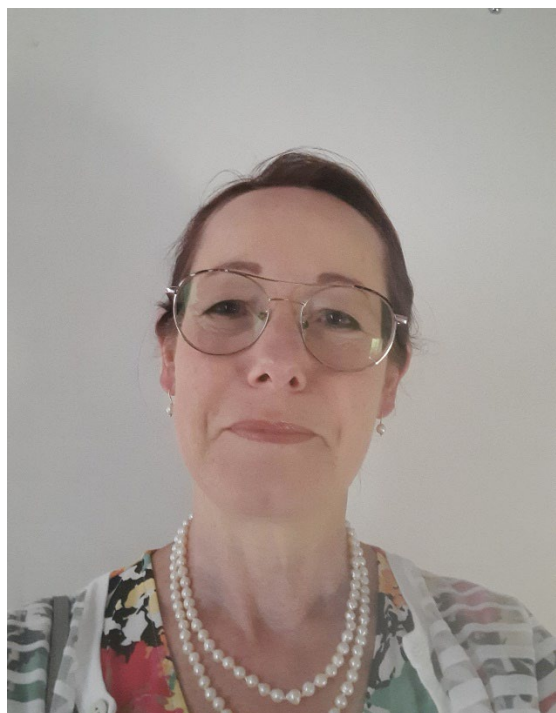# National College of Ireland (NCI) - CINNTE Review 2024

The Review Team

Chair

Rowena Pelik has been working as an Independent Higher Education Consultant since stepping back from her role at QAA UK in 2020. She has conducted reviews for the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and for the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), as well as for Studijų Kokybės Vertinimo Centras (SKVC) in Lithuania.

Her most recent ENQA review was the targeted review of QQI in 2024 giving Rowena detailed insights into the higher education system in Ireland as well as an up-to-date understanding of the work of QQI.

Alongside external review activity, she has continued to work on projects with QAA, especially on Internal Quality Assurance and Transnational Education. Most recently Rowena has led the development of an innovative online university in Europe for a private provider based in England.

From 2014 to 2020 Rowena was a Director of the UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) where she was Director of Nations and International and, latterly, Director of Strategic Projects.

She has had a long career in higher education – first as an academic, teaching design history and cultural studies, and academic leader as Head of the School of Art and Design at the University of Salford, before moving into a central leadership role as Director of Academic Quality and Standards. In 2008 she moved to Edinburgh Napier University as Director of Academic Development and Academic Strategy.

She has extensive experience in external quality assurance as an expert academic reviewer and quality assurance specialist at discipline, institutional and national levels within the four nations of the UK, and internationally, across Europe and in the Middle and Far East.

Coordinating Reviewer/International QA Representative

Majella Thomas is an international independent quality assurance expert with over 20 years' experience in the tertiary education sector. Her experience is primarily in the university sector and includes conducting internal and external reviews, developing systems and processes to manage institutional compliance with statutory quality assurance requirements, and policy development, design and implementation. She has also managed work-integrated learning programs and taught in higher and vocational education contexts. She began working in quality management in 2005.

She currently works with higher education providers to develop and enhance quality assurance and regulatory compliance processes and systems, and has conducted independent reviews of corporate and academic governance, quality assurance processes, and program quality. Majella also works as an external quality assurance expert for Ecctis's evaluation and benchmarking scheme.

Prior to that she worked for RMIT University as a Senior Compliance Manager with responsibility for leading a multi-year project to assess institutional compliance with statutory quality requirements and develop and implement a program of assurance and enhancement. This built on her work at Australia's Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), where she conducted regulatory assessments of the compliance of providers with the Higher Education Standards Framework, contributed to development of new regulatory processes and engaged with regulatory and quality assurance agencies across the Asia-Pacific region.

Industry Representative

Michael Bulman is Strategic Alliances Director with Kyndryl Ireland, working across the ecosystem of alliances and partnerships to maximise the value delivered to enterprise clients in Ireland and the UK. He is responsible for developing and managing relationships with key technology partners, aligning offerings and capabilities, and driving joint sales opportunities. With over 20 years in the IT Services industry, Michael is a senior leader with a proven track record of delivering value to clients and partners. He has led large services organisations and managed multi-million euro business portfolios, consistently achieving results and exceeding expectations.

Michael graduated from Dublin City University with a first-class honours Executive MBA in 2018, enhancing his strategic thinking and business acumen. He has served on the board of the MBA Association of Ireland (MBAAI) since 2018, including four years as the Association President. The mission of the MBAAI is to extend the value of the MBA qualification for students and graduates, providing opportunities for ongoing learning and networking across the island of Ireland.

Higher Education Sectoral Representative/QA Expert

Dr Brendan Murphy is currently Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement in Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) with cross organisational responsibility for the TUS Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework.

Brendan has over 25 years' experience in higher education serving as a lecturer in the then Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) for a 20-year period prior to appointment as Head of Quality, Teaching and Learning in LIT in 2017. As a Lecturer in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Brendan was heavily involved in programme development and programme leadership roles during this period. As Head of Quality, Teaching and Learning in LIT, Brendan held management responsibility for Quality, Teaching and Learning and Student Retention. He led a significant programme of policy review and development and the rollout of a comprehensive programme of staff CPD, including a successful MA in Academic Practice.

Since designation as a TU, Brendan holds management responsibility for the development of the University's quality assurance and enhancement framework and its implementation across all its constituent campuses and faculties. In addition to management responsibilities, Brendan is an active participant in TUS Governance through membership of Academic Council a broad range of committees and working groups. He is also the TUS representative on the QQI Irish Quality and Qualifications Forum (IQQF). During 2023 – 2024, Brendan has acted as Institutional Coordinator for the successful CINNTE Review of TUS.

Brendan is a graduate of the University of Limerick, holding a B.Sc. (Ed) in General and Rural Science and a PhD in Molecular Biology.

Learner Representative

Matthew Kitching is Deputy Chief Executive Officer in the Students' Union at Buckinghamshire New University, where he is responsible for a wide range of membership services. Matthew is also a PhD student in Higher Education at Lancaster University and his work focusses on international quality assurance and student organisations.

Matthew has worked for more than 15 quality assurance agencies in Europe, Africa, South America and Asia. He currently serves on the boards of EQ-Arts and the European Council for Business Education. In addition, he is a member of the Accreditation Council at the Centre for Quality Assurance in Aerospace, Defence and Security education and training and part of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee at the European Council on Chiropractic Education.

Matthew holds degrees in Police Studies and Political Science. He has previously worked for the European Students' Union, where he led their quality assurance work.

Higher Education Sectoral Representative/ Teaching, Learning and Assessment Expert

Dr Jennifer Bruton is Executive Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Computing and a member of the Senior Management Group of Dublin City University. Her disciplinary background is electronic, mechatronic, software engineering and higher education quality and leadership.

Throughout her academic career, Jennifer has been involved in many innovative programme developments, with particular strength in technology-enhanced teaching, and is passionate about quality in teaching and learning. Jennifer was Associate Dean for Education from 2007 to 2011, has been both a member, and Chair, of the University Disciplinary Committee (UDC), has been a committee member of the DCU Quality Promotion Committee and an active participant on DCU's Education Committee. Jennifer has represented DCU as an Associate on the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and is also an experienced member of Engineers Ireland's Accreditation Board which is tasked with ensuring the quality of engineering programmes across Ireland. Her higher education research focuses on the quality of the student experience and engineering education.

In 2021, Jennifer stepped down from a 3-year appointment as Head of School of Electronic Engineering to take up the role of Executive Dean of Faculty. In this role, she has executive responsibility for quality of all the activities in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing, with oversight of all academic offerings and the student experience, more generally.