 and is used in conjunction with the regular library support services. An [FAQ resource](#) has also been developed.

An [Assignment Toolkit](#) which includes a suite of self-directed modules that guide students through the assignment completion process and provides a grounding in academic integrity is available online. This is an open and reusable learning resource that was developed by the library through SATLE funding facilitated by the Department of Technology Enhanced Learning. A public version of the course is available [here](#) for other academic institutions to freely re-use and re-adapt content for their students. In September 2023, [the University of Limerick](#) acknowledged the value of this resource in building their version of an [Assignment Toolkit](#). From September 2023 all MTU students are automatically enrolled on the course within Canvas and receive digital badges on completion of each module.

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<sup>3</sup> Social Sciences & Humanities, & Medical Collections

The highly qualified, experienced and skilled staff of the MTU Libraries – without a doubt the Libraries’ greatest resource – continually demonstrate significant capacity to deliver innovative library services combined with a passion for engagement and outreach within MTU and the wider community. There is a clear commitment to enable students to discover and utilise resources for their study and future career, become independent and self-motivated learners and to learn the necessary skills to become independent life-long learners. The MTU Libraries cater for information literacy requirements at all levels, i.e. undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD level, as well as academics and researchers. Presentations and workshops for members of the MTU academic and research community are delivered either face-to-face or online as requested and range from individual support to group and class tutorials. They are complemented by ‘outreach’ offerings, such as workshops for regional DEIS schools or as part of life-long learning community events in the region.

The MTU Library is committed to promoting and supporting scholarly communications via its Institutional Repository, [SWORD](#) (Southwest Online Research Deposit). SWORD records, preserves, and disseminates MTU research outputs and also features publishing capabilities and a conference hosting infrastructure. Between September 2023 and August 2024, 165 MTU-affiliated works were added to SWORD. During the reporting period downloads increased by approximately 45% on the previous year (from 38,296 to 68,975), and readership distribution across recognised institutions saw a growth of almost 11.5% (1888 to 2132) which included a 6% (176 to 188) increase on the number of countries accessing MTU research outputs ([verified data available here](#)).

The Library is actively developing Open Science infrastructures that support the data management needs and research integrity agenda of the research community. In addition to managing MTU’s membership of the Irish ORCID consortium, the Library provides a DOI minting service via [CrossRef](#) and provides access to [DMPonline](#), a toolkit to help researchers create, review and share data management plans. Thanks to the inclusion of five new IReL Read and Publish<sup>4</sup> Deals in early 2023, Article Processing Charge (APC)<sup>5</sup> provision increased by 50% on the previous year’s provision. This resulted in MTU research - from Science to Business to Engineering - to be shared Openly and reach the widest possible global audience. During the reporting period the University’s Research Data Management (RDM) Librarian was appointed by invitation onto the University’s MTU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), with specific support for reviewing applications that require an expert in data management.

## 3.3 Digital Environment

### 3.3.1 Information Technology Services and Supports

MTU sets out to provide an engaging, high-quality, flexible and inclusive learning experience for all students, built on an excellent, modern educational IT infrastructure and resources across all campuses which are continually enhanced and which have served the University well during the Covid-19 emergency period.

The IT Services Team works to provide high-quality IT services and solutions to students and staff across all campuses, thus enhancing student experience and supporting academic delivery across MTU, in collaboration

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<sup>4</sup> Read and Publish Deals are transformative agreements usually made between publishers and library consortia which provides both read access to the publisher’s content to consortia member institutions, and the access to Open Access publication in the publisher’s titles without the researcher having to pay an APC.

<sup>5</sup> An Article Processing Charge is the cost many academic journals charge to authors to make their publication immediately Openly available- as opposed to being behind a paywall. It is often called Gold OA and charges can range from anywhere between €1000-€11000 per article, depending on the publisher and journal.

with relevant technical staff in the academic units. A strong focus is placed on staff development and empowerment through effective IT governance processes and appropriate IT staff training programmes, accompanied by regular awareness-raising campaigns through various media on critical topics such as cybersecurity.

At the time of writing, students are able to access comprehensive information on IT services and supports available to them through the [IT Support Tab](#) on the [MTU \(Cork\) Campuses Student Portal](#) and the [MTU \(Kerry\) Campus Computer Facilities](#) web page. Staff queries may also be posted through the MTU IT Services Space on the internal Workvivo staff server, which furthermore provides staff members with updates on new developments in the IT space.

IT Service Desks, both physical and virtual, respond to a wide range of computer-related queries across MTU. Issues can be related in person, by email, online or by phone, with services available to both staff and learners.

All new MTU (Cork) campus students receive their, currently, [myCIT.ie](#) and [Web4 Student](#) account details on registration, along with their MTU (Cork) campus SmartCard. MyCIT email accounts are based on Gmail, with online tutorials supporting learners in setting up and fully utilising their myCIT email account. Students use Single Sign On (SSO) authentication to log into all relevant IT services, including email, Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas) and WiFi. A Microsoft Office plan is available free to current MTU students which permits learners to install, at no cost, the latest version of the MS Office suite (including MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint apps) on up to five personal devices, use MS Office online on any device and avail of 1TB Cloud storage on OneDrive.

Apart from being the primary form of campus identification, the MTU (Cork) SmartCard provides access to Library facilities and services, restricted-access laboratories and campus car parking facilities. It also acts as a personal electronic 'purse' for use at 'Smart' campus locations including photocopiers, print and reprographic services, food services and campus shops.

All new MTU (Kerry) campus students receive their MTU (Kerry) campus computer network account details and [Web4 Student](#) account details on registration, along with their MTU (Kerry) campus T-Card. Online tutorials supporting learners in utilising the campus IT computer facilities are available via the campus Virtual Learning Environment, Blackboard. Students use Single Sign On (SSO) authentication to log into all relevant IT services, including email, the Virtual Learning Environment (now Canvas) and WiFi. While the T-Card acts as the primary form of on-campus identification, it also provides access to various facilities and laboratories, and is used for reprographic services.

The IT Services Department also provides software, networking and hardware support to the MTU (Cork) [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) and MTU (Kerry)'s [eLearning Development Services Unit \(EDSU\)](#) as well as to academic departments involved in the delivery of online or blended programmes.

On the MTU (Cork) campuses, this ongoing support also informed and accelerated the implementation of the Emergency Remote Teaching ('ERT') Model in response to Covid-19 from March 2020 onwards. Covid-19 presented particular challenges for the attainment and assessment of learning outcomes related to laboratory work, which features prominently in many programmes. Following extensive work by IT Services, the range and functionality of the Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI), which had previously mainly supported programme delivery in Computer Science and Mathematics, was massively extended in time for the 2020/21 academic year. Several additional areas – including Engineering, Life Sciences, Business and Music – are now enabled to avail of virtual desktops for remote delivery purposes. Furthermore, remote 'labs' are integrated with the timetabling

system, so that any laboratories scheduled are automatically aligned to the class timetable. The VDI permits lecturers to collaborate with students during remote lab sessions, complementing the use of MS Teams to facilitate screensharing and provision of individual assistance to students during class time.

### 3.3.2 Digital Learning Ecosystem

MTU has long-established expertise in the use of technology for the enhancement of teaching and learning. Building on its digital learning infrastructure and the dedicated pedagogical and technological supports of the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) and the [eLearning Development Services Unit \(EDSU\)](#), TEL and EDSU's expertise enabled MTU to transition rapidly to online programme delivery in response to Covid-19 restrictions in higher education, effectively meeting the demands of emergency remote teaching (ERT) during the pandemic. Since this period there has been a significant increase in the number of online and blended mode programmes being provided across the university, reflecting changed and changing expectations among staff and students with respect to digital learning and its role in creating new learning opportunities.

#### a. Digital Learning Policy

Online and blended delivery at MTU is framed and guided by the MTU [Digital Learning Policy](#), which is aligned with broader national standards, in particular QQI's [Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes](#) (2018) and the [QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Programmes Supported by Digital Education](#) (2023).

Digital learning is defined in the MTU policy in the following way:

“Learning being supported, facilitated, evidenced, or experienced in a digital or online environment or by otherwise making use of digital learning tools and technologies. Digital learning may take place in contexts where students are co-present in the same physical space as each other and the relevant lecturer or instructor or in contexts where neither students nor the lecturer/instructor are co-present.”  
(p. 4)

The key purposes of digital learning in MTU are outlined in the policy as follows:

1. To enhance and enrich the learning experience of all students.
2. To ensure the educational opportunities offered by the University are available and accessible to the widest cohort of learners irrespective of their location or circumstances.
3. To support staff to enhance their teaching, learning, assessment and student engagement activities and practices.
4. To support the incorporation of universal design principles across all learning environments.

The Digital Learning Policy sets out key quality and design principles for digital learning at MTU, stating that its design, delivery, and support must reflect the University's standards of academic quality and excellence; safeguard the fair and equitable treatment of MTU students and staff; and promote an inclusive, high-quality student experience.

The policy clarifies related commitments, requirements and quality assurance arrangements with respect to infrastructure, the provision and support of accredited online and blended mode programmes, access to and

dissemination of digital learning materials and activities, as well as policy with respect to data protection and retention, and intellectual property and copyright issues.

Notably, any new online programmes or modules, as well as significant modifications to existing ones involving digital learning, require formal consultation with the Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning or the eLearning Development Services Unit before approval. This requirement is reflected in related procedures and process relating to the development and modification of modules and programmes in the university.

## b. Digital Learning Infrastructure and Resources

At the heart of the rich digital learning infrastructure is the Canvas Learning Management System (also called a Virtual Learning Environment, or VLE), managed by the [Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\)](#) and the [eLearning Development Services Unit \(EDSU\)](#) on the MTU (Cork) and (Kerry) campuses respectively. Canvas is a cloud-based platform with a range of features to support important online teaching and learning functions with respect to assessment, content sharing, communication and collaboration, class management and learning analytics. Canvas is integrated with the Banner student record system, so that staff and students are automatically enrolled on the relevant modules based on the most up-to-date information.

Canvas was selected as the University's Learning Management System (LMS) for its user-friendly experience, mobile support, learning analytics, and seamless integration with other platforms and tools. Ease of integration has been key to allowing the University to selectively pilot new tools and functionality and to mainstream new integrations in a systematic and evidence-based way. Current integrations include: Canvas Credentials (a digital badging platform based on the older Badgr system); Turnitin (plagiarism detection); e-learning authoring tools (H5P and ScreenPal); and UDOIT (a digital accessibility checker). The experience with Canvas in MTU (Cork) prior to and during ERT informed the decision of MTU (Kerry) and the University as a whole to move to one VLE.

Since its introduction, Canvas has been established as the central hub and access point for all online components of the University's programme provision, whether by way of complementing traditional face-to-face delivery or supporting blended or fully online modes. During Covid-19, the flexibility offered by the Virtual Learning environments (VLE), combined with in-house experience in TEL and EDSU, allowed the University to respond quickly and effectively to the demands of emergency remote teaching (ERT). The platforms provided by the VLEs were the primary – and often exclusive – way in which staff engaged with learners throughout this period, and the system supported a number of different ERT approaches, both through its out-of-the-box features and its ability to integrate with other ed-tech components and tools.

The key integrated platform is the video conference platform Zoom. Canvas and Zoom are key technical components supporting online and blended mode programmes. Whether used for this or other purposes and modalities, these platforms together provide rich learning analytics, giving lecturers and programme co-ordinators valid, reliable and actionable insight into learner engagement and performance.

Plans are underway to consolidate MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) staff and students onto a single instance of the Canvas Learning Management System. Ancillary integrated systems, in particular Zoom and MTU's plagiarism detection tool Turnitin, will also be unified as part of this merger. The merger will take place after the merger of the University's Student Record Management Systems (SRMS).

### c. Digital Learning Support Services for Students and Staff

MTU provides a comprehensive digital learning support framework for both students and staff. Key support mechanisms include:

- **Induction Sessions:** Interactive digital onboarding sessions introduce students and staff to MTU’s digital learning ecosystem, and key online support services.
- **Helpdesk Services:** The TEL and EDSU helpdesks provide technical and pedagogical support for both students and staff. Staff can schedule one-on-one consultations with a learning technologist, while a 24/7 external helpdesk is available through Canvas.
- **Knowledgebase and YouTube Resources:** A continuously updated repository of help articles, guides, FAQs, and training videos is available to support both students and staff.
- **E-learning Studios/Media Booths:** Dedicated studios and media booths designed for high-quality online teaching, learning, and content creation across MTU’s campuses.
- **Workshops and Training:** Regular training sessions on evidence-based practices, covering topics such as online teaching, student engagement, digital pedagogy, and online assessment. Sessions provided to both students and staff.
- **Staff Pilot Projects:** Initiatives that enable staff to explore, test, and implement innovative digital learning strategies to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

The above framework ensures that both students and staff receive the necessary technical, pedagogical, and training support to maximise the benefit of digital learning at MTU.

## 3.4 Academic, Career and Welfare Services and Student Life

MTU is a student-centred university, with a strong focus on student support and student engagement. The professionals who provide the University’s broad range of student services cater to large and diverse student population and are dedicated to supporting the academic, professional and personal development of all students from pre-entry to graduation and beyond, contributing to the fulfilment of MTU’s mission ‘to lead change, and through education, empower people for a successful future in a globalised world.’

Information on the range of available learner services and supports and points of contact for each can be obtained from the [Student Services](#) page on the MTU website. This provides access points to the web portals or pages of the University’s [Access & Disability](#), [Careers](#), [Counselling](#), [Health & Medical](#) and [Accommodation](#) Services. Information on [Fees and Funding](#) sources and the location of the Academic Learning Services is also made available, as are links to the MTU Students’ Unions (see [Part A Section 3.4 d](#) below), the [Arts Office](#) and the [MTU Libraries](#) (see [Part A Section 3.2](#) above). Registered students may also access academic supports through the University’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) (see [Part A Section 3.3.2 b](#) above).

Prospective and new students wishing to obtain summary information on student supports and contact details for relevant services may do so through the [MTU Quick Entry Guide](#) (available online via the [MTU Prospectus Builder](#) page), Open Days and various induction events, both on campus and in outreach format. More detailed information on the range and location of the services available in each campus location is provided on the legacy websites of [MTU \(Kerry\)](#) and [MTU \(Cork\)](#).

## a. Academic and Career Support Services

Key services and supports related to aspects of programme access and entry, academic study and graduate career development are provided by MTU's [AnSEO, the Student Engagement Office](#), the [Access & Disability Service](#) and the [Careers Service](#), in addition to the core administrative services and supports of the MTU [Admissions](#) and Examinations Offices.

In addition to its work around First Year engagement, the Student Engagement Office delivers or coordinates student success initiatives such as the [Just Ask!](#) Campaigns or [Academic Success Coaching](#), which offers one-to-one or group coaching sessions intended to improve the ability of learners at all stages to identify academic goals and to develop strategies and skills to meet these. Another core strand of AnSEO's work revolves around building student partnership in quality through different project strands recently brought together under the banner [Le Chéile](#).

AnSEO also incorporates the [Academic Learning Centre](#) on the MTU (Cork) campuses, which offers individual or group-based advisory sessions and tutorials support in academic writing as well as a range of STEM areas in which learners traditionally experience a level of difficulty, particularly Mathematics.

On the MTU (Kerry) campuses, academic support is provided through the [Academic Success Centre](#), which offers one-to-one study guidance and academic skills workshops, both on general academic success topics and tailored to the needs of specific groups of students. The web page of the centre also pulls together links to academic resources and skills training opportunities offered by other MTU (Kerry) offices and services.

## b. Financial Supports and Funding of Student Services

Information on financial supports available to learners can be obtained via the [Grants, Scholarships and Financial Assistance](#) page of the MTU website. Grants are principally available through the [Student Universal Support Ireland \(SUSI\)](#) scheme; a range of [Scholarships](#) is also available to prospective MTU learners.

Learners facing economic hardship may apply for financial support through the [Student Assistance Fund](#). A critical element of this for the duration of the Covid-19-related remote delivery arrangements was the Government Laptop Loan Scheme and the special HEA Covid-19 funding package aimed at enabling equitable access to necessary digital devices for disadvantaged learners. While the laptop scheme has now ended, students may apply to the Student Assistant Fund for financial support to purchase laptops.

MTU offers a number of [Academic and Sports Scholarships](#) linked to specific academic programmes on offer in one of the two campus locations. Individual application links are provided for each relevant programme. Two further scholarships, the [Sanctuary Scholarship](#) and the [1916 Bursary Scholarship](#), aim to support participation in higher education by asylum seekers and refugees and by resident applicants from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds respectively. These scholarships are offered to eligible applicants across all MTU campuses.

Heretofore, student support services provided on the MTU (Cork) campuses, including the MTU (Cork) Sports and Societies Offices, but also services such as the Medical Centre, Counselling and the Accommodation Office, have been funded through a devolved budget managed by the Student Finance Committee. Reporting to the Finance Committee of Governing Body, the membership of the Student Finance Committee includes representatives of the University Executive and relevant services as well as four representatives of the Students' Union. Devolution of service funding to this committee thus ensures that learners, through their formal representational structures, are enabled to play a critical part in the governance and management of the services provided to them. Any funds remaining once allocation of funding to the regular student services is complete

are invested in the Capital Development Reserve and are also utilised to support various student-focused special projects. Thus, for example, the new MTU Arena on the Bishopstown campus came to be planned and brought to completion, while special projects of a smaller nature include study hubs in library spaces and enhancements to the Rory Gallagher Theatre. A similar model was agreed for MTU and put in place in late 2022/23. Work is ongoing on the development of a unitary devolved student services funding process involving the MTU Students' Union and a 3- to 5-year budget plan. This is to be rolled out across the University in the near future to ensure a more consistent experience of supports for students across all six campuses.

Responsibility for the management of the two European Social Fund (ESF) funds, the Student Assistance Fund and the Fund for Students with Disabilities, lies with the Access Funding Committee. The Access Funding Committee is tasked with evaluating and revising policies and procedures regarding these funds and preparing for internal and external audit. The Committee includes representatives from the MTU Finance Office and Student Services, relevant MTU senior managers, as well as Students' Union representatives. Following on from the establishment of the MTU Student Finance Committee, it is planned to extend the Access Funding Committee across MTU in the near future.

### c. Student Life and Welfare Support Services

MTU's [Clubs](#) and [Societies](#) play a vital role in helping students build friendships and support networks, open themselves up to new possibilities and perspectives and develop a sense of belonging, engagement and pride. In turn, positive integration into the MTU community contributes to improved engagement and retention in the students' chosen academic programme.

Supports and services related to students' physical and mental health and welfare needs are provided by the relevant [Medical/Health Centre](#), [Counselling Service](#) and [Accommodation Office](#), while the [Chaplaincies](#) have an open door policy, welcoming learners and staff of all faiths and none.

On MTU (Cork)'s main Bishopstown campus, the principal student services hub is the Nexus Student Centre. This houses most of the services outlined in the sections below, as well as a Student Common Room, meeting rooms and 'high-street' services such as a mini-market and bistro. The offices of the MTU (Cork) Students' Union are also housed here. A more limited range of comparable services is available in each of MTU (Cork) constituent college campuses. The Nexus also hosts many key events of the MTU (Cork) annual academic calendar.

In MTU (Kerry), the main Student Services Office is currently located in the Library and Information Centre (U-Block) on the North Campus. Some student services are also available on the MTU (Kerry) South campus. A new dedicated Kerry Campus Learner Centre is currently in planning. The new Learner Centre in the heart of the MTU (Kerry) North Campus, for which a business case was approved in 2023, will provide a central location for learners, allowing consolidation of existing services and the provision of additional facilities, thus supporting MTU's ambition to achieve a unified approach to the delivery of academic and support services across campuses.

(For further detail on the development of MTU's physical footprint, see [Part B Section 1.1 h.](#))

With four separate MTU campuses located at some geographical distance from each other in Cork, a key role in maintaining ongoing links between these continues to be that of the Campus Liaison Officer, who visits each constituent college on a weekly basis and provides information about supports available to all students.

#### d. MTU Students' Union

The MTU Students' Unions are the main representative bodies of and for the students of MTU. Currently still operating as separate entities in the two different campus locations, [MTU Students' Union \(Kerry\)](#) and [MTU \(Cork\) Students' Union](#), a unified structure and funding model for a single Students' Union operating across all six MTU campuses have been agreed with the University. A constitution has been drafted and the Unions are at an advanced stage of alignment of business processes, ahead of the final merger following a referendum on the new constitution. In the meantime, a Joint Executive Committee (JEC) comprising both Presidents and the four Vice Presidents is in place and is recognised by the Governing Body for the purposes of the TU Act.

In addition to their role in institutional governance (see [Part A Section 1.1.4](#) above), the Students' Unions also offer students many practical supports and services 'at eye level'. On the main MTU (Cork) Bishopstown campus, students can access the permanently resourced SU Office in the Nexus Student Centre for day-to-day necessities, as well as to arrange meetings with the SU sabbatical officers to discuss issues or concerns. The MTU (Kerry) Students' Union Office is located in the Business and IT Building (R-Block) on the North campus.

A University-wide MTU Students' Union publication is currently under discussion, building on the tradition of the monthly [expliCIT Magazine](#) written and produced by MTU (Cork) campus students with student interests and information needs in mind, and available both in print and online format.

#### e. Services and Supports for International Learners

The International Offices located on the MTU (Cork) and (Kerry) main campuses provide end-to-end support to incoming and outgoing learners embarking on an international experience. In line with the National Strategy for Higher Education, the University recognises that different groups of students need different and uniquely tailored academic, life and cultural supports to enable successful integration and participation in their new living and learning environment. The International Offices aim to support incoming students of different cultural origins to have the best possible life and learning experience at MTU, as well as preparing outgoing students for a successful period of living and studying abroad.

The offerings of the International Offices can be accessed through local [MTU \(Cork\)](#) and [MTU \(Kerry\)](#) International Office websites or the central [MTU International Office](#) web page.

The International Office websites provide both incoming ERASMUS and other EU students and prospective non-EU applicants with detailed information on topics such as the application process, programme entry requirements, orientation and registration, fees and scholarships, living in Ireland, visas and health insurance. For students interested in programmes of MTU (Cork), this can be accessed through the [Erasmus](#) and [Non-EU](#) sections of the International Office website. For prospective entrants at MTU (Kerry) through the [ERASMUS and Exchange Students](#) and [International Students \(Non-EU\)](#) applicant portals respectively.

Outgoing students of MTU wishing to study or obtain work placement abroad can gain access to relevant information through the [Study and Work Abroad](#) tab on the MTU (Kerry) International Office website and the [Study Abroad](#) tab of the MTU (Cork) website. At time of offer, incoming international students are issued with a digital International Student Handbook, which is updated annually. There are two versions of the digital handbook offering bespoke information for both [Cork-bound](#) and [Kerry-bound](#) students. Regular information webinars addressing academic and practical information for international students also take place. Post-arrival, the International Offices also work closely with the local Garda Immigration Offices to ensure that incoming students have a seamless and low-stress engagement with the immigration authorities.

To ensure continuity of support during the Covid-19 emergency, the MTU (Cork) International Office launched a Virtual International Office which allowed learners and staff to 'drop in' virtually via a Zoom link with any queries or requests for advice.

An "International Module" is also accessible to all MTU international students on Canvas, MTU's virtual learning environment. This module provides practical information on living in Ireland specific to the needs of current international learners (on topics such as PPS Numbers, bank accounts and the immigration process). It is also used as an additional channel for the University to communicate with and distribute information to international learners specifically, improving the reach of targeted information provision outside of emails.

Registered international learners at MTU have access to the same broad range of student services and supports as local students. International students may also draw on the supports of the MTU Students' Union, of which they are members for the duration of their registration with the University. The MTU (Kerry) campus also runs a comprehensive orientation programme prior to and around arrival for all new incoming international students, including an onsite orientation event to ease the transition into MTU.

In addition to service provision to students, the International Offices are engaged in advocacy for internationalisation within the University, working closely with other student support services and academic departments to ensure that the additional needs of international learners are understood and supported. MTU is a member of ICOS (Irish Council for Overseas Students) and works actively within that forum to advocate with the Irish Government for international students.

## 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

### 4.1 Research Environment and Research Degree Provision Framework

Research is a core dimension of activity at MTU, in collaboration with a wide range of organisations, including Higher Education Institutions, industry, state and voluntary bodies. MTU's Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship constitute one of MTU's five strategic themes, with the Strategic Plan envisioning that excellence in research, innovation, scholarly activity, knowledge transfer and engagement that have measurable impact will be a hallmark of the University.

MTU's research activities are founded on collaboration and expertise across science, engineering, business, social sciences, humanities, the creative and performing arts and media. They are increasingly linked to issues of global relevance which the University addresses through the UN Sustainable Development Goals whilst aligning to, and advancing, national and European research priorities and strategies.

MTU has the largest-scale of R&I expenditure (€30.3m) and highest direct-funded research income from industry partnerships (€1.99m) across the entire TU sector (AKTS 2023). The University currently has close on 220 research postgraduates and over 30 postdocs.

Most research income is competitively generated, through funding applications to national and international funding agencies for specific research projects under relevant funding calls. Through the RFAM budget, provided as additional funding via the HEA and based on a transparent rubric which takes account of PG graduations, research income and knowledge transfer metrics, the Research Offices are enabled to support research activities targeted at building sustainable capacity in the MTU research and innovation ecosystem. The allocation of €14.6m under the ERDF-funded TU RISE programme (2023) has facilitated the strengthening of the Research Advisory Offices (Research Office, Innovation and Enterprise Office, Graduate Research School) with an additional 17 personnel, with the associated increase in support for the entirety of the MTU R&I ecosystem. The same fund enables MTU to register 18 PhD's and 8 Research Masters, along with 25 postdocs, and further provides support for over 20 academic staff to buy out time for research and supervision duties.

Since July 2024, the strategic development of the MTU research environment is led by the VP for Research & Innovation, with important contributions from the Research & Innovation Committee of Academic Council to policy development. While the development process is in train, knowledge transfer activities arising from the research outputs are coordinated and supported by the [Innovation & Enterprise Office in MTU](#). Working in tandem with these, the Research Offices focus on innovation activities in each campus location.

The MTU Research Integrity & Compliance Officer (RICO) has responsibility for fostering a research environment that promotes the responsible conduct of research which maintains the highest standards of integrity, along with contributing to the development, implementation and review of the University's research-related policies and procedures.

Overall responsibility for the quality assurance of postgraduate research provision in MTU lies within the remit of the Graduate Research School. The new University-wide School has moved underneath the aegis of the Vice-President for Research & Innovation.

## 4.2 Postgraduate Research Regulations and Postgraduate Student Lifecycle

Research degree provision at MTU is governed by comprehensive MTU Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study which cover all quality-relevant aspects of postgraduate education. Complementary policy documents covering, inter alia, ethical research practice, IP issues and conflict of interest (see [PART A Section 4.3 a](#) just below) establish a secure legal and ethical framework within which postgraduate education can take place.

The provisions of the MTU postgraduate regulations largely reflect the regulations that previously applied at MTU (Cork), respectively Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) before it. All postgraduate research students registered on the MTU (Cork) campuses were therefore moved under the new common MTU regulations immediately upon their coming into effect in September 2022.

Preceding this, in February 2021 the MTU Academic Council had already approved the legacy Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study of MTU (Cork) as the interim MTU Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study for the whole of the University (see [Section A11.6a](#) of the [MTU \(Kerry\) QA Procedures](#)). The interim regulations were to apply to research students across all MTU campuses registered on new postgraduate programmes from 1 January, 2021 onwards (including students transferring from a Level 9 to a Level 10 programme). The interim regulations were to apply to research students across all MTU campuses registered on new postgraduate programmes from 1 January, 2021 onwards (including students transferring from a Level 9 to a Level 10 programme).

Any students registered on research programmes of MTU (Kerry) prior to 1 January 2021 either continue to be subject to saved MTU (Kerry) regulations or are supported in transitioning to MTU regulations, depending on the stage of their studies. The pertinent MTU (Kerry) regulations remain published in Section A11 of the [MTU \(Kerry\) QA Procedures](#) and encompass the following documents:

- [A11.1 Introduction](#);
- [A11.2: Project Proposal Approval and Student Registration](#);
- [A11.3: Research Degree Programme Supervision and Monitoring](#);
- [A11.4: Thesis Submission and Examination](#).

Applications for registration, progression or transfer between research registers and notices of 'Intention to Submit' a thesis or other examinable work require the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies in MTU (Cork), respectively Head of Research or Registrar in MTU (Kerry), before proceeding.

Support in reviewing such applications may be provided by the MTU Postgraduate Research Studies Board (PRB) and/or external experts in the field, as relevant.

In addition to providing support on postgraduate research student entry and progression, the Postgraduate Research Studies Board advises the University on matters relating to academic standards in postgraduate academic formation, makes recommendations to the Academic Council on the Postgraduate Research Regulations, and liaises with the Academic Council and its Committees (including the Research & Innovation Committee) on such matters. The functions of the PRB are set out in Appendix C of the [Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study](#).

Information about postgraduate study opportunities at MTU is available via the [Postgraduate](#) portal on the MTU website. At the time of writing, additional information for prospective postgraduate students, including on the MTU postgraduate environment, entry requirements and application process, structured elements, available supports, and supporting documentation, may be accessed from the web pages of the [MTU \(Cork\)](#)

[Graduate Studies Office](#) and through the [Research Postgraduate Programmes](#) section on the MTU (Kerry) website while information related to postgraduate study is being migrated to the main MTU website.

Applications for funding for research postgraduates, in addition to the general study opportunities as published on the Postgraduate Research portal, are supported by the Research Offices, including for IRC, SFI, DAFM and Horizon Europe funding.

## 4.3 Research Integrity and Ethics

### a. Research and Knowledge Transfer Policies and Procedures

MTU has approved a substantial number of policies, procedures and guidelines regulating the responsible conduct of research and knowledge transfer activity.

MTU's [Research Integrity Policy](#) and the [Code of Good Practice in Research](#) outline the key requirements on all those engaged with research in MTU, including all researchers, students, technical, administrative and research support staff. The Policy and Code summarise the principles and practices under which research in MTU must be carried out and include the associated policies that may be relevant during the course of a research study's lifecycle. These two core documents are complemented by a range of more detailed policies and operational documents regulating specific aspects of ethical research practice, knowledge transfer, IP and the management of research data, as follows:

- [Authorship Policy](#);
- [Human Research Ethics Policy](#), with several supplementary operational documents including
  - [Full Ethical Review Human Research Ethics Application Form](#);
  - [Human Research Ethics Screening Checklist](#);
  - [Minimal Risk Human Research Ethics Application Form](#);
  - [Procedures for Review of Human Research Ethics Application Forms from University Staff and Research Students \(Masters and PhD\)](#); and
  - [Procedures for External Research Requesting Access to MTU Research Participants](#);
- [Intellectual Property Policy](#);
- [Open Access Policy](#);
- [Research Data Management Policy](#);
- [Signing Authority for MTU IP and Innovation Agreements](#).

In November 2022, the new MTU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) replaced the two hitherto separate legacy research ethics committees of the antecedent institutions. With a membership drawn from all six MTU campuses, HREC has responsibility for reviewing applications for research study involving human participants on the basis of the [Procedures for Review of Human Research Ethics Application Forms from University Staff and Research Students \(Masters and PhD\)](#) and the [Procedures for External Research Requesting Access to MTU Research Participants](#).

All research-related policies and procedures are published in the Policies and Publications – Academic section on the MTU website (link [here](#)).

Further guidance and access to a wealth of additional resources is provided to researchers on the dedicated [Research Integrity](#) and [Research Ethics](#) web pages of the University.

## b. Strengthening MTU Research Integrity Culture

To strengthen the existing positive research culture and support MTU researchers to continue carrying out research and knowledge transfer activities with integrity against a backdrop of a changing external R&I landscape, MTU has created the post of designated Research Integrity & Compliance Officer (RICO). Reporting to the Vice-President Research & Innovation, the RICO promotes the responsible conduct of research, contribute to the development and implementation of MTU's research policies, and collaborates with relevant offices and postholders to ensure MTU's research training includes adequate coverage of research integrity and the ramifications of research misconduct.

All research-active staff and research students in MTU are required to undertake research integrity training. Coordinated by the Research Offices, this training is delivered online via [Epigeum](#) and includes a robust certification framework based on the key learner outcomes.

MTU researchers also have the option of registering on a credit-bearing module entitled [Fostering Research Integrity](#) (10 ECTS credits, Expert level). This module counts towards the credit requirements of MTU's Structured PhD programme, which is applicable to PhD students across all disciplines.

Postgraduate research students also have access to other research-specific training available within MTU, such as the offerings of the [MTU Libraries](#). A suite of digital badges is on offer for completing training units on topics such as the research ethics application process, research data management, and responsible dissemination.

## 5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

### 5.1 Recruitment and Professional Development of Staff

#### a. Policy and Procedures for Staff Recruitment, Induction and Progression

The MTU Human Resources Office has a detailed plan in place for development of aligned processes for the recruitment, induction, progression and professional development of the University's staff. Pending completion and approval of an aligned MTU Recruitment and Selection Policy, which is under development, the existing legacy recruitment and selection policies of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) continue to apply in respect of MTU staff on the respective campuses.

A change to legacy selection procedures already implemented across all campuses concerns approval levels. In the antecedent institutions, the procedures approved by each of the Governing Bodies required all appointments to be approved by the Governing Body. Since designation, only appointments to posts at grade Senior Lecturer II (SLII) or Assistant Principal Officer (APO) require Governing Body approval.

On the operational level, as an outcome of the CoreHR system merger project, recruitment processes have been aligned between the campus locations, and a unified online employment application process is in place.

Members of internal interview boards are provided with a guidance manual designed to facilitate the interview process, for instance by outlining appropriate interview questions.

In order to 'gender-proof' recruitment, selection and promotion procedures and practices, MTU (Cork) has provided unconscious bias training to all staff who are routinely called upon to sit on interview boards, including Heads of Department and Heads of School. Originally provided by an external organisation, the unconscious bias training programme is now being rolled out by MTU (Cork) staff following upskilling and the plan is to roll this out to MTU (Kerry) under the Train-the-Trainer initiative.

Further procedural changes in relation to recruitment may arise from the review of the recruitment and selection processes in the technological higher education sector, which is currently underway with a view to rendering the process simpler and more efficient.

#### b. Continuous Professional Development for Academic Staff

MTU makes provision for staff development for all categories of staff, and its staff development programme is addressed at all staff groups. Each academic unit is allocated funding for staff development, which is generally used to fund attendance at conferences and seminars for staff members of that unit.

Staff may apply for funding to pursue further, part-time academic studies in MTU or in other higher education institutions, mainly on Masters or doctoral programmes. All staff development funding applications require the approval of the head of the relevant academic or administrative unit. Academic units and central university functions may also apply for funding for dedicated short courses, workshops and seminars designed to meet specific identified staff development needs. Depending on the nature of the requirements, these may be confined to a particular department or may be interdepartmental.

Finally, the continuous development of the professional and pedagogical competence of academic staff forms an important part of the activities of the [Teaching & Learning Unit \(TLU\)](#) in MTU (Cork) and the Assistant Registrar's Office (Kerry). CPD offerings in this space across the campuses range from full NQF Level 9 teaching and learning awards, the [Certificate in Effective Teaching in Higher Education \(SPA, 20 ECTS\)](#) and a part-time [MA in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education](#) to [national digital badges](#) and a wide range of short staff development seminars, workshops and guest speakers. Seed funding for academic department-

led teaching & learning initiatives is also available. MTU also facilitates learning communities and networking events, all offered in formats designed to maximise ease of access.

Supported by a number of national funding initiatives, MTU was able to develop and initiate several successful new staff CPD programmes in recent years which have since been mainstreamed. These include:

- [‘EAT-PD’: Enabling Academic Transitions through Professional Development](#)

This CPD programme, developed by the [Teaching & Learning Unit \(TLU\)](#), is aimed at new and early career academic staff who have been teaching full-time for three years or less (or equivalent). EAT-PD enables staff relatively new to teaching to develop their competencies in the classroom. The focus of this 15-week experiential programme (1 hour per week) is to expose staff, in a supportive and constructive environment, to a range of research-based teaching strategies that can be used to enhance lectures and support learning.

Initially funded through the Strategic Alignment of Teaching & Learning Enhancement (SATLE) Fund 2019, such was the success of the initial offering that it received mainstream funding within MTU from Semester 2, 2021/22 onwards, with planned offerings every semester going forward.

- [‘Elevate’ Leadership Development Programme](#)

Elevate is MTU’s bespoke leadership development programme, open to all staff members on all campuses.

Developed by the [TLU](#) in conjunction with the HR Managers and the MTU Transformation Office, this programme was delivered by the TLU for the first time in Semester 2 of 2022/23. Initially funded through HEA Systems Performance Funding and the Technological Universities Transformation Fund (TUTF), it is now funded through the Technological Sector Advancement Fund (TSAF).

Elevate is specifically aimed at staff in non-senior management roles and offers leadership skills training on a cohort basis, with particular emphasis on transformation, communication, planning and change in support of Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Student Engagement (TLASE). The project enables distributed leadership and emphasises collaboration, with a view to supporting the implementation of MTU strategy and personal or team professional objectives that align with this. Staff self-select one of three programme strands based on their previous experience of leadership, current and previous roles, and their interest in developing leadership skills: Leadership Fundamentals, Leadership Core, or Experiential Leadership.

Elevate is delivered on an annual basis, with 90, 157 and 120 participants respectively enrolled on each of the three deliveries to date, many of whom from the administrative and technical staff of MTU.

### c. Recruitment and Development of Researchers

MTU is a two-time holder of the [EURAXESS](#) HR Excellence in Research Award (achieved by its predecessor institution Cork Institute of Technology in 2017 and 2019 respectively), recognising the institutional commitment to the adoption and realisation of the 40 principles of the European Charter for the Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (‘Charter & Code’), and showcasing MTU internationally as a favourable working environment for researchers. MTU is working towards a renewal of this EURAXESS award on a whole-University basis, which will recognise MTU’s progress in supporting researchers at all career stages.

In line with MTU's strategic goals of strengthening and extending research activities and engaging and empowering staff, the University recognises the need for research units to be in a position to recruit talented researchers as expeditiously as possible while adhering to best practice in recruitment, selection and provision of opportunities for professional development.

A significant milestone towards full implementation of the EC 'Charter & Code' was the adoption of an 'OTM-R' (open, transparent and merit-based) Researcher Recruitment Policy for MTU, detailing every step of the recruitment process, from advertising to appointment. Other actions include appointment of a HR staff member dedicated solely to researcher recruitment, provision of MTU graduate internships for research positions, and provision of paid student work placement opportunities in one of the research centres or groups.

## 5.2 Staff Wellbeing and Support

A number of MTU human resources policies to support staff in different life circumstances who may require leave, as well as an [MTU Annual Leave Policy](#), have been finalised and put in place University-wide at the point of writing. These are available from the Policies and Publications – HR section of the MTU website (link [here](#)).

MTU also has in place a [MTU Dignity and Respect Policy](#) and associated [Dignity and Respect Procedure](#), which have the distinction of being the first common policy documents to be approved upon MTU designation.

The Dignity and Respect Policy establishes the right of staff and students of MTU to be treated with dignity and respect and commits the University to ensuring that staff and students can work and learn in a positive and safe environment free from all forms of bullying, harassment, victimisation and sexual harassment. The linked procedural document sets out the process for making complaints related to issues covered by the policy and the steps towards achieving a resolution.

MTU offers ongoing support for the mental wellbeing of its staff members through its Employee Assistance Service (EAS), now provided by [Spectrum.Life](#). The assistance service is designed to support employees with personal or work-related concerns through telephone support, specialist information and face-to-face counselling. Beyond fully anonymised usage level data, no information on service use is shared with MTU. Information on the service and the associated wellbeing platform/app is available in the MTU Staff Wellbeing space on the internal Workvivo staff portal.

Building on nationally recognised, impactful legacy health promotion entities on both the MTU (Cork) and (Kerry) campuses, MTU and University College Cork jointly signed the HEA Healthy Campus Charter and Framework (link [here](#)) in January 2023. The institutions further agreed to embark on a research collaboration to inform the implementation of the Charter principles at each institution, enabling the research to draw on health and wellbeing data from substantial cohorts of both student and staff participants. Funding was subsequently allocated via the HEA Technological Sector Advancement Fund (TSAF) to support continued expansion of 'A Healthy MTU' (AHMTU) as a whole-university initiative. AHMTU is jointly directed by staff of the Department of Sport, Leisure & Childhood Studies, supported by an operational AHMTU Team with representation from both Cork and Kerry campuses, in addition to a whole-university Advisory Group. TSAF funding has also supported the appointment of a designated Senior Researcher and the continued expansion of a bespoke portfolio of health projects within MTU's HEX-SPO Research Group in Health, Exercise & Sport Sciences to inform and evaluate AHMTU. Pertinent research-informed campus activities have included a bespoke 'A Healthy MTU' Roadshow (February 2025), with a varied programme of health and wellbeing initiatives for students and staff on both Cork and Kerry campuses. The AHMTU Co-Directors recently served

on a national consortium to develop the HEA's Healthy Campus Self-Evaluation Tool (link [here](#)); AHMTU is furthermore represented on the HEA Student and Staff Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group.

Finally, a new [MTU Hormonal Health Policy](#) and [Hormonal Health Toolkit](#) were recently put in place. The policy and toolkit aim to create awareness of hormonal health issues in the workplace which could potentially affect many MTU staff members; offer guidance for staff experiencing challenges, as well as their colleagues and manager; and provide guidance on practical measures to increase the wellbeing of staff members affected.

## 5.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

### a. EDI Policies, Procedures and Awareness-Raising Activities

As an employer and higher education provider, MTU not only has the responsibility of adhering to legislative requirements regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, but – as importantly – of doing so in a manner that is visible to all. Relevant pieces of legislation include the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (2005), the Equal Status Acts (2000-2018), the Employment Equality Acts (1998-2015), the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act (2014), and the Gender Recognition Act (2015), which inform all aspects of staff recruitment and management.

As outlined in [Part A, Section 2.2.2 a \(iii\)](#) above, implementation of EDI principles across the activities of the University is underpinned and guided by the new [MTU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#), adopted in November 2024. This is complemented by the [MTU Equality Statement 2024 to 2028](#) which summarises MTU's commitments to enabling access and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in line with Section 19 of the 2018 TU Act and other national legislation, as well as MTU's own Strategic Plan (link [here](#)).

The EDI policy aims to ensure that the University community is representative of all sections of society and that each member of the community is respected and valued and able to give their best as a result, thus supporting the University to fulfil its legal obligations and public sector equality and human rights duty.

Various training, policy development and communications activities and greater student and staff participation in EDI research support MTU in communicating legislative requirements and acceptable behaviours and in fostering active support for 'living' EDI principles among the members of the university. Activities designed to raise awareness for equality, diversity and inclusion issues are organised by a number of MTU services and the MTU Students' Union. Not least, Equity/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion also forms one of eight educational pillars of MTU's curriculum framework entitled [An Inclusive Curriculum for a Sustainable Future](#) (see e.g. [PART A Section 2.1.2](#)).

The [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) team](#) plays a key role in ensuring the promotion and mainstreaming of equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout MTU. Comprised of two full time members – an EDI Manager and an EDI Officer – and led by the Chair of the Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team, the EDI team drives key equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives, projects and events while also working with colleagues within and outside of MTU on the implementation of MTU's strategic goals in relation to EDI.

In January 2024, a Sexual Violence & Harassment Prevention (SVHP) Officer began at MTU, leading on training and awareness activities around sexual consent, gender-based violence and sexual assault, and supporting members of the University with disclosures. The EDI team collaborates on regular basis with the SVHP Officer, along with the Access Offices, Disability Support Services, Student Counselling, Societies, Teaching & Learning functions, and Students' Union on collaborative initiatives such as the Code Red Period Dignity Project or the

EDI Roadshows held on all campuses to raise awareness of existing EDI-related initiatives or supports. (For additional information on initiatives to prevent sexual violence and harassment, see [Part B Section 2.2 e.](#))

EDI-related initiatives include installation of a Progress Pride window decal in the Administration Building on the main Cork campus in February 2024, to make a public demonstration of MTU as a safe and inclusive environment for our LGBT+ community.

Pending the implementation of University-wide Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy, the [Student Change of Details Regulations](#), published in the Policies and Regulations – Academic section of the MTU Website (link [here](#)), sets out the processes by which transgender and otherwise gender-transitioning students may request a change of their personal details in the University’s records.

Saved [Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy](#) however continues in force on the MTU (Kerry) campuses; see Section A13.9 of the MTU (Kerry) Quality Assurance Procedures (link [here](#)).

## b. Gender Equality

### i. Athena Swan

Following successful application in November 2023, MTU now holds its first Athena Swan Bronze Award as a new university (published [here](#)).

This institutional achievement builds on a previous Athena Swan Bronze Legacy Award received by MTU in 2021, on foot of the Bronze award having been achieved by – then – Cork Institute of Technology in 2019. Receiving this prestigious accreditation paves the way for future improvements to equality to be made an institutional level, and also allows individual university departments to seek departmental awards. The application process included undertaking an institutional EDI Survey; collating and analysing all evidence required to meet the submission requirements; and compiling and committing to a comprehensive evidence-based, four-year plan to improve equality for all MTU staff and students.

The [Athena Swan Charter](#) was launched in the United Kingdom in 2005 by [AdvanceHE](#), a sector-owned charity working with higher education institutions globally to improve higher education for staff, students and society, and was extended to Ireland in 2015 with funding from the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Adoption of the Charter commits higher education and research institutions to removing barriers that contribute to gender-based underrepresentation and to taking a targeted approach to address issues of both internal and external origin. Initially focused on female academic staff in STEMM areas (science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine), the Charter was transformed and expanded in 2021 to include all staff and students, with specific awareness of intersectional inequalities and the experiences of MTU’s trans and non-binary community. Achievement of an Athena Swan Bronze Award requires a thorough analysis of institutional data, policies and procedures, identification of key issues, and the creation and implementation of a three-year action plan to address the issues identified.

The national Gender Equality Taskforce has noted that engagement with the Athena Swan process has been transformative for Irish HEIs and has encouraged institutions to work towards obtaining a Silver- and, eventually, Gold-level award by demonstrating progressive levels of achievement in relation to the embedding and promotion of gender equality and evidence of impact against challenges from actions implemented. While cognisant of the growing momentum around Athena Swan certification, the taskforce has also recognised that, owing to revised application requirements which have increased the workload involved, the original timelines may not be achievable for institutions. Some additional detail on the Bronze Award application process in MTU is provided in [Part B Section 1.1 d.](#)

*ii. Aurora Leadership Initiative*

A number of female staff members are invited annually to avail of the Advance HE [Aurora Leadership Development Initiative](#). There were ten participants in 2023/24, an increase of four on 2022/23. MTU is committed to continue participation in the Advance HE Aurora programme on an annual basis to support female leadership among its staff going forward.

*iii. Strategic Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI)*

Following a successful application to the first call under the Strategic Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI), MTU has one SALI postholder at Senior Lecturer III, the grade at which SALI posts in the Technological Higher Education (THE) sector were pegged. However, as noted in MTU's Athena Swan submission (November 2023), there is a gender imbalance in the grades of Senior Lecturer I/III and, to a lesser extent, SLII, when compared with the breakdown for Assistant Lecturer/Lecturer grades.

## 6.0 Information and Data Management

### 6.1 Staff and Student Record Systems

Core learner, graduate and staff data are collated in MTU's Banner Student and CORE HR Staff Records Systems. Relevant Banner and CORE data are made available to authorised users in the faculties, schools and the central administration for purposes of managing and quality assuring the provision and related supports as necessary.

A single, merged CORE HR system is now in place.

Version 9 of the Banner Student Record System (SRS) has been implemented on all MTU campuses, following a University-wide upgrade to this version in 2023 (and an initial upgrade to Banner V8.5 on the Cork campuses earlier in the academic year 2022/23).

The Kerry campuses have used Banner and the functionality provided therein as its sole student record management system from AY 2001/02.

Previously on the Cork campuses, many critical aspects of the student lifecycle ran in stand-alone systems. An intensive and substantial programme of work has taken place to replace these separate systems with an integrated set of processes using the Banner system, so that Banner is the single student record system for the whole student life cycle.

In 2022/23, the Curriculum Advising and Programme Planning (CAPP) Compliance and Banner processes for examination results processing and graduation, which had been in use in MTU (Kerry) for many years, were also implemented on the MTU (Cork) campuses.

The MTU (Cork) legacy broadsheets system has now been retired, and all broadsheets are processed via Banner. However, there remain differences between the business processes in the MTU (Kerry) and MTU (Cork) systems during what is still a transition phase. For example, the timings of grade roll vary. Also, changes agreed by Progression & Awards Boards are processed 'live' in Kerry, while they are processed post the board meeting in Cork. As a consequence, the timeline for completion of processing, including issue of results, varies. Ultimately, the aim is to move to the 'live changes' across the University, and to achieve a more streamlined, consistent and efficient experience for staff and students.

At present, while all student records are now housed in Banner V9, there are still two instances of the system in MTU. Merger is envisaged to be completed in 2026; ahead of that, the Banner Merger Project Team is progressing the alignment of all Banner-related processes, including curriculum management, examination timetabling, room timetabling, and examination paper management. Completion of this alignment work is essential for progressing the final phase of the Banner Upgrade and Merger Programme, the merger of the pre-existing Banner systems of the Cork and Kerry campuses into one unified student records system for the University.

### 6.2 Information and Data Management and Freedom of Information

Soon after TU designation, the MTU Governing Body approved a suite of policies in relation to Information and Data Management. All published information and data management policies may be obtained from the Policies and Publications – Data Protection section of the MTU website (link [here](#)).

The [Information Governance Policy](#) provides direction on the classification, ownership, deletion and retention of data and information for the University as well as clarifying accountability for data and information. Data and information as pertaining to this policy includes electronic and non-electronic data. MTU is reliant upon the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of its data and information to successfully

conduct its operations, meet student and staff/faculty expectations, and provide services. All staff, students, and external parties of the University have a responsibility to protect University data and information from unauthorized generation, access, modification, disclosure, transmission, or destruction and are expected to be familiar with and comply with this policy. University data and information is an important asset and resource. All data and information is categorised according to appropriate needs for protection, handling and compliance with regulatory requirements. The purpose of classification is to ensure that data and information is managed in a manner appropriate to the risks associated with ensuring that it remains reliable, trustworthy and available for appropriate use. It is also provided to make staff aware of their responsibilities for the protection of sensitive/confidential data and information and that access to such data and information should be restricted to appropriate authorised personal that require this access and that personal information is only disclosed to third parties as it applies.

MTU is committed to complying with all applicable data protection, privacy and security laws and regulations (collectively referred to as requirements) in the locations in which it operates. In Europe, the data protection requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into effect on May 25, 2018.

MTU's [Data Protection Policy](#) creates a common core set of values, principles and procedures intended to achieve a standard set of universal compliance parameters based on GDPR.

The [Data Retention Policy](#) ensures that the University applies retention periods appropriately and retains data only for the period for which it is allowed.

The security and protection of MTU assets, facilities and staff are fundamental to the efficient and effective operations of the University. The [Data Handling and Clean Desk Policy](#) establishes the minimum requirements for handling data and maintaining a "Clean desk", i.e. a work space where sensitive/critical information about University employees, students, University intellectual property, and University vendors is handled correctly, is secure in locked areas and out of sight. The [Data Protection – Breach Response Policy](#) applies throughout the Organisation in the event of a personal information/data breach. The [Data Access Management and Privileged User Policy](#) ensures that processes and tools are in place to manage secure access to critical information, manage the lifecycle of systems and application accounts, and to manage administrative privileges on computers, networks and applications.

Implementation of GDPR across MTU is overseen by a Data Protection Officer both on the MTU (Cork) and Kerry campuses. In addition to the GDPR-related duties, the Data Protection Officer also processes any freedom of information requests made to MTU (Cork) / CIT.

Pursuant to Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, the [FOI section of the MTU website](#) sets out key public information on the University under the FoI Publication Scheme, including on its public services, decision-making processes and procurement policy. Contact information for making Freedom of Information requests is also provided.

## 6.3 IT Policy and Systems

A number of policies in relation to the management and protection of the University's IT systems have also been adopted by MTU and are available in the Policies and Publications – IT section of the MTU website ([link here](#)).

The MTU [Information Security Policy](#) sets out the overall approach to information security. It provides a security model aimed at implementing best practices to protect information assets from unauthorized use and at providing the required controls by protecting data confidentiality, where sensitivity warrants this. In addition, the policy is concerned with the integrity of data, to ensure its completeness and accuracy regardless of confidentiality and criticality; with the availability of data, so that it is accessible as and when

required; and with protecting the work and study environment of staff and students and the good name and reputation of MTU.

The [Third Party IT Engagement Policy](#) sets out the conditions that must be met to ensure the security of University data and resources are maintained when a third party is engaged to provide a service while the [Staff Machine Replacement Policy](#) ensures that the machines connecting to the University's network are not posing an increased risk to the University's staff and students.

## 7.0 Public Information and Communication

The main repository for public information about MTU is the [MTU website](#). The website allows prospective students and other stakeholders to obtain comprehensive information about the University and its [six campuses](#), [campus life](#) as an MTU student, and the MTU [programme portfolio](#). MTU's programmes can be accessed and searched from anywhere on the MTU website, and all programme listings link through to the full current approved specifications for MTU programmes and modules.

The mission, vision and values of the University are outlined in several sections of the MTU website as well as in a number of published documents, first and foremost of which is the [MTU Strategic Plan Our Shared Vision 2022-2027](#). The MTU website also records the University's commitment to [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) and to the implementation of [Universal Design](#) principles. MTU's lived commitment to [Sustainability & Community](#) is showcased on the [MTU Green Campus website](#).

Interested stakeholders may furthermore access information on MTU's [Research](#) and [Innovation and Enterprise](#) ecosystem and on various [opportunities for engaging and partnering](#) with the University.

Policies, reports and public records related to the governance and quality assurance activities of the University are available through the [Governance](#) section of the MTU website, which provides access to relevant [Governing Body](#) and [Academic Council](#) documentation as well as the current [Policies and Publications](#) of the University.

Currently, the MTU website still links to the legacy websites of the two predecessor institutions where this remains relevant; thus, the [Policies and Publications – Academic](#) section provides links to the remaining Campus Policies of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry). These links are being iteratively phased out as new common content is added to the MTU website itself on a phased basis.

As part of its commitment to reduce its impact on the environment, MTU has been reducing the volume of its printed programme literature. Full printed programme prospectuses were phased out at the end of the 2022/23 academic year and replaced by a [digital MTU Prospectus builder](#). A Quick Entry Guide with summary programme listings is still being distributed in printed and pdf formats. Information on the University and its programmes of study is also disseminated via different social media outlets, including the [MTU Facebook](#), [MTU Twitter](#) and [MTU Instagram](#) pages and the [MTU Youtube](#) channel; MTU also has a presence on [LinkedIn](#).

In addition to MTU's expanded online presence, the University continues to hold regular in-person information events both on its campuses and in an outreach format, such as Open Days, a Postgraduate Fair, Mature Student Evenings or Roadshows, and is also represented at national third-level exhibitions such as Higher Options.

The Marketing Unit, currently in the Office of the Vice-President for External Affairs, works with members of the University to enhance MTU's image and visibility amongst its external stakeholders and to ensure that MTU projects a consistent, high-quality message to the outside world. It provides services in advertising, branding and marketing; publications, design and print; public relations; student recruitment; and digital services.

The [Digital Accessibility Index](#) gives valuable insights into the digital accessibility of key areas in Ireland's public sector, including government parties, education, housing, healthcare, and of Ireland's leading companies. The 2023 audit presented stark findings: only 27% of the websites of Ireland's top 100 companies can be used by people with disabilities, a 1% decrease from the previous year's review. Similarly, 95% of Ireland's top university and secondary school websites were found to be inaccessible. MTU was one out of just four educational institutions, out of 39 reviewed, which passed.

## 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

### 8.1 Internal Governance Audit and Review

Immediately upon University designation, the Governing Body of MTU at its first meeting established an Audit & Risk Committee to assist the Governing Body in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities regarding risk management, internal control and internal audit, as set out in the [MTU Code of Governance](#) adopted in January 2021 and the Technological Universities Act 2018.

### 8.2 External Academic Quality Monitoring and Review Cycles

The internal academic quality assurance system of MTU is systematically linked into external quality assurance cycles at the national level through a number of mechanisms.

Chief amongst these are the annual reports – including the present Annual Quality Report – to the two statutory agencies with legal and regulatory responsibilities for Irish further and higher education, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) (link to QQI's Quality Monitoring web page [here](#)) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) (link to the HEA Performance Management web page [here](#)). The reports are complemented by cyclical dialogue meetings with each agency and a schedule of external institutional audits (commissioned by the HEA) respectively major cyclical institutional reviews (overseen by QQI; see the [Quality Review](#) page on the QQI website). The engagement of MTU with each agency is governed and bounded by the statutes, national strategies and government policies which determine the remit of each authority vis-à-vis the Irish higher education providers.

The ongoing formal and semi-formal engagement of MTU with the HEA, the statutory planning and development body for further and higher education, encompasses an annual programmes & budgets process and strategic dialogue as well as other HEA-sponsored programmes, initiatives and functional audits.

The integrity and effectiveness of the overall quality assurance and governance framework of Irish higher education providers is reviewed through cyclical Institutional Reviews organised and overseen by QQI, entitled 'CINNTE' Reviews during the most recent, multi-year review cycle which commenced in 2018. MTU successfully completed its first whole-University CINNTE review following TU designation in March 2024. The [MTU Institutional Review Report](#) of the independent international CINNTE Review Team and a summary [MTU Quality Profile](#) were published on the QQI website in September 2024. For further details on the 2024 CINNTE review process at Munster Technological University, see [Part B Section 1.1 c](#) below.

With regard to the evaluation of the student experience, the key instrument at a national level is the annual '[StudentSurvey.ie](#)' in which all public higher education providers in Ireland have been participating since its inception in 2013. The outcomes of the student survey are analysed by the University and discussed by the Academic Council and other relevant units. Through funding awarded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning, the recently launched [SUCCEED – Standardising the Use, Communication and Capability of StudentSurvey.ie Data](#) project aims to make StudentSurvey.ie data more accessible at academic unit and programme level and therefore provide an evidence-based mechanism to close the feedback loop.

The annual [HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey](#) is also carried out by the University, and the results are made available to the faculties for analysis.

## 8.3 Internal Quality Monitoring and Periodic Review

Pending adoption of common MTU policy on monitoring and periodic review, the saved legacy policies and procedures of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) remain partially in place in the different campus locations, with local amendment. Current saved policies which remain in force may be accessed from the Quality Assurance Procedures web page of MTU (Kerry) and the Academic Regulations and Policies web page of MTU (Cork) respectively.

### c. Ongoing Monitoring of Academic Programmes

Ongoing programme monitoring is a core responsibility of the MTU Programme Boards / Course Boards. At MTU (Kerry), the primary policies for ongoing monitoring of programmes are published in Section A6, Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes, of the [MTU \(Kerry\) Regulations](#). The procedures for programme monitoring are incorporated into Sub-Section A6.2, Course Boards, which outlines the functions of the Course Boards regarding, inter alia, the academic standards, including the examinations, assessment, delivery, content of the programmes, and the monitoring of learners. Related policies and procedures governing [School Boards \(A6.1\)](#) – to which Course Boards report –, the [Course Programme Handbook \(A6.4\)](#) and the representation and role of [students on Course Boards \(A6.6\)](#) remain in force.

In MTU (Cork), continuous monitoring of academic programmes is carried out by the individual Programme Boards in accordance with the Annual Programme Status Review process, guided by the [MTU \(Cork\) Policy and Procedure for the Annual Programme Status Review \(APSR\)](#), published on the Academic Regulations and Policies web page of MTU (Cork) (link [here](#)). Programme boards are required to report annually on programme development and enhancement measures. To support and guide the boards, an Enterprise Reporting Portal has been implemented in MTU (Cork) to provide authorised users with a standardised report template for each programme. Each template is pre-populated with key performance data for the relevant programme drawn down automatically from the Banner SRS (see [Policy Appendix B: Sample Template for Programme Review Report \(CAO\)](#)), although the recent stepped transition to Version 9 of Banner has temporarily disrupted data access through the portal. In their analysis of programme performance, the programme boards consider qualitative feedback from different sources – such as external examiner reports – as well as a range of quantitative performance indicators (applications and acceptances, enrolment and retention, student and graduate performance).

### d. Faculty Enhancement Review Process

The review of MTU's programme portfolio will be undertaken as part of the University's new Faculty Enhancement Review (FER) process. The FER process is informed by MTU's experience of the CINNTE Review. In essence, FER evaluates the quality assurance procedures within the faculty under review whilst also exploring how the faculty has enhanced its teaching, learning and research. FER affords each faculty an opportunity to step back from the day-to-day business of programme delivery and management to reflect, in a multi-campus context, on the current status and envisaged future direction of the faculty in the context of the strategic development of the University and the wider environment. The approach taken will, therefore, be forward-looking; retrospective review will focus on the period since designation in the first instance. Thus, the term 'period under review' will generally refer to the period since designation in the initial cycle of FE Reviews, although the faculty and/or its constituent departments may refer to, comment on, and review developments prior to designation if they so wish.

FER evaluates the effectiveness of how the faculty implements University policies and procedures for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and enhancing the quality of the education, research and

related services that the faculty provides. Such reviews are coordinated by the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar and underpinned by the relevant sections of the TU Act 2018. FER measures faculty accountability for compliance with University standards for quality assurance, and adherence to other relevant policies and procedures as established in MTU. The review explores faculty enhancement of quality in relation to impacts on teaching, learning, research, engagement, faculty achievements and innovations in quality assurance, and alignment to the University's mission and strategy.

MTU considers ongoing reviews and updating of its programmes to be an integral part of its quality assurance mechanisms, ensuring that the University's programmes are relevant to learners and contribute to the wider economic, academic and social context. Thus, academic staff continually update and further develop modules and programmes, design new modules and programmes in response to rapidly emerging market needs, and critically evaluate programmes which no longer address a real need.

These processes need to be accompanied and supported by academic quality procedures which are robust and flexible enough to maintain and improve the quality of established programmes, while not stifling their vitality or hindering the momentum for change.

FER is built on a self-study by the relevant faculty, complemented by meetings of the Faculty Enhancement Review Panel with staff, students and other stakeholders. A key question for the Faculty Enhancement Review Panel throughout will be if there is sufficient evidence of a thorough, effective and reflective self-review which identifies opportunities and challenges, addresses shortcomings, and which lays the foundations for a successful development of the faculty and its programme portfolio over the next five years.

At the recommendation of the University Executive, Academic Council has agreed that the Faculty of Creative & Performing Arts and Media and the Faculty of Business will be the first two faculties to undergo Faculty Enhancement Review. It is envisaged that these two faculties would complete FER in the academic year 2025/26. Proposed timelines for the Faculties of Health & Social Sciences, Engineering, and Science & Informatics are being worked out at present. Proposed timelines for the Faculties of Health & Social Sciences, Engineering, and Science & Informatics are being worked out at present.

## 8.4 Engagement with Professional and Other External Quality Frameworks

As described earlier in this report, MTU systematically engages with a number of other external quality frameworks.

Some of these are engagements sought by MTU to streamline and certify particular function- or area-specific management processes. These include certification of the management and quality system of NMCI under ISO 9001-2015.

MTU also engages with the discipline-specific external QA frameworks for regulated professions under the remit of CORU (Social Care Work, Biomedical Science, Nursing) or the International Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) overseen by the Marine Survey Office (Nautical Science, Marine Engineering, Marine Electrotechnology). In certain joint postgraduate programmes with University College Cork, the QA procedures of the Teaching Council also apply (Art & Design Education); these procedures are also taken into account in undergraduate programmes leading to single MTU awards which articulate with consecutive teacher training programmes at Masters level, such as the [BA \(Honours\) in Home Economics and Business](#).

Even where professional registration is not mandatory, the desirability of professional accreditation for graduates in fields such as Engineering, Architecture or Accountancy means that MTU regularly engages with many different professional QA frameworks maintained by representative professional bodies or

associations, both national and international. The engagement of the University with these professional quality frameworks may take different forms, but more often than not implies regular external review or audit of curricula, arrangements for programme delivery and the overall academic quality framework of MTU by the regulator or relevant professional body.

## 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

### 9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	33
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	0

<b>1. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
Name of body:	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science in Nautical Science; Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nautical Science; Bachelor of Engineering in Marine Engineering; Bachelor of Engineering in Marine Electrotechnology. <a href="https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/304632/47b95f85-974c-4d09-a8bd-24b85fec2ea.pdf#page=null">https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/304632/47b95f85-974c-4d09-a8bd-24b85fec2ea.pdf#page=null</a> . (Marine Notice No. 52 of 2024 / Schedule of

	Examinations for Certificate of Competency for Deck Officers, Marine Engineer Officers, Skippers and Second Hands September 2024 - July 2025). NB: "Date of accreditation or last review" entry represents the date of publication of Marine Notice 52 of 2024. <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/</a> ; <a href="https://www.nmci.ie/undergraduatecourses">https://www.nmci.ie/undergraduatecourses</a> .
Date of accreditation or last review	09/09/2024
Date of next review	

<b>2. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
Name of body:	Institute of Measurement & Control (InstMC)
Programme titles and links to publications	1. Higher Certificate in Science in Applied Physics and Instrumentation - EngTech; 2. Higher Certificate in Science in Industrial Measurement & Control - EngTech; 3. Bachelor of Science in Instrumentation and PLC Systems - IEng FL; 4. Bachelor of Science in Applied Physics and Instrumentation - IEng; 5. Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Applied Physics and Instrumentation - CEng partial; 6. Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Industrial Physics (Joint Award of MTU and UCC; closed for new intakes) - CEng partial; 7. Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Instrument Engineering - CEng partial. <a href="https://www.instm.org/careers_learning/accreditation.aspx">https://www.instm.org/careers_learning/accreditation.aspx</a> ; <a href="https://physicalsciences.mtu.ie">https://physicalsciences.mtu.ie</a> .
Date of accreditation or last review	30/06/2023
Date of next review	30/06/2028

<b>3. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
Name of body:	CORU (Health & Social Care Professionals Council)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts in Social Care Work. <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt573/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt573/</a> ; <a href="https://coru.ie/health-and-social-care-professionals/education/approved-qualifications/social-care-workers/">https://coru.ie/health-and-social-care-professionals/education/approved-qualifications/social-care-workers/</a> .
Date of accreditation or last review	28/05/2024
Date of next review	31/12/2026

<b>4. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
Name of body:	Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP)

Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling & Psychotherapy. <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/crhcoun8/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/crhcoun8/</a> ; <a href="https://www.iacp.ie/register-of-accredited-courses">https://www.iacp.ie/register-of-accredited-courses</a> .
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2023
Date of next review	31/12/2026

<b>5. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
Name of body:	Irish Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (IACP)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts in Counselling with Addiction; Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling with Addiction (Collaborative Programme with Galilee House of Studies, Athy, Co. Kildare). <a href="https://www.iacp.ie/register-of-accredited-courses">https://www.iacp.ie/register-of-accredited-courses</a> ; <a href="https://www.galileehouseofstudies.ie/">https://www.galileehouseofstudies.ie/</a> ; <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt925/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt925/</a> .
Date of accreditation or last review	21/11/2024
Date of next review	21/11/2030

<b>6. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical and Automation Engineering; Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering. <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt834/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt834/</a> ; <a href="https://www.engineersireland.ie/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=VnCbdHKwV2w%3d&amp;portalid=0&amp;resourceView=1">https://www.engineersireland.ie/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=VnCbdHKwV2w%3d&amp;portalid=0&amp;resourceView=1</a> .
Date of accreditation or last review	30/05/2023
Date of next review	30/05/2025

<b>7. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
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Name of body:	CIPD
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts in Human Resource Management (Level 7). <a href="https://mtu.akarisoftware.com/index.cfm/page/course/courseId/1893">https://mtu.akarisoftware.com/index.cfm/page/course/courseId/1893</a> . <a href="https://findacentre.cipd.org/search/p2?qualificationType=accredited&amp;typeOfStudy&amp;country=ireland&amp;searchTownCountry&amp;lat&amp;lng&amp;city2">https://findacentre.cipd.org/search/p2?qualificationType=accredited&amp;typeOfStudy&amp;country=ireland&amp;searchTownCountry&amp;lat&amp;lng&amp;city2</a> .
Date of accreditation or last review	11/09/2023
Date of next review	01/05/2028

<b>8. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
Name of body:	CIPD
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Arts in Human Resource Management (Level 9). <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/crbhrmn9/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/crbhrmn9/</a> . <a href="https://findacentre.cipd.org/search/p2?qualificationType=accredited&amp;typeOfStudy&amp;country=ireland&amp;searchTownCountry&amp;lat&amp;lng&amp;city2">https://findacentre.cipd.org/search/p2?qualificationType=accredited&amp;typeOfStudy&amp;country=ireland&amp;searchTownCountry&amp;lat&amp;lng&amp;city2</a> .
Date of accreditation or last review	10/10/2023
Date of next review	01/05/2028

<b>9. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
Name of body:	Public Relations Institute of Ireland (PRII)

Programme titles and links to publications	MA in Public Relations with New Media. <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/crbprnm9/">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/crbprnm9/</a> ; <a href="https://www.prii.ie/">https://www.prii.ie/</a> ; <a href="https://www.prii.ie/about-prii/prii-accredited-third-level-pr-courses.html">https://www.prii.ie/about-prii/prii-accredited-third-level-pr-courses.html</a> .
Date of accreditation or last review	01/09/2023
Date of next review	31/08/2025

<b>10. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
Name of body:	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Business in Accounting; Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting (TL_BACCT_B). <a href="https://www.accaglobal.com/ie/en/help/exemptions-calculator.html">https://www.accaglobal.com/ie/en/help/exemptions-calculator.html</a>
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	31/12/2027

## 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	22
Joint/double/multiple awards	18
Collaborative programmes	22
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

1. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	MTU / University of Limerick / TU Dublin (CyberSkills.ie)
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Diploma in Science in Cybersecurity Operations <a href="https://cyberskills.ie/courses/pathways/higher-diploma-in-cyber-security-operations/">https://cyberskills.ie/courses/pathways/higher-diploma-in-cyber-security-operations/</a>
Date of last review	09/06/2023
Date of next review	31/08/2028

2. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	MTU / University College Cork (iEd Hub)
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in Regulated New Product Introduction & Technology Transfer (60 ECTS credits) <a href="https://www.mtu.ie/courses/crernpi9/#modules">https://www.mtu.ie/courses/crernpi9/#modules</a>
Date of last review	07/12/2023
Date of next review	31/08/2029

3. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme

Name of body (/bodies):	ATU (Lead Provider) / MTU / TUS / Dundalk IT / Irish MedTech Association
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering [Apprenticeship Mode] <a href="https://content.apprenticeship.ie/f/83224/x/d53410fd20/manufacturing-engineering-apprenticeships-trifold.pdf">https://content.apprenticeship.ie/f/83224/x/d53410fd20/manufacturing-engineering-apprenticeships-trifold.pdf</a> ; <a href="https://apprenticeship.ie/career-seekers/get-started/next-steps/engineering/advanced-manufacturing-engineering-l8">https://apprenticeship.ie/career-seekers/get-started/next-steps/engineering/advanced-manufacturing-engineering-l8</a>
Date of last review	30/04/2024
Date of next review	31/08/2029

## 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.

<b>Articulation agreements - Total number</b>	<b>14</b>
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<b>1. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technology, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Animation, Visual Effects and Motion Design; Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts; Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education and Care; Bachelor of Science in Health, Sport and Exercise Sciences; Bachelor of Arts in Coaching and Sports Performance; Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Health and Exercise Sciences with Massage Therapy; Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care; Bachelor of Business (Honours) Marketing/Accounting/Management; Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing with Software Development. <a href="https://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationFor/International/NonEUStudents/CanadianCollegesOntarioStudyPathways//">https://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationFor/International/NonEUStudents/CanadianCollegesOntarioStudyPathways//</a>
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	01/10/2023
Date of next review	30/09/2028
Detail of the agreement	To be eligible for consideration for entry to any programme, Algonquin College graduates will have achieved a minimum grade average of 60%. This requirement is subject to periodic review.

<b>2. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Durham College, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing with Software Development; Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts; Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education and Care; Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Animation, Visual Effects, and Motion Design; Bachelor of Science in Health, Sport and Exercise Sciences; Bachelor of Science in Coaching

	and Sports Performance; Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Health and Sports Sciences with Massage Therapy; Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Marketing/Accounting; Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Event Management. <a href="https://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationFor/International/NonEUStudents/CanadianCollegesOntarioStudyPathways/">https://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationFor/International/NonEUStudents/CanadianCollegesOntarioStudyPathways/</a> .
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	01/08/2024
Date of next review	31/08/2029
Detail of the agreement	To be eligible for consideration for entry to any programme, Durham College graduates will have achieved a minimum grade average of 60%. This requirement is subject to periodic review.

<b>3. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Fanshawe College, London, Ontario, Canada
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts; Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Marketing/Accounting/Management; Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Event Management; Bachelor of Science in Health, Sport and Exercise Sciences; Bachelor of Science in Coaching and Sports Performance; Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Health and Exercise Sciences with Massage Therapy; Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care. <a href="https://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationFor/International/NonEUStudents/CanadianCollegesOntarioStudyPathways/">https://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationFor/International/NonEUStudents/CanadianCollegesOntarioStudyPathways/</a> .
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	01/03/2024
Date of next review	31/03/2029
Detail of the agreement	To be eligible for consideration for entry to any programme, Fanshawe College graduates will have achieved a minimum grade average of 60%. This requirement is subject to periodic review.

<b>4. Articulation agreement</b>	<b>Articulation agreement</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	The Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education and Care; Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts; Bachelor of Science in Health, Sports and Exercise Sciences; Bachelor of Science in Coaching and Sports Performance; Bachelor of Science in Health and Exercise Sciences with Massage Therapy. <a href="https://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationFor/International/NonEUStudents/CanadianCollegesOntarioStudyPathways/">https://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationFor/International/NonEUStudents/CanadianCollegesOntarioStudyPathways/</a>
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	01/03/2024
Date of next review	31/05/2029
Detail of the agreement	To be eligible for consideration for entry to any programme, Humber College graduates will have achieved a minimum grade average of 60%. This requirement is subject to periodic review.

Munster Technological University (MTU)

2025

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**Annual Quality Report**  
**Munster Technological University (MTU)**  
**PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**  
**ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**  
**Reporting Period 2023-2024**

## **PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**

## 1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

### 1.1 Strategic QA Updates

#### a. MTU Executive Structure

The new MTU Executive Structure, design of which was completed in June 2022, encompasses 11 multi-campus roles: five Vice Presidents, five Faculty Deans, and a Chief Corporate Officer. Following a lengthy government approval process, sanction was granted in November 2023 for recruitment to commence. The posts were to be advertised in four tranches. Recruitment of the first two tranches got underway in early 2024, and appointments beyond this were dependent on further sanction from government.

Recruitment of the first six posts was completed by the end of the reporting period:

- Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar (appointed September 2024);
- Vice President Finance & Operations (appointed July 2024);
- Vice President Research & Innovation (appointed July 2024);
- Dean of Faculty of Creative & Performing Arts and Media (appointed October 2024);
- Dean of Faculty of Engineering (appointed August 2024);
- Chief Corporate Officer (appointed October 2024).

In January 2025, final sanction for the remaining five posts was announced by the Minister for Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. At the time of writing, recruitment of these posts - Vice President People & Culture, Vice President Engagement & Global, Dean of Faculty of Business, Dean of Faculty of Science & Informatics, and Dean of Faculty of Health and Social Sciences – is underway, in two tranches, and is expected to be completed by the end of this academic year. The executive recruitment firm Perrett Laver continues to support the process.

Whereas it had been initially envisaged that the full structure would be in place by the end of 2024, the process for government approval took longer than anticipated. The ensuing delay has impacted on progress on the detailed design and implementation of both the academic and professional services operating models, as well as being less than optimal for day-to-day university operations. Now that the final sanction has been granted, full implementation of the executive structure will enable the University to fully integrate across all campuses for the benefit of all students and staff now and long into the future.

#### b. TU Transformation Programme

Notwithstanding the impact of the delay in the implementation of the executive structure on the other related workstreams of MTU's TU Transformation Programme, progress was made on various items during the reporting period.

The TU Transformation Programme had been supported from 2021 to 2023 by KPMG, engaged by MTU as external advisory support following two separate tender processes.

In late 2022/23, as KPMG completed its contract, MTU established an internal team to support the TU Transformation programme. Two management-level posts of Change Management Integration Facilitators (Academic / Administrative), filled via internal competition, were put in place. The main areas of focus for the Change Management Integration Facilitators are the detailed design and implementation of the Professional Services Operating Model and the implementation of the Academic Operating Model, high-level design of which was completed in June 2023.

Since their appointment, the CMI Facilitators have worked closely with staff across the university and developed strong working relationships across all campuses. From the outset, the main focus was on building

relationships and trust (initially through on-the-ground engagement with academic and PMSS managers on an individual basis), communications, gathering feedback and providing fora for staff engagement. Building on this, the Facilitators worked closely with management and staff through a series of staff workshops to develop plans for the year, reviewing and aligning processes, organisational structures, and quality assurance frameworks, amongst other areas.

The two workstreams developing the Academic Operating Model and the Professional and Management Support Services (PMSS) Operating Model have been designed to run in parallel, based on their interdependent nature. As they progress, the degree of 'cross-talking' between them has increased, and it is clear that the intersection of the two will be key to establishing effective support for the academic structures.

Accordingly, a Transformation Implementation Group (TIG) was established, in September 2023, to oversee the PMSS and Academic Change Management Integration Programmes. Comprising the relevant Executive Sponsors, the two CMI Facilitators, a Communications Specialist, and the two Directors of the Transformation Office, the group's duties are to review progress, discuss issues arising, agree prioritisation and planning, and consider communications.

The TIG meets on a fortnightly basis and reports to the University Executive. As items are progressed, proposals arising therefrom are recommended to the University Executive for final approval. In 2023/24, for example:

- During 2023, high-level organisational reviews of External Engagement, Research and Graduate Studies took place. An end-to-end design of the Research function was completed and is now being implemented, supported by TU RISE funding. As part of this work, a proposal for the establishment of the MTU Graduate Research School was developed. To progress this, the CMI Facilitators convened and supported a working group to review previous structures in Cork and Kerry and identify an optimum model for MTU. Significant engagement was also undertaken with Heads of School, Heads of Department, Heads of Research Centres, research supervisors, and postgraduate research students to gather feedback which was then incorporated into the proposal. Through the CMI Facilitators, the Dean of Graduate Studies (Cork) and the Head of Research (Kerry), the University gained insights on the structures and practices of other institutions. The proposal paper for the structure of MTU's Graduate School was finally approved by the University Executive in November 2023. Following the appointment of the Vice President Research & Innovation, the paper was adopted by the Academic Council in December 2024 and implementation is now underway.
- The detailed design of the integrated MTU Finance function was completed and costed, following which a comprehensive resource case for the Finance Office organisational structure was submitted to and approved by the University Executive. Implementation of the MTU Finance Office organisational structure is currently underway.
- The Transformation Implementation Group also considered a resource case for harmonising the organisational structure of the MyBan team, already aligned across Cork and Kerry under one Head of Function since late 2022. The Group has identified an urgent need to hire two developers for succession planning for impending retirements, critical to the successful completion of the MyBan student records system merger project, as well as on-going operational management and continued system developments and improvements, now and into the future.
- IT Services informally implemented their organisational structure during the reporting period and are due to formalise changes in reporting lines in AY 24/25.

Harmonising and achieving unified processes, organisational structures and a cohesive programme portfolio will support meeting the University's strategic plan objectives, fostering a greater sense of working as one and making optimum use of resources and opportunities.

Aligned functions will allow for increased efficiencies in developing and implementing policies, procedures, and processes. It will reduce duplication of work, leading to immediate gains, allowing staff to focus on additional initiatives not offered heretofore. It will support the continuation of the alignment of the digital infrastructure and systems, digitisation of processes, further systems development, and enhanced reporting capabilities. Efficiencies will also be realised through the alignment and cohesion of faculties, as appropriate.

This work will contribute to meaningful communication, engagement and consultation, supporting transparency and alignment, and helping to ensure that change sticks. This will lead to a better, more aligned and unified experience for students, staff and stakeholders, and reassure external stakeholders that MTU is an adaptive, responsive, future-focused university.

#### *i. Faculty Development*

The completion, in June 2023, of the high-level design of the five faculties, is the springboard for the detailed faculty design and for a curriculum portfolio review, organised by faculty. With progress on the appointment of the new Deans slowed due to the lengthy government approval process, it was decided to focus, in the first instance, on the development of policy and procedure for the curriculum portfolio review, entitled Faculty Enhancement Review (FER).

The University Executive approved two faculties to undergo FER first during AY 24/25, the Faculty of Business and Faculty of Creative & Performing Arts and Media. Faculty Leadership Teams from these faculties have been meeting regularly to explore opportunities for alignment and cohesion as well as agreeing programmes to be recommended for inclusion in FER. The remaining three faculties will be addressed in the following years. (For further detail, see [Part B Section 1.4.1.](#))

#### *ii. MTU Governing Body Effectiveness Review*

MTU's Code of Governance provides for a periodical external review of Governing Body effectiveness. The Institute of Public Administration undertook the external effectiveness review of MTU Governing Body in 2023. The report was presented to Governing Body in November 2023. A total of 21 recommendations were made, on various areas including verbal presentations, tabled items, induction, and training. Following this, an implementation plan was developed and agreed and is being tracked on ViClarity.

### **c. CINNTE Institutional Review**

The timeframe for the first institutional review of MTU under the CINNTE cycle was agreed with QQI in November 2022.

The Registrar & Vice President on the Cork Campuses was Institutional Review Coordinator for the review. The CINNTE Institutional Review was discussed regularly at Governing Body, Academic Council, and University Executive. Briefings were also provided to the Students' Union.

#### *i. Self-Evaluation Process*

Preparatory work included a desk review of internal and external documentation. However, the self-evaluation process slowed subsequently due to the cyber-attack on the Cork Campuses in February 2023, the fallout of which continued to impact into 2023/24.

To offset this to some extent, MTU leveraged the findings of the consultation processes undertaken for both its strategic plan “Our Shared Vision 2022-2027” and its high-level organisational design. A review of MTU Academic Council minutes provided insight on student and staff perspectives on what had worked well and what might need enhancement. The self-evaluation process was also informed by a desk review of Governing Body digests, reports of key standing boards, minutes of the University Executive, and recent bids for government funding, along with engagement with committees of the Academic Council committees and Registrar’s Office teams.

Some dedicated staff feedback sessions, drawing from all campuses and faculties, were convened and a number of individual interviews were also held; these sessions and interviews largely focussed on the effectiveness of the University’s documented approach to quality assurance in MTU as a whole in the time period since designation. Feedback in relation to other chapter areas was conveyed to the relevant leads.

Early in the process, it was decided to align the main body of the report to the QQI Statutory QA Guidelines which are, in turn, mapped to the ESG. A common chapter structure was then developed, with three sections envisioned for each chapter:

- Quality Framework: an ‘as is’ snapshot of the quality framework;
- Quality in Action: a reflection on progress over the period since designation;
- Planning for Action: future enhancements.

This structure was adopted for most chapters, with a modified approach for the others. Several case studies were also included in the ISER to illustrate MTU’s approach to Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

As events transpired, the new executive structure was approved by government just weeks before the ISER submission date. The recruitment process had commenced by the Planning Visit in February, and all of the first six posts were advertised by the visit of the Review Team in March.

Thus the self-evaluation report was very much a document of its time, serving not only as a reflection of our progress to date but also as a roadmap for the future.

The final chapter of the ISER set out identified enhancement themes.

Given the circumstances, the positive findings of the Review Team on the clarity and presentation of developments in ISER were welcome. We would concur with its feedback that the ISER could have been more reflective, and there are certainly learnings here for the future.

## *ii. Planning for the Review Visit*

Per the CINNTE guidelines, a planning meeting with the Review Team Chair, Co-ordinating Reviewer and QQI Senior Manager took place online on Tuesday 6 February. Six themes were identified by the Review Team for further exploration during the main review visit. The Planning Visit also afforded MTU an opportunity to provide an update on developments in the University since December, including the success of the TSAF and TU RISE applications, and the commencement of the recruitment processes for the new Executive.

The schedule for the visit was also finalised. While it was initially understood that the site visit would take place entirely on the Bishopstown campus, the Review Team requested a visit to the Kerry North campus to be included. This took place on Thursday 14th March and included a session focusing on craft apprenticeship and a session with local external stakeholders. The amendment to the schedule was welcomed as an opportunity to further enhance awareness of and engagement with the Review among students and staff of all campuses.

A lot of time went into the development of the schedule for the visit. The QQI template provided for this purpose is very useful, but there were challenges, arising from MTU's scale, diversity of disciplines, multi-campus nature, variance in campus size, and early stages of organisational structure and QA, in keeping the group size small enough to afford meaningful contributions, while also ensuring that groups were representative, and colleagues felt bought in.

For the Bishopstown campus sessions, staff of other campuses were encouraged to attend onsite where possible. This entailed additional administrative workload in terms of travel arrangements, parking, catering, etc. However, it was not possible for all staff to travel to Bishopstown for the appointed time. Furthermore, while the timing of the visit during teaching time meant that students were available to participate, students of the Kerry Campuses attended the relevant sessions, held in Cork, remotely.

During the planning process, it was decided to assign one staff member of IT Services to support the visit for the entire week. This was highly effective in terms of supporting the Review Team and ensuring that the schedule ran smoothly.

### *iii. Review Visit*

After all the preparation, the week of the Review Visit was an extremely constructive one. In total, 43 meetings were held and the Review Team met with 351 persons, including staff, students, collaborators and external stakeholders. Feedback from staff on the process was very positive, with the Review Team being complimented for its rigorous, yet constructive and fair approach, and the stated ambition of all its members to add value. It was generally agreed that the Institutional Review process was effective in bringing staff of all campuses together and that the Review will be really significant in terms of MTU's transformation journey.

The Review Team was unanimous in its conclusions that the University has made progress, commensurate with expectations, towards the development and implementation of a unified institutional QA infrastructure and has realistic plans for the full implementation of a single robust QA infrastructure. The findings of the Review Team included 24 commendations which were broadly categorised in the areas of: Strategy; Structures; Culture and People; Widening Access and Participation in Life-Long Learning; Support for Learning and Student Voice; Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship; External Partnership and Regional Engagement. The Review Team made 27 recommendations covering many of the same areas.

In October 2024, QQI published the [MTU CINNTE Review Report](#) along with the [Quality Profile](#). The CINNTE Institutional Review Report provided a positive evaluation of MTU's progress as a newly established technological university, while also identifying critical areas for development that align with the University's mission to provide high-quality, inclusive, and innovative education.

The University was pleased to note commendations amongst others on its "visible and inclusive student-centred culture"; its "extensive and effective regional, national, and global government, industry and community partnerships [...] which provide evidence of enhancement of learning, teaching and research and high-level, impactful external engagement"; and its "extensive and visible contribution" to "the region's economy, community, and education". The CINNTE Review Team also expressed itself "impressed by the clarity of vision and level of ambition articulated in MTU's strategic plan" in which "there is a clear shared focus on the transformation journey, 'Succeeding Together'".

MTU welcomes recommendations amongst others to expedite the establishment of the new University Executive and identify "clear structures, roles and responsibilities at all levels reporting to Executive members", to expedite completion of a complete unitary QA framework, and to deliver an enhanced MTU programme portfolio based on a "strategic approach to portfolio management and governance [...] enabling lifelong learning and the sustainability of the university", which MTU had already identified through the self-evaluation process. Implementing the CINNTE recommendations is fundamental to further strengthening the

University's academic offerings, to support regional economic growth and to continue to meet the evolving needs of students and the community.

To ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the report, a senior level working group has been established. The group will be chaired by the President and comprises of the of the Vice President Finance and Operations, the Chief Corporate Officer, the Vice President Research and Innovation, the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar, Vice President External Affairs and the Dean of Academic Quality Enhancement.

MTU has submitted its Implementation Plan to QQI; this has been published on QQI's website and is accessible [here](#). A follow-up report is due in October 2025.

Academic Council will be updated as work progresses. The CINNTE Institutional Review Report and the implementation workplan will also be forwarded to the Governing Body.

#### d. Athena Swan Institutional Bronze Award

MTU made its institutional submission Athena Swan Bronze in November 2023, following an eighteen-month long application process. This process included undertaking an institutional EDI Survey; collating and analysing all evidence required to meet the submission requirements; and compiling and committing to a comprehensive evidence-based, four-year plan to improve equality for all MTU staff and students.

This work was carried out by the MTU Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team, comprising 30 staff and student representatives across many campuses and departments, and chaired by the Head of School of Humanities. Support throughout the application process was provided by MTU's EDU team.

Through this submission, a commitment was made to five institutional gender equality priorities, five institutional priorities on other equality grounds, with 95 actions identified to support the achievement of equality for all at MTU. These actions are to be implemented over the next four years.

#### e. Implementation of MTU's Strategic Plan: Our Shared Vision to 2027

##### *i. Strategic Plan Implementation and Reporting*

The reporting period coincided with the second year of implementation of the University's Strategic Plan. During 2023/24, the University engaged Deloitte to undertake a review, focussing on KPIs and methodology. This was overseen by the Strategic Development Committee of Governing Body, which also receives periodic updates on the implementation of the strategic plan, across all themes.

An implementation report was presented to the Governing Body in December 2024. A Strategic Planning Policy for the University is in development.

##### *ii. Economic Impact Study*

During 2023/24, MTU undertook an Economic and Social Impact Study for the year 2022/23. This work was carried out in collaboration with Indecon International Economic and Strategic Consultants. The report, published in January 2025, estimates that total economic impact on the Irish economy associated with MTU's activities in 2022/23 to be almost €1bn. The reported year saw MTU generate €979m in economic impacts, including €574m across Teaching and Learning; €343m through university and student expenditure; €44m in Research and Development; and €18m in International Students. The study showed that MTU has been responsible for the creation of more than 1,750 direct jobs or full-time equivalents (FTEs), with 84% of graduates at NFQ Levels 6 – 8 finding employment within three months of programme completion.

MTU was also shown to have had a significant impact on society and communities in Ireland through student and staff supports, community engagement, and a genuine commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. As part of the report, students were asked if they would have gone to university or college if MTU did not exist. Almost 5% of respondents indicated that they would have been very unlikely to go to college if MTU did not exist, and 7% indicated that they would have gone to college outside of Ireland if MTU did not exist.

### *iii. Performance Agreement with HEA*

Following the launch of HEA's new system performance framework in October 2023, MTU immediately commenced work on its performance agreement.

The HEA framework matrix comprises four key pillars representing the key domains of institutional activity – Teaching & Learning, Research & Innovation, Access & Participation, and Engagement. These intersect with a number of transversal areas of impact that reflect national system level priorities for the higher education and research system.

Under the MTU approach, the development of the agreement was coordinated by the Head of Strategy & Performance. The President assigned executive sponsors to lead out on a response to each of the four pillars – Teaching & Learning, Access & Participation, Research, and Engagement. Separately, a group representative of the transversal areas was convened to consider each of the pillar inputs through the lens of those cross-cutting transversal themes.

While the HEA has posited the pillars and transversals of the framework matrix as together presenting institutions with a flexible mechanism to identify performance objectives that are aligned to institutional strategy while also aligned to national strategy, the university did find its own strategic plan, approved over one year previously, to be in close alignment with the framework, and this helped achieve a consistent and coherent approach. MTU also leveraged the system- and institution-level data available through the HEA's System Performance Dashboard in order to refine its proposed KPIs and indicators.

Following an iterative process of engagement and dialogue with the HEA, MTU's Performance Agreement was approved and is now published (link [here](#)). Per the framework, MTU will report annually against the performance agreement in the form of a self-evaluation report, which will be reviewed and discussed in a process of strategy and performance dialogue with the HEA.

## **f. Academic Council**

### *i. Academic Council Elections*

In October 2022, Governing Body granted an extension of the Academic Council term in the interest of retaining a fully functional Academic Council during the academic year 2022/23 so that the programme of work towards the development of a unified academic quality framework for the University could progress without interruption while affording the necessary additional time for the membership regulations, standing orders, and committee structure of the new 'steady state' Academic Council model to be developed and approved.

Whereas it had been previously envisaged that the new Academic Council would be in place for the start of the academic year 2023/24, further time was needed due to the fallout of the February 2023 cyber-attack. Preparation work for elections was finalised in Autumn 2024. Elections to the new Council took place over the period December 2023 to February 2024, and the new Academic Council first convened on 9 February 2024.

The elected membership of the new Academic Council is organised by five constituencies. Three of these relate to staff on academic grades: non-management academic staff organised by faculty; management academic staff, also organised by faculty; a constituency for academic staff in central roles; and a research constituency. For the first time, a specific Professional, Management & Support Staff (PMSS) constituency is included. In these initial elections, interest in seats in the PMSS constituency was high, with an election required. However, while the consultation process undertaken in 2022 and 2023 had shown strong support for a non-management academic staff majority, these seats took longer to fill. By the time of the first meeting on 9 February 2024, 82 of the 95 available seats had been filled. Through a further communication campaign, all but 4 available seats were filled by May 2024.

At the request of the Academic Council, a review of the findings of the 2022 staff survey on Academic Council participation was undertaken, and the possible main reasons for staff not putting their name forward for Academic Council membership were identified as relating to time/workload issues and lack of knowledge or awareness of Council. However, it was also noted that since the survey was completed in 2022, the Academic Council Dashboard, a 'one-stop-shop' for all matters relating to Academic Council, had been further developed and enhanced. It was reported to Academic Council that consultation with past staff members of Council had further confirmed that lack of time to participate effectively and completely was one of the main reasons for staff not putting their name forward for membership of Academic Council.

Under the new procedure, there is provision for facilitation of Observer status at Academic Council meetings. This remains to be implemented, pending the resolution of technological challenges.

#### *ii. Committees and Working Groups of Academic Council*

Arising from the advance consultation, the pre-existing committee structure was carried over and so the following six Academic Council Committees were (re-)established in June 2023, with remits covering the same areas of academic operations as those of the 'Integration & Development' Committees preceding them:

- Academic Planning & Review Committee;
- Admissions & Student Affairs Committee;
- Learning Resources/Infrastructure & Student Supports Committee;
- Regulations, Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee;
- Research & Innovation Committee (renamed from 'Research Council' to more clearly express the Committee's relationship with Academic Council);
- Standing Orders Committee.

One of the first tasks of the new Academic Council was to approve regulations for the election of academic staff members to the Committees and for the election of Committee Chairpersons. Elections were completed in Spring 2024 and the new Committees were functional by the end of the reporting period. However, as had been anticipated, the hiatus of approximately three months in the transitional period as elections of Council, committees and committee chairs were completed, did slow progress on policy and procedure approvals, though that has picked up again in 2024/25.

The Executive Committee remains as a feature of the new Academic Council. It normally meets once in advance of each meeting of the Academic Council, to order and manage the agenda for each meeting of the MTU Academic Council as set out in its terms of reference. As delegated by Academic Council from time to time, the Committee may deliberate and decide on critical academic issues on behalf of the Academic Council during time periods when a meeting of the full Council is not scheduled or not feasible. In December 2023, Academic Council approved the request to delegate authority to the Executive Committee to conduct the

business of Council for time sensitive matters during the interim period before the first meeting of the new 'steady-state' Academic Council was in place. Two such meetings took place.

In addition to the I&D Committees, a number of Working Groups were established by the 'transitional' Academic Council. The Micro-credentials and Academic Integrity Working Groups were carried over to the steady-state Academic Council, as their work was still in train.

#### g. Follow-up Actions re. February 2023 Cyber-Attack on the Cork Campuses

During 2023/24, MTU continued its review of the extent of the data breach arising from the February 2023 cyber-attack on the Cork campuses. The process to identify, insofar as possible, all affected individuals, was a lengthy and arduous one. In early May 2024, MTU commenced issuing GDPR notifications and guidance in line with its data protection obligations to affected individuals, with priority being given to cases that may be considered high risk or vulnerable. This work was completed by the end of the same month. Further information and updates were made available on a dedicated [MTU Cyber Care Support Portal](#).

A final investigation report issued from KPMG to the Audit and Risk Committee in June 2024. Governing Body was informed that the majority of the recommendations contained in the report had been addressed, with the remainder to be completed by the end of the 2024 calendar year.

Lastly, the Terms of Reference of the Audit & Risk Committee and Strategic Development Committees of Governing Body were amended to include ICT Security Oversight as relevant to the respective Committee's functions.

#### h. Physical Infrastructure

##### *i. Facilities Development*

The new MTU Multi-Purpose Arena on the Bishopstown Campus was formally opened by Minister Simon Harris in November 2023. Per a previous recommendation of the Student Finance Committee, the MTU Steering Committee was established to provide guidance, support, and strategic leadership with regard to operational and governance matters relating to the MTU Arena.

The MTU Arena is the first of a 2-phase programme which will ultimately see in excess of €22m (of which ca. €12m directly from MTU) invested in state-of-the-art sports facilities on the MTU Bishopstown Campus. Phase 2 is a collaboration with Athletics Ireland for which government funding of €9.225m was previously awarded following a joint application to the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructural Fund (LSSIF) of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

In November 2023, it was confirmed that full funding is in place for the Phase 2 project, this being the High-Performance Indoor Athletics Training Centre, for which planning permission was submitted in May 2024. This ca. 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> facility will feature a large multi-event zone incorporating a sprint track, elite sport science laboratories, classrooms, fitness studios, as well as facilities for events such as the high jump, pole vault, long jump and triple jump. It will be used by multiple stakeholders including Athletics Ireland members and clubs.

Meanwhile, resurfacing of main track was completed in Summer 2024, in time for the 70th Cork City Sports on the 9th of July. This project was also funded by the LSSIF. The eight-lane running track is now of international standard.

With the MTU Arena now fully operational, work commenced on the reconfiguration of the old sports hall on the Bishopstown campus. This project was completed during 2023/24. Now renamed the Carmine Building following a staff and student consultation, the project has realised new lecture theatres and office space for staff.

Construction of two further new buildings – the STEM Building on the Kerry North Campus and the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) Building on the Bishopstown Campus continued during 2023/24. These projects are part of the first bundle of six buildings in the Government’s Higher Education PPP programme and are expected to be operational for the start of academic year 2025/26. Following engagement with staff, it has been agreed that the STEM Building will be called An Cuan and the LRC Building named Le Chéile.

In December 2023, two project proposals submitted by MTU in response to the Technological Sector Strategic Projects Fund (TSSPF) funding call were approved to proceed to design stage. These are the Kerry Campus Learner Centre and the Bishopstown Campus Extension Project.

The Bishopstown Campus Extension Project includes an upgrading and extension of the ‘1974 Building’ under the project title “DnA Combined Extensions” (DnA). This will address huge weaknesses in MTU building infrastructure which became increasingly evident during the pandemic and will also alleviate the current capacity undersupply.

Along with the STEM building on the North Campus in Kerry (currently under construction and expected to be completed in 2025) the Kerry Campus Learner Centre will assist MTU to move towards its vision of a single Kerry campus which will reduce operational costs and improve energy targets, as well as providing students with a more consistent student experience.

## *ii. Student Accommodation Planning*

The 2023/24 academic year presented significant challenges in relation to student accommodation, primarily due to a shortage of bed spaces in shared houses that was exacerbated by the housing crisis. This has led to increased pressure on Purpose-Built Student Apartments (PBAs) and a shift towards ‘digs’ (living with a family/owner-occupier) accommodation which is not a long-term solution, does not support an independent student lifestyle, and offers no formal support for students or providers, as it falls outside the scope of the Residential Tenancies Act. Furthermore, many more students are commuting long distances to MTU, adding to their stress.

Students with disabilities prefer PBAs due to their proximity to campus and better participation in student life. However, the current crisis has made it difficult to secure such accommodation. International and Erasmus students have also been affected, as many digs do not offer full-time let arrangements.

In January 2024, the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform jointly announced government agreement on a new long-term policy to develop student accommodation. Subsequently, a call for proposals for accommodation projects for Technological Universities opened, and a suite of preliminary business case templates was provided to facilitate a coherent approach by HEIs. MTU has engaged the services of Cushman and Wakefield and is developing an accommodation strategy for the whole University. It is anticipated that the largest part of the development of on campus accommodation will take place in the next five to six years. Planning for the Bishopstown campus and the North Campus in Kerry is being progressed simultaneously.

## *i. Sustainability*

### *i. Strategy*

In 2023, MTU worked with *Change by Degrees* to develop a 10-Year Sustainability Strategic plan. The Plan was developed over four phases: Project Set-up, Stakeholder Engagement, Materiality Assessment, and Co-creation.

The Climate Action Roadmap document will be updated annually in line with updated Public Sector Climate Action Mandates. It includes a set of objectives and targets to align with the European Green Deal and Ireland's Climate Action Plan – including the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate. These targets include a 51% reduction in GHG emissions from 2021 to 2030, achieving net-zero emissions no later than 2050 and specific commitments on energy efficiency, governance structures and staff engagement. The MTU Sustainability Strategy has a holistic focus on the decarbonisation targets prioritised in the Climate Action Mandate and on Environmental, Social and Governance objectives.

### *ii. People*

Through the Technological Sector Advancement Fund (TSAF), a Sustainability Project Coordinator was recruited in 2023/24. The Sustainability Project Coordinator works on the Green Campus Project, working with Green Teams, campus-based transdisciplinary groups of staff and students who work closely with various functions such as Estates, Procurement, Catering and Finance to create awareness and embed sustainable practices across the university.

Details on staff CPD training on sustainability can be found in [Part B Section 2.2.d \(i\)](#) below.

### *iii. Parking*

MTU actively promotes sustainable transportation options, such as bicycles and shared mobility, as an alternative to car use among its employees and visitors. The University has created and maintained comprehensive facilities to support these options, both inside and outside its buildings. However, car parking continued to be a challenge on the Bishopstown campus in early 2023/24. A Park & Ride scheme was piloted in early 2024, with a 15-minute frequency at peak times. The scheme has been continued into 2024/25, is working well, and has been well-received.

Under the Higher Education Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Pathfinder Programme (EEDPP), MTU received €3m for the deep retrofit of the Melbourn Building. This project upgraded the envelope of the building elements to realise a significant improvement in an overall building envelope performance and strategy to reduce peak heat demand to less than approximately 55W/m<sup>2</sup>. The project proceeded to detailed design and tender during Q4 2022, contractor appointed in May 2023 and work commenced in June 2023.

Finally, work was also carried out throughout the reporting period to improve the thermal performance of the 1974 Building.

## **j. Funding Opportunities**

### *i. TU RISE*

In 2023/24, MTU was awarded €14.6m under the [TU RISE](#) programme (Technological Universities Research and Innovation Supporting Enterprise).

TU RISE is co-financed by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the ERDF [Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional Programme 2021-27](#) and the [Northern & Western Regional Programme 2021-27](#).

This 4-year scheme has two key outcomes:

- Establishment and/or development of central research functions in institutions to support research capacity building and further engagement with regions.
- Enhancement of institutional research capacity through increasing researcher human capital in research areas that have potential to facilitate stronger engagement with regional enterprises aligned to Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy and the Regional Enterprise Plans.

MTU currently has the largest research and innovation expenditure (€30m) and highest direct-funded research income from industry partnerships across the entire TU sector in Ireland. The university's TU RISE programme – [MTU Research-to-Impact](#) - will support MTU's strategic ambitions in research and innovation by helping to scale up the university's research activities across all campuses.

Aligning with TU RISE scope and target outcomes, [MTU Research-to-Impact](#) is:

- Transforming MTU's Research & Innovation ecosystem to support the development of Research & Innovation advisory functions to a sufficient scale to meet MTU's ambitions and achieve target research outcomes in line with MTU strategy, the TU Act (2018), and relevant regional policies and strategic priorities within the Horizon Europe programme.
- Expanding, training, and developing MTU's Research and Innovation Human Capital (budgeted for 20 additional PhDs, 12 Research Masters and 22 Postdocs) to ensure they deliver impactful R&I outcomes that are in line with the region's needs.
- Providing a pipeline of R&I-skilled graduates and staff who, through their engagement with regional enterprise and community stakeholders, will stimulate more industry-led sustainable R&I outcomes across the key industry sectors and entirety of the southern region.

[MTU Research-to-Impact](#) is focusing on strategic engagement across industry sectors with a particular emphasis on multidisciplinary, tackling global challenges, and structured collaboration and networking activities with enterprise that have clear actions and deliverables.

Internal governance arrangements for [MTU Research-to-Impact](#) have been in place since work commenced on the application in Summer 2023. Following a tender process, the University has engaged KPMG for project management support. A dedicated HR resource was also put in place in 2023/24 to coordinate the significant recruitment programme.

## *ii. Technological Sector Advancement Fund (TSAF)*

In late 2023, MTU was awarded €7.5 million under the new [Technological Sector Advancement Fund \(TSAF\)](#). This fund replaces the Technological Sector Transformation Fund, which focused on the establishment of technological universities. TSAF aims to build on the success of the technological higher education sector in Ireland by providing targeted support for maintaining or initiating initiatives that are critical to the strategic development of these institutions.

The MTU TSAF project focuses on two of MTU's strategic themes: *Learner Education & Experience* and *People & Community*. As with TU RISE, MTU's approach to the TSAF call leveraged on the learnings and successes of previous funding streams including the TU Transformation Fund (TUTF) and previous Landscape Funding calls. MTU allocated a portion of TUTF funding to the upgrade and merger of its student record system and IT systems. Further development in these areas is now funded under TSAF with the objective to deliver a 'cloud-first' platform of securely and strategically merged MTU systems to enable and support coherent, efficient delivery of services and decision-making capacity to MTU's staff, students, and stakeholders. The other objectives of MTU's TSAF function focus on staff and students, including transitional supports for students, staff development, healthy campus, green campus, universal design and micro-credentials. Funding will also be used to mainstream initiatives such as [Ready Steady Work](#), the multiple award-winning placement programme for under-represented groups.

As with TU RISE, governance arrangements for MTU's TSAF project were put in place from application stage. Implementation commenced in early 2024, soon after the outcome was announced, and is supported by the KPMG project management resource and the dedicated HR Business partner.

### *iii. N-TUTORR*

MTU is a member of N-TUTORR, a partnership of seven technological higher education institutions, funded by NextGenerationEU and co-ordinated by THEA and HEA. Its programme of work is guided by six core themes: Digital Transformation, Universal Design for Learning, Education for Sustainability, Academic Integrity, EDI, and Employability; and organised into three streams: Student Empowerment, Staff Capabilities, and Digital Ecosystems.

In early 2023, the MTU Project Lead for N-TUTORR was appointed and joined the MTU N-TUTORR Steering Group. Subsequently, twelve internal secondments (both from academic and PMSS staff) were allocated to the project within MTU. Outputs in the reporting period included the new MTU Curriculum Framework (see [Part B Section 2.3 a](#) and [Part A Sections 2.1.2](#) and [2.2.2 a](#)), a suite of Digital Learning Resources (DLRs), several Flexible and Accessible Learning Resources (FALR) projects, an upgrade of facilities for teaching and learning and associated events in Blackrock Castle Observatory, 12 wheelchair-accessible student pods, and the *Students as Partners* Fellowship Programme.

Key Performance Indicators were collected for MTU during the project. Excluding repetitions, a total of 1,067 staff and 2,429 students of MTU engaged with N-TUTORR during the project duration.

At national level, MTU led on a number of white papers and strategic documents related to the digital transformation theme. These include the sectoral white paper on Open Educational Practices, launched in June 2024.

Close-out work is now being done, ahead of the project-end date of June 2025.

### *iv. PATH 4.1 (including Universal Design Framework Implementation)*

MTU was allocated €180,000 funding under PATH 4 Phase 1 in late 2022. A key strategic action implemented under this funding was MTU declaration of commitment to embedding the Universal Design Framework. The President approved the establishment of the MTU Universal Design (UD) Framework Implementation Steering Committee in April 2023 and launched the Committee in June 2023. Committee membership is comprised of allocated and self-referred seats for staff and students from all campuses and functional areas. Its membership and terms of reference are reflective of the five focal areas for embedding of the Universal Design Framework in MTU: Learning, Teaching & Assessment; Supports, Services & Social Engagement; Physical Campus and the Built Environment; Digital Environment and Human Resources.

Under Path 4.1, MTU progressed six individual work packages:

1. ODAM (Online Digital Accessibility at MTU), aiming to improve the accessibility of the university's existing e-learning infrastructure;
2. Expansion of Quiet Zone opportunities for the MTU Community;
3. Staff training to promote engagement with work placement preparation for students with disabilities;
4. Development of National ALTITUDE Charter for the Implementation of Universal Design in Tertiary Education;
5. Leadership in Universal Design, resulting in a national UD Leadership Symposium for Tertiary Education and development of UD for Senior Leaders in Tertiary Education Digital Badge;
6. Piloting of higher education experience for students with intellectual disabilities and a national community of practice for shared learning in this space.

#### *v. PATH 4.2*

In February 2024, MTU was awarded a €1.38M funding under PATH 4 Phase 2. The purpose of this particular HEA call, which was competitive, is to pilot new programme provision for students with intellectual disabilities and inform future HEA policy and programme provision for students with intellectual disabilities.

A collaborative working group of MTU staff and representatives from Cork ETB, COPE, the National Learning Network, Saint John of Gods, and Down Syndrome Ireland developed the MTU proposal, which was informed by direct consultation with students, their families, and INHEF.

Nationally, the notification and announcement of the outcome of the application was followed by an iterative feedback process on the original submissions made by the successful HEIs, with the HEA also engaging the advice of an international expert panel to critique proposals further. MTU revised its proposal to take account of the feedback provided. At the time of writing, the first of the two MTU pilot programmes commenced on the Kerry Campus, while a cross-campus collaboration based in Cork will commence the other pilot programme in the coming months, pending validation by the Academic Council.

In its submission, MTU leveraged on substantial experience in this domain, both accredited and non-accredited, and involving collaboration with external partners. Heretofore, while MTU and its antecedent institutions collaborated in programme provision for students with intellectual disabilities, the award was made by QQI, through the relevant provider. For example, MTU CSM's Inclusive Music Ensemble initiative has involved co-delivery by MTU lecturers and Cork ETB teachers to learners at NFQ Levels 3, 6 and 8, heretofore with MTU certification at Levels 6 and 8 and QQI certification at Level 3. In the case of PATH 4 Phase 2 provision, HEA stipulated that the programme must be HE-led, with the award being made by the HEI. Thus, the challenge was to deliver on this while ensuring, as advised by the international reviewers, that the NFQ level of each programme was appropriate for the cohort and compliant with the MTU higher education policy framework.

#### *v. Strategic Alignment of Teaching & Learning Funding 2023 (SATLE)*

This funding, now multi-annual in nature and administered by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (now under the umbrella of the HEA) continues to present higher education institutions nationally with opportunities to enhance Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Student Engagement for both students and staff.

In 2023, MTU was allocated a further €410,000 for the 2023/24 academic year. Its approach for SATLE 2023/24 has built on the work of SATLE 2019, SATLE 2020 and SATLE 2022-2023 across five main areas:

##### **1. Disciplinary Excellence in Learning Teaching and Assessment (DELTA)**

An internal competitive application process is in place to provide SATLE funding to support three MTU discipline-specific teams to embark on their DELTA application process through a 4-hour staff buyout per team for the academic year with their commitment to DELTA application process completion before 25 August 2025.

##### **2. Reimagining Assessment and Feedback Together 3 (RAFT 3)**

For details on this initiative see [Part B Section 2.7 c.](#)

##### **3. Learning Enhancement Projects (LEPs)**

This call was issued in Semester 2 (2023/24), with submissions reviewed and confirmed by end of Semester 2. LEPs were selected by a panel of international reviewers as part of a competitive process. In

total, they span the full range of discipline areas in MTU and involve engagement from students, staff and external partners. Successful projects are being undertaken during the 2024/25 academic year.

#### 4. **Reusable Learning Resources Project**

This project, led by the Department of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and the e-Learning Development Services Unit (EDSU), builds on the development of a series of Reusable Learning Resources.

The work has already been recognised through bestowal of the inaugural *SATLE National Forum T&L Impact Award for Excellence and Impact in Digital Transformation* in December 2024.

[Part B Section B.2.4.2 d](#) of this AQR provides additional information on [Foundations in Open Science](#), an Open Science Reusable Learning Resource (RLR) launched in conjunction with the MTU Libraries in March 2024.

Detailed information on the resources developed in 2023/24 is accessible [here](#).

#### 5. **National MTU Seminar Series**

This is an allocation in respect of national seminars hosted by higher education institutes (HEI) aligned with the themes:

- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
- Digital Transformation in the Tertiary Sector
- Best Practice in Upholding and Cultivating Academic Integrity

## 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	CINNTE (AQR 2023, Section B.1.2)	ISER submitted December 2023. Main Review Visit took place 11-15 March 2024. Report published by QQI October 2024. Implementation Plan submitted to and published by QQI March 2025.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of MTU Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures in relation to Assessment (Academic Integrity, Individual Extenuating Circumstances, Assessment Appeals and Reviews, Student Feedback, Late Submission Penalties).</li> </ul> (AQR 2024, Section B.1.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies related to assessment are in development.</li> <li>Draft Academic Integrity Procedure considered by Academic Council in May 2024. Target date for approval 2024/25, along with implementation plan, ahead of implementation in 2025/26.</li> </ul>
3	Development of MTU Student Affairs Policies and Procedures in relation to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substance Abuse</li> <li>Student Wellness &amp; Health</li> <li>Gender Identity and Gender Expression</li> <li>Posthumous and Aegrotat Awards</li> </ul> (AQR 2024, Section B.1.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These policies are all in development.</li> </ul>
4	Protocol and Procedure for Death of Staff (AQR 2024, Section B.1.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In development.</li> </ul>
5	MTU Examinations Administration Process (AQR 2024, Section B.1.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment ongoing.</li> </ul>
6	Student Affairs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment of other academic administration/ student affairs processes ongoing.</li> </ul>

	<p>k. Alignment of MTU Forms and Fees in relation to application, admissions, international, repeat examinations</p> <p>l. Alignment of MTU processes in relation to management of Student Assistance Fund;</p> <p>m. Alignment of MTU processes in relation to assessment of Mature applicants;</p> <p>n. MTU Code of Practice in relation to admissions.</p> <p><i>(AQR 2024, Section B.1.2)</i></p>	
8	<p>Implementation of MTU Executive Structure</p> <p><i>(AQR 2024, Section B.1.2)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six posts have been filled. The remaining five are at recruitment stage. It is anticipated that the process will be complete by the end of the academic year.</li> </ul>

## 1.3 Governance and Management

### 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
<p><b>Governing Body</b> (9 meetings)</p>	<p>5 October 2023; 2 November 2023; 7 December 2023; 1 February 2024; 7 March 2024; 4 April 2024; 2 May 2024; 6 June 2024; 4 July 2024.</p>
<p><b>Academic Council</b> (8 meetings)</p>	<p>6 October 2023; 10 November 2023; 15 December 2023; 9 February 2024; 22 March 2024; 3 May 2024; 31 May 2024; 19 June 2024.</p>
<p><b>University Executive</b> (25 meetings)</p>	<p>5/19 September 2023; 3/17/31 October 2023; 14/28 November 2023; 12 December 2023; 9/23/30 January 2024; 6/20/28 February 2024; 5/19 March 2024; 9/16 April 2024; 1/14/28 May 2024; 11/24 June 2024; 9 July 2024; 20 August 2024.</p>
<p><b>Academic Council Executive Committee</b> (10 meetings)</p>	<p>27 September 2023; 25 October 2023; 6 December 2023; 11/30 January 2024; 12 March 2024; 24 April 2024; 22 May 2024;</p>

	10 June 2024; 23 July 2024.
<b>Academic Planning &amp; Review</b> <i>Committee of Academic Council</i> <sup>1</sup>	4 meetings over the period of 1 November to 11 December 2023 inclusive.
<b>Admissions &amp; Student Affairs</b> <i>Committee of Academic Council</i>	1 meeting on 19 June 2024.
<b>Learning Resources/Infrastructure &amp; Student Supports</b> <i>Committee of Academic Council</i>	0 meetings.
<b>Regulations / Quality Assurance &amp; Enhancement</b> <i>Committee of Academic Council</i>	1 meeting on 18 June 2024.
<b>Research Council Integration &amp; Development</b> <i>Committee of Academic Council</i> <sup>1,2</sup>	5 meetings over the period of 7 September to 7 December 2023 inclusive.
<b>Standing Orders</b> <i>Committee of Academic Council</i>	0 meetings.
<b>MTU-UCC Joint Board</b> (3 meetings)	16 November 2023; 9 April 2024; 17 June 2024.

1 = *Integration & Development Committee of the Transitional Academic Council*

2 = *Committee title revised to Research & Innovation Committee of the [Steady-State] Academic Council*

## 1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

### a. Organisational Structure

As set out in the previous section, the first six posts (Vice-President Academic Affairs & Registrar, Vice-President Research & Innovation, Vice-President Finance & Operations, Chief Corporate Officer, Dean of Faculty of Creative & Performing Arts & Media, and Dean of Engineering) were filled in late 2023/24. With final government approval now in place, recruitment of the remaining five posts (Vice-President Engagement & Global, Vice-President People and Culture, Dean of Business, Dean of Science & Informatics, and Dean of Health & Social Sciences) is now underway, in two tranches. It is envisaged that the recruitment will be completed by end of this academic year.

As approved in June 2023, the faculties span multiple campuses and faculty leadership roles are cross-organisational. With all Faculty Deans due to be in post by the end of the subsequent reporting period (AY 2024/25), consultation is ongoing regarding the leadership roles of Vice Deans at present.

### b. Senior Staff Appointments

The following senior staff appointments were made on a permanent, acting and/or fixed-term basis in the academic year 2023/24<sup>6</sup>:

- Mr Paul Gallagher, Vice President for Finance & Operations (VPFO), July 2024
- Prof Hugh McGlynn, Vice President for Research & Innovation, July 2024
- Dr David Goulding, Head, School of Science & Informatics (Acting), Oct. 2023
- Ms Deirdre Collins, Head, Department of Pop, Jazz, Trad, Voice & Theatre Studies, June 2024
- Dr Brian Devitt, Head, Department of Maritime Studies, NMCI, April 2024
- Dr Breda O'Dwyer, Head, Department of Organisation & Professional Development, Oct. 2023
- Ms Irene O'Mara, Head, Dep't of Pop, Jazz, Trad, Voice & Theatre Studies (Acting), Dec. 2023
- Dr Susan Rea, Director of Nimbus Research Centre, Jan. 24
- Dr Ronan Coleman, Director of Cyber Innovate (Dep't of Computer Science), May 24
- Dr Tadgh Leane, Process Alignment Programme Manager, Office of the VPAAR, April 2024
- Mr Don Crowley, Change Management Programme Integration Facilitator (Acad.), Oct. 2023
- Ms Edwina Deenihan, Head of Student Counselling (Acting), Jan. 2024
- Mr Michael Hanrahan, Employee Relations Manager, Office of the VPFO, June 2024

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<sup>6</sup> Does not include executive appointments made in early 2024/25, viz. Prof Christine Cross, VP Academic Affairs & Registrar (VPAAR); Mr Simon Jennings, Chief Corporate Officer; Prof Alistair Payne, Dean of Creative & Performing Arts and Media; and Dr Séan McSweeney, Dean of Faculty of Engineering.

## 1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

### 1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Programmatic review is a periodic quality process in which peer evaluators analyse the effectiveness of a suite of programmes in a faculty, with an emphasis on quality, standards, and flexibility as well as appropriateness of response to changing needs. Guided by the principles set out in ENQA, *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG) 2015 (link [here](#)), programmatic review is one of the most significant academic quality instruments of the University.

Under CIT/IT Tralee policy, in order to retain its validation, each taught programme of higher education and training had to successfully undergo programmatic review at intervals not normally exceeding five (5) years. Programmatic review was conducted in two phases:

- Phase 1 looked at strategic and high-level issues and was normally organised by school;
- Phase 2 consisted of a detailed programme review, normally by each department within the school under review.

In January 2023, work commenced on the development of the Academic Operating Model for MTU, over two phases. The main deliverable of Phase 1, completed in June 2023, was the design of the high-level structure of the faculties. Through Phase 1, a capstone programme report for each faculty was also produced, which provided a listing of current programmes of that faculty, student and staff data for those programmes, and some competitor analysis within the Irish higher education sector. These reports were completed partly in anticipation of the second phase of the work, that being the definition of a coherent academic portfolio for each of the new faculties.

At the same time, it was noted that the majority of MTU programmes (Cork Campus programmes mainly) had had their validation extended by Academic Council and were overdue programmatic review, due initially to the uncertainty and workload associated with the TU application process and subsequently the impact of the pandemic. That said, many departments were proactive in updating modules and programmes throughout this period. For example, new assessment strategies introduced during the pandemic were mainstreamed in several cases, with Registrars' Offices facilitating this ongoing enhancement.

And so, the University considered the opportunity to leverage MTU's first programmatic review in MTU as a quality assurance and enhancement exercise in a broader sense, not just as a re-validation exercise, but as a catalyst for and enabler of the development of a coherent, fit-for-purpose and sustainable academic programme portfolio for MTU, with ensuing benefits for learners, staff, industry and the region.

As reported in [Part B Section 1.1.b](#) above, an internal implementation team was put in place in late 2022/23, with two Change Management Integration Facilitators (one academic, one PMSS), both at management grade, appointed. The Transformation Programme Implementation Steering Group, established in September 2023 and reporting to the University Executive, oversees progress on the interlinked workstreams of academic and PMSS operating models. Its membership

includes the Communications Specialist based in the Office of the President, which ensures a focus on regular, effective and consistent communication, to encourage the support and engagement of all staff and students.

From the outset, the Change Management Integration Facilitator (Academic) spearheaded engagement with and between Heads of Department/School/Faculty across the University and with Registrar's Office teams. This engagement and consultation have been key to the development of policy, procedure and guidelines for the forthcoming Faculty Enhancement Review. Iterative drafts were also shared with the University Executive and the Academic Council. Initially, discussion focussed on an approach similar to that for CIT and IT Tralee, with consideration also given to a process-focussed approach which could be extended to quality reviews of other units of the University including central services functions and research centres.

In February 2024, the Academic Council agreed on a two-phased approach similar to that of the antecedent institutions, these to be preceded by a preparatory phase, 'Phase Zero', which would afford staff of each of the new faculties the opportunity to engage and reflect, in a multi-campus context, on the current status and envisaged future direction of its programme portfolio in the context of the strategic development of the University and the wider environment. Phase 0 was to be informed by an analysis of the external environment and by the aforementioned capstone report on the programme portfolio of each domain/faculty.

Concerns had been raised that an approach identical to that of the antecedent institutions might lead to a very cumbersome and inefficient process which would take several years to complete, and it was suggested that, as a university, it was appropriate for MTU to leverage its own well-established QA functions and processes, thus enabling the external review aspect to focus on major programme changes and on the strategic direction of the portfolio.

This discussion coincided with the Planning Meeting and Review Team site visit for the CINNTE Institutional Review, with positive feedback on how the Planning Visit was employed to set up discussion points for the site visit and on the panel composition and method of working.

Thus, the policy and procedure finally agreed by the Academic Council in October 2024 provide for a single QA phase, **Faculty Enhancement Review (FER)** (see also [Part A Section 8.3](#)), managed by the Registrar's Office, preceded by a preparatory phase of engagement coordinated by the CMI Facilitator (Academic) and championed by the academic management of the faculty.

As recommended by the University Executive, the Academic Council had previously agreed a phased approach to allow learnings to feed forward and also afford a phased allocation of staffing resources, both at faculty/department level and centrally, particularly in academic quality and other academic affairs functions. In February 2024, and again on the recommendation of the University Executive, the Academic Council agreed that the **Faculty of Creative and Performing Arts and Media** and the **Faculty of Business** would be the first two faculties to undergo programme review. This sequencing remains. At the time of writing, the new Faculty of Creative & Performing Arts and Media has had its first formal all-staff day in January 2025, led by the new Dean.

Proposed timelines for the **Faculty of Health and Social Sciences**, **Faculty of Engineering**, and **Faculty of Science & Informatics** are being worked out at present, and it is envisaged that these will all have completed FER by end AY 2026/27.

Last but not least, the new FER policy includes principles to underpin the portfolio review, including the principle of 'One Programme per Award' as agreed by the University Executive in 2022/23.

<b>Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period</b>	<b>Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)</b>	<b>Links to relevant publications</b>
n/a		

## 1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels<sup>7</sup> 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	29	0	n/a	n/a	29	0	n/a
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes	0				0		
Desk reviews	10 <sup>1</sup>				9		
Virtual processes	19				19		
Average panel size for each process type*	4.8 <sup>2</sup>				4.8 <sup>2</sup>		

\* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

- Annotations:
1. Desk reviews were conducted for a number of reasons: Restructuring of 3+1 offering to a 4-year ab-initio degree (2); addition of embedded exit awards (3); addition of online delivery mode (2); revision of programme title (2); adoption of an externally approved programme (1).
  2. MTU programme approval policy specifies different panel sizes for different award types. Furthermore, new MTU-wide policy for the approval of major awards includes a learner representative in addition to the standard panel membership of 4+1. All panels for major awards captured in this table included a learner representative.

<sup>7</sup> QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

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

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	19 <sup>1</sup>	12	7	0	11	8	0	0	0	7 <sup>2</sup>	1 <sup>3</sup>
Secretary	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
Academic/Discipline Specific	24 <sup>4</sup>	18	6	0	11	13	0	0	0	13	0
Student Representative	8 <sup>5</sup>	2	6	0	0	8	0	0	0	8	0
QA	9	3	6	0	9	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
Teaching & Learning	n/a										
External Industry /Third Mission	28 <sup>6</sup>	15	13	0	0	28	0	0	0	0	28

- Annotations:**
1. Applicable MTU (Cork) legacy policy for validation of non-major award provides for an internal Chair from a different school. 18 Chairs were senior academics, with external Chairs coming from the relevant discipline area; one Chair was a senior industry representative.
  2. The 11 internal chairs are omitted from this figure.
  3. The senior industry representative gave rise to this figure.
  4. Excluding chairs.
  5. Postgraduate student from a different school, as per the applicable policy, for the validation of major awards only. Applicable MTU (Cork) legacy policy for validation of non-major awards does not provide for a learning representative on the panel.
  6. In each case, constituted by an internal Registrar's Office / Academic QAE representative, as per the applicable policy.

## 2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

### 2.1 Policy Alignment and Development

#### a. Marks and Standards (Regulations for Modules and Programmes)

The academic year 2023/24 saw full implementation of the new Marks and Standards and new University-wide provisions on external examination. Whereas it was originally envisaged that MTU-wide policies and procedures related to assessment (individual extenuating circumstances, reviews, appeals) would be approved in time for 2023/24 implementation, this did not materialise due to the impact of the February 2023 cyber-attack on all university functions. Thus, the pre-existing policies and procedures remained in effect.

The new Marks and Standards were however codified in Banner, with Banner examination results processing fully operational across all campuses in 2023/24. (For details on the implementation of Version 9 the Banner Student Record System, see [Part A Section 6.1](#) and [Part B Section 2.5](#) of this report.)

#### b. Portfolio of Academic Policies and Procedures

##### i. Approval of MTU Policies and Procedures

With many elements of a new MTU academic policy framework in development since designation now in place, the volume of policy approvals by Academic Council decreased markedly in the reporting period.

Academic Policies and Procedures approved by the MTU Academic Council in 2023/24 were:

- Inclusive Curriculum for a Sustainable Future, May 2024;
- Policy Regulations for Modules and Programmes (Marks and Standards), Version 2.1, May 2024;
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, May 2024.

Several additional academic policies and procedures were under development in 2023/24, with a view to bringing these to Academic Council for approval the following academic year. Amongst others, these included a new policy and procedure for the review of academic units and their programme portfolios, reconceptualised as a Faculty Enhancement Review process (see also [Part A Section 2.4.1 b](#) and [Part B Section 1.4.1](#), both above).

##### ii. Approval of Revisions to Legacy Procedures (Campus-specific)

In May 2024, Academic Council also approved further extension for one final academic year of the following MTU (Cork) legacy procedure, pending development of MTU-wide policy:

- [Supplement to Guidelines: Admissions to Level 8 Degrees \(Post Level 7 Award\) for 2019/20 Level 7 graduates, 2020/21 Level 7 graduates, and 2021/22 Level 7 graduates, and 2022/23 graduates applying in 2023 \(Cork Campuses\)](#), March 2023.

The final extension will apply ‘mutatis mutandis’ to graduates of Ordinary Bachelor (NFQ L7) degrees hosted on the MTU (Cork) campuses applying in 2024, with no requirement for a corresponding adaptation of the legacy policy document. Academic Council further agreed to extend the existing programme derogations linked to PRSB requirements as listed in the Annex to the policy supplement, but stipulated that no new derogations would be allowable during the final extension period.

The provisions of this supplement lower the progression threshold for NFQ Level 7 graduates from 50% to 40% and were first introduced by – then – Cork Institute of Technology to counterbalance potentially detrimental effects of the transition to Covid-19 emergency remote teaching. Since TU designation, continued application of these provisions has effectively meant that regardless of a learner’s original entry route, the standard threshold for progression to the award stage of a Level 8 degree has been 40% across all of MTU, unless a programme has been approved to operate a raised threshold on foot of professional accreditation/recognition requirements.

The extended policy supplement remains published on the [MTU \(Cork\) Academic Regulations and Policies](#) page.

### c. Other University Policies and Procedures

#### i. MTU Equality Statement

For purposes of compliance with Section 19 of the *TU Act 2018*, an MTU [Equality Statement for the period of May 2024 to May 2028](#) was adopted by the University in May 2024.

#### ii. Digitaly Online Credentials System

In 2023/24, the online credentials system, Digitaly, already in place on the MTU (Kerry) campuses, was rolled out across all Cork campuses. Thus all MTU students and graduates can now directly download their transcripts from their Digitaly account, and share transcripts and European Diploma Supplements with third parties such as employers and other higher education institutions.

The roll-out of Digitaly in Cork came later than originally planned, due to the need for the MyBan and Examinations teams to focus on the immediate response to the cyber-attack on the MTU (Cork) campuses in February 2023, particularly the issue of Summer 2023 examination results. (The cyber-attack and MTU response was subject of a case study in [AQR 2024](#).) At that time, the Awards Office faced significant challenges in providing transcripts to students in a timely manner. Currently, results are available through Digitaly for all students in academic years 2022/23 and 2023/24. It is planned to eventually have transcripts going back as far as 2001/02 available via Digitaly. The University will continue to manually produce transcripts for graduates pre-2001/02, with a longer lead time.

## 2.2 Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

### a. Leading and Empowering Staff in TU Transformation

Throughout AY 2023/24, several interactive workshops were convened for staff across all campuses and grades. These covered an outline of what the MTU Transformation Programme was about, an overview of the four workstreams, the role of the Change Management and Integration Facilitators, discussion on the current and target operating models, the role of management and staff in delivering the programme and the importance of two-way communication.

Approximately 1,200 staff had the opportunity to attend and contribute to at least one workshop:

- Two senior staff workshops brought together approximately 100 university leaders and progressed discussions in each faculty and functional area. The first, held in Cork in March, commencing with a workshop for senior staff in Cork in March 2024, focussed on the mission, vision, and values of each of

the new faculties and central services functions. The second, held in Kerry in May 2024, progressed work on the Faculty Enhancement Review.

- Following on from the senior staff workshops, the facilitators organised and ran workshops in April and June for staff across all Professional Management Support Staff (PMSS) grades in all campuses, commencing with supervisory non-management grades (Senior Staff Officer, Administrative Officer).
- The importance of ensuring alignment with the University Strategic Plan at all meetings and workshops was highlighted. The significance of the enablers and objectives was emphasised, and staff were advised to align activities to these as work progresses in the transformation programme.

### b. MTU Pathway to Fellowship Programme

Following a successful pilot in the previous academic year, in 2023/24 MTU continued to engage Advance HE for the development of the [Advance HE Fellowship Scheme](#), an internationally recognised professional accreditation system that offers [accreditation through distinct categories](#) from Associate Fellow to Principal Fellow.

Initially, 52 staff had enrolled. By December 2023, 41 staff had completed, there were 43 new starters, and 5 were still progressing with their application. MTU Advance HE Fellowship programme participants share their experience of the programme in a video published [here](#) on the TLU website.

### c. Leadership Development

As reported in Part A, the LEAD@MTU programme, initially geared towards the University's senior management team, has now been opened to managers in all areas across all campuses.

LEAD@MTU is aligned with a recently developed MTU *Certificate in Higher Education Leadership* (NFQ Level 9 Special Purpose Award, 10 ECTS credits); 2 senior managers completed this programme in 2023/24.

The original LEAD model included a three-day international residential programme in University of Leuven, Belgium, but this had to be postponed due to the February 2023 cyber-attack. 28 staff participated in the rescheduled event in October 2023. The design of this event ensured a broad perspective on European Higher Education and on the role of innovation (within and outside the sector) in shaping attitudes to change, advancement and leadership.

#### i. Leadership Summit

On 2 May 2024, MTU hosted a [Leadership Summit](#), again funded by the HEA Systems Performance Framework 2021-2024. Recognising the rapidly changing societal landscape, this event set out to provide some valuable leadership insights to emerging challenges and opportunities while also providing a platform to connect with peers to explore how best to move forward together.

This event attracted a large attendance, not just from within MTU, but also senior management and executives from many Irish HEIs and those from our Ingenium and Erasmus networks also. The [agenda](#) included plenary keynote talks and parallel sessions involving national and international speakers and on a range of topics pertinent to the higher education landscape today and into the next decade.

## *ii. Elevate Leadership Development Programme*

*Elevate*, MTU's bespoke leadership development programme, open to all staff members but aimed specifically at those in non-senior management roles and first delivered in the previous academic year, continued to be provided in 2023/24, funded through HEA Systems Performance Funding and TUTF, with a total enrolment of 120 staff.

Participants self-select one of three leadership programmes based on their previous experience of leadership, their current and previous roles, and their interest in developing leadership skills: Leadership Fundamentals; Leadership Core, or Experiential Leadership.

In March 2024, Academic Council approved a new 10 ECTS credits, NFQ Level 8 Special Purpose Award, *Certificate in Leadership in Action*. This award relates to the Experiential Leadership strand of *Elevate* which is aimed at supporting staff who have a formal or informal leadership role in MTU, are involved in drawing people together to achieve a goal of some sort, are in ongoing complex collaboration with a group of people, and/or have previously completed the Elevate Leadership Core strand. 27 staff members had completed the Certificate by the end of the academic year.

## d. Continuous Professional Development

### *i. Sustainability Training*

Following the development of the climate action roadmap, the development of an appropriate climate action training plan for all university staff was identified as being crucial to ensure that staff are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to reduce the university's carbon footprint and promote sustainability practices. In 2023, the *Sustainability 101* e-learning training programme, developed by *Change by Degrees* and facilitated by the Department of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), was made available to all staff.

Climate Action Literacy Training (CALT) was provided to all senior management staff.

Sustainability Workshops were organised across all six campuses of MTU, with every staff member invited to participate. These workshops, facilitated by *Change by Degrees*, focussed on key areas such as strategy planning for sustainable activities and the decarbonisation of the organisation. The sessions were designed to foster a holistic, transdisciplinary approach to goal creation, encouraging collaboration and co-creation of sustainable solutions across various departments and sectors within the institution. Through these workshops, MTU aimed to engage its staff in developing actionable strategies to drive sustainability and reduce its environmental impact.

### *ii. Supporting Staff in relation to Student Mental Health*

Together with the HEA and Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education Ireland (**PCHEI**), the MTU student counselling service developed a new online training programme for staff. This programme, *Identifying & Responding to Distressed or at Risk Students*, consists of a suite of online modules which provide information about student mental health, referral pathways and role boundaries so staff can support students in the best way possible within their current role and workload. Completion of the two modules is rewarded with a Digital Badge. By the end of 2023/24, at least 204 staff had engaged with the programme with 117 completing and receiving their badge. It is planned to organise a follow-up in-person bespoke workshop for staff, facilitated by MTU Student Counselling, to create discussion and support in specific scenarios.

### e. Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention

The position of the Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention Officer (SVHPO) was filled in January 2024 with the goal of fostering a safe, respectful, and supportive environment within the University. The key objectives of this position include promoting a culture of safety and respect, and actively working to reduce the harmful effects of sexual misconduct, misogyny, and gender-based violence (DSGBV).

A major focus of this role has been the implementation of campaigns, training initiatives, and awareness-raising activities. To date two campaigns have taken place; Spiking Awareness and 16 Days of Action against Gender-Based Violence. In addition, the SVHPO has engaged relevant stakeholders both within and outside of the university both at a community and voluntary level by gaining membership on the Sexual Health Network and as part of the Safe and Protected Subgroup, working to protect children and young people at risk of DSGBV. Collaboration with external support services has been crucial in developing initiatives, policies, and tailored responses to combat sexual harassment and violence.

To date, 326 staff and students have participated in training on ESVH (Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment). These training sessions have ranged from basic consent education for first-year students to more specialized courses on reporting processes for those in supportive roles. Further targeted training has focused on strategic and in-depth disclosure protocols for staff who are likely to engage with students who have experienced sexual harassment. Other critical areas of focus have included awareness around stalking, spiking, intimate-image abuse, and online/digital abuse.

Promotion of SpeakOut, the University's anonymous reporting system, has been a cornerstone of this initiative, alongside ongoing efforts to educate students about the laws surrounding stalking, spiking, and intimate-image abuse. Additionally, communication regarding healthy relationships and available support services—both within the university and externally—continues to be prioritized.

## 2.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

### a. Curriculum Framework

The development of MTU's Curriculum Framework, approved by Academic Council in May 2024, was a key output of MTU's N-TUTORR team in 2023/24. A steering group was established to oversee the project, including the relevant MTU N-TUTORR leads and a management sponsor for each pillar.

While guidance had been provided by N-TUTORR nationally, MTU shaped and adapted the Framework to ensure better alignment with its own strategy and to maximise the opportunity to enhance the framework by linking it to existing MTU policies, including the Policy & Procedure for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards. Thus, while the N-TUTORR guidance proposed six pillars, MTU added two more (Entrepreneurship and Research & Innovation) and broadened the UDL theme to the more comprehensive pillar of Universal Design. The eight pillars – Academic Integrity; Digital Transformation; Education for Sustainability; Entrepreneurship; Employability; Equity / Equality, Diversity & Inclusion; Research & Innovation; and Universal Design for Learning – are supported by 43 guiding principles to inform the design, delivery, review and enhancement of programmes. The Curriculum Framework also aligns with the EDIT Charter, an output of the “Embedding EDI in the Curriculum of the new Technological University Sector (EDIT)” Project, adopted by MTU in early 2023.

Under the new Faculty Enhancement Review Policy and Procedure, programme teams will have regard to the Curriculum Framework in the forthcoming review of programmes.

A mapping tool has also been developed by the N-TUTORR academic developers to assist programme teams in mapping their programmes against each of the eight pillars.

### b. Digital Learning

June 2024 saw the publication of the book *How to Use Digital Learning with Confidence and Creativity: A Practical Introduction*, edited by Dr Gearóid Ó Súilleabháin (MTU), Dr Donna Lanclos (adjunct faculty of MTU) and Dr Tom Farrelly (MTU). The book includes contributions from a number of prominent researchers and practitioners in the field of digital learning from Ireland, the UK, mainland Europe, Canada, the US, Egypt, and Australia.

Just weeks earlier, MTU hosted the [International OER Open Education conference \(“OER24”\)](#) on its Bishopstown campus on March 27 – 28. The event was hosted in partnership with the Association of Learning Technology (ALT), the leading professional body for Learning Tech in the UK. The conference, now in its 15th year, is a high-profile one and attracted over 200 researchers and practitioners in the open education and digital learning field from around the world. Recordings of the keynote presentations from OER24 can be [accessed on this YouTube playlist](#).

Last but certainly not least, the work of the Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning in advancing the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment through digital technology throughout the reporting period was recognised by the [Association for Learning Technology \(ALT\)](#) through bestowal of the [ALT Award for Team of the Year 2024](#) in September 2024.

### c. Academic Calendar

The academic year 2023/24 saw the implementation of a common academic calendar for full-time and part-time MTU programmes, across all campuses. Challenges remained in relation to timing of end-of-semester assessment in Semester 1 and the completion of examinations related processes (appeals and reviews) for Semester 2 modules on the Cork campuses. The Registrars established a working group, including students’ union representation and staff representatives of university functions to develop a set of principles to inform longer-term planning. The outputs of this group were presented to Academic Council on 3 May 2024. These included principles, along with the constraints to be considered in the development of a calendar, and finally, two options for 2024/25. Following follow-up consultation, including with staff unions, a final proposal for AY 2024/2025 was presented to and approved by the Academic Council on 31 May. This calendar adheres, as much as possible, to the principles submitted to Academic Council previously. Significantly more work will be required to achieve a position whereby planning can be on a five-year basis. Timelines for Autumn results processing, Semester 1 assessment, and Semester 2 appeals and reviews remain particularly challenging and will likely require intervention at national level to resolve for the long term. As the impact of Covid-19 on the post-primary education sector continues to impact on the Leaving Certificate, it has been noted that the later release of Leaving Certificate results is likely to continue and that the ramifications of this need to be further considered, both on academic delivery and the more holistic learner experience, particularly for first years who now arrive on campus after continuing students have returned, which can be overwhelming.

## d. Examinations

Semester 1 timelines in the new common calendar (see above) impacted on the scheduling of assessment, in particular the end-of-semester examinations. With just nine days in which to run the Semester 1 examination session, some manual exam scheduling on the timetabling software was needed to find the most optimal solution. Space was an additional constraint on the Bishopstown campus and, while an additional large exam hall was identified, this then put strain on rosters for invigilators and other support staff due to the required numbers in the venues. Given all the constraints, there is little to no option for flexibility, as one individual request for a change will impact downstream. Upgrading of the examinations scheduling software has now been classed as a priority item by the University Executive.

As a consequence of the February 2023 cyber-attack, the MAXe examination paper management system was unavailable for Semester 2 and related Autumn examinations in 2022/23. While it had initially been envisaged that MAXe would be restored in time for 2023/24, this was not possible and so the secure contingency system that had been developed following the cyber-attack continued to be used. The contingency system followed the workflow process of the MAXe system closely and was a huge success in the particular context in which it had been developed. However, it was resource-heavy in terms of staff and relied on manual entry of data and formatting of examination papers. Consultation with academic staff as internal examiners showed that there was a clear preference on their part to have MAXe reinstated if possible. Following a review, it was decided to reinstate MAXe for 2024/25. The main issue encountered by users of MAXe in previous years was the authentication process to access the application. With new authentication measures being rolled out by IT Services, this issue was addressed, and Semester 1 2024/25 examination papers were all managed in MAXe.

Looking to the longer term, examination paper management and examination scheduling are two of the processes included in the Process Alignment Programme currently underway, ahead of the merger of the two student record systems, currently planned for 2026.

## 2.4 Supports and Resources for Learners

### 2.4.1 MTU Context

During 2023/24, staff in the area of Academic Administration & Student Affairs invested significant time in building relationships across the campuses. In March 2024, the relevant leads travelled to Limerick for a study visit and considered models of practice in University of Limerick and Technological University of the Shannon. The feedback on this initiative was very positive, not only in relation to the learnings regarding structures, operations, systems and policies, but also on the opportunity to stronger relationships with counterparts of other campuses and to connect with peers in other institutions. The preparation for the CINNTE Review, along with the Review Team visit itself, was also effective in bringing colleagues together and enhancing relationships.

That said, challenges remain, and the resolution of these was slowed as a consequence of the lengthy process for the approval of the executive posts, with a single Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar not appointed until September 2024. The proportion of staff of this area who are on lower grades is relatively high, while grading is not fully aligned across the campus locations. Furthermore, while funding opportunities such as TU RISE, TSAF and N-TUTORR are very welcome, the fixed-term promotional opportunities available through these have led to a high level of churn within the system.

A further issue, in the area of Access & Disability in particular, is that funding streams are for a time-limited period, and staff have voiced concerns about the precarious nature of contracts, all at a time when the demand for the service is on an upward curve, both in terms of scale and complexity.

The 2024/25 budget process prioritised specific areas of risk, following a risk analysis undertaken by the areas, and prioritised a number of new posts for approval. At the time of writing, these have been progressed.

Working in collaboration with IT Services, Access staff in Kerry and Cork made further progress on the alignment of procedures and processes for the Student Assistance Fund (SAF). There is now a common scoring system while opening/closing dates, communications, and the payment process are all aligned. More work is required before this work is complete: for example, the entire SAF process is run through Banner in Kerry and through SharePoint in Cork. Further analysis is needed to determine the optimal process for MTU.

Nationally, there are onerous reporting requirements, both in relation to the Student Assistance Fund (SAF) and the Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD). Additionally, HEA's new National Access Plan has a specific focus on an evidence-driven approach, using analysis of quality data, and placing a strong emphasis on concrete and tangible targets. The Plan proposes to measure its impact on goals through the use of KPIs, national targets and qualitative indicators. As a HEI, MTU is required to report annually to the HEA on progress on the NAP and its own performance agreement. The strengthened link between the NAP and the System Performance Framework, with Access & Participation as one of four key pillars, is noteworthy and welcome.

The continued implementation of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework (HEA, 2020) has seen additional mental health funding allocated to each HEI, MTU included, over the past three years. This has supported a move towards more adequate staffing and has also facilitated more whole-campus mental health initiatives and a modern, digitised database for confidential student counselling records. While this funding is welcomed, it is fixed term each year and there is no guarantee of this continuing into the future. MTU agrees that multi-annual core funding must be continued into future so that staff-student ratios reflect best practice, with staff enjoying long-term contracts, as well as ensuring that the 2020 framework can be implemented in full.

## 2.4.2 Library Enhancements

### a. Collection Development

MTU Library further increased electronic content this year, supporting the University's strategy to embed UN SDGs within curricula and in conjunction with MTU's Open Access mandate. The Library funded and onboarded the Knowledge Unlatched (an international initiative for OA) Focus SDG Collection - [KU Select](#). This is an entirely OA eBook collection of topics aligning with the UN's global Sustainable Development Goals such as Health and Wellbeing, Climate Action and No Poverty. In addition, MTU pledged funding for three years to the [Open Research Library](#) - an online scholarly collection surfacing one of the most comprehensive collections of peer-reviewed Open Access e-books in the world. Funding was secured via NTUTORR to acquire a bespoke collection of print and digital books relating to UDL to broaden the range and extent to which [Universal Design](#) textbooks are available to all staff and students at MTU. Print copies were purchased and rolled out on both campus Libraries with the print acquisitions mirrored in eBook format. The collection supports the implementation of quality UDL practices across the University and contributes to the endeavour to build on a strong understanding and culture of UD at MTU. This hybrid collection not only offers further ways for staff and students to learn

about UD principles, but these resources allow all readers multiple ways to customise the display of information, guaranteeing a UD approach to understanding and learning more about UD.

In partnership with the Careers Department, the [Careers Collection](#) of print material in the Bishopstown library was refreshed and centrally relocated to accentuate its prominence for students. The currency and scope of the material was upgraded and centralised into a unique space dedicated entirely to this valuable collection and highlighting the MTU Careers Service. The Careers collection print content upgrade integrates with the library's broader strategy to replenish and enhance print resources post-Pandemic. This approach, whereby the physical collection complements and widens access to the electronic, also aligns with Universal Design principles adhered to by the Library.

The [SAGE Research Core](#) portfolio of resources was upgraded to include a new video channel, *Sage Research Methods Video: Qualitative and Mixed*. This new video feature contains 125 hours of video, including tutorials, case study videos, expert interviews, and documentaries, covering the entire research methods and statistics curriculum and skills such as how to interview effectively, manage fieldnotes, data and communicate findings.

Further inclusion in [IReL](#) deals during the reporting period resulted in the roll-out of four new resources for the duration of 2024: *Springer Nature*, a leading provider of science, technology and medicine content that includes access to 3,000+ journals, was onboarded and the subscription incorporates a transformative agreement that enables MTU researchers to avail of article processing charges to publish their articles in Open Access Springer journals. *Springer 2024 Computer Science* eBook collection was also introduced with 1300+ e-titles published throughout the year, covering contemporary topics such as artificial intelligence and cryptography. The 'unlimited access/downloads with title retention in perpetuity' eBook licensing model is the optimum on the eBook market. The launch of *Project MUSE* resulted in 800 new e-journals in the digital humanities and social science disciplines, along with 5,500+ Open Access eBooks. Finally, MTU gained access via IReL to the Irish Newspaper Archive - the world's largest database of Irish Newspapers with publications dating back to 1738 to the present day. It has proven a very popular resource for both current affairs research and the exploration of local and national Irish history. Library staff created a series of bespoke online information sessions and delivered training to publicise and support user engagement with this new academic content.

To advance evidence-based decision making and evaluation of electronic resource performance, the Library acquired the [CELUS](#) reporting tool during 2023. This was implemented to centralise data measurement and facilitate more granular user analytics via automated data harvesting and reporting tools. As part of a commitment to UDL principles and ensuring flexible, hybrid collections, print expenditure grew by 20% compared to the previous year's spend<sup>8</sup>. During the reporting period, in-depth data analysis was carried out on the Library's print serials collection, resulting in the deselection of outdated and defunct material. This project was completed in Summer 2024, which resulted in approximately 90% storage space on the first floor being freed up. An opportunity now exists to re-evaluate the space available to repurpose/redesign the area to accommodate new features and introduce positive-living and wellbeing collections and spaces.

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<sup>8</sup> Cork campus figures

## b. Training and Outreach Programmes

An extensive range of online, hybrid and face-to-face information sessions were provided throughout 2023/2024 with 50+ workshops being offered and almost 1,200 students & staff attending<sup>9</sup>. Topics covered by library staff included information and digital literacy, use of library resources for study, teaching and research, referencing, misinformation, literature review process and research methods. The previously launched OER, The Assignment Toolkit, was upgraded and rolled out to MTU students on the Canvas platform in September 2024. Revisions included updated versions of Harvard, MLA, Chicago, APA and IEEE referencing styles. Library staff were invited to present on the Toolkit at the 2023 QQI Sectoral Findings & Enhancement Showcase in Dublin in October 2023. In March 2024, the Toolkit won first prize in the OER category of the inaugural [Irish Open Access Publishing \(IOAP\) awards](#).

As part of the INGENIUM initiative, the library hosted a librarian from the University of Skövde, Sweden during November 2023. All Cork and Kerry libraries were visited and both partner institutes gained insights into different practices, approaches, and new trends in the field of academic librarianship. It also provided an opportunity for networking, sharing experiences, and building collaborations.

Throughout 2023/2024 library staff worked with a team of students from a variety of disciplines to co-create a new Subject Guide Template which would form the basis for a new suite of digital Subject Guides across all MTU campuses. In addition to the student partnership, a survey was circulated to all academic staff to help inform planning and design. All feedback has been incorporated into the newly designed guides which are also compliant with the UDL and Accessibility guidelines. The new guides went live on the library website in Sem. 1 of the 2024/25 academic year.

Library staff across all grades and roles undertook a range of CPD offerings during 2023/2024. Topics covered included Academic Integrity, Artificial Intelligence, Assessment Feedback, Cybersecurity, Leadership, Open Science, Publishing, Research Integrity, Student and Staff Partnerships, Usage Data for Decision Making, Universal Design, Sustainability and Systematic Reviews. Bespoke training sessions were arranged to support library staff in front-facing roles. In partnership with MTU Student Counselling Service, all staff completed an online training programme - 'Identifying & Responding to Distressed or At-Risk Students'. To ensure the library offers an inclusive environment and experience all staff attended an online training workshop facilitated by [AsIAm](#), Ireland's National Autism Charity.

## c. Library User Experience Enhancement

The introduction of a portable [Reader Pen](#) borrowing service to all MTU Libraries was made possible thanks to NTUTORR funding and the Library Learning Community members' ambition. The pens are portable tools which support independent reading and learning. The project involved [partnering with students](#) to research and identify the most suitable product and service provision, and has positively impacted students, ensuring improved access to print resources and removing barriers where learning or language difficulties exist.

A Universal Design Audit was carried out in the library, guided by the [ALTITUDE Charter](#). The audit identified mainly strengths and resulted in the installation of additional hearing loops at all information desks along with more height adjustable study desks across satellite campus libraries. Digital signage was introduced in addition to all print signage being revised and upgraded to incorporate universal symbols. The concept of Biophilia, the

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<sup>9</sup> Figures based on Cork Campus data – between Sep. 2023 and Aug. 2024, 16% increase in attendance

human tendency to seek connection with nature, was introduced across all campus libraries. Studies show that plants can reduce stress, improve air-quality and increase focus, creating a more inviting atmosphere in the room. In partnership with [Green Spaces for Health](#), plants were piloted in group study hubs and a [Biophilia in Action](#) exhibition was held. Introducing greenery has enhanced areas aesthetically while also providing an increased sense of well-being and improved air quality.

The Fleischmann Library Learning Community sought to improve accessibility to a vast but underused audio collection of both Vinyl and CD while also incorporating the theme of the library as a place of sanctuary, and launched [The Listening Spot](#) during Culture Night 2023 celebrations at the MTU Cork School of Music. Library staff transformed existing library space to create a new zone offering students the space and resources to spend time to listening, and reading in a relaxed yet focused environment, free from the distractions associated with off-campus locations, and other busy areas within the campus. The project involved a curated collection of jazz music, books, and journals from musician and author Brian Priestly in addition to the installation of new audio equipment. Once again, the implementation of biophilic principles was included in the design.

The MTU Library Systems team embarked on a project to align and merge the IT systems and infrastructure on both Cork and Kerry campuses) that support the provision of our electronic resources (i.e. eBooks, eDatabases, eJournals). This project included the merger of IT systems for resources such as Ebook Central, ProQuest Platform, EBSCOHost, Scopus & ScienceDirect etc. It also included the merger of EZproxy and the implementation of a new MTU Azure AD authentication solution. As a result of this extensive work, all MTU patrons can now access the same library electronic resources easily and securely, both on site and remotely, 24/7. In July 2024, MTU Library rolled out a new merged instance of the Library Management System (LMS). Everyday library operations such as circulation, cataloguing, acquisitions, inter-library loans and online searching are all handled in the LMS (Koha). This project, which involved stakeholders across MTU, was the culmination of considerable work carried out by library staff across Cork and Kerry campuses, building on previous work to align library policies and business processes. Having a single unified catalogue supports the library's commitment to ensuring that all MTU patrons enjoy the same service across all library branches.

The entrance of the [John Holland Library](#) at NMCI was upgraded to include new radio frequency identification security gates to enhance and align security systems and footfall reporting across all campus libraries.

#### d. Research and Digital Scholarship Supports

In September 2023, MTU, along with four other TU's, joined the [Technological University Network \(TU-NET\)](#). TU-NET is an affiliation of the Technological Universities in Ireland that are committed to the provision and development of Open Research services and infrastructure in the TU-SECTOR. SWORD became fully compliant with the latest version of [OpenAire](#)<sup>10</sup> in the summer of 2024, and all of SWORD's items are now harvested directly to a [shared TU-NET repository](#) on the OpenAire platform. The Metadata & Research Data Management (RDM) Librarian represents MTU in TU-NET.

In September 2023, the University's RDM Librarian collaborated with the Research Integrity & Compliance Officer to deliver a series of "Bitesize" lunchtime research webinars. The Digital Scholarship Librarian partnered with colleagues such as the RICO and CIRIT (Cross-Institutional Research Integrity Training) in October 2023 to

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<sup>10</sup> OpenAIRE is a Non-Profit Partnership of 50 organisations, to ensure a permanent open scholarly communication infrastructure to support European research.

deliver a [workshop](#) entitled [A Virtue Approach to Research Integrity & Good Authorship Practices](#) at the [Academic & Research Integrity International Conference 2023](#). The established collaboration between MTU Library and the RICO continued with further training provided by the Digital Scholarship Librarian, offering best practice guidance in identifying [Predatory Journals and Responsible Dissemination](#).

Building on existing collaborations between MTU Library and the Department of Biological Sciences, the second [ORBioM \(Open Research BioSciences Meeting\)](#) took place in November 2023 on the Bishopstown Campus. Postgraduate students engaged in biology-related research from across MTU came together to share their work, which was made possible via the publishing capabilities on SWORD.

Utilising funding secured via the MTU's SATLE Reusable Learning Resources (RLR) Funding Initiative, an Open Science Reusable Learning Resource (RLR) was launched in March 2024, called [Foundations in Open Science](#). The resource is available via Canvas for all MTU staff and students who will be awarded a digital badge on completion, and [freely and openly available to the public](#). In addition to this, the SATLE funding provided for the [Center of Open Science](#) to deliver dedicated training on Openness and Reproducibility Research Practices over the course of two half days. Modules covered during the training included: [Hands-on Data management Kickstarter](#), [Reproducible Methods](#), and [Research Sharing Kickstarter](#).

Stage Three of the Thesis Digitisation project was completed in August 2024, where approximately 1000 theses had DOIs created for them via [Crossref](#), ensuring their discoverability via a permanent digital identifier.

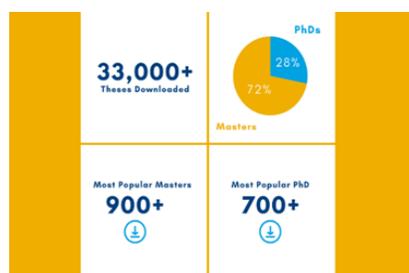


Figure 7: Downloads of MTU online theses (SWORD), June 24 to Feb. 25

## 2.4.3 Access and Participation

### a. Digital Supports

As reported in AQR 2023, the Government Laptop Loan Scheme introduced as a response to Covid-19 was extremely beneficial in addressing the digital divide and access to flexible learning, especially so following the February 2023 cyber-attack on the MTU (Cork) campuses. The scheme ended in 2023/24. Unfortunately, while the Access Service made every effort to retrieve laptops from students, the return rate was very low and those that were returned were either obsolete or otherwise unfit for use. Currently, any MTU student who requires support in the form of a laptop is now signposted to the Student Assistance Fund, as was previously the case. The Access Team is working with MTU colleagues in Fundraising in an effort to raise further funds for this.

The Linked Schools Team and the Enabling Transitions Coordinator (DSS) developed a pre-entry information resource, using the medium of animation to complement the Linked Schools Team's engagement with schools. Funded by the Teaching and Learning Unit (TLU) and AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office. The aim of this project was to disseminate key information about access to higher education by reimagining the traditional 'school talk' on national reduced entry schemes. With Universal Design as the framework guiding the process and Human-Centered Design (HCD) as the lens, the medium of animation was used to disseminate key

information and messages about the HEAR scheme to a much wider audience in a more meaningful, clear, and engaging manner. The video is age appropriate, autism aware and, in 1 minute and 13 seconds summarises the main points of the traditional school talk which typically takes 40-60 minutes. The [first education story](#) is based on a leaving certificate student who applies for the HEAR (Higher Education Access Route) scheme and successfully gains entry into University. The student is then supported in their education journey by a HEAR mentor and becomes the first in their family to receive a degree. The project team made a successful funding application to MTU's Innovation and Enterprise Month fund which enabled them to launch the first video in March 2024 as part of MTU Innovation and Enterprise month. [The Education Story is available to watch on YouTube](#) and has since been shared with CAO and the Irish University Association (IUA).

## b. Alignment of Access and Disability Service

Prior to the merger of the two former Institutes of Technology, a review of CIT's Access and Disability Service had been undertaken in 2020, supported by PWC following a tender process.

In AY 2022/23, TUTF funding was allocated to undertake a review of the Kerry Campus Access and Disability Service and to update findings of the 2020 CIT Report. Following a separate tender process, PWC was appointed to undertake the 2022/23 review. This included an *ab initio* review of the Kerry Campus Access function and a progress review on some of the recommendations and targets outlined in the 2020 report, incorporating some of the new challenges (i.e. any shifts post-Covid-19 or since the establishment of MTU). At the time of writing, a draft is with relevant MTU staff for review. The report will prove beneficial to highlight the engagement, work and challenges within Access, and to inform the alignment and future development of the function.

In the meantime, cross-campus collaboration occurred across several initiatives and funds, including the Student Assistance Fund, Fund for Students with Disabilities, 1916 Bursaries, Sanctuary Scholarships and Tomar Trust etc. There is agreement that this collaborative work is both important and necessary in order to ensure parity of service provision across all campuses, although Access and Disability Service staff have noted that it does result in a considerable amount of additional administration short-term.

## c. Access Initiatives

A multitude of access initiatives are in place across all MTU campuses. The projects presented below provide some examples of MTU's work aimed at increasing access and widening participation.

### i. Bonding Days for Traveller Students

Following on from various discussions held with individual Traveller students, it became apparent that there was a need to create space for Traveller students to meet and connect with each other in MTU. Through PATH 5 funding, two Bonding Days, one in Cork and one in Kerry, were arranged for all MTU Traveller students, in October 2023 and May 2024. The events gave students the opportunity to step away from day-to-day student life and concentrate on building social and personal connections with their peers.

### ii. Building Social Connections – Access Special Purpose Award

*Building Social Connections*, a single subject 5 ECTS credit module, was rolled out in Semester 2 2023/24. Funded by N-TUTORR, it is a collaboration between staff and students from the Access Service and the School of Humanities. Among its aims are to increase participation from underrepresented groups in Higher Education, as outlined in the National Access Plan 2022-2028.

The module was developed by two lecturers and delivered by two of their PhD students, with a trauma sensitive approach to education and learning at the core of the module's design and delivery. A UDL approach is evident across the module structure, assessment and delivery.

Lectures were held every Friday in Blackpool Library, a local community selected to provide students with the assurance of a familiar, convenient, accessible and engaged space. Lectures provided an understanding of social connections, relational development, exploration of self-care strategies, role of the community as well as themes such as identity, cultural diversity, with a strong emphasis on reflection in each session.

A research study has been undertaken by three lecturers since the programme concluded, including interviews with several participants of the programme. This study is intended to inform further development of the next pathway for this cohort.

Further N-TUTORR funding has been secured to support the development of a second 5 ETCS credit module, to be delivered in 2024/25. It is hoped that these modules will provide the springboard to the development of an MTU Access Foundation Programme which will provide a pathway to full-time study in MTU.

### *iii. Mentoring Initiative for Neurodiverse Students*

In 2023/24, the Disability Support Service piloted a new mentoring initiative with the Department of Mechanical, Biomedical & Manufacturing Engineering. Four lecturers volunteered to become mentors and were supported by the Disability Transition Programme Coordinator. By year end, the department reported the project to be a success, with plans to continue the department mentoring support option in the 2024/25 academic year. Some of the staff mentors have, additionally, become involved in the Neurodiversity and UD Learning Community events and have reported that their new knowledge in this area has supported their students.

## **2.5 Information and Data Management**

### **Banner Upgrade and Merger Project**

Following the upgrade to Banner V9 on all campuses, the extension of to the Cork Campuses, and the pivot to Banner broadsheets processing on the Cork Campuses in 2023/24, the focus for 2023/24 was on enhancement for improved user experience. A suite of reports for the Module Examination Boards was developed. As regards the documentation for Progression and Awards Boards, the broadsheet was further developed so that it was student-oriented rather than module-orientated. However, the insights available from the module-oriented approach remained available through Argos reporting.

Ahead of the merger of the two student record systems of Kerry, Cork, currently envisaged to take place in 2026, formal work began on identifying all associated processes and systems required to be aligned for the final Banner merger. An academic manager was seconded as Process Alignment Manager to coordinate this work.

## 2.6 Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

### a. INGENIUM European University Alliance

The INGENIUM Alliance, comprised of 10 partnering universities including MTU, was successful under the 2022 European Universities call. It launched in January 2023. [INGENIUM](#) is divided into ten inter-related work packages (see [Table 3](#) overleaf), of which MTU is leading the eighth: *Entrepreneurial INGENIUM*.

<b>Work Package</b>	<b>Work Package Label</b>	<b>Lead Institution</b>
<b>001</b>	Management and Coordination	UNIOVI (Spain)
<b>002</b>	Building a cohesive cooperation framework	MUS (Bulgaria)
<b>003</b>	Digital INGENIUM	UOC (Greece)
<b>004</b>	The INGENIUM European Campus	HKA (Germany)
<b>005</b>	INGENIUM for innovative teaching and lifelong learning	XAMK (Finland)
<b>006</b>	INGENIUM for research	UDA (Italy)
<b>you too man007</b>	INGENIUM for Sustainable Development	HS (Sweden)
<b>008</b>	Entrepreneurial INGENIUM	MTU (Ireland)
<b>009</b>	INGENIUM for Non-discriminatory and Socially Engaged Higher Education	URN (France)
<b>010</b>	Impact and Dissemination	TUIASI (Romania)

[Table 3](#): INGENIUM work packages and lead institutions

Work Package 2 (which envisages the development of a joint Quality Assurance (QA) system and the development of a common culture of QA across the Alliance structures and activities) and Work Package 4 (which aims at creating the relevant framework, structures and procedures to create the INGENIUM European Campus (IEC)) have since been bundled as one within MTU and are both sponsored by the Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar.

During the reporting period, the partner Universities built their INGENIUM local teams, and joint activities helped to strengthen the connections between their university communities, while progressing in the implementation of the work programme. The MTU lead was appointed in June 2023, and the local management and governance structure was fully in place and operational by December 2023.

A meeting of the rectors and presidents of the 10 Alliance members took place in Cork on the 13th of February. This meeting of the Ingenium Alliance Council helped to demonstrate the strong executive support to the INGENIUM Alliance mission. The creation of a legal entity was considered, and this has since been completed.

The IAC also stressed the importance of the communication programme, to make INGENIUM activities more visible and better known. A revised and updated INGENIUM Dissemination and Exploitation Strategy was approved. Simultaneously, the Communication Strategy underwent a comprehensive review and update to enhance effectiveness in reaching target audiences and maximizing the impact of the Alliance. A significant milestone achieved during this period was the conception, development, and successful launch of the new INGENIUM Website ([link here](#)), to make sure the Alliance is effectively communicating activities and outcomes.

As a result of the Alliance's measures to enhance student participation in the Alliance Council and the Steering Committee, representatives from the INGENIUM Student Advisory Board (ISAB) are regularly attending the Ingenium Steering Committee (ISC) meetings.

The February 2024 IAC meeting took place during the second edition of *10 Days of INGENIUM*, the flagship community building activity of the Alliance which takes place twice each academic year, hosted by two partner universities in two successive weeks. In February 2023, University of Crete and MTU hosted, and *10 Days of Ingenium* brought together the INGENIUM governing and operational structures and work packages with the junior and senior schools, helping to make INGENIUM more visible in the partner Universities and to build the INGENIUM community. During the week of 12 – 16 February 2024, approximately 130 delegates from across the INGENIUM alliance were present on the Bishopstown and Kerry North campuses.

In addition to the hosting arrangements for *10 Days of Ingenium*, institutional priorities of MTU in relation to Ingenium over the first half of 2024 included:

- Strengthening links to other Irish HEIs in the coordination of European University Alliance activities and the development of position papers to articulate the impact EUAs have had on the educational landscape thus far.
- Alignment and organisation of all MTU internal stakeholders to ensure INGENIUM policies and procedures in relation to e.g. healthy campus become or integrate into MTU policies and procedures
- Dissemination of INGENIUM across the university community to the maximum extent possible internally in order to increase student and staff awareness and participation rates.
- Dissemination of INGENIUM at externally facing events to develop both brand awareness and increase broader engagement.
- Involvement of MTU researchers in the INGENIUM Research Groups call and continuing participation in the Science Factory for PhD students

Challenges in the student registration and enrolment process were identified, and an online module was identified for an assessment of the process. The importance of adhering to institutional and national policy and procedures was also highlighted, and it was planned to continue to audit all overlapping MTU and INGENIUM policies and progress any necessary amendments for Academic Council approval to ensure MTU stays on track to achieve key actions.

## b. FET-HE Pathways and Tertiary Programmes

The regional collaboration *New Horizons*, involving MTU, UCC, Cork ETB, and Kerry ETB, continued to progress its work during 2023/24. The project Oversight Group, comprising the Chief Executives and Presidents of the partner organisations, as well as the Directors of FET and the Registrars, met on a quarterly basis, with the Operational Group (Registrars, Directors of FET, and Programme Development Coordinators) meeting monthly.

Progress was made on mapping of existing pathways between FET and HE in Computer Science and Animation, and on programme development in Technical Theatre, Dance, and Tertiary Processing Technician (working title). In order to afford sufficient time for planning and quality assurance processes, MTU decided not to include any programmes for September 2024 intake, with the exception of a 1+4 pathway in General Nursing and Mental Health Nursing.

## 2.7 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

### a. Development of Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure

In October 2022, Academic Council approved the establishment of an Academic Integrity Working Group, which has carried over into the new Academic Council which first convened in February 2024. Sitting under the Regulations, Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee, the Working Group includes a wide range of stakeholders, including Committee members, Heads of Department, lecturers and nominees from several relevant central services functions. The Working Group is chaired by a member of the Regulations, Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee who is also one of MTU's nominees to the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN).

The first output of the Working Group was the Academic Integrity Policy, approved by Academic Council in March 2023. Its implementation was paused, pending the development and approval of the associated detailed procedure.

Following an internal expression of interest process, the Working Group Chair was seconded to the N-TUTORR Project on a whole-time capacity for the calendar year 2024, working on the pillar of academic integrity. One of the agreed priorities was the development of the procedure, to be informed by consultation with student and staff stakeholders, and a validation of the new scoring system for academic offences against case history of the Cork and Kerry campuses to ensure cross-campus and faculty alignment as well as alignment with the current penalty schemes. Where it is decided to increase a standard sanction for a given instance of academic misconduct, due notice will need to be given to students.

As with the policy, the procedure is informed by the outputs of NAIN, in particular the [Framework for the Investigation of Allegations of Academic Misconduct](#). The new procedure will also provide more guidance for the informal, department-based stage, and will draw on the experience of 'courageous conversations' in Australia.

At present, the academic misconduct boards are centrally located in MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry). The Working Group, cognisant of the likelihood of an increase in reporting and sensitive to the specific contexts of the academic disciplines of each faculty, initially envisaged a more distributed approach, whereby there would be an academic misconduct board for each faculty, with a central appeal mechanism and a central Academic Misconduct Register.

However, when the first draft was shared with the Academic Council in March 2024, members favoured a single board in the first instance, remaining under the remit of the Vice President Academic Affairs & Registrar, to ensure consistency of approach and fairness to all students.

The draft MTU Academic Integrity Policy also provides for an Academic Integrity Officer and faculty-based Academic Integrity advisors. The position on dedicated national funding for such resources remains unclear.

### b. Development of Academic Integrity Supports for Staff and Students

For the calendar year 2024, two wholetime lecturers were seconded to the N-TUTORR, following an internal expression of interest process, to work as academic developers for the academic integrity pillar. Apart from the development of the aforementioned procedure and implementation plan for same, some preparatory work was done on the possible introduction of [Wiroo](#), an Australian software tool developed by Macquarie University. This tool detects and reports on contract cheating and collusion cases at scale, using non-learning analytics and network visualisation.

A second focal area of the work was Artificial Intelligence and postgraduate research. Various initiatives were completed including support and consultation for research and supervisory staff and best Practice in Gen AI Workshops for research staff. An initiative was launched for postgraduate and undergraduate students entitled CROP@MTU (CReate it Own it be Proud of it).

In 2023/24, N-TUTORR facilitated enhancements of the EPIGEUM training at sectoral level, and funded implementation costs for the same period in MTU.

The MTU Library [Assignment Toolkit](#) continued to receive very positive feedback and was presented at the showcase of AQR 2023 Case Studies held by QQI in October 2024. Through SATLE funding, work is underway on building upon the toolkit's existing strengths by developing and incorporating new supplementary content into the Critical Thinking Skills and Misinformation modules. This additional content will address a newly emerged knowledge gap in the area of Digital Media Literacy – a crucial set of skills for today's students to navigate the digital information ecosystem.

### c. RAFT 3 (Re-imagining Assessment and Feedback Together)

Funded by SATLE, RAFT (Re-imagining Assessment and Feedback Together) is a change initiative where academic staff work together with students to adapt and enhance an assessment or feedback process in a module or programme. The initiative has run since 2021/22. It adopts a year-long action research approach to explore, research and perhaps solve an assessment and feedback issue. Semester 1 focuses on exploring and planning. Staff are supported to engage with the literature on assessment and feedback, collaborate with each other to share perspectives and engage with students-as-partners to understand how students perceive the same issue. The output from Semester 1 is an action plan for Semester 2. Semester 2 then focuses on implementing the change, gathering evidence to demonstrate impact and developing case-studies or other outputs to support transferability. The engagement with students-as-partners continues.

[AnSEO – the Student Engagement](#) Office supports RAFT by offering sessions, advice and consultation on the Student-as-Partner and co-creation theme.

Staff participating in RAFT are supported in engaging with the literature and processes of pedagogical research and are thus empowered to evidence the impact of their own assessment interventions. The impact of RAFT as an initiative has largely been evidenced through these staff generated outputs.

To date 32 interventions have been completed. Outputs from these have been presented at two National Forum sponsored seminars and at three conferences. The outputs have also been disseminated through journal articles and case studies have been generated and published online. Participants were asked to generate short recordings summarising their interventions, outputs and the impact of RAFT.

The initiative involved 60 staff in total over the first three years. Most projects focused on modules, but a few focused on programmes. Many of the modules involved had classes of over 100 students. Taking a conservative estimate of 40 students per module, the estimated number of students immediately impacted is 2,400.

The focus of the 2023/24 call centred on academic integrity, and specifically to supporting staff in their assessment practices to proactively cultivate academic integrity through enhanced assessment design, to address generative artificial intelligence issues in higher education, and to disseminate emerging good practices for wider application. As in previous years, the programme will run in two phases, with those staff engaged receiving a one-hour timetable alleviation.

Under the Local Enhancement Projects strand of MTU's response to SATLE, [an Academic Integrity Learning](#)

Community for staff and students across MTU was established in 2023/24. The projects in question also entail the development of guidelines and other supports for academic departments in handling minor breaches at local level, comprising a step-by-step handbook, and email templates for communicating with students, tips and suggestions, induction on academic integrity for first years, and Gen AI support for staff and students.

## 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

### 3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

#### 3.1.1 Development of Processes for Periodic Review

For developments planned in relation to the processes for programmatic review and periodic review of MTU units, please refer back to [Part B, Section 1.4.1](#), Overview of Periodic Reviews, of this AQR.

No.	<b>Relevant objectives</b> Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	<b>Planned actions and indicators</b> <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.            If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i>
		- See above -

### 3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

For developments planned in relation to planned review of MTU units, please refer back to [Part B, Section 1.4.1](#), Overview of Periodic Reviews, of this AQR.

#### 3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
n/a		

#### 3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Faculty of Creative & Performing Arts and Media	2025/26	First MTU Faculty Enhancement Review
Faculty of Business	2025/26	First MTU Faculty Enhancement Review
Faculty of Engineering	Semester 1, 2025/26 (Phase 1)	First MTU Faculty Enhancement Review
Faculty of Health and Social Sciences	Semester 1, 2025/26 (Phase 1)	First MTU Faculty Enhancement Review
Faculty of Science and Informatics	Semester 1, 2025/26 (Phase 1)	First MTU Faculty Enhancement Review

## 4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

### MTU Case Study 1:

#### SUCCEED – Enhancing the Use of StudentSurvey.ie Data to Improve Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Student Engagement

MTU's SUCCEED programme is a pioneering, university-wide initiative launched in the Academic Year 2022/23, designed to enhance the accessibility and utilisation of student feedback from [StudentSurvey.ie](#). By transforming this data into actionable insights, SUCCEED amplifies the student voice and drives improvements in teaching, learning, and academic support structures.

This case study will explore how SUCCEED standardises student survey data, fosters collaboration between students, programme teams, academic units, and institutional leadership, and how it serves as a model of good practice for other higher education institutions.

##### a. Overview

SUCCEED (Standardising the Use, Communication, and Capability of StudEntSurvEy.ie Data) is a university-wide programme designed to enhance the accessibility, interpretation, and utilisation of student feedback collected through [StudentSurvey.ie](#), the Irish National Survey of Student Engagement. The programme enables academic units, programme teams, and institutional leadership to systematically leverage student feedback in decision-making, thereby enhancing student learning, teaching practices, and academic support structures.

A unique aspect of SUCCEED is its ability to bridge the gap between MTU's staff-facing [Teaching & Learning Unit \(TLU\)](#) and its student-facing [AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office](#), ensuring that StudentSurvey.ie data directly informs the strategic development of student success initiatives. [Table 1](#) below illustrates how TLU and AnSEO initiatives directly map to the ten key StudentSurvey.ie Summary Indicators. This mapping has been commended by several external experts as a distinctive feature of our approach, highlighting the innovative nature of SUCCEED within the higher education landscape.

Group	Programmes	StudentSurvey.ie Indicators									
		Higher Order Learning	Reflective and Integrative Learning	Quantitative Reasoning	Learning Strategies	Collaborative Learning	Student-Faculty Interaction	Effective Teaching Practices	Quality of Interactions	Supportive Environment	Learning, Creative and Social Skills
TLU	<a href="#">MA Teaching &amp; Learning in Higher Education</a>	✓	✓			✓		✓			✓
	<a href="#">EAT-PD Programme</a>	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓
	<a href="#">National Digital Badges</a>	✓	✓			✓		✓			✓
	<a href="#">Coaching in Higher Education Programme</a>		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<a href="#">Workshops &amp; Seminars</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<a href="#">Combined Funding Call</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<a href="#">SATLE Funding</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<a href="#">TLASE Research Laboratory</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
	<a href="#">Learning Communities</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<a href="#">Coaching &amp; Mentoring</a>		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<a href="#">INTEGRATE Staff Induction Mentoring Programme</a>		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<a href="#">ELEVATE - Leadership Development Training</a>						✓		✓	✓	
	<a href="#">LEAD - Leadership Enhancement &amp; Development Programme</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<a href="#">Advance HE Fellowship Programme</a>	✓	✓			✓		✓			
	<a href="#">In at the Deep End</a>		✓				✓	✓	✓		✓
	<a href="#">TACIT Guides</a>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	<a href="#">The TLASE Weekly</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
AnSEO	<a href="#">Academic Learning Centre</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	<a href="#">Academic Success Coaching</a>		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
	<a href="#">Navigate</a>	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
	<a href="#">EDGE - MTU Graduate Development</a>					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	<a href="#">Good Start</a>						✓		✓	✓	✓

<u>Transitions at MTU Funding</u>					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
<u>Le Chéile</u>					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
<u>Reach Academic Mentoring</u>		✓				✓		✓	✓	✓

*Table 1 Mapping of TLU & AnSEO Programmes to StudentSurvey.ie Base Question Indicator Groupings*

## b. Background and Motivation

Since its inception, StudentSurvey.ie has gathered feedback from over 350,000 students nationally. These students have created a large and valuable data set of their experiences of Irish higher education.

From an institutional perspective each year, up until 2023, StudentSurvey.ie produced a national summary of survey results together with high-level institutional reports for the year in question. However, to effectively interpret these results some level of contextualisation with information from individual institutions is required to understand what the students at that institution are in fact saying. Therefore, despite the valuable insights offered by StudentSurvey.ie, **three key challenges** have historically hindered its impact at an institutional level:

1. **Limited Accessibility and Interpretation of Data:** The raw survey data lacked structured, standardised reporting at the **programme and academic unit levels**, making it difficult to interpret trends and implement meaningful interventions.
2. **Low Response Rates and Generalisability Issues:** Insufficient student participation meant that some datasets had high margins of error, limiting their usability in informing programme-level decision-making.
3. **Fragmented Data Utilisation:** StudentSurvey.ie data often remained siloed within institutional reports rather than being directly accessible and actionable for academic staff.

Hence, opportunities to improve teaching, learning, assessment, and student engagement (TLASE), based on real student feedback, were effectively being missed.

SUCCEED is designed to **address these key challenges** by:

- Creating a **standardised, reproducible reporting structure** to enable programme and academic units to interpret year-on-year trends and summary indicators.
- Closing the **feedback loop between students and staff** by ensuring that student engagement data is used to inform curriculum development, teaching strategies, and student support initiatives.
- Developing **coaching-based consultations** where academic staff are supported in interpreting and acting on their reports.
- Strengthening **student-staff partnerships** to co-create solutions based on student feedback.

## c. Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of SUCCEED is to transform student feedback into meaningful TLASE enhancement actions thereby empowering both students and staff by achieving the following objectives:

- Enhancing accessibility and understanding of StudentSurvey.ie data within MTU;
- Enabling informed decision-making that enhances student engagement and success;
- Promoting a culture of evidence-based practices across MTU.

#### d. Methods and Implementation

In 2020, MTU, through Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement 2020 (SATLE 2020) funding, elected to fund SUCCEED as one of its learning enhancement projects, to take a more structured standardised approach to making StudentSurvey.ie data more useful and actionable for decision-making across the university. The project was originally the result of a collaboration between the following core areas within MTU:

- Department of Mathematics;
- Research Integrity & Compliance Office;
- Student Engagement Functions;
- Students' Union;
- Teaching and Learning Unit.

Today, the SUCCEED programme is led by Linda O'Sullivan, Academic Project Lead, Teaching and Learning Unit and AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office, and formerly a Lecturer in the Department of Computer Science, with the support of:

- Róisín O'Grady, Student Engagement Officer, AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office;
- Marese Bermingham, Head of the Teaching and Learning Unit, AnSEO – The Student Engagement Office, and the Arts Office; and
- Dr Seán Lacey, MTU's Research Integrity & Compliance Officer and formerly a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mathematics

Together, this team have worked to maximise the potential of StudentSurvey.ie data to improve the MTU student experience by developing a standardised reporting structure that makes the data more accessible, understandable, and actionable for academic units.

Figure 1 below illustrates how through SUCCEED, MTU is leveraging the data submitted to and received from StudentSurvey.ie each year – encompassing its population dataset, sample data, and organisational structure – to build a standardised reporting structure that academic units are supported to engage with to effect TLASE enhancement.

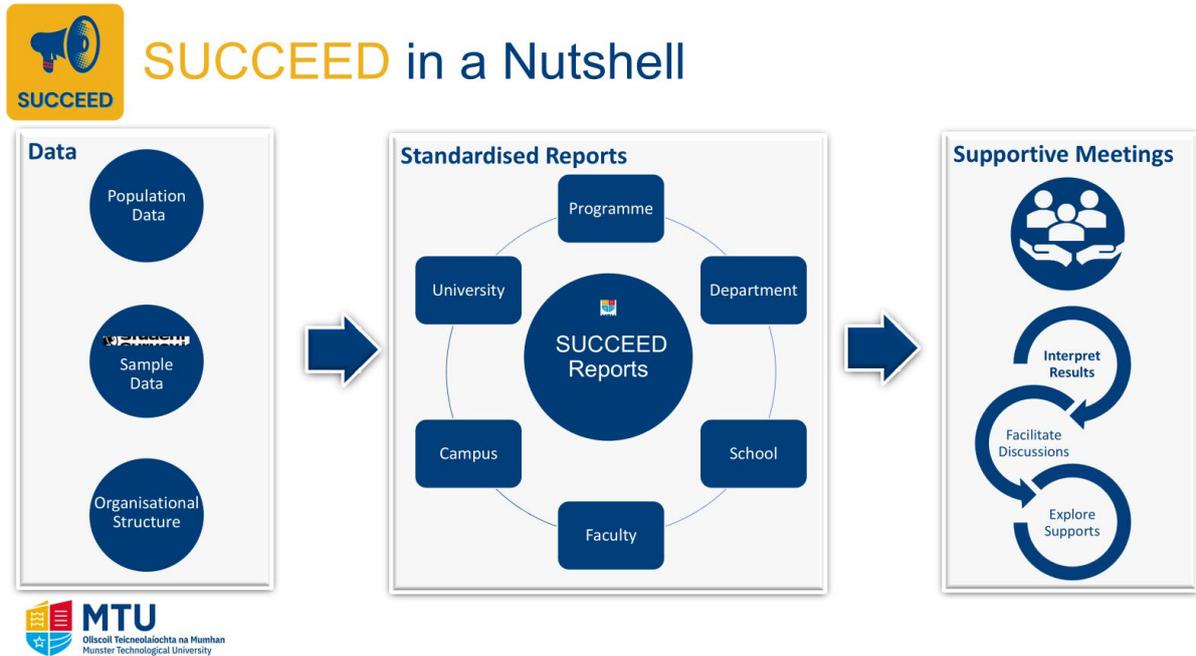


Figure 1 Overview of SUCCEED Programme

SUCCEED effectively employs a three-pronged approach:

1. **Data Standardisation & Reporting:** Annual reports are provided to all academic units, these reports include response rates together with the associated margins of error, indicator trends, and comparative insights across programme or academic unit scores within the university's organisational structure which highlight key trends in student experience and satisfaction in terms of their academic, personal, and social development. To illustrate, Figure 2 presents a sample extract from a SUCCEED report, highlighting how academic units receive structured data insights for informed decision-making.
2. **Collaborative Engagement & Coaching:** Structured coaching-based consultations, referred to as SUCCEED Meetings, help staff in interpreting data and developing targeted student-centred interventions.
3. **Capacity Building & Resource Development:** The [SUCCEED Programme webpage](#) provides self-service resources for academic units to independently analyse and act on survey feedback, ensuring sustainability. Furthermore, SUCCEED has been integrated into MTU's DELTA Award application process, is informing professional development initiatives and may, in the future, be incorporated into programme review processes to further embed data-informed decision-making across the university.

#### e. Impact and Key Outcomes

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 report recommends that "Higher education institutions should put in place systems to capture feedback from students to inform institutional and programme management, as well as national policy."

StudentSurvey.ie, and therefore by implication SUCCEED, significantly contributes to achieving this recommendation by:

- **Increasing transparency in relation to the student experience** of and engagement with MTU and helping staff and faculty gain insights into student feedback.
- **Enabling MTU students to voice** their experiences and engagement with the university.
- **Assisting MTU align its policies and practices** with actual student experiences, ensuring that these are relevant and responsive to student needs.
- **Helping MTU identify areas of strong student engagement** to reinforce and expand successful practices.
- **Highlighting areas where student engagement needs improving**, allowing MTU to respond with targeted actions.
- **Acting as a continuous guide for improving MTU's TLASE strategies** to maintain a high-quality educational environment.
- **Facilitating comparison with other higher education institutes** nationally, sectorally, and internationally.

Since the 2022/23 academic year, SUCCEED has evolved into a university-wide programme and has demonstrated tangible benefits across MTU, as follows:

- **Measurable improvements in StudentSurvey.ie indicator scores (2021-2023):**

MTU has seen the following improvements in its StudentSurvey.ie indicator scores in the period 2021 – 2023:

- Quality of Interactions: +28%
- Student-Faculty Interaction: +24%
- Collaborative Learning: +10%
- Quantitative Reasoning: +7%
- Reflective and Integrative Learning: +3%

- **Enhanced access to and utilisation of StudentSurvey.ie data:**

MTU staff are experiencing the value of SUCCEED as:

- Thirty-five departmental level reports, eleven school-level reports and three faculty/campus level reports have been generated and distributed annually.
- Over twenty structured consultations have been held with heads of departments and schools to aid with report interpretation and the development of student-centred responses.

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*"This data is a Godsend!", Head of Department*

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- **Supported MTU's Vibrant TLASE Enhancement Culture:**

MTU continues to have an active and vibrant TLASE Enhancement culture as evidenced by:

- The volume of local TLASE Enhancement Projects funded under MTU's Local Combined Funding Call, e.g. > 150 Applications in 2023/24 alone.

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*"Thanks to the insights from our SUCCEED report and subsequent meeting, we were able to identify student transitions as an area that we needed to improve and successfully applied to TLU/AnSEO for funding to enhance our support initiatives", former Head of Department*

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- Continued success of MTU's SATLE Funded TLASE Enhancement Projects with over sixty projects funded since 2019, SUCCEED being one of them.

- **National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Disciplinary Excellence in Learning and Teaching Award (DELTA) Success:**

- Contributed to MTU's Sport & Leisure Team's national DELTA success in 2023.

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*"SUCCEED provided us with evidence from our students as to what we were doing well and as a result enabled us to identify areas of enhancement to teaching excellence. This insight was invaluable in developing our successful action plan and ultimately our DELTA Award success.", Lecturer, Sport, Leisure & Childhood Studies, MTU*

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- Currently, supporting three further teams preparing their applications for the 2024-25 academic year.



# SUCCEED Sample Report - Extract



## SUCCEED: Standardising the Use, Communication and Capability of studEntsurvEy.ie Data

**Response rate:** To determine an appropriate response rate, the maximum margin of error must be considered as well as the desired confidence level. Different research requires different degrees of reliability, depending on the specific objectives and possible consequences of the survey findings. Often, an acceptable margin of error used by survey researchers falls less than 8% at the 95% confidence level. More information on response rate and margin of error can be found on <https://mathematics.cit.ie/quartiles>.

**Indicators:** There are 10 StudentSurvey.ie indicators which range in value from 0 - 60 points. Although StudentSurvey.ie indicators are presented together in parts of this report, the indicator scores are not to be compared against each other. The survey is not designed with this purpose in mind, but rather the survey is designed to determine trends within indicator scores - i.e., trends across years and/or against similar programmes and/or academic units within individual indicator scores.

StudentSurvey.ie is distributed to first year and final year undergraduates, and students pursuing taught postgraduate studies only.

Abbreviations: CI - Confidence Interval; SD - Standard Deviation.

### Part I - School v. Faculty v. University

#### Response Rate at School Level (2016 - 2023)

School	Response Rate	Margin of Error
Alpha	36%	1.07%

#### Response Rate at Faculty Level (2016 - 2023)

Faculty	Response Rate	Margin of Error
Beta	40%	0.72%

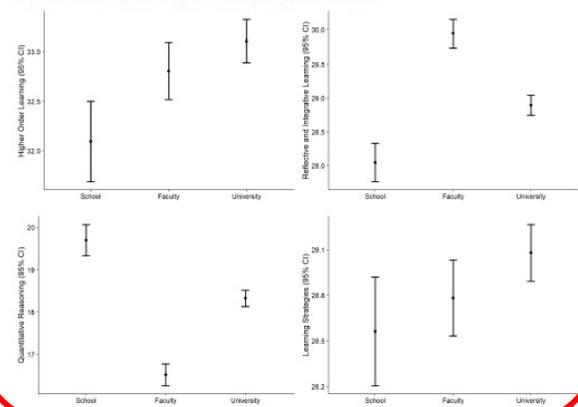
#### Response Rate at University Level (2016 - 2023)

University	Response Rate	Margin of Error
Gamma	33%	0.56%

### Indicator Descriptive Statistics for School (2016 - 2023)

Indicators	Sample size	Mean	95% CI (lower)	95% CI (upper)	SD	Median	1st Quartile	3rd Quartile	Min	Max
Higher Order Learning	4284	32.1	31.7	32.5	13.5	30.0	20.0	40.0	0	60
Reflective and Integrative Learning	5298	28.0	27.8	28.3	10.5	28.6	20.0	34.3	0	60
Quantitative Reasoning	4711	19.7	19.3	20.1	12.9	20.0	13.3	26.7	0	60
Learning Strategies	4712	28.6	28.2	28.9	12.5	26.7	20.0	40.0	0	60
Collaborative Learning	5251	32.4	32.0	32.7	12.1	30.0	25.0	40.0	0	60
Student Faculty Interaction	4700	11.8	11.5	12.1	11.4	10.0	0.0	20.0	0	60
Effective Teaching Practices	4323	32.4	32.0	32.8	13.2	32.0	24.0	40.0	0	60
Quality of Interactions	3750	36.2	35.7	36.6	13.9	36.0	26.0	46.0	0	60
Supportive Environment	4259	26.3	25.9	26.8	13.5	25.0	17.5	35.0	0	60
Learning, Creative and Social Skills	627	33.7	32.7	34.7	13.1	32.5	25.0	42.5	0	60

### Error Bar Plots (95% CI) for Indicators (2016 - 2023)



### Part II - Year-on-Year School Analysis

When it comes to having confidence that the data collected is generalisable for the entire Department, it is not solely about a good response rate, but also a low margin of error. The latter being a better indicator than the former. The following is a guideline:

- Margin of error  $\leq 8\%$  - data gathered is generalisable for entire population
- $8\% <$  Margin of error  $\leq 10\%$  - trends may be accurate and catalyst to improve response rate
- Margin of error  $> 10\%$  - difficult to draw accurate conclusions. Data is still of use, but with caution when interpreting

#### Response Rate for the School (2016 - 2023)

School	Year of feedback	Responses	Population	Response Rate	Margin of Error
Alpha	2016	414	1785	23%	4.22%
Alpha	2017	621	1760	47%	2.5%
Alpha	2018	819	1916	43%	2.69%
Alpha	2019	847	1876	45%	2.49%
Alpha	2020	699	1889	37%	2.94%
Alpha	2021	846	2059	41%	2.59%
Alpha	2022	636	1962	32%	3.2%
Alpha	2023	275	1773	16%	5.43%

#### Higher Order Learning Descriptive Statistics

School	Year	Sample size	Mean	95% CI (lower)	95% CI (Upper)	SD	Median	1st Quartile	3rd Quartile	Min	Max
Alpha	2016	343	31.4	29.8	33.0	14.95	30	20	40	0	60
Alpha	2017	700	32.0	31.0	33.0	13.67	30	20	40	0	60
Alpha	2018	617	32.7	31.7	33.8	13.26	35	20	40	0	60
Alpha	2019	641	32.1	31.1	33.1	13.08	35	20	40	0	60
Alpha	2020	581	32.6	31.6	33.7	13.17	30	25	40	0	60
Alpha	2021	717	32.9	31.9	33.8	13.48	35	20	40	0	60
Alpha	2022	500	31.0	29.7	32.2	13.88	30	20	40	0	60
Alpha	2023	185	30.0	28.2	31.8	12.37	30	20	40	0	60

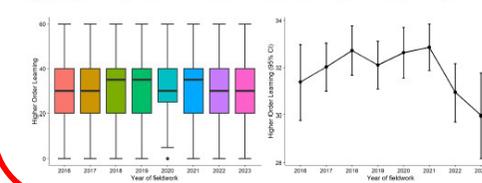


Figure 2 Extract from a Standard SUCCEED School Level Report for a Dummy Data Set

## f. Future Plans

While SUCCEED has successfully enhanced access to and engagement with StudentSurvey.ie data, several challenges remain, i.e.:

- **Navigating the Ongoing Review of StudentSurvey.ie:**  
StudentSurvey.ie is currently under review and will not take place again until 2026. If the survey structure changes significantly, SUCCEED will, if possible, develop a mapping framework to align new data with historical trends, ensuring continued usability for institutional decision-making.
- **Enhancing Student Participation Rates:**  
Increasing participation in StudentSurvey.ie will enable more granular and reliable reporting. Higher response rates will reduce the margin of error, making results more generalisable not only at academic unit level but also at programme level. With increased participation, SUCCEED could analyse trends at a cohort level (first-year, final-year, and taught postgraduate students) instead of reporting aggregate findings.
- **Incorporating Qualitative Responses:**  
Including qualitative responses from StudentSurvey.ie in SUCCEED reports would provide a more rounded and nuanced view of the student experience, complementing the quantitative data.
- **Ensuring Sustained Academic Staff Engagement:**  
Competing demands on faculty time and resources pose a challenge to maintaining ongoing engagement.

To address these challenges and future-proof SUCCEED, we plan to:

- **Monitor and Engage with the StudentSurvey.ie Review Process:**  
We are engaging with sectoral discussions on the revised survey format and have recently assisted in the coordination of an MTU student focus group to assess the readability of, and gather feedback on, new survey questions. Once the updated 2026 survey structure is confirmed, SUCCEED will adapt its reporting model to align with new data collection methodologies while striving where possible to maintain continuity with past trends.
- **Increase MTU Student Participation:**  
Initiatives will be implemented to enhance student participation in StudentSurvey.ie, including improved communication strategies and partnerships with both student leaders and staff.
- **Refine Reporting Structures:**  
We will develop cohort-specific reports instead of aggregating all student experiences into one dataset.
- **Expand Structured Student-Staff Dialogues:**  
This will ensure that feedback leads to co-created actions, not just reporting.

- **Build Trust and Relationships:**  
Emphasising the notion of distributed leadership will help further develop the programme.
- **Expand SUCCEED Beyond StudentSurvey.ie:**  
We plan to broaden SUCCEED's scope by gathering and interpreting other MTU student related data into meaningful actions across TLASE initiatives. This expansion presents an opportunity to lay the foundation for a more integrated approach to student engagement and learning enhancement.

These developments will ensure that SUCCEED remains a dynamic, responsive tool that evolves alongside the changing needs of students and staff.

### g. Conclusion

SUCCEED represents a transformative approach to leveraging student feedback in higher education. By standardising survey data, fostering collaboration, and embedding evidence-based decision-making, SUCCEED ensures that student voices drive institutional improvements at MTU. Its mapping of TLU/AnSEO initiatives to StudentSurvey.ie Summary Indicators makes it a sector-leading initiative with scalability potential for other higher education institutions.

**Key Takeaways** from SUCCEED's implementation include:

- **Importance of Data Accessibility:** Enhancing access to StudentSurvey.ie data is crucial for informed decision-making at all academic levels. By standardising reporting structures, academic units can better utilise insights for TLASE enhancement purposes.
- **Training and Support:** Providing ongoing training and support for interpreting and acting on StudentSurvey.ie results is vital. Academic staff require structured resources and consultations to effectively analyse data and implement targeted improvements.
- **Feedback Loops Enhance Engagement:** Establishing mechanisms for continuous feedback fosters a culture of engagement. When students and staff see how their input informs decisions, it encourages greater participation in future surveys and strengthens student-staff partnerships.
- **Data-Informed Practices Lead to Improvement:** Using evidence-based approaches to identify strengths and weaknesses allows academic units to focus on targeted development areas, ultimately enhancing student learning outcomes.

By embedding these principles into institutional practice, SUCCEED provides a scalable and replicable framework that can be adapted by other higher education institutions looking to future-proof their educational strategies.

## MTU Case Study 2:

### Open Educational Practices at Munster Technological University

Open Educational Practices (OEP) at MTU incorporate a broad spectrum of teaching and learning approaches that emphasise openness, collaboration, and digital innovation. These practices align with the University's *Digital Learning Policy*, which states:

The ongoing use and promotion of digital learning in the University proceeds from a position of openness, inclusiveness and learner-centredness. It is a practice explicitly intended as one continuous with the egalitarian traditions, recent and historical, of distance education, open learning, inclusive education and more recent ideologies and values associated with open source, open access, open educational resources (OER) and open educational practices (OEP). (Munster Technological University, 2022, p.6)

MTU's commitment to OEP is firmly embedded within its broader digital transformation agenda, aligning with national policy objectives to foster inclusive and equitable educational opportunities.

#### a. Global Leadership in Open Education: Hosting OER24

MTU has actively engaged in OEP and Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives for many years, both through internal University programmes and wider national and international collaborations. A key recent milestone however the University's hosting of the [International OER24 Open Education Conference](#) in March 2024. This high-profile event, which attracted over 200 participants, provided an important platform for showcasing MTU's work and leadership in open education. The conference featured keynote presentations from internationally-renowned scholars, including Dr Rajiv Jhangiani, Professor Laura Czerniewicz, and Dr Catherine Cronin, and also facilitated knowledge exchange, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the dissemination of emerging research and practice in the University.

A significant feature of OER24 was the launch of a sectoral White Paper, *Open Education Practices in Higher Education: Focusing on Responsiveness, Innovation & Inclusivity* (Jhangiani et al., 2024), developed as part of the N-TUTORR programme (Higher Education Authority, 2024a). This publication includes key strategic recommendations for embedding OEP across higher education, addressing core challenges such as equitable access, sustainable resource creation, and institutional responsiveness to digital transformation.

#### b. The Reusable Learning Resources (RLR) Initiative

The University's Reusable Learning Resources (RLR) initiative was recently awarded the inaugural [National Forum SATLE Impact Award under the Digital Transformation category](#) (Higher Education Authority, 2024b). This ongoing initiative has significantly contributed to the understanding, adoption and scaling of OEP across MTU by addressing common challenges faced by academic staff, including time constraints, media production costs, and related technical barriers to OER content creation.

Since its inception, the initiative has supported 28 funded projects, engaging 124 staff members and fostering collaborations with over 20 external stakeholders. Collectively, these efforts have positively impacted an estimated 5,000 students by supporting the development of high-quality, media-rich open educational resources that enhance curricula and digital learning supports across multiple disciplines.

The RLR initiative significantly also places a strong emphasis on student co-creation, aligning with best practices in participatory pedagogy. Through workshops, training sessions, and mentorship, staff are equipped with the skills and tools needed to develop scalable, adaptable learning resources, contributing to a sustainable and innovative open education ecosystem. External partnerships further enhance the initiative's impact, facilitating cross-institutional knowledge exchange and expanding MTU's network of open education practitioners.

### c. Supporting OEP Through Digital Learning Infrastructure

MTU's digital learning ecosystem plays a pivotal role in facilitating the integration of open educational resources and practices. The University's Learning Management System (LMS), Canvas, together with the Canvas Commons learning object repository (Instructure, 2025), provide staff with the tools to share, adapt, and distribute open educational content and other resources within the university and the broader educational community. Complementary technologies such as H5P, Canvas Studio, and ScreenPal enable the creation of interactive, media-rich, and openly-licensed content, supporting learner engagement and ensuring that digital resources remain accessible and adaptable to diverse teaching and learning needs.

### d. Fostering Inclusivity Through Open Educational Practices

Inclusivity remains at the heart of MTU's OEP work, ensuring that all learners, including those with disabilities, have equitable access to high-quality educational experiences. A key development in this area is the integration of the UDOIT accessibility tool (Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning, 2024) within the MTU LMS. This tool automatically scans course materials and other content for accessibility issues, helping teaching and other staff to design and development content that is compliant with accessibility standards and ensuring that students with diverse needs can interact with learning materials in an equivalent way.

Additional inclusive strategies in MTU include:

- Closed captioning for video content to enhance accessibility for all students;
- Student co-creation of learning materials, particularly through the RLR initiative, empowering students as active participants in their learning journey;
- The development of universally designed content, ensuring that teaching resources meet the needs of a diverse student population.

By embedding accessibility, student engagement, and inclusive design into its OEP framework, MTU advances educational equity and fosters a culture of openness, collaboration, and lifelong learning.

### e. Driving Educational Transformation Through Open Practices

MTU remains at the forefront of advancing open, inclusive, and innovative educational practices through its commitment to OEP. Guided by sectoral frameworks like the N-TUTORR OEP White Paper, the University continues to invest in open development, collaboration, and inclusive pedagogies. These efforts reinforce and demonstrate the value of openness in education, fostering sustainable and equitable approaches for teaching, learning, assessment and student support systems.

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