**NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND**

**2025**

# Annual Quality Report (NCI)
# Reporting Period
# 2023-2024

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**2025**

# Annual Quality Report (NCI)
## PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
# Reporting Period 2023-2024

# PREFACE

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

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

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

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

# CONTENTS

**PREFACE** ....................................................................................................................**3**

**Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template** ................................................ **6**

**PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM**....................................................................**8**

**Introduction and Overview of Institution** ....................................................................... **9**

**1.0      Internal QA Framework** ...................................................................................... **9**

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality ............................................................... 9

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision ............................... 11

**2.0 Programme Development and Delivery** ...............................................................**12**

2.1 Programme Development and Approval................................................................. 12

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification ............................................ 13

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards ............................................................................. 14

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment.................................................................... 14

**3.0 Learner Resources and Support**.........................................................................**15**

**4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes** .......................................................**17**

**5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support** ....................................................**17**

**6.0 Information and Data Management** ......................................................................**18**

**7.0 Public Information and Communication**...............................................................**22**

**8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review** .........................................................................**23**

**9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties**.......................................................**24**

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies .................................... 24

9.2 Collaborative Provision ........................................................................................ 27

9.3 Articulation Agreements ....................................................................................... 32

**9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties**.......................................................**37**

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies.................................... 37

9.2 Collaborative Provision......................................................................................... 40

9.3 Articulation Agreements........................................................................................ 43

**PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**............................................**47**

**1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments**.........................................................**48**

# Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template[1]

## Legislation

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

## QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

Other QQI Policy Documents

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

## Other National/International References

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

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

- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](UN Sustainable Development Goals)

# PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

**Table 1**

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

The AQR has been approved by the NCI Academic Council and is submitted by Patricia Maguire, Director of Quality and Institutional Effectiveness (QIE). The AQR was approved by Academic Council on 26th February 2025. It will also be submitted to the Governing Body on 7th March 2025, as the Annual Report of the Academic Council.

NCI is an independent, not-for-profit College; a HEA-funded institution and a registered charity. At the close of the 2023-24 reporting period, we recorded an enrolment total of some 6,700 full and part-time students.

NCI's mission, since foundation in 1951, is to *Change Lives through Education*. Since its foundation, NCI has developed and evolved in anticipation of, as well as in response to, internal and external stimuli both in the city centre of Dublin, our home, and in Ireland more widely. NCI is always seeking to embrace and address global trends and challenges in education, skills and in research and innovation across our academic disciplines.

NCI has been committed to supporting the development of Irish society by promoting the principles of access, opportunity, and excellence in education. We are now at the mid-cycle point of our current 2022-27 NCI Strategic Plan and we are reviewing our progress against the objectives and actions of that Plan, with a view to recalibration and renewal, as required, for the remainder of the period until the end of 2027.

# 1.0 Internal QA Framework

## 1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

### Overarching governance and management structures

NCI's overall governance and management structures, including roles and responsibilities of our committees, are set out in Chapter 2 of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES). Since 2019, NCI has made some changes to its governance and management structure, most notably:

i)      introducing three sub-committees of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee (LTAC) to advance work on Assessment, Learning and Teaching and Digital Learning practices and where warranted, policy and procedural updates, for Academic Council approval.

ii)     introducing a Programme Lifecycle Management committee which has a dual reporting line to the Executive Group and to the Academic Council in relation to new programme development, approval and validation (QQI) and/or professional accreditation (PRSBs) and programme review and revalidation, as well as the monitoring of collaborative partnership agreements. More information on the Programme Lifecycle Management structure, with its

four key phases covering programme conception, development, approval, and monitoring and review, is provided in section 2.1 and 8 of this AQR.

Figure 1, below, depicts the academic governance and management structure during the 2023-24 year, showing the fundamental differentiation between the academic governance system on the one hand, relating to academic matters (yellow-shaded boxes) and the executive management system (light blue -shaded boxes).
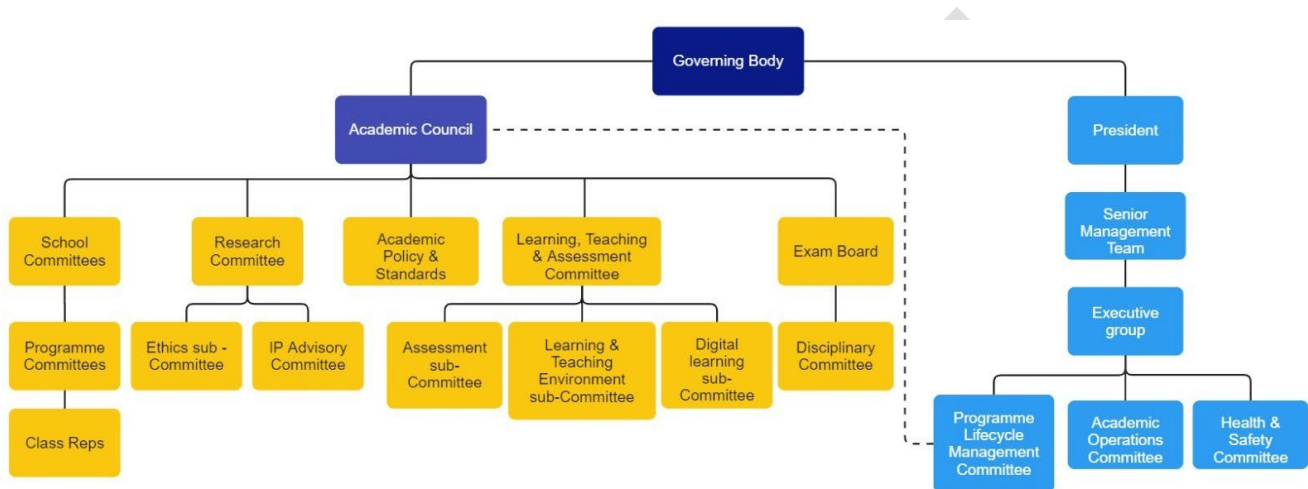


Figure 1: Governance and Management structure 2023-24

During the 2023-24 reporting period, the Academic Policy and Standards Committee (APSC) was not functional, although it was not formally stood down by the Academic Council and is under review. Academic or Student-facing policy matters were progressed through the auspices of the Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee or Research Committee, as relevant to the remits of those committees, and approved by the Academic Council.

These governance and management committee changes, although approved and operational before and during the 2023-24 reporting period, were not formally documented and (re) published in Chapter 2: QAES system during the 2023-24 reporting period. This is now being addressed in the 2024-25 year, with added impetus from the findings of the external institutional review (CINNTE) Panel, who visited NCI in December 2024.

## QA policies and procedures

NCI benefits from a documented set of policies and procedures that together represent the Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES), which is published online. The QA Handbook has 13 chapters and was approved by QQI as part of the QQI Re-engagement process with NCI in 2018/2019. Each chapter and its policy provisions are aligned with the ESG (European Standards and Guidelines for QA) and QQI Core and Sector Specific QA Guidelines.

Over the cumulative 2022- 2025 period, once NCI emerged from the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, the College has incrementally updated some policy provisions and added some new policies in line with strategic priorities, and in response to internal and external stimuli such as national concerns about threats to Academic Integrity. Where updates were made, or new policies approved and introduced, these are outlined in the relevant sections of Part A.

| NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) | |
| --- | --- |
| Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re-engagement Process | Material change made and approved within 2023-2024 reporting period |
| Chapter 1: Introduction | No Material Changes made to the published QAES Chapter |
| Chapter 2: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System | No Material Changes made to the published QAES Chapter. |

## 1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

NCI is not a Designated Awarding Body (DAB), therefore there are no Linked Providers involved in the delivery of the College's programmes and the College is not involved in making any Joint Awards. NCI does not currently have QA Scope of Provision for transnational programmes.

NCI has a range of Collaboration Agreements, which are listed in section 9.3. These include:

- Articulation Agreements with Irish Further Education Colleges, to facilitate progression for NFQ Level 5 and 6 graduates into NCI programmes;
- a small number of Cooperation Agreements with universities in China, where undergraduate Computing and undergraduate accounting students registered at those universities may complete the final year of their Bachelor's degrees at NCI once they have met designated grade thresholds;
- Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) with the Consortium Steering Groups for NFQ Level 6 and 8 Apprenticeship programmes in *International Financial Services* and in *Recruitment Practice.*
- Agreements with the Department of Education, the North-East Inner City (NEIC) Council and Industry Partners to govern and fund the P-TECH programme ("Pathways to Technology", NFQ Level 6 and 9 awards) and the new collaborative tertiary degree, the *BA(Hons) in Digital and Business Skills*, with the City of Dublin ETB.
- A Memoradum of Agreement underpinning the collaborative *MSc and PG Diploma in Open Data Practice* with TU Wien (Austria) and UPB (Bucharest).

NCI's published Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures in the area of Collaborative Programmes did not change in the 2023-24 reporting period, given that the 2012 QQI Policy remains current. However, the governance and management of collaborative partnerships was enhanced during the period by the appointment of a dedicated Academic Partnerships Manager, and the expansion of the remit of the Programme Lifecycle Management committee to include oversight of the Collaborative Partnerships Register, reporting to the Executive Group and to the Academic Council. These enhancements are currently being updated in a revised Chapter 3 of the QA Handbook.

| NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) | |
| --- | --- |
| Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re-engagement Process | Material change made and approved within 2023/2024 reporting period |

| Chapter 3: Programme Development, Validation and Evaluation | No Material Changes in relation to published QA for Collaborative Programmes. |
|---|---|

# 2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

## 2.1 Programme Development and Approval

NCI has a well-developed and continuously improving programme development and approval process which consists of a four-stage *internal* Programme Lifecycle structure and the *external* Independent Evaluation of programme quality and standards. NCI enjoys Devolved Responsibility from QQI to arrange the external, Independent Evaluation of new programme validations, as well as the independent evaluation of programme revalidation proposals, which are underpinned by in-depth programme review on a five-yearly cycle as mandated by QQI.

Independent Panels ensure relevant external academic, industry and learner scrutiny of NCI's programmes in line with QQI's QA Guidelines. QQI-approved **Procedures for Devolved Responsibility for the arrangement of an Independent Evaluation report** are published as an Appendix to Chapter 3 of the QA Handbook: Programme Development, Validation and Evaluation.

Prior to the external Independent Evaluation stage, and in alignment with the ESG Part 1 requirements for *internal* quality assurance, new programme proposals are designed and developed within the academic Schools, led by Deans and Vice-Deans for undergraduate and for graduate studies through School Committees. The Stage 1 Programme Design and Development phase of the Programme Lifecycle, as depicted in Figure 2, includes:

i. Documented "Programme Opportunity Proposals" for new programmes, stress-tested for evidence of alignment with School and institutional strategies and of market relevance, comparability with sectoral offerings and financial viability.
ii. Following approval to proceed from the Executive Group and the Academic Council, first draft Programme Validation documents and Module Descriptors are reviewed by **"Mock" Independent Panels**, which are convened to stress-test the academic merits, wider industry relevance and student-centredness of proposed new programmes, against QQI's Validation Policy and criteria. These mock panels include external academic subject-matter experts, industry specialists and a student representative.

Figure 2: Programme Lifecycle

The Mock Panel process is a critical internal QA step to provide expert feedback to the programme design team on the academic structure, learning, teaching and assessment strategies and learning outcomes of a new programme. This is an iterative process, resulting in enhanced programme proposals prior to the initiation of Stage 2: Programme Validation, which follows the Devolved Responsibility procedures where a further QQI-appointed Independent Evaluation Panel is convened.

### Changes during the 2023-24 reporting period:

The Stage 1 internal Programme Opportunity Proposal (POP) process was strengthened through the inclusion of requirements to highlight any proposed online asynchronous delivery within modules, whether for new programmes or for revalidated programmes, and mandate the involvement of the Digital Learning Design Team within NCI's Teaching Enhancement Unit.

| NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) | |
|---|---|
| Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 engagement Process | Material change made and approved within 2023-24 reporting period |
| Chapter 3: Programme Development, Validation and Evaluation | No material changes to published Policy and Procedures. |
| Chapter 12: Provision of Apprenticeship Programmes | No material changes to published Policy and Procedures |

## 2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

The policies and procedures relating to admission, progression, recognition and certification are contained with QAES Chapters 4 and 6 as outlined below and are aligned with QQI's *Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression* (2015) as the current QQI policy in this area. NCI's 2019 Policy includes NCI's well-established procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) which are utilised for both admissions purposes, in line with QQI-validated entry procedures to programmes, and for the purpose of exemptions to specific modules on programmes for applicant learners with relevant documentation.

NCI did not make any material change to these core polices and procedures in the 2023/24 reporting period.

| NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) | |
| --- | --- |
| Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re engagement Process | Material change made and approved within 2023/24 reporting period |
| Chapter 6: Admission, Registration and Curriculum | No material changes |

## 2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

NCI is not a Designated Awarding Body; however, it has Delegated Authority from QQI to make awards up to Level 9 on the NFQ. Accordingly, it does not set out Procedures for Making Awards beyond this scope.

## 2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

### Academic Integrity

During the 2023-24 reporting period, the Academic Council approved new Policy and Procedures on Academic Integrity at NCI. A review of existing policy, procedures and resources for staff had been under way since 2023.

Policy, procedures and guidelines were published on NCI's internal Support Hub (Policy and Procedures) and on Moodle, the VLE and Learner Management System. More information is provided in Part B of this Annual Quality Report: section 2.1 *Initiatives in the Institution relating to Academic Integrity.*

### Grading

To ensure robustness and integrity across our assessment and examination structures we operate a 'two lines of defence' model, utilising internal moderation and external examiners to ensure academic standards are benchmarked against internal and external best practice. This approach provides a high level of assurance to the Academic Council, Governing Body and QQI, that learner assessments across NCI are fair and equitable.

Policy and procedures relating to Internal grading and external examining are set out in the published Chapter 4: Assessment, of the QAES. NCI did not make any material changes to Chapter 4 during the reporting period, since the College was continuing to operate under the extended QQI-Covid-19 emergency provisions for online learning and assessment and updated academic integrity and procedures were awaiting Academic Council approval in June 2024.

| NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) | |
|---|---|
| **Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re engagement Process** | **Material change made and approved within 2023/2024 reporting period** |
| Chapter 4: Assessment | No change to the published Chapter. Continued operation of assessment under QQI's Covid-19 emergency rules. |
| Chapter 5: Learning and Teaching Environment | No material changes |
| Chapter 13: Technology Mediated Learning | No further material changes in 2023/24. Revised Policy and procedures approved by Academic Council in October 2022 were reported via the 2024 AQR for the 2022-23 period. |

## 3.0 Learner Resources and Support

During the reporting period, NCI significantly expanded the resources and infrastructure provided to learners through the Library and its Academic Support Centre, with the opening of the new Library, which includes dedicated Study Spaces, in the new Spencer Dock campus building. The new Spencer Dock building also provides a significant expansion of student social spaces and catering facilities on the 6th floor. More information is provided in Part B: Quality Enhancement, of this Annual Quality Report.

Information for students on the range of support services available is published online at: Current NCI Students Hub | National College of Ireland

In relation to QA policies and procedures, no new policies were formally approved in the 2023-24 reporting period (In the previous reporting period, 2022-23, NCI had approved two new policies in Learner Supports: *Fitness to Continue to Study* and *Student Mental Health and Wellbeing*).

NCI's overarching policy commitments in the area of Learner Resources and Support are published in Chapter 7 of the 2019-approved QAES (QA Handbook). These cover the following services:

-Learning and Disability Support Services (including Reasonable Accommodations)
-Medical Services
-Counselling Services
-Assistive Technology Supports
-Mathematics Support Services
-Computing Support Services
-Library and Information Services
-Academic Support Services (incl. academic writing and academic referencing supports)
-Careers and Employability Services
-International Student Supports (Pre-arrival supports, Welcome programme and so on).
-Recreation Supports
-NCI Students' Union and the learner Class Rep system.

| NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) | |
|---|---|
| Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re engagement Process | Material change made and approved within 2023/2024 reporting period |
| Chapter 7: Support Services for Learners | No material changes were made to the published Chapter. |

# 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

During the reporting period, NCI's Research Strategy for the 2023-27 period was approved by the Academic Council and published. It is available here: Research Strategy | National College of Ireland.  NCI's QA policy and procedures for research are set out in Chapter 11 of the 2019 QA Handbook. Following the launch of the new Research Strategy in 2023-24, this Chapter is now under review by the Research Committee of the Academic Council.

| NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) | |
|---|---|
| Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re engagement Process | Material change made and approved within 2023/2024 reporting period |
| Chapter 11: Research | No material changes to the published Policy and procedures. |

# 5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

NCI's strategic commitment to the development and well-being of our staff community is the second of our six strategic priorities in the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan. We know that the performance and wellbeing of all our staff is critical to our success in achieving all the other priorities within our Strategic Plan.

NCI's core policies and procedures for Staff Recruitment, Management and Development were approved as part of the QQI Re-Engagement process in 2019. These are published online at: NCIQAH-8. Staff Recruitment and Development.pdf. Since then, while the College has introduced additional new Human Resources policies and practices, to reflect evolving sectoral practices, our Athena Swan commitments and Hybrid Working arising from our Covid-19 experience, NCI's core policy commitments on staff recruitment and staff development remain the same.  NCI's HR department website provides information to the public on staff vacancies and recruitment procedures: HR Department | National College of Ireland

The College's HR services are available to staff through the internal NCI Support Hub, which is regularly updated. The following extract from the Support Hub introduces the NCI Flexible and Remote Working Policy.

# Flexible and Remote Working Policy

Ciara Jackson
Updated 7 months ago

Follow

**Policy Number:** FLEs/Remote 2024     **Version Number:** 2     **Review Date:** May 2026

**Date:** 18 June 2024     **Status:** Active     **Author/s:** HR

In accordance with Part 4, Section 31, of the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, National College of Ireland is committed to facilitating a balanced work-life environment by recognising the rights of employees to request flexible and remote working arrangements. This policy outlines the procedures for requesting, reviewing, and implementing flexible and remote working arrangements.

**How do I access all the HR Policies and Procedures?**

You can find all the latest HR Policies and Procedures under the HR Policies and Procedures section on the NCI Support Hub. Make sure you are signed in with your Staff credentials to see them all.

| NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) | |
|---|---|
| Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re engagement Process | Material change made and approved within 2023/2024 reporting period |
| Chapter 8: Staff Recruitment and Development | No material changes to the published Chapter. Under Review. |

# 6.0 Information and Data Management

NCI's formally-approved Policy and Procedures on Information Governance are published online at: NCIQAH-9. Information Governance.pdf. NCI staff have access to Chapter 9 (dated 2019) of the QAES, on Information Systems and Governances well as any updated policies and procedures in relation to Information Governance, though the online Support Hub:

# Information Governance Policies

Information Governance Policies                    Follow

| POLICY ON INFORMATION SYSTEMS & GOVERNANCE | > | Instructions on How to Recall Emails in Outlook | > |

| Data Governance Classification and Handling Policy | > | Portable Storage Device Policy | > |

| Information on Phishing | > | Covert Recording Policy | > |

| Bring Your Own Device Policy | > |

Figure 3: Screenshot from NCI Support Hub policies and procedures (February 2025).

## Records Management

NCI's core QA policy on Records Management is set out in Chapter 9 of the QA Handbook, approved by QQI in 2019. Staff can access this policy and updated specific records management policies via the online Support Hub for staff:

## Records Management Policies

Records Management Policies

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| HR Records Retention Schedule | › | Legal Records Retention Schedule | › |
| Finance Records Retention Schedule | › | What is Records Management? | › |
| Student Records Retention Schedule | › | Payroll Records Retention Schedule | › |
| Governance and Company Records Retention Schedule | › | What is a record? | › |

Figure 4: Screenshot of current Records Management Policies and Retention Schedules, on the NCI Support Hub (February 2025)

## IT and Data Security

NCI is acutely aware of our obligations in relation to information and data security. Following a Cybersecurity attack in 2021, the College introduced an Information Security Management System (ISMS), updated our information security and data protection policies. We are fully compliant with Irish and European data protection regulations and employ a dedicated Data Protection and Information Governance Officer.

All Data Protection policies and procedures are available to staff through the NCI Support Hub:

# Data Protection Policies

Data Protection Policies

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Guidance on Third Party Requests for Personal Data | › | Guide to GDPR terminology | › |
| Data Protection Training | › | Staff Covid Privacy Statement | › |
| NCI Staff Data Processing Notice | › | Data Protection Impact Assessment Threshold Policy | › |
| Data Protection by Design and Default Policy | › | Tips - GDPR and Video Conferencing | › |
| Tips - GDPR and Working from Home | › | Personal Data Risk Classification Scheme | › |
| Personal Data Breach Handling Procedure | › | Data Subject Rights Procedure | › |
| Data Breach Incident Procedure | › | Data Protection Policy | › |
| Privacy Statement Policy | › | Vendor Risk Management Policy | › |

Figure 5: Screenshots of NCI Policies and Procedures in relation to Data Protection (February 2025)

## Student Information System and systems integration

The primary system for storing learner data is the Student Information System (SIS) - Quercus+. Once a learner is registered, their academic journey is managed in SIS. The College has built an integration platform wherein learner data flows to all required systems including: Moodle - our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE); Technology One, our Timetabling system; and the Library Management System.

## Using Institutional Data effectively

The NCI Strategic Plan for 2022-27 commits the College to making better use of institutional data to inform decision-making. The College has an ongoing 'Management Information Services' (MIS) project which is concerned with data cleansing and creating a range of self-access dashboards to inform data-driven decision making at a programme, school and institutional level. Standardised datasets are currently produced for Programme Teams to monitor KPIs at programme level, including student applications and student enrolments; learner retention and grade classifications as well as student demographics. Annually, at institutional level, NCI monitors KPIs in:

- domestic and international recruitment and admissions numbers;
- award classifications across programmes and at College level;
- graduate (Employability) outcomes (First Destination Reports: NCI ran the HEA survey for full and part-time graduates, in the 2023-24 academic year)

| NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) | |
| --- | --- |
| Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re engagement Process | Material change made and approved within 2023/2024 reporting period |
| Chapter 9: Information Governance and Compliance | No material changes to the published Chapter. |

# 7.0 Public Information and Communication

NCI publishes accurate information on its programmes of education and training to all prospective learner groups, through its website (course pages) and through printed prospectus materials. This is supplemented annually by multiple Open Days, for prospective learners and information session for (secondary) School Guidance Teachers.  Information is also published on admissions and fees policies, for domestic and international learners, and on NCI's PEL (Protection of Enrolled Learners) commitments to learners.

College publishes up to date information online about our Strategic Plan (currently 2022-27), and any associated strategies such as the Research Strategy (currently 2023-27) and strategic Equality Diversity and Inclusion goals through the Athena Swan Charter and Action Plans. Wider information about NCI's annual achievements is published online through Annual Reports.

NCI publishes information online on our Corporate and Academic Governance structures, and the College's audited Financial Accounts.

| NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) | |
| --- | --- |
| Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re engagement Process | Material change made and approved within 2023/2024 reporting period |
| Chapter 10: Public Information | No material changes |

## 8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

During the reporting period, NCI completed 11 in-depth periodic programme reviews of QQI-validated programmes. The College also embedded the updated Annual Programme Monitoring Process across its programme portfolio. In the reporting period, NCI undertook a large-scale institutional self-evaluation process as part of preparations for the Institutional Quality Review process; the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) was finalised for the QQI-appointed Review Panel, in August 2024.

The QAES Chapter 3, approved in 2019, sets out the QA policies and procedures governing programme development, approval, validation, monitoring and review. No formal changes were made to the published online Chapter in 2023-24, however refreshed procedures were provided for NCI staff on the internal policies and procedures online repository. Updated procedures across the full programme lifecycle, will be published online in 2025 and reported in the 2026 Annual Quality Report and the Institutional Quality Improvement Plan arising from the CINNTE process.

| NCI Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) | |
| --- | --- |
| Relevant Handbook Chapters Approved by QQI in the 2019 Re engagement Process | Material change made and approved within 2023/2024 reporting period |
| Chapter 3: Programme Development, Validation and Evaluation | No material changes |

# 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

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

| Type of arrangement | Total Number |
|---|---|
| PRSBs | 7 |
| Awarding bodies | 0 |
| QA bodies | 0 |

| 1.  Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body) | PRSB |
|---|---|
| Name of body: | Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology (PG24523) |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 17/05/2024 |
| Date of next review | 16/05/2029 |

| 2.  Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body) | PRSB |
|---|---|
| Name of body: | Chartered Accountants Ireland |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Master of Science in Accounting (PG24979)<br>Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Accounting (PG24980) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Date of accreditation or last review | 22/09/2022 |
| Date of next review | TBD by CAI |

| 3. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body) | PRSB |
|---|---|
| Name of body: | CIMA and AICPA (combined) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Accounting (PG24980) |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 22/09/2022 |
| Date of next review | TBD by CIMA and AICPA |

| 4. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body) | PRSB |
|---|---|
| Name of body: | ACCA |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Accounting (PG24980) |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 22/09/2022 |
| Date of next review | TBD by ACCA |

| 5. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body) | PRSB |
|---|---|
| Name of body: | Teaching Council |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Educational Practice in Teaching for Further Education (PG24375) |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 9/10/2020 |
| Date of next review | TBC by the Teaching Council |

| 6. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body) | PRSB |
|---|---|
| Name of body: | Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Diploma in HRM Strategy and Practice (PG24941) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in HRM Strategy and Practice (PG24940) Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management (PG24931) Master of Arts in Human Resource Management (PG24917) Diploma and Certificate in Professional Human Resource Practice (PG25247) Diploma and Certificate in Professional Learning and Organizational Development (PG25250) |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 28/04/2023 |
| Date of next review | TBD by CIPD, on foot of any major changes to the NCI programmes (for example arising from QQI programme review and revalidation processes, scheduled for 2026/27 (first four programmes, above) and 2027/28 (final two programmes listed above) |

| 7. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body) | PRSB |
|---|---|
| Name of body: | Qualifications Advisory Board |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 16/07/2020 |
| Date of next review | TBD by QAB, on foot of QAB government department re-structuring notification in 2024 |

## 9.2 Collaborative Provision

| Type of arrangement | Total number |
|---|---|
| Joint research degrees | 0 |
| Joint/double/multiple awards | 0 |
| Collaborative programmes | 12 |
| Franchise programmes | 0 |
| Linked providers (DABs only) | 0 |
| 1. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision) | Memorandum of Agreement |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Financial Services Ireland (FSI) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Higher Certificate in International Financial Services (IFS Associate Apprenticeship) (PG25774) |
| Date of last review | 14/02/2024 |
| Date of next review | 13/02/2029 |

| 2. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision) | Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Financial Services Ireland (FSI) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Higher Diploma in Financial Services Analytics (IFS Specialist Apprenticeship) (PG23405) |
| Date of last review | 01/01/2017 |
| Date of next review | 30/04/2025 |

| 3. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision) | Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Employment and Recruitment Federation |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Recruitment Practice (PG25965) |
| Date of last review | 30/04/2024 |
| Date of next review | 30/03/2029  (as part of programme review and QQI revalidation) |
| | |
| 4. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision) | Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Quality Matters and the Wheel |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Certificate in Non-Profit Leadership and Management (PG25495) |
| Date of last review | 01/06/2023 |
| Date of next review | 31/05/2029 (in advance of programme review and QQI revalidation) |
| | |
| 5. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision) | Agreement pursuant to Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Department of Education |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Certificate in P-Tech (Pathways in Technology) (PG24969) |
| Date of last review | 16/12/2021 |
| Date of next review | 31/08/2025 (currently under review, aligned with programme review and revalidation in Spring 2025) |
| | |
| 6. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision) | Contract of Services |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Department of Social Protection (DSP) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Certificate in Social Protection Studies (PG26101) |

| | Certificate in Social Protection Investigative Work (PG26100) |
|---|---|
| | Certificate in Public Employment Services Provision (PG26099) |
| | Certificate in Social Welfare Decision Making (PG26103) |
| | Certificate in Managing Social Protection Services (PG26098) |
| | Certificate in Community Welfare Service Provision (PG26097) |
| | Certificate in Social Welfare Appeals (PG26102) |
| | Certificate in Operations Management (PG25769) |
| Date of last review | 16/09/2022 |
| Date of next review | TBC (RFT Process) |
| | |
| 7. **Collaborative provision** (Type of collaborative provision) | Co-Operation Agreement |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Hebei University |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management 180 ECTS (PG25315) |
| | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management 240 ECTS (PG25323) |
| Date of last review | 27/10/2021 |
| Date of next review | 26/10/2033 |
| | |
| 8. **Collaborative provision** (Type of collaborative provision) | Sino-Ireland Agreement |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Yunnan Normal University |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance 240 ECTS (PG24995) |
| | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance 180 ECTS (PG24996) |
| Date of last review | 07/07/2023 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Date of next review | 06/07/2031 |
| | |
| **9. Collaborative provision**<br><br>(Type of collaborative provision) | Undergraduate Co-Operative Agreement |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Nanchang Hangkong University |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (PG24355) |
| Date of last review | 17/04/2019 |
| Date of next review | 16/04/2028 |
| | |
| **10.** Collaborative Provision | Memorandum of Agreement |
| Name of body (/bodies): | City of Dublin Education and Training Board (City of Dublin ETB) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Digital and Business Skills (PG25805)<br><br>Bachelor of Arts in Digital and Business Skills (PG25812)<br><br>Higher Certificate in Arts in Digital and Business Skills (PG25813) |
| Date of last review | 26/08/2024 |
| Date of next review | 25/08/2029 (subject to renewal discussions as per MOA terms) |
| | |
| **11. Collaborative Provision** | Collaborative Programme Agreement |
| Name of body (/bodies): | SIPTU |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Certificate in Trade Union Studies (PG24390) |
| Date of last review | 01/09/2020 |

| Date of next review | Autumn 2025 in line with Programme Review and Revalidation. |
|---|---|
| | |
| **12. Collaborative Provision** | Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Politehnica Bucuresti and TU Wein |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Master of Science Open Data Practice (PG25329) <br><br> Postgraduate Diploma Open Data Practice (PG25330) <br><br> Certificate in Open Data Practice (PG25331) |
| Date of last review | 11/04/2024 |
| Date of next review | 31/08/2029 (as part of programme review and QQI revalidation) |

## 9.3 Articulation Agreements

| Articulation agreements - Total number | 10 |
|---|---|

| 1. Articulation agreement: | |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Coláiste Dhulaigh |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG22721)<br>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing Practice (PG22899)<br>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management (PG22723)<br>Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (PG24355)<br><br>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | January 2021<br>February 2022: Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care |
| Date of next review | March -April 2025 in line with QQI revalidation |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

| 2. Articulation agreement: | |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Blackrock College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG22721)<br>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management (PG22723) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | January 2017 |
| Date of next review | March -April 2025 in line with QQI revalidation |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

|  |  |
|---|---|
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **3. Articulation agreement:** |  |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Rathmines College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (PG24355)<br>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG22721)<br>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing Practice (PG22899)<br>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management (PG22723) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | January 2021 |
| Date of next review | March - June 2025 in line with QQI revalidation |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |
|  |  |
| **4. Articulation agreement:** |  |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Marino College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | February 2022 |
| Date of next review | March -April 2025 in line with QQI revalidation |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

| **5. Articulation agreement:** |  |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Inchicore College |

| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG22721)<br>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing Practice (PG22899)<br>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management (PG22723)<br>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
|---|---|
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | February 2021<br>February 2022: Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care |
| Date of next review | March -April 2025 in line with QQI revalidation |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

| 6.  Articulation agreement: | |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Liberties College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | February 2022 |
| Date of next review | March -April 2025 in line with QQI revalidation |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

| 7.  Articulation agreement: | |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Whitehall College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | February 2022 |
| Date of next review | March -April 2025 in line with QQI revalidation |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

### 8. Articulation agreement:

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | The Open College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | March 2022 |
| Date of next review | March -April 2025 in line with QQI revalidation |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

### 9. Articulation agreement:

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Dundrum College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | February 2022 |
| Date of next review | March -April 2025 in line with QQI revalidation |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

### 10. Articulation agreement:

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Irish Life Plc |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (PG24355) (Part-time) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | 29th May 2024 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Date of next review | 30th November 2026 |
| Detail of the agreement | Memorandum of Agreement to market and promote the part-time version of the BSc (Hons) Computing degree to Irish Life Plc staff who meet the stated minimum entry requirements. |

# 9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

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

| Type of arrangement | Total Number |
|---|---|
| PRSBs | 7 |
| Awarding bodies | 0 |
| QA bodies | 0 |

| 1. Type of arrangement | PRSB |
|---|---|
| Name of body: | Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology (PG24523) |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 17/05/2024 |
| Date of next review | 16/05/2029 |

| 2. Type of arrangement | PRSB |
|---|---|

| Name of body: | Chartered Accountants Ireland |
|---|---|
| Programme titles and links to publications | Master of Science in Accounting (PG24979) Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Accounting (PG24980) |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 22/09/2022 |
| Date of next review | |

| 3. Type of arrangement | PRSB |
|---|---|
| Name of body: | CIMA and AICPA (combined) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Accounting (PG24980) |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 22/09/2022 |
| Date of next review | |

| 4. Type of arrangement | PRSB |
|---|---|
| Name of body: | ACCA |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Postgraduate Diploma in Business in Accounting (PG24980) |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 22/09/2022 |
| Date of next review | |

| 5. Type of arrangement | PRSB |
|---|---|
| Name of body: | Teaching Council |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Educational Practice in Teaching for Further Education (PG24375) |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 09/10/2020 |
| Date of next review | |

| 6. Type of arrangement | PRSB |
|---|---|
| Name of body: | Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Diploma in HRM Strategy and Practice (PG24941) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in HRM Strategy and Practice (PG24940) Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Human Resource Management (PG24931) Master of Arts in Human Resource Management (PG24917) Diploma and Certificate in Professional Human Resource Practice (PG25247) Diploma and Certificate in Professional Learning and Organizational Development (PG25250) |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 28/04/2023 |
| Date of next review | |

| 7. Type of arrangement | PRSB |
| --- | --- |
| Name of body: | Qualifications Advisory Board |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of accreditation or last review | 16/07/2020 |
| Date of next review | |

## 9.2 Collaborative Provision

**Definitions:**

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

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

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

| Type of arrangement | Total Number |
|---|---|
| Joint research degrees | 0 |
| Joint/double/multiple awards | 0 |
| Collaborative programmes | 12 |
| Franchise programmes | 0 |
| Linked providers (DABs only) | 0 |

| 1. Collaborative provision | Collaborative programme |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Financial Services Ireland (FSI) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Higher Certificate in International Financial Services (IFS Associate Apprenticeship) (PG25774) |
| Date of last review | 14/02/2024 |
| Date of next review | 13/02/2029 |

| 2. Collaborative provision | Collaborative programme |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Financial Services Ireland (FSI) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Higher Diploma in Financial Services Analytics (IFS Specialist Apprenticeship) (PG23405) |
| Date of last review | 01/01/2017 |
| Date of next review | 30/04/2025 |

| 3. Collaborative provision | Collaborative programme |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Employment and Recruitment Federation |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Recruitment Practice (PG25965) |
| Date of last review | 30/04/2024 |
| Date of next review | 30/03/2029 |

| 4. Collaborative provision | Collaborative programme |
| --- | --- |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Quality Matters and the Wheel |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Certificate in Non-Profit Leadership and Management (PG25495) |
| Date of last review | 01/06/2023 |
| Date of next review | 31/05/2029 |

| 5. Collaborative provision | Collaborative programme |
| --- | --- |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Department of Education |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Certificate in P-Tech (Pathways in Technology) (PG24969) |
| Date of last review | 16/12/2021 |
| Date of next review | 31/08/2025 |

| 6. Collaborative provision | Collaborative programme |
| --- | --- |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Department of Social Protection (DSP) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Certificate in Social Protection Studies (PG26101)  Certificate in Social Protection Investigative Work (PG26100) Certificate in Public Employment Services Provision (PG26099) Certificate in Social Welfare Decision Making (PG26103)   Certificate in Managing Social Protection Services (PG26098) Certificate in Community Welfare Service Provision (PG26097)   Certificate in Social Welfare Appeals (PG26102) Certificate in Operations Management (PG25769) |
| Date of last review | 16/09/2022 |
| Date of next review | |

| 7. Collaborative provision | Collaborative programme |
| --- | --- |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Hebei University |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management 180 ECTS (PG25315) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management 240 ECTS (PG25323) |
| Date of last review | 27/10/2021 |
| Date of next review | 26/10/2033 |

| 8. Collaborative provision | Collaborative programme |
| --- | --- |
| Name of body (/bodies): | Yunnan Normal University |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance 240 ECTS (PG24995) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting and Finance 180 ECTS (PG24996) |
| Date of last review | 07/07/2023 |

| Date of next review | 06/07/2031 |
|---|---|

| **9. Collaborative provision** | **Collaborative programme** |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Nanchang Hangkong University |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (PG24355) |
| Date of last review | 17/04/2019 |
| Date of next review | 16/04/2028 |

| **10. Collaborative provision** | **Collaborative programme** |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | City of Dublin Education and Training Board (City of Dublin ETB) |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Digital and Business Skills (PG25805) Bachelor of Arts in Digital and Business Skills (PG25812) Higher Certificate in Arts in Digital and Business Skills (PG25813) |
| Date of last review | 26/08/2024 |
| Date of next review | 25/08/2029 |

| **11. Collaborative provision** | **Collaborative programme** |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | SIPTU |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Certificate in Trade Union Studies (PG24390) |
| Date of last review | 01/09/2020 |
| Date of next review | |

| **12. Collaborative provision** | **Collaborative programme** |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Politehnica Bucuresti and TU Wein |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Master of Science Open Data Practice (PG25329) Postgraduate Diploma Open Data Practice (PG25330) Certificate in Open Data Practice (PG25331) |
| Date of last review | 11/04/2024 |
| 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.

| Articulation agreements - Total number | 10 |
|---|---|

| 1. Articulation agreement | Articulation agreement |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Coláiste Dhulaigh |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG22721)   Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing Practice (PG22899)   Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management (PG22723)   Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (PG24355)   Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | 01/01/2021 |
| Date of next review | 01/04/2025 |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

| 2. Articulation agreement | Articulation agreement |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Blackrock College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG22721)   Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management (PG22723) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | 01/01/2017 |
| Date of next review | 01/04/2025 |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

| 3. Articulation agreement | Articulation agreement |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Rathmines College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (PG24355)  Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG22721)   Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing Practice (PG22899)   Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management (PG22723) |

| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | 01/01/2021 |
|---|---|
| Date of next review | 01/04/2025 |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

| 4. Articulation agreement | Articulation agreement |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Marino College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | 01/02/2022 |
| Date of next review | 01/04/2025 |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

| 5. Articulation agreement | Articulation agreement |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Inchicore College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business (PG22721)   Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing Practice (PG22899)   Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management (PG22723)   Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | 01/02/2021 |
| Date of next review | 01/04/2025 |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

| 6. Articulation agreement | Articulation agreement |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Liberties College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | 01/02/2022 |
| Date of next review | 01/04/2025 |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

| 7. Articulation agreement | Articulation agreement |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Whitehall College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | 01/02/2022 |
| Date of next review | 01/04/2025 |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

| **8. Articulation agreement** | **Articulation agreement** |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | The Open College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | 01/03/2022 |
| Date of next review | 01/04/2025 |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

| **9. Articulation agreement** | **Articulation agreement** |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Dundrum College |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | 01/02/2022 |
| Date of next review | 01/04/2025 |
| Detail of the agreement | Articulation agreement |

| **10. Articulation agreement** | **Articulation agreement** |
|---|---|
| Name of body (/bodies): | Irish Life Plc |
| Programme titles and links to publications | Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (PG24355) (Part-time) |
| Date of agreement/arrangement or last review | 29/05/2024 |
| Date of next review | 30/11/2026 |
| Detail of the agreement | Memorandum of Agreement to market and promote the part-time version of the BSc (Hons) Computing degree to Irish Life Plc staff who meet the stated minimum entry requirements. |

**NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND**

**2025**

# Annual Quality Report (NCI)
## 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

**External Institutional Review ("CINNTE")**

During the 2023-24 reporting period, NCI undertook a significant College-wide self-evaluation, against QQI's Terms of Reference for the Institutional Review of Independent and Private Providers (CINNTE Review). By the end of the 2023-24 period, NCI had submitted its Institutional Profile (IP) document and the Institutional Self-Evaluation report (ISER) to QQI, for review by the Independent Evaluation Panel.

The CINNTE process was overseen by the CINNTE Advisory Group under the leadership of Registrar, Karen Jones. The QIE Director and Project Officer drove the project, with ongoing guidance and support from the Advisory Group which met regularly to keep the process on track. The QIE Office provided essential support and resources. Having gained feedback from Academic Council and from Governing Body on penultimate drafts of the key documents the Director of QIE secured approval from the Executive Group, in August 20204, to submit the final documents to QQI as per the stated deadline.

Self-evaluation activities:

The Quality and Institutional Effectiveness (QIE) Director, Patricia Maguire, led out on the institutional self-evaluation and engagement process and ensured a collaborative and inclusive approach. We engaged a diverse range of stakeholders–staff, students, and external partners and ensured all voices were heard.

Inputs from NCI staff were gathered through a bespoke all-staff survey and a follow-up "CINNTE Consultation Fortnight" in April 2024, with internal staff workshops on specific themes arising from the survey. A dedicated CINNTE webpage: https://www.ncirl.ie/QIE/CINNTE for external publication and an internal all staff SharePoint site launched in March 2024 to enhance transparency and facilitate easy access to relevant information.
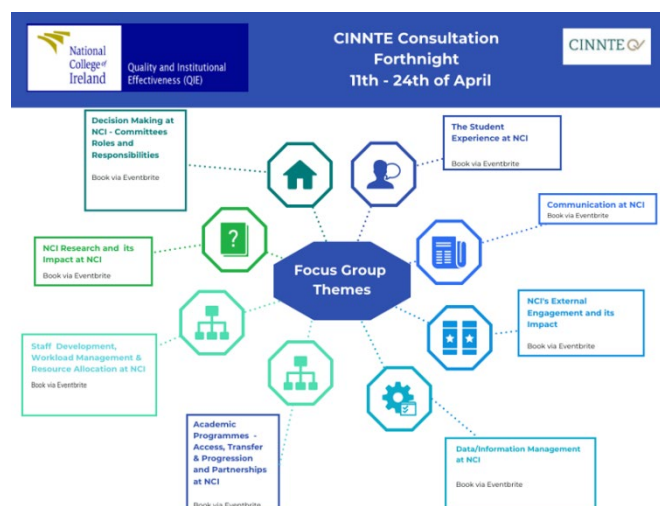
Approximately 259 staff members participated across the workshops and we came away with a number of key Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement themes that were reflected in the ISER, including, among others:

- as a small College, intra-staff familiarity and "short" decision-making lines can be positive, however there is a need for greater transparency about membership of governance and management committees and what their roles and responsibilities are;
- the need for scalability of our student and staff support services as NCI grows the number and complexity of its programmes, and grows student numbers.
- Good staff communication need not mean extensive emails; better use should be made of existing committee structures to disseminate information, and through internal staff information platforms
- the student experience at NCI has improved in recent years, testified by studentsurvey.ie results and other feedback from students however data shows that more students now require specific supports, and have many life challenges impacting on capacity for study(impact of Covid-19 also a factor)
- Staff retention is a challenge as other HEIs and industry attract key staff. Progression pathways internally are essential.
- NCI has significant links with industry, employers and community partners however we could do more to coordinate our interactions with these key external stakeholders, for greater impact.
- Targeted interventions in specific areas would be facilitated by more accessible, reliable data on how the College is performing against the wider sector.

Views about NCI's Quality Assurance and Enhancement processes were also sought from student Class Reps; from students taking online modules (the online student experience) and from a group of business and industry representatives with links to NCI.

*"Stakeholder participation was essential for a successful CINNTE review, including students, support and academic staff, the Governing Body, professional accreditation bodies, and industry partners who collaborate with us through careers initiatives, competitions, and guest lectures." –* Dr. April Hargreaves, School of Business Vice-Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Research and CINNTE Advisory Group member.

A key outcome was the strong sense of collaboration and inclusivity throughout the process. Student involvement was particularly impactful, as highlighted by Tre Roberts, NCISU President: *"NCISU always felt an intrinsic part of the process. Students were consulted and heard, and we had a seat at the table. Everyone was listened to and happy to contribute."*

### Outcomes of the CINNTE process

NCI awaits the formal report from the Independent CINNTE Panel, in March 2024. The Quality Improvement Plan will be submitted three months after the final report is published and will be incorporated into the AQR for the 2024-25 period.

### Launch of NCI Research Strategy

During the reporting period NCI's Research Strategy for the 2023-27 period was approved and launched. The Strategy charts a course for NCI's academic and action-based research, to deliver on the Strategic Priority for Research articulated in the 2022-27 NCI Strategic Plan.

The Research Strategy seeks to prioritise research that is aligned with the College's Mission "*To Change Lives Through Education*" and seeks to advance our social justice values and strategic commitments to the UNSDGs.  The Strategy sets out objectives and targets, with KPIs, to increase doctoral research and to provide more support for Early-Career Researchers, as well as supporting Research-Active faculty. These will be underpinned Research Office infrastructure.

The levels of academic and action-based research at NCI have been steadily growing in recent years. The Institutional Profile document submitted as part of the NCI external Institutional Review process, in summer 2024, included statistics on NCI's growing research output and citations. The Research Strategy is available here: NCI Research Strategy 2023 - WEB.pdf

## 1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

| No. | Relevant objectives<br><br>Relevant objectives from the 2022-27 Strategic Plan: Implementation Plan (Governing Body 2023-24) | Planned actions and indicators for 2023-24 | Update on Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Students<br><br>Be a recognised leader in sustainability, with our commitments evident across our physical infrastructure, academic programmes, research & graduate attributes | Working with others across the College, the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Office in NCI will support the achievement of the following planned actions during the 2023-24 year/AQR reporting period:<br><br>i.Update to QA Policy and Procedures on Programme Development, Approval, Review and Revalidation (including new QA procedures to facilitate ERASMUS study mobility)<br><br>The above action will address CINNTE Objective on *Governance and Management of Quality.*<br><br>ii.Refresh student data reporting structures, processes and key roles and responsibilities, improving access to reliably accurate student-related data which supports programme and module sustainability. | i. Updates made to programme development, approval and monitoring procedures published on online Staff intranet platform, but not published in QA Handbook during 2023-24. Publication of revised Chapter 3 of QAES to take place before the end of 2024-25.<br><br>Draft ERASMUS + QA Policy reviewed by Academic Council, May 2024 (to be finalised and approved in 2024-25).<br><br>ii. Student-data reporting processes advanced during 2023-24, with standardisation of programme monitoring and programme review KPI datasets.<br><br>iii. Audit of Sustainability LO's in the curriculum completed and included in deliberations of the NCI Sustainability Strategy Steering Group. |

| | | The above action will address CINNTE Objectives on T*eaching, Learning and Assessment* and on *Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review*<br><br>iii.Learning Outcomes for Sustainability: Audit of curriculum repository<br><br>The above action will address CINNTE Objectives on T*eaching, Learning and Assessment* and on *Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Students<br><br>Embed sustainability informed globalisation as an explicit feature of NCI International programmes & graduates | i.    Successfully complete the IEM (International Education Mark) QQI application process.<br><br>The above action will address CINNTE Objective on *Governance and Management of Quality*<br><br>ii.    Extend QA Scope of Provision to enable online national and transnational programme delivery and agree a project plan for transnational, online programme development.<br><br>The above action will address CINNTE Objective on *Governance and Management of Quality* and *Teaching, Learning and Assessment.* | i.    IEM application process delayed until the 2024-25 academic year (application to be submitted in March 2025).<br><br>ii.    QQI process for extension of scope delayed until 2024-25 academic year (application due to be submitted in June 2025). |
| 3 | Teaching:<br><br>Future-Proof NCI's Portfolio of | Working with others across the College, the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Office in NCI will support the achievement of the following planned actions during the 2023-24 year/AQR reporting period: | i.    Data from APM reports in Autumn 2023 reviewed by School Committees and Academic Council  in December 2023 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Programmes & Ensure Alignment with Sustainability Strategy. | i.Ensure data from annual programme monitoring, and other QA feedback processes informs decisions across the Programme Lifecycle.<br><br>The above action will address CINNTE Objectives on *Governance and Management of Quality,* T*eaching, Learning and Assessment* and *Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review*<br><br>ii. Ensure that resource implications arising from programme development/review are shared in advance with relevant Services including; admissions, exams, the Library, Work placement (Careers), IT, Teaching Enhancement and Digital Learning Design, and Academic Operations).<br><br>The above action will address CINNTE Objectives in T*eaching, Learning and Assessment* | ii.     Data from module learner surveys taken up by lecturers and discussed with Deans of Schools. |
| 4 | NCI Positioning | Working with others across the College, the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Office in NCI will support the achievement of the following planned actions during the 2023-24 year/AQR reporting period:<br><br>i.QQI deadlines achieved to support success in the Institutional Review Process (CINNTE).<br><br>ii. Project team established to assess NCI requirements prior to making a Delegated Authority Application to QQI. | i.     Institutional Profile (IP) and Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) submitted to QQI and CINNTE Panel, by end of 2023-24 year.<br><br>ii.     DA Project team not established in 2023-24 due to CINNTE preparations and absence of QQI procedures for DA application. |

## 1.3 Governance and Management

### 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

| Body | Meeting dates |
|---|---|
| Executive Group | Monday, 18 September 2023<br>Monday, 16 October 2023<br>Wednesday, 15 November 2023<br>Monday, 11 December 2023<br>Monday 8th of January 2024<br>Monday 12th of February 2024<br>Monday 11th of March 2024<br>Monday 8th of April 2024<br>Monday 13th of May 2024<br>Monday 10th of June 2024 |
| Governing Body | Friday 20th of October 2023,<br>Friday 8th of December 2023<br>Friday 23rd January 2024<br>Friday 8th of March 2024<br>Friday 24th of May 2024 |
| Academic Council | Wednesday 4th October 2023,<br>Wednesday 6th December 2023<br>Wednesday 28th February 2024<br>Wednesday 19th June 2024 |
| AC sub-committee:<br>Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee | Thursday 16th November 2023<br>Thursday 5th June 2024 |
| AC sub-committee: Research Committee | Wednesday 20th September 2023,<br>Wednesday 22nd November 2023,<br>Wednesday 14th February 2024<br>Wednesday 24th April 2024 |

## 1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

There were no specific changes to leadership or management roles during the 2023-24 reporting period. In April 2024, and following an external review, the decision was taken to re-structure the Academic Operations team as a functional unit within the Registrar's area, facilitating closer

linkages with Student Registry functions such as Admissions and Exams. This integration will improve the quality of services provided to students, as well as to academic and other staff

## 1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

## 1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

| Unit of review<br><br>for which report has been published during reporting period | Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted) | Links to relevant publications |
|---|---|---|
| **Programme Review and Revalidation** | | |
| Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Recruitment Practice (apprenticeship) | July-2024 | Irish Register of Qualifications (iqr.ie) |
| Certificate in Community Welfare Service Provision | July-2024 | Irish Register of Qualifications (iqr.ie) |
| Certificate in Managing Social Protection Services | July-2024 | Irish Register of Qualifications (iqr.ie) |
| Certificate in Public Employment Services Provision | July-2024 | Irish Register of Qualifications (iqr.ie) |
| Certificate in Social Protection Investigative Work | July-2024 | Irish Register of Qualifications (iqr.ie) |
| Certificate in Social Protection Studies | July-2024 | Irish Register of Qualifications (iqr.ie) |
| Certificate in Social Welfare Appeals | July-2024 | Irish Register of Qualifications (iqr.ie) |
| Certificate in Social Welfare Decision Making | July-2024 | Irish Register of Qualifications (iqr.ie) |
| Higher Certificate in International Financial Services (apprenticeship) | July-2024 | Irish Register of Qualifications (iqr.ie) |
| Master of Science in Data Analytics | July-2024 | Irish Register of Qualifications (iqr.ie) |
| Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Data Analytics | July-2024 | Irish Register of Qualifications (iqr.ie) |
| Certificate in Non-Profit Leadership and Management | November-2023 | Irish Register of Qualifications (iqr.ie) |

| Thematic/Department/Support Service Review | | |
|---|---|---|
| Review of Academic Operations | April 2024 | Internal Report |

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

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

| | Total | Academic Schools/ Department | Professional Services/Support Unit | Approval/Review of Linked Provider | Programme Approval | Programme Review | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Number of review/ evaluation processes** | 8 | | | | 7 | 1 | |
| *of those:* | 7 | | | | | | |
| **On-site processes** | 0 | | | | | | |
| **Desk reviews** | 0 | | | | | | |
| **Virtual processes** | 8 | | | | | | |
| **Average panel size for each process type\*** | 7 | | | | | | |

\* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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

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

| Type of Expert/ Role on Panel | Total | Gender | | | Internal | National | International | | | Institution Type | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Male | Female | Other, or unspecified | | | UK, incl. NI | Other European | Outside of Europe | Similar | Different |
| Chair | 7 | 5 | 2 | | 2 | 4 | | | | 7 | |
| Secretary | 7 | 4 | 3 | | | | | | | | |
| Academic/Discipline Specific | 14 | 9 | 5 | | 1 | 12 | 1 | | | | |
| Student Representative | 6 | 2 | 4 | | | 6 | | | | 6 | |
| QA | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching & Learning | | | | | | | | | | | |
| External Industry /Third Mission | 7 | 3 | 4 | | | 7 | | | | | 7 |

# 2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

**Governance and Management of Quality**

During the 2023-24 reporting period, NCI's President and Senior Management colleagues continued to report to the Governing Body on the implementation of the strategic goals and objectives within the 2022-27 Strategic Plan and its' six key pillars of **Students, Staff, Teaching, Research, Access and Positioning**.  In December 2023, the Governing Body assessed the progress made by the College throughout 2023. Progress against Strategic Plan priorities continued to be tracked through MS Planner and monitored at each Executive Group (EG), Senior Management Team (SMT) and Governing Body (GB) meeting during 2023-24. A snapshot of the live plan from July 2024 is presented below.

**2024 Strategic Implementation Plan**

National College of Ireland

Executive Group

115 Tasks left

Not started — 20
In progress — 74
Late — 21
Completed — 188
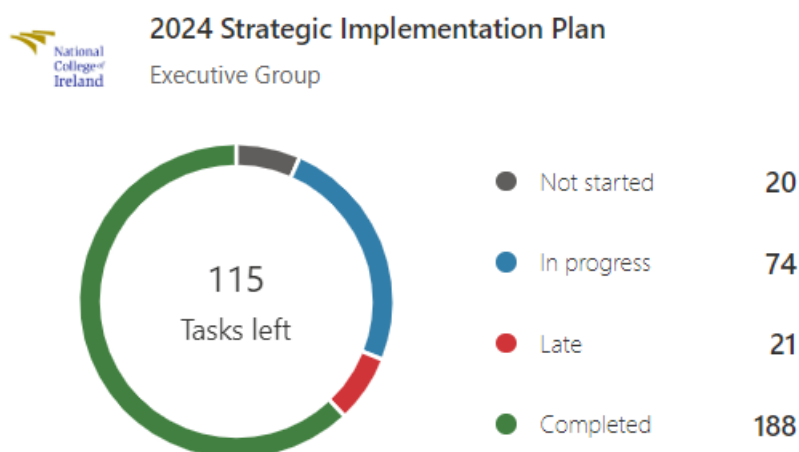
Towards the end of the reporting period, the Governing Body charged the Executive with consolidating the volume of implementation actions and re-focussing efforts on a smaller number of impactful Change Projects, for approval by the Governing Body in 2024-25. It was acknowledged that the Independent CINNTE Panel findings, expected during the 20204-25 academic year, would necessarily impact on Quality Assurance and/or Enhancement Change Projects.

**Programmes of Education and Training**

During the reporting period, NCI further strengthened the governance and management of academic programme provision within Programme and School Committees, and through the College-level Programme Lifecycle Management committee, reporting to the Executive Group for business decisions on new programme validations and to the Academic Council for final decisions on the proposed (new) programme validation schedule and the proposed revalidation and programme

retirement schedules, that is, which programmes should be retained in NCI's evolving programme portfolio, subject to QQI PAEC approval.

During the 2023-24 period, NCI broke new ground by successfully validating the first QQI tertiary degree between an Independent HE provider and an Education and Training Board. The *BA (Honours) in Digital and Business Skills*, with exit award of Higher Certificate, was developed in full partnership with the City of Dublin ETB, and is a progression route for Leaving Certificate students with the (NFQ Level 6) P-TECH award (Pathways to Technology). Students are registered as both ETB and NCI students from day 1 of their journey, moving through the first validated two years of programme delivery at the Cathal Brugha Street FET campus, with regular events also at NCI, and transitioning to their third and fourth years of the degree, at NCI. The degree is underpinned by an MOA between City of Dublin ETB and NCI and supported by the National Tertiary Office.

During the reporting period, we also successfully revalidated two NCI consortium-led apprenticeship programmes (major awards in International Financial Services and in Recruitment Practice) and other Major awards, including the highly successful MSc and PG Diploma in Data Analytics which was revalidated with a fully online mode – in line with the new 2023 Statutory Guidelines for Blended and fully Online programmes. The fully online mode of delivery was permitted by QQI in advance of the formal application process to extend Scope of Provision for online programmes..

The 2023-24 period also saw NCI's extensive suite of previously CIPD-awarded Diploma and Certificate programmes (in HR Practice; Organisational Learning and Development; Employment Law and Practice) newly validated by QQI and therefore aligned with the NFQ for the first time. CIPD accreditation continues for these programmes.

*Collaborative Partnerships and Articulation Agreements*
During the reporting period, the remit of the Programme Lifecycle Management Committee was expanded to include an annual review of NCI's list of collaborative partnerships and articulation agreements. The objective is to update the Executive Group, in relation to any corporate governance, strategic or financial aspects and to report to the Academic Council for academic oversight of existing academic partnerships and for the approval of proposals for new Collaborative Partnerships, linked to new programme validations. This new process was introduced in the reporting period and will be consolidated during the 2024-25 academic year.

### Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
The second round of the redesigned NCI Academic Promotions process was launched in the summer of 2024 (outcomes to be reported in the AQR for the 2024-2025 period). The first round in 2023

resulted in 11 staff gaining promotion to the status of Professor or Associate Professor, from a pool of 25 applicants. The 2023 gender breakdown was 36.4% male and 63.6% female. A robust and consistent policy and criteria-based academic promotions process impacts significantly not only on staff retention among academic staff but also their commitment to NCI, re-energising their engagement in their teaching, assessment, research and wider outreach roles. NCI will continue to build on our progress. The non-academic promotions process continued through the annual opportunity for proposed promotions, subject to Executive approval.

The 2023-24 year was also an important year in terms of developing staff capabilities in EDI areas and in recruitment practices, with all managerial staff completing - for example - Unconscious Bias Training to support their roles as Interview Panel members. During the reporting period, the College also reviewed and formalised its Flexible and Remote Working Policy and procedures (following the draft Hybrid Working Policy), giving clarity and certainty to staff on the parameters for home-working.

### Supports and resources for learners

Significantly impacting on Learning and Teaching, NCI opened the new Spencer Dock building in September 2023. This building added 5,600 square metres to NCI's campus provision in the North-east Inner City of Dublin. The start of the art building includes new, (flexible), multimedia classrooms; the NCI Norma Smurfit Library (expanded over two floors), with new study spaces; dedicated Assistive Technology Services and Academic Support Centre facilities for students. Spencer Dock also includes bookable meeting and conference rooms; office space; underground parking, a bike shed and staff shower facilities.

During the reporting period, the College continued to operate under QQI's Covid-19 emergency rules governing online learning and teaching and alternative assessments, which QQI had extended to cover the 2023-24 year. This meant, in practice, that while the College had largely returned to in-person, on-campus teaching and assessment for full-time programmes, a majority of part-time students were able to continue their studies and their assessments in fully online mode during 2023-24 (with some Blended learning activities involving on-campus events, scheduled for some programmes). In Spring 2024, the Teaching Enhancement and Digital Learning Design Unit surveyed students with online modules to gain information on their specific experiences, particularly the factors that impacted on their sense of "belonging", as an online student, in NCI. This data was used within the CINNTE Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and we are building on this survey as part of the Action Plan for the NCI application for extended Scope of Provision for online learning.

During the reporting period, the Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee (LTAC), reporting to the Academic Council, began a review of a range of Assessment-related practices at NCI, including a College-wide review of Grading Rubrics, and a standardisation of Assessment Brief Templates, to improve the learner experience. The Committee also began a review of NCI's current software tool (RPNow) and capacity for expansion of online proctoring, in preparation for the extension of QA Scope of Provision for fully online national and/or transnational programmes (application due in June 2025). The outcomes of both reviews are expected in 2024-25 and will be reported in the 2026 AQR. Further assessment-related Quality enhancement activities are underway for the next reporting period as the College emerges from QQI's alternative assessment provisions under Covid and also enhances its provision to support both students and staff to maintain academic integrity.

### Supports and resources for learners

The opening of the new Spencer Dock building, as referenced in the section above, was a major 2023-24 enhancement to the Quality of NCI's support services and resources for learners. During the reporting period, the College continued to pursue the *Learner Success Strategy*, in place since 2023:



Figure 6: Key areas of the Learner Support Strategy 2023 - 2026

A report to Academic Council in June 2024 highlighted the progress – and challenges - noted by the end of the 2023-24 year – including, among others:

- Contact made with 1727 students who recorded one or more "Not Present" (module grade outcome) contacted by the College to "Get Back on Track" with their studies
- 254 students contacted under Moodle Engagement pilot project (learning analytics)
- Getting to Grips sessions run throughout the academic year.
- New Assistive Technology service launched in Spencer Dock building

NCI has seen an increase in the number of students registering with the Learning and Disability Support Service in recent years with a record 182 students registered in the 2023-24 year, an increase of 40 students (28%) on the previous 2022/23 year.

During the year, to further enhance the Quality of our student supports, NCI took a decision to develop a physical, "one-stop shop" **Student Hub** on the ground floor of the Mayor Square campus. Work got underway in 2024, with a timeline to open the Hub in September 2024. A report on the impact of the

new Student Hub will be provided in the 2024-25 AQR, in February 2026. The physical facility is intended to provide a visible, focal point for students requiring support or guidance while on campus, and to compliment the online "Zendesk" student support hub which has been operating since Covid-19 restrictions. In response to the growing volume of "tickets" lodged in 2022/23 and 2023/24, a new Service Level Agreement was signed in January 2024 with Zendesk. Data on the number of tickets lodged and timelines for closing tickets are reported to the Registrar quarterly.

### Information and Data Management (including analysis and impact of information gathered via the national Student Survey)

During the reporting period, as a HEA-funded institution, NCI ramped up its participation in sectoral data and information-management activities, including preparatory work to include our student enrolment data, for the first time, in the HEA's SRS returns. This resulted in the inclusion of NCI data on students in the published HEA sectoral information (HEA Statistics) in Autumn 2024 (just outside of the current reporting period). This will continue in 2024-2025 and the impact of this will be assessed over the coming years as NCI analyses and benchmarks our performance against the universities and colleges in the HEA sector. NCI also completed and published its annual Gender Pay Gap report, in December 2023.

During the reporting period, the College's MIS project progressed during 2023-24 with the completion of Phase 1 data cleansing and reporting for cyclical programme-level review and to support Annual Programme Monitoring metrics. This information, on key programme Peformance Indicators such as application v enrolment ratios; student completion rates and grade classifications, is invaluable for programme teams undergoing periodic programme review, and for the annual programme "health-check" monitoring process.

Like all HEIs across the sector, NCI felt the absence in Spring 2024 of the national *studentsurvey.ie*, which had been paused by the HEA pending a full review. This represented a gap in our tracking of high-level student satisfaction with their experience at NCI, and whether they would choose NCI again for their studies, if they had the decision to make again. Given our broader institutional self-evaluation work during the 2023-24 year, we were unable to design and run a bespoke College-wide student experience survey - to fill the studentsurvey.ie gap - however the data from our Module-level student surveys (27% response rate across all registered students) in Semester 1 of 2023-24 were reviewed by module lecturers and Deans of the Schools and we undertook bespoke surveys of online students (as previously referenced) and of the Class Reps - to obtain information on their experience of their role (this was all part of the CINNTE self-evaluation).

Finally, during the reporting period, NCI's QIE Office completed a staff survey as part of the self-evaluation process for Institutional Review (CINNTE). This survey focused on unearthing levels of staff familiarity with NCI's QA policies and procedures as well as their levels of engagement with staff training opportunities. The survey had a 22% response rate and provided a rich data-set for analysis as part of the self-evaluation. The results were cross-referenced with the Equality and Culture Survey from the 2022-23 year and both surveys confirmed that staff wanted increased transparency about the role of decision-making committees, for example and easily accessible information on roles and responsibilities around the College.

### Integration of UN sustainable development goals (SDG)

During the reporting period, NCI's Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Research, and Vice-President for EDI, undertook extensive consultation to draft NCI's Sustainability strategy. This strategy – a major action in the NCI Strategic Plan 2022-27 - was approved by the Academic Council in Autumn 2024, therefore falling outside of the current reporting period. An update on the Implementation plan for the strategy and early impact, will be provided in the 2024-25 AQR, submitted in February 2026.

## 2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

NCI's QAES includes a robust assessment plagiarism policy and procedures, which have always been in operation but which have widened since approval in 2019, to address <u>academic integrity</u> more broadly. In the last two years, in response to the rise of Large Language Models (LLMs) and Generative Artificial Intelligence tools such as ChatGPT, the Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee (LTAC) has significantly updated NCI's <u>policy, procedures and guidelines</u> for both students and staff, accompanied by extensive training workshops delivered by Library staff and by the Teaching Enhancement Unit, and informed by national best practice through the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), of which NCI is a member. NCI is also a member of <u>ICAI, the International Center for Academic Integrity</u> which provides a range of resources for staff.

Our institutional policy approach is multifaceted; first and foremost we prioritise <u>awareness-raising, education and guidance</u> for students on the importance of academic integrity in their work, and how, if used correctly and ethically, LLMs and Generative AI tools can support and enhance their learning. We promote the multiple supports available, from lecturers but also from the <u>Library Academic Support centre,</u> on how to conduct academic research for essays and other major non-proctored assignments and to improve skills in academic referencing. The Teaching Enhancement and Digital Learning Design Unit provided training throughout 2023-24 for academic staff to resign assessment instruments to mitigate inappropriate students' use of AI.

Feedback from staff in the 2022-23 highlighted the need for an evaluative framework which would facilitate equitable academic judgements about the severity of academic misconduct within non-proctored assessments. Theis led to the most recent academic integrity policy update at the Academic Council in June 2024, with the introduction of a new, structured framework of sanctions for student academic misconduct in assessment. The framework includes five levels of sanction, culminating in a Disciplinary hearing at level 5. This new framework will come into effect in 2024/25 and its impact monitored during the next reporting period.

# 3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

## 3.1QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

| No. | Relevant objectives<br><br>**Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable** | **Planned actions and indicators**<br><br>*Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.*<br><br>*If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Complete the CINNTE process to include the submission of an NCI Quality Improvement Plan to address CINNTE Panel recommendations* (Final Panel report due in March 2025; estimate QIP submission in June/July 2025). | Led by Director of QIE, the QIP will specify the actions that NCI will undertake in response to the CINNTE Panel findings. The QIP actions will be mapped to:<br>-relevant ESG and/or QQI QA Guidelines<br>-NCI's Strategic Plan for 2022-27<br>- the associated NCI Research Strategy 2023-27, NCI Sustainability Strategy (once approved in 2025) and NCI Athena Swan Action Plan. |
| 2 | Further embed the Annual Programme Monitoring process in 2024-25, with defined KPIs and MIS datasets | QIE is the lead department working with Admissions and Student Records and IT Reporting, and the academic Schools.<br><br>This action addresses ESG 1.9 On-Going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes and to QQI QA Guidelines on Programme Review (2022). |
| 3 | Secure the International Education Mark (TrustEd Ireland) | QIE and NCI Marketing and International Department as co-leaders.<br><br>This action addresses ESG 1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification; 1.6 Learner Resources and Student Support and 1.8 Public Information (in relation to international learners). It addresses QQI's IEM |

| | | criteria, most specially the *Code of Practice for the Providers of Programmes to International Learners*. |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | Submit NCI application for QQI Extension of QA Scope of Provision for fully online national and transnational programmes | QIE and NCI Teaching Enhancement and Digital Learning Design and the co-leaders. <br><br> This action addresses all of ESG Part 1 Internal Quality Assurance and addresses QQI's (2023) *Statutory Guidelines for Blended and Fully Online Programmes*. It will support the achievement of NCI's 2022-27 Strategic Priority for Teaching: <br> "*We will develop and maintain successful programmes, distinctive in our design, delivery and assessment and aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals*". |
| | Support Programme Teams and Schools' academic leadership to project-manage the successful validation and revalidation of programmes leading to QQI awards. | QIE to lead, working across the College to implement Programme Lifecycle QA policies and processes. |
| 6. | Embed EDI principles and sustainability as core to NCI's programme design, approval and monitoring processes | QIE to lead, working with NCI EDI Manager and Sustainability Strategy Implementation Group. |

## 3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

| Unit to be reviewed | Date of planned review | Date of last review |
|---|---|---|
| Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (PG24355) | 09/09/2024 | September 2020 |
| Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Data Science (PG24074) | 09/09/2024 | September 2019 |
| Bachelor of Science in Computing (PG24358) | 09/09/2024 | September 2020 |
| Bachelor of Science in Data Science (PG24075) | 09/09/2024 | September 2019 |
| Higher Certificate in Science in Computing (PG24359) | 09/09/2024 | September 2020 |
| Higher Certificate in Science in Data Science (PG24076) | 09/09/2024 | September 2019 |
| Higher Diploma in Business in Financial Services Analytics (PG23405) | 25/03/2025 | September 2017 |
| Certificate in Educational Practice for P-Tech (PG24509) | 05/03/2025 | September 2021 |
| Certificate in P-Tech (Pathways in Technology) (PG24969) | 05/03/2025 | September 2021 |
| Certificate in Strategies of Learning and Teaching for P-Tech (PG24508) | 05/03/2025 | September 2021 |
| Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24368) | 21/03/2025 | September 2020 |
| Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24372) | 21/03/2025 | September 2020 |
| Higher Certificate in Arts in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24373) | 21/03/2025 | September 2020 |
| Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (PG24374) | 21/03/2025 | September 2020 |
| Certificate in Leadership, Governance and Change Management for Early Childhood Home Visiting (PG24571) | 21/03/2025 | September 2021 |
| Certificate in Curriculum and Pedagogical Practices for Early Childhood Home Visiting (PG24572) | 21/03/2025 | September 2021 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Master of Arts in Educational Practice (PG24370) | TBC - subject to PAEC approval of request for 12-month extension | September 2020 |
| Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Educational Practice (PG24371) | TBC - subject to PAEC approval of request for 12-month extension | September 2020 |
| Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Educational Practice in Teaching for Further Education (PG24375) | TBC - subject to PAEC approval of request for 12-month extension | September 2020 |
| Certificate in Digital Capabilities and the Learner Experience (PG24573) | 07/05/2025 | September 2021 |
| Certificate in Business Analysis (PG24378) | TBC | September 2020 |
| Certificate in Emerging Digital Technologies (PG24392) | 15/05/2025 | September 2021 |

## 3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

| Unit to be reviewed | Date of planned review | Date of last review |
|---|---|---|
| NCI Library Services (thematic review, under discussion) | TBC | N/AA |
| MSc/PG Diploma in Cloud Computing | TBC | 2020 |
| Higher Diploma and Certificate in Data Analytics | TBC | 2021 |

## 3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Expected QQI revalidation cycles are mapped to 2028-29. The final schedules are subject to change on an annual basis, through the Academic Council.

Link: Revalidations and validations 2025-2026

# 4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

## Case-Study 1: Enhancing graduate employability: School of Computing Project Showcase with Industry

Introduction:

Project Showcase was launched in 2005 and each year, industry experts and employers, graduate recruiters, faculty, students, family, friends and members of the public visit the college campus and speak to final (undergraduate) students about their work. The high point for NCI School of Computing graduates of the *BSc.(Honours) in Computing, BSc. (Honours) in Data Science, and BSc. (Honours) in Technology Management* is the opportunity to present their final year projects at Project Showcase. Students are interrogated by professionals, who want to see that the nitty-gritty of the technology is fully understood and its potential realised, and must also communicate their high tech, specialised work to 'lay people', who need to hear about it in plain English, and see how it could impact on their daily lives.

Our undergraduate students are equipped with excellent technical skills and transferable soft skills to enable them to be effective and flexible graduates with expertise in the areas of computer science, data science and technology management.
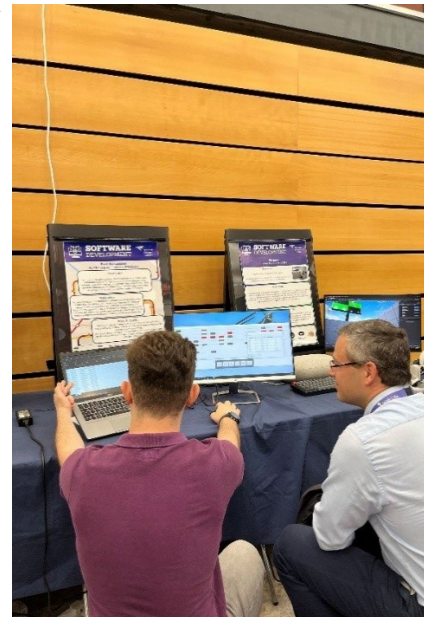


The School of Computer Science has a successful track record of interaction with industry through various events that have been organised over the past 20 years.

Reach:

Project Showcase itself is a valuable experience not only for the exhibiting students but also for students of earlier stages of the programme and even potential students who may be considering studying

Computing as it gives them a sense of the end goal of their programme. The day itself is a valuable opportunity for employers to access potential graduate employees and for NCI to strengthen its relationships with employers in the Computing Industry through sponsorship opportunities. Each year, companies sponsor prizes for the best projects displayed at the event. Citi has been a long-term sponsor of the top prize at project showcase and has been joined in recent years by companies such as HSE, ESB and Fidelity among others.

### Collaboration:

Project Showcase has always been a collaborative effort, where departments from across the campus of NCI pull together, availing of services and resources of external networks and service providers, to produce a top-quality event, giving students and employers alike the best experience possible. The Project Showcase committee consists of faculty and staff representatives from the School of Computing; NCI Commercial Office; NCI Careers, Academic Operations, IT and Marketing departments.

### Recent Challenge:

For several years, Project Showcase received funding from Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) which facilitated the rental of display boards and the printing of event programmes in addition to other incidental costs. Changes to KTI funding processes in 2024 meant that projects such as Project Showcase no longer qualified for this funding. Thus, the Project Showcase committee was tasked with finding ways to reduce costs so that the event would be sustained into the future.

### Solution:

In 2024, to make this event as **sustainable** as possible, the School of Computing took the decision to invest in alternative display boards which can be used to showcase students work with poster presentations. These boards can be easily stored on site for use for both at this event and others. Another step taken to improve the sustainability of Project Showcase is the replacement of the printed event programme with an online event programme which is circulated to employers in advance of the event and is easily accessed via a mobile device on the day. The event programme contains a brief profile for each student participating in the showcase with an overview of their project and a link to their LinkedIn Profiles. The new online event programme is developed by the showcase team using Sway, a Microsoft application which is already available to NCI staff via Office 365.

### Impact:

The investments and changes made by the showcase committee for Showcase 2024 have ensured that the event will continue to run for years to come, and that students and employers will continue to benefit from all that this event has to offer. The outlay for rental of display boards incurs a cost of approximately €4,500 annually and the purchase of new boards had only an initial outlay of €1,800 with no further costs in the future.

The online event programme was circulated via email to a database of industry contacts maintained by the NCI Careers Department along with an invite to the event itself. The online event programme was viewed more than 90 times in advance of the event itself. 27 representatives from various companies such as Irish Life, Arthur Cox, Amazon, KPMG, PwC and Workday, attended the event and have engaged with the students learning about their cutting-edge solutions for current real words problems. Students have developed solutions in the areas of Cybersecurity, IoT, Data Analysis, Software Development and Game Development.

Social media engagement results from Project Showcase 2024 (Table 1) give some sense of the reach of the event and the exposure it offers for NCI, our students and our industry sponsors. In May 2024, Project Showcase social media posts across X, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn generated over 23,000 impressions and more than 500 engagements.

In summary, Project Showcase 2024 was a very successful event which highlights some of the innovative learning, teaching and assessment practices taking place in the School of Computing at NCI and how the school continues to adapt and change in line with NCI's strategic objectives in relation to sustainability.  These latest changes have made the Project Showcase a more sustainable event that adopts eco-friendly practices.

*Table 1Social Media Engagement*

| Social Media Engagement | | |
|---|---|---|
| Instagram | Impressions | Engagement |
| https://www.instagram.com/p/C7L-crFCjaj/ | 2,227 | 90 |
| https://www.instagram.com/reel/C7IttqvMHfg/ | 2,861 | 69 |
| | | |
| Twitter/X | | |
| https://x.com/NCIRL/status/1792505060682793352 | 328 | 8 |
| https://x.com/NCIRL/status/1796133365134868484 | 278 | 29 |
| | | |
| Facebook | | |
| https://www.facebook.com/612835064211453/posts/821617399999884 | 1,400 | 10 |
| https://www.facebook.com/612835064211453/posts/827636199398004 | 1,641 | 20 |
| | | |
| LinkedIn | | |
| https://www.linkedin.com/posts/national-college-of-ireland_next-week-we-will-be-crowning-the- | 5,468 | 49 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2024-winners-activity-7198275777656684544-oruW?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop | | |
| https://www.linkedin.com/posts/national-college-of-ireland_computing-project-showcase-2024-final-year-activity-7201928390512168960-BywY?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop | 9,140 | 191 |

# Case-Study II: AI Hackathon on Sustainability, for Computing Students

**Introduction and Context:**

NCI organized a hackathon and panel discussion in partnership with the British Council (BC) in Ireland as part of their 'Stronger Together' initiative, with support from Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI). The event aimed to explore how AI could contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The first joint '**AI for Good**' hackathon was held in March 2023, where five teams (30 students) from the School of Computing, the School of Business, and the Higher Diploma in Computing participated. The two-day event concluded with a pitch presentation judged by industry experts from major organizations such as AWS, Citi, and Huawei. The success of this collaboration led to another hackathon followed by a panel discussion on 27th Sept 2023.



Figure 7: then Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, TD Simon Harris, meets students at the AI for Good Hackathon



Figure 8: Students participating in the Hackathon

**Summary of the Initiative:**

The "How can AI be a force for good?" initiative combined two key elements:

- **Hackathon:** Four teams from the March 2023 hackathon showcased their progress, incorporating judges' feedback over six months. Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation, and Science, Simon Harris TD (now Prime Minister), visited NCI to present awards and interact with the teams.

 **First prize** went to Team Little Life (pictured left): Amrit Laxmanasa Shidling, Sneha Muralidhar and Pradeep Narayanaswamy; and **second prize** went to Team Mammoscan (pictured right): Hudson Paul, Simani Future Monyatsi, Vamshi Krishna, Joshua Oluwafe Komolafe and Manuel Amir Freer Valdez.

- **Panel Discussion:** Featured thought leaders, academics, and industry experts discussing the ethical considerations of AI development and its role in sustainable and equitable growth. The discussion highlighted AI's potential to address issues like climate change, inequality, and healthcare accessibility.

*Distinguished Panellists:*



**Dr. Maxine Mackintosh:** Leads the Diverse Data initiative at Genomics England, co-founder of One HealthTech.

**Deirdre O'Neill:** Senior Development Advisor, Enterprise Ireland.

**Dr. Dónal Fullam:** Assistant Professor, Creative and Cultural Industries, University College Dublin.

**Ciaran Fennessy:** Head of Strategy & Transformation, Citi.

**Murugaraj Dhamodaran**: First Secretary, Embassy of India in Dublin.

**Prof. Paul Stynes** - Dean, School of Computing, NCI.

The panel was moderated by Malcolm Love, a media producer and public communication coach, ensuring an engaging and thought-provoking discussion.

**Key Findings and Impact:**

The "How can AI be a force for good?" initiative has had a direct impact on the structure and content of several NCI courses, integrating real-world AI challenges and ethical considerations into the curriculum.

- **Integration into Course Assessments:**
    - The Data Governance, Ethics, and Sustainability module now includes a case study-based assessment requiring students to develop AI-driven solutions aligned with SDGs.
    - The Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning courses incorporate project-based learning that mirrors hackathon-style problem-solving.
- **Emphasis on Ethical AI Development:**
    - Courses such as AI in Business and Ethics in AI now include deeper discussions on fairness, transparency, and inclusivity in AI solutions.
    - Students are encouraged to critically evaluate bias in AI models and propose ethical mitigation strategies.
- **Practical Exposure and Industry Collaboration:**
    - The event's insights have reinforced the importance of industry collaboration within the curriculum. The Hackathon 2025 focusses on AI for Sustainability and Humanity.
    - Participation by 14 teams for Hackathon 2024.
    - The 2025 hackathon is being organized in March by a larger coalition of stakeholders, including the NCI Student Union (NCISU), the School of Computing (SOC), the School of Business (SOB), and the Commercial Department. The event is funded and supported by Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) and the Enterprise Ireland Student Entrepreneur Awards, with mentorship and judging provided by industry experts.

Increased guest lectures, workshops, and mentorship from industry professionals are being incorporated into the NCI learning experience.

### Testimonial and Feedback

Introducing the panel on behalf of the British Council, Director for Ireland, **Dr Kerry McCall Magan said**: "*The global Stronger Together programme aims to create an enabling environment which brings together young people with representatives of government, civil society, enterprise, and institutions; this event does all that and poses a question the answer to which will shape our future.*"

**Professor Gina Quin, President of National College of Ireland said**: "*I was proud to welcome Minister Harris to this event, to meet our students and learn of the work NCI is doing in the field of AI. The panel of distinguished experts from across the fields of education, commerce, art and creative industries, culture and economics, took on all the challenges of AI presented to them by our audience.*"

**Saurabh Sharma**, MSc in Artificial Intelligence (Jan 2023), Hackathon Team Lead: "*The NCI hackathon and panel discussion were truly inspiring. The support from NCI, the Minister, and industry experts gave me the confidence to launch my company in December 2023. Engaging with AI and business leaders reinforced my belief in responsible innovation. I'm grateful for this transformative experience.*"

**Lathifa Jaffer Diang'A,** MSc in Data Analytics (Sept 2024)**:** "*Through the Data Governance, Ethics, and Sustainability CA, I creatively explored innovative data-driven solutions to address sustainability challenges aligned with the UN SDG goals. I also gained valuable insights into ethical data governance and learned a lot about GDPR compliance, enhancing my understanding of how technology can foster sustainable global change.*"

**Sumit Jeevan Mandal**, Class representative of MSc in Artificial Intelligence for Business (Jan 2025) expressed gratitude: "*We are very thankful to the college for the efforts in providing valuable opportunities, stating that participation in the hackathon has allowed them to develop essential skills. Many students are eagerly preparing their solutions, excited to present innovative ideas that contribute to a noble cause and drive meaningful change through AI.*"

### Conclusion:

The "How can AI be a force for good?" initiative has significantly influenced NCI's academic approach, reinforcing its dedication to developing AI professionals who excel not only in technical expertise but also in ethical responsibility. NCI places a strong emphasis on experiential learning, integrating industry collaborations, hackathons, and teamwork exercises into its curriculum. These

hands-on initiatives empower students with the practical skills and confidence needed to create AI solutions that effectively meet both industry requirements and broader societal challenges.

# Case-Study III: Integrating the UN Sustainable Development Goals into Student Assessments in Human Resources

### Introduction and Context

In the 2023-2024 academic year, NCI School of Business Lecturers were asked to incorporate elements of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) into core modules. With the idea "*Your mission, should you choose to accept it*".... Strategic Management module assignment (for Year 3 and 4 students) was designed. Students were asked to examine and assess current issues that organisations face. Students were to support their findings with academic theories supported with business reports including the UN SDGs. The driver for the incorporation of reports and issues was the recognition that business and management students, who will be future leaders, may benefit from practical insights into how frameworks such as the UN SDGs and academic theories such as Wicked Thinking, Evidence-based decision making etc. can inform organisational strategies, this also aligns with broader educational themes of promoting socially responsible behaviours with real world learning experiences.
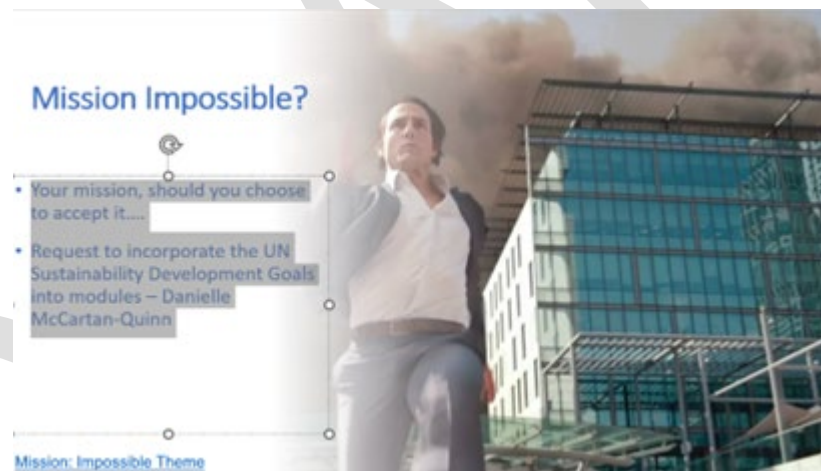


Source: Presentation: Incorporating the UN Sustainability Development Goals into Assignments, NCI Hackathon
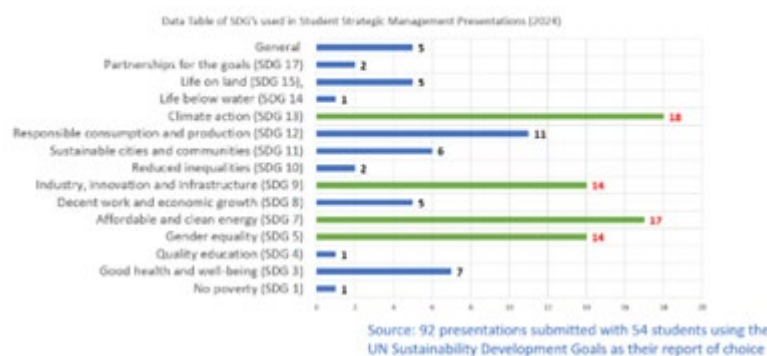
### Incorporating the UN SDGs into Assignments

The pilot for incorporating the UN SDGs into assignment was conducted with the Strategic Management (module) student cohort of 2024. Students were asked to take on the role of a consultant and advise senior management of an initiative that would improve the organisation to provide a competitive advantage. Students were free to choose a company or industry of their choice, and a topic of interest aligned with the learning objectives of the module. The assignment comprised a number of elements including in-person presentation, a short report (700 words) and a

data analysis table of their work and research. In addition, students had to submit an email summarising their key findings and provide recommendations to senior management. Students presented (group or individual) in-person to the class their proposed strategy and research supported with sources from Ireland's SDG GeoHive Portal for local data, and incorporated reports from PwC, KPMG, ESB, Formula 1 etc. for real-world examples. Topics included  gender issue such as pay gaps, climate related issue such carbon emissions, water conservation, sustainable energy etc.

Students attended weekly tutorials which provided structured opportunities for students to discuss their findings, explore case studies, and refine their chosen strategies. Students were able to interpret and apply theoretical concepts in real world practical evidence-based decision making. Of the 92 presentations submitted, 54 students chose the UN Sustainability Development Goals as their report of choice and 14 of the 17 SDGs were used as the issue of choice.



Source: Presentation: Incorporating the UN Sustainability Development Goals into Assignments, NCI Hackathon - chart breakdown of the SDG's used by students in the Strategic Management module 2024.

### Student Work

**Sorcha Moran,** 3rd Year NCI Student 2024 - data table entry.

*"United Nations (2023) and United Nations (2015): Goal 14 of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was used as the UN report was spoken about in lectures and was chosen as the report to reference in this assignment as per assignment guidelines. Goal 14 was selected as the key issue Unilever should consider in its strategy. The 2023 reference was used to get recent updates and figures on Goal 14. The UN's goals are important for addressing issues like poverty, inequality, and climate change."*

## Presentation Data Analysis (Website Section)

Source: Adapted table from NCI Student Sorcha Moran CA Presentation (2024)

### Data Analysis and Collection Table - For Presentation

| Source | Why and Validity of the Source |
|---|---|
| Websites | Unilever (2023), Unilever (2024a), Unilever (2024b), and Unilever (2024c): These Unilever webpages were used to access key information regarding Unilever and helped form the basis for this assignment. These web pages provided information on Unilever's strategies, 2023 annual report, missions/visions/aims, brand ownership, and stakeholder engagements. Unilever's webpages are a valid source of information as they come directly from the company themselves, however, while accessing a company's website is important for getting the latest information, the company's website would be biased - as the website is designed to portray the company positively.<br><br>**United Nations (2023) and United Nations (2015): Goal 14 of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** was used as the UN report was spoken about in lectures and was chosen as the report to reference in this assignment as per assignment guidelines. Goal 14 was selected as the key issue Unilever should consider in its strategy. The 2023 reference was used to get recent updates and figures on Goal 14. The UN's goals are important for addressing issues like poverty, inequality, and climate change. |

**Student Presentation - Plan on a Page:**

Plan on a Page group presentation **- Nathan Morgan, Ryan Maye, Jermaine Arkins, Sean Woods and Marc Jackson,** NCI Strategic Management students 2024.



Strategic Objectives / Plan on a Page
Source: NCI Students Nathan Morgan, Ryan Maye, Jermaine Arkins, Sean Woods, Marc Jackson (2024)

(ESB Net Zero Strategy, 2022)

**Student Testimonials**

**Ali Owoyemi,** NCI 4th Year Student 2024 - Testimonial 16/02/205

*"During my studies, I had the opportunity to explore the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption & Production), in the context of my Strategic Management assignment on Formula 1's sustainability strategy. Engaging with the SDGs provided me with a structured and globally recognized framework for analysing how businesses can contribute to sustainability while maintaining competitiveness and innovation.*

*The SDGs played a crucial role in shaping my research, allowing me to evaluate Formula 1's approach to reducing carbon emissions, implementing sustainable materials, and promoting responsible consumption throughout its operations. It was fascinating to see how a high-*

*performance industry like motorsports is adapting to sustainability challenges, and the SDGs helped me critically assess the effectiveness of these strategies. Applying these principles not only enhanced the depth of my assignment but also broadened my understanding of how businesses can integrate sustainability into their core strategies.*

*I found this process incredibly insightful, as it reinforced the importance of aligning corporate goals with global sustainability initiatives."*

**C**onor Kelly, NCI 4th Year Student 2024 – Testimonial 16/02/2025

*"The integration of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in my final year Strategic Management module was both beneficial and thought provoking. The assignment allowed me to apply my own interests and ideas to develop a solution for a societal issue I was passionate about.*

*After selecting a topic, we leveraged the UN SDGs to build a case for addressing the issue. My assignment focused on the gender pay gap and broader inequalities within the Irish Rugby Football Union, specifically aligning with SDG 5, Gender Equality. Connecting my work to a relevant SDG provided a strong foundation for my analysis while keeping me engaged, as I was exploring a topic of genuine personal interest.*

*What made this assignment particularly valuable was that it felt like real strategic work and project management rather than just another laborious college task. I could clearly see how the SDGs could be applied in real world efforts to drive meaningful change. The structured yet flexible approach allowed me to think critically about practical solutions, reinforcing the real world impact of strategic management in addressing global challenges."*

In addition the UN SDGs were presented as part of the <u>NASA Space Challenge</u> event that was hosted in NCI on the 6th October 2024.

**Future areas for development**

- Incorporate UN SDGs into assignments for other modules, Ethics, Human Resources Management etc.
- Highlight exemplar presentations and data tables for future students to review
- Design UN SDG tutorials (Climate Change, Social Justice, Gender, etc.) for student in-class debate.
- Separately, the School of Business in partnership with the CELL are designing a **Sustainability course (Badge level)** for students and staff. It is planned to pilot the course with students and staff in 2025.

**Conclusion**: Expanding Student Learning and Future Directions

Many students in the module did not have an awareness of the UN SDGs and the introduction of the UN SDGs in assignments proved popular, as evident by the pilot cohort choosing the UN SDGs as their report of choice. The incorporation of the SDGs demonstrates how structured, multi-part assignments can improve student engagement, critical thinking, provide real-world problem-solving skills and awareness in the area of sustainability and similar related topics.

*For further information on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, visit* https://sdgs.un.org/goals and *Ireland's SDG GeoHive.*