

National University of Ireland
2025

Annual Quality Report
National University of Ireland
Reporting Period 2023-2024

National University of Ireland
2025

Annual Quality Report (NUI)

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
CONTENTS.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template.....	5
PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM.....	7
Introduction and Overview of Institution.....	8
1.0 Internal QA Framework	10
1.1 Governance and Management of Quality	10
1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision	15
1.2.1 Linked Providers	15
1.2.2 QA Developments Relating to the Recognised Colleges (both DABs and Linked Providers).....	15
2.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties.....	22
2.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	22
3.0 Collaborative Provision	23
9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties.....	23
9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	23
9.2 Collaborative Provision	25
9.3 Articulation Agreements.....	26
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT.....	28
1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments	29
1.1 Strategic QA Updates	29
1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR	30
1.3 Governance and Management.....	31
1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule.....	31
1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments	31
1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review	34
1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews	34
2.0 IQA System - Enhancement and Impacts	37
2.1 Extern Examining Processes	37
2.2 CINNTE Review of NUI.....	37
2.3 NUI and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs).....	38
2.4 Third-mission activities, societal and community engagement	39
2.5 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity.....	40

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period	41
3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives	41
3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods	42
3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period	42
3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period	42

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

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](#)

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

- [HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education](#)
- [The Salzburg Principles](#)
- [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#)
- [SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices](#)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

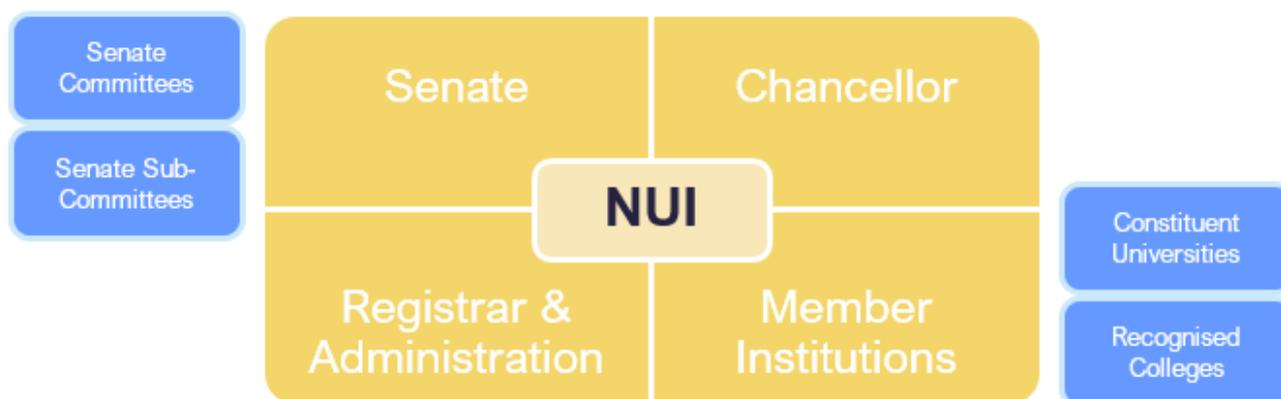
Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - Internal QA Framework	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to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

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for **National University of Ireland (NUI)** for the reporting period **1 September 2023 - 31 August 2024**.

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

The AQR has been approved by Dr Kieran McGovern, Head of Academic Services and Registry, and Dr Patrick O'Leary, NUI Registrar, and is submitted by Dr Sorcha Uí Chonnachtaigh, Manager of Academic Affairs.



The National University of Ireland

The National University of Ireland (NUI) is a federal university with four constituent universities (CUs), two recognised colleges (RCs) and a number of associated institutions. Collectively, these are referred to as member institutions. NUI is a designated awarding body (DAB) but not a provider of education, though it does directly award higher doctorate degrees.

NUI was established by charter in 1908 and is empowered by charter and statute to recognise other institutions of higher education - known as recognised colleges - that meet the quality standards of the University in the academic programmes and student experience that they offer. Through quality assurance (QA) policies, procedures and guidelines, NUI applies standards that are comparable to those in the constituent universities, and on this basis these colleges are permitted to award degrees and other qualifications of the National University of Ireland. NUI's position as a designated awarding body (DAB) in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 has further strengthened NUI's statutory role in this regard.

Constituent Universities

Maynooth University / MU

University College Cork / UCC

University College Dublin / UCD

University of Galway (no abbreviations/initialisms permitted)

Recognised Colleges

Royal College of Surgeons - University of Medicine and Health Sciences / RCSI (DAB)
Institute of Public Administration / IPA (Linked Provider)

The AQR Development Process

NUI has a small team of 20 people. The Manager of Academic Affairs has the main responsibility for quality matters in NUI and manages the relationship with the recognised colleges. For this reason, the AQR is written by the Manager of Academic Affairs with input from external stakeholders (in the RCs) and the Head of Academic Services & Registry. The NUI Registrar gives final approval before the report is submitted.

A note on the Reporting Period

In 2023-24, NUI was focused on implementation of the actions relating to the recommendations in the CINNTE review report.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The terms below are used in the report:

CU	Constituent university
DAB	Designated awarding body
ISER	Institutional Self-Evaluation Report
LP	Linked provider
MAA	Manager of Academic Affairs
NUI	National University of Ireland
QA	Quality assurance
QAE	Quality assurance and enhancement
QT	Quality Team
RC	Recognised college

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

This section provides information on the overarching quality policy and the decision-making fora for quality assurance in NUI during the reporting period.

a. Overarching Institutional Quality Policy

NUI's current [strategic plan for 2023-27](#) was launched in May 2023. Under Pillar 1 (Education & Research), Objective 4 outlines NUI's renewed commitment to 'ensure that quality assurance policies are appropriate and quality enhancement continues to be a priority' for the University.

In 2023, NUI's [Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework](#) replaced the (2017) [Policy for Quality Assurance and Enhancement](#). This Framework is a more future-proof document and reiterates (what was asserted in the predecessor document) that recognised colleges have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance on a day-to-day basis. In May 2024, NUI Senate approved a federation-wide [quality policy](#). This relatively simple and straightforward document formally captures the ongoing responsibilities of all member institutions regarding the quality standards of the University.

NUI has developed guidelines, policies and procedures, and provides ongoing guidance and support to its recognised colleges, with due regard to national guidelines,² sectoral practices and European good practice guidelines. NUI benefits from membership of the European Universities Association (EUA) Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF). At a national sectoral level, NUI engages actively as a member of the Irish Universities Association (IUA) Quality Committee and the IUA Quality Officers Group. NUI is also represented at the QQI's Irish Quality and Qualifications Forum for Statutory Awarding Bodies.

This engagement and information-sharing supports NUI's work to review and expand the range of quality assurance policies, procedures and guidelines.

NUI's governing body, the Senate, oversees quality matters - approving new/revised QA policies. The Registrar presents a report on QA matters in the recognised colleges at every meeting of

² NUI is also guided by the [Statutory Guidelines for the Review of Linked Providers by the National University of Ireland](#), issued by QQI in March 2019.

Senate. The Committee of Registrars of the NUI Constituent Universities also provides advice and support on QA matters, as and when required.

b. Quality Assurance Decision-making Fora

NUI Senate governs the NUI's role as a DAB for the recognised colleges that are linked providers.³ The NUI Registrar leads and manages the implementation of this role, supported by designated executive staff in NUI, namely the Head of Academic Services and Registry and the Manager of Academic Affairs. The Registrar reports to Senate at its meetings in January, May and November on QA matters in the recognised colleges, bringing forward items for decision, as and when appropriate. Membership of the NUI Senate includes the NUI Chancellor, the NUI Registrar, chief officers of the constituent universities, four government nominees, four elected members from the governing bodies of each constituent university, and eight members elected by convocation (graduates of the NUI). An additional four members may be co-opted by Senate.

Below the level of the Senate, operational business between NUI and its recognised colleges is conducted through separate steering committees for each institution. The steering committees act as the main mechanism for oversight of all strategic, policy and operational issues between NUI and the relevant recognised college. In the case of recognised colleges that are also linked providers, this committee is the key forum for deliberation and decision-making on quality assurance matters, leading to formal decision-making by the Senate where warranted.

Figure 1 below illustrates the oversight and monitoring cycle of QA activity between NUI and its recognised colleges that are linked providers. This is based on an interpretation of quality in its widest sense, inclusive of the approval and re-approval processes for academic programmes leading to NUI qualifications as well as activities more traditionally associated with quality assurance such as external examining and institutional effectiveness reviews.

All these steps - except the periodic institutional review of QA effectiveness - apply to both of NUI's current recognised colleges. As a designated awarding body in its own right, RCSI's institutional effectiveness review is conducted directly by QQI, and this does not fall within NUI's QA

³ At present, there is only one such recognised college, the IPA. RCSI is a DAB in its own right though it remains a recognised college of the University. The unique and long-standing relationship between NUI and RCSI is detailed in NUI's (2020) publication, [*The quality assurance relationship between the National University of Ireland and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland-University of Medicine and Health Sciences.*](#)

responsibility.⁴ The NUI Registrar and staff participate in the reviews of RCSI, attending meetings convened by the external review panels and providing documentation upon request. NUI Senate notes the outcome of the RCSI institutional effectiveness review.

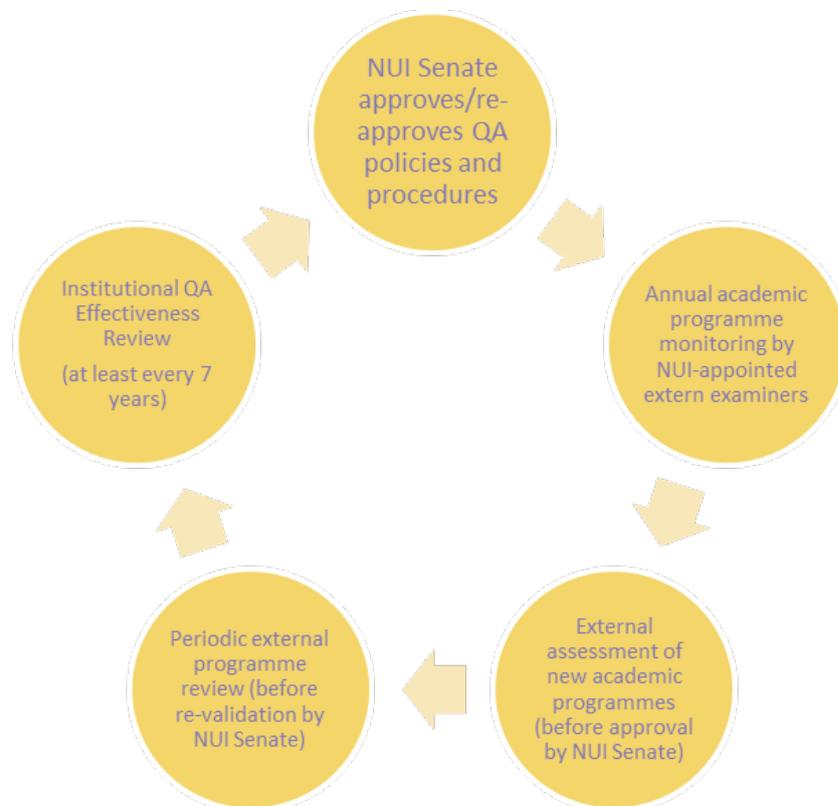


Figure 1: NUI QA oversight and monitoring cycle for recognised colleges that are linked providers

c. Representation of Learners and External Stakeholders

External stakeholders are involved in NUI's governing body, the Senate, and external stakeholders and partners are involved in civic engagement activities and ad hoc projects.

As a non-provider, NUI does not have learners in the same way as its member institutions. Learner experience is a core concern of our quality assurance activity with regard to the recognised colleges, but NUI does not have a direct relationship with learners that is typical in provider institutions. However, in the development of the ISER for the CINNTE review of NUI, the establishment of a student council was identified as an action to address the need for greater student engagement in the federation. This was a recommendation in the CINNTE review report

⁴ The most recent institutional review of IPA took place in 2020-21 and follow-up activities took place during the previous reporting period. The IPA's quality assurance policies and procedures were revalidated for a further 7 years by NUI Senate at that time.

and a key action identified by NUI in its institutional implementation plan. During the reporting period, NUI liaised with all member institutions with a view to launching the Student Council in Q4 2024 (outside the reporting period).

Important note:

With the prior permission of QQI, NUI has adapted Part A by moving most of the information from further sections of Part A into section 1.2. This change reflects the scope of this Annual Quality Report, which relates only to NUI's quality responsibilities towards its recognised colleges and, in particular, its current linked provider institution, the Institute of Public Administration (IPA). Part A, therefore, has the following sections:

- Section 1.2: QA Developments Relating to Recognised Colleges (sub-sections i-xi)
- Section 2: Details of Arrangements with Third Parties
- Section 3: Collaborative Provision

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

1.2.1 Linked Providers

At present there are two types of provider institutions with the status of a recognised college of NUI:⁵

- A provider institution that is deemed a 'linked provider' under the Act 2012;⁶ NUI is the DAB for qualifications of the linked provider. At present this includes the Institute of Public Administration (IPA).
- A provider institution that is also the holder of the status of designated awarding body under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. Here, the responsibility for approval of the quality assurance provision for that institution lies directly with QQI. At present this includes the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland - University of Medicine and Health Sciences (RCSI).

1.2.2 QA Developments Relating to the Recognised Colleges (both DABs and Linked Providers)

As noted in last year's AQR, NUI revised the core quality assurance document pertaining to the recognised colleges in 2022-23, NUI (2023) *Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework*. This document outlines NUI's responsibilities and those of the recognised colleges in maintaining the high standards of quality established by the federal university. In May 2024, NUI Senate approved the *National University of Ireland Quality*. This federation-wide policy outlines expectations for maintaining quality standards and indicates the NUI policies that apply to different institution types (constituent universities, recognised colleges; designated awarding bodies and linked providers).

⁵ The conditions for recognised colleges as set out by Senate are governed under NUI Statute LXXXV1: Chapter LIX. This is not published online however details are available upon request from the NUI Registrar (registrar@nui.ie).

⁶ 2012 Act: Section 2(3) states that 'a linked provider is 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'.

In addition, NUI revised and published (following approval by NUI Senate in November 2023) the document relating to approval of quality procedures in linked providers (following an institutional review):

- NUI (2023) *[Policy and Procedures for the Approval of Quality Assurance Procedures in Recognised Colleges that are Linked Providers of NUI.](#)*

This document was revised based on internal experience of the process and consultation with colleagues in the IPA, which underwent institutional review in 2021-22.

i. Programme Design and Approval

All new programmes proposed by NUI recognised colleges leading to NUI qualifications are subject to approval by the NUI Senate. The design of the programme lies with the institution and follows NUI's core procedural document concerning education provision in recognised colleges.⁷ This core document is due for review in 2024-25.

ii. Monitoring and Periodic Review

Monitoring of quality in academic programmes via the external examination process is guided by NUI Senate's (2019) *[NUI Extern Examiners: Primary degree and taught postgraduate courses in recognised colleges.](#)* This policy is due to be reviewed in the 2023-24 academic year.

In May 2019, NUI formalised its long-standing requirement for programme review in the recognised colleges by publishing a new [policy](#) and set of procedures governing external, periodic reviews of academic programmes. These guidelines were first used by IPA in the (COVID-delayed) external, periodic review of its suite of BA (Hons) programmes and the findings and recommendations were reported to Senate in Autumn 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic, programme reviews were suspended in IPA. They have since been resumed. This policy is planned for review during 2024-25. A number of internal programme reviews (MEconSc and Bachelor of Business Studies) were in progress during the reporting period.

RCSI has undertaken a significant project on its internal quality and programmatic reviews and had suspended reviews until the revised process was approved. RCSI will report to QQI directly on this.

⁷ NUI (2021) *[Policy, Regulations and Procedures for the Approval of Research Degrees in the Recognised Colleges.](#)*

iii. Progression, Recognition and Certification Policies and Procedures

NUI has not materially updated its policies or guidelines in this area during the reporting period.

Progression: During the normal process of programme approval, or to make major changes to existing academic programmes, documentation submitted to NUI must include details of arrangements for access and transfer into the programmes of study and the progression pathways in place for students. As part of its procedures (see section i above), NUI requires re-assurance from an external, independent academic peer assessor of senior rank that these provisions are in line with international good practice. Access, transfer and progression (ATP) is a standing item on the agenda for steering committee meetings with NUI's linked provider, IPA. All discussions of new programmes involved consideration of ATP matters.

Recognition: NUI's 2013 *Policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning for the Degrees and Qualifications of the National University* applies but is due for review and renewal in line with sectoral developments being led by QQI (and a [project](#) led by the IUA and THEA); NUI is monitoring and engaging with processes where appropriate. (It is our understanding that new QQI guidelines in this area are planned for the near future.)

Certification: The NUI Registrar co-chairs examination boards in the recognised colleges and formally recommends to the Senate the award of degrees and other qualifications to students who have achieved the requisite results, in line with the published marks and standards of the recognised college. The NUI Chancellor then confers all degrees and other qualifications made in the recognised colleges at conferring ceremonies. All degree and certificate parchments bear the university seal as well as the institutional crest of the recognised college where the graduate undertook the course of study.

NUI also provides a [certification service](#) for graduates who have lost their original parchment and seek duplicate documentation as well as a certification service for agencies (largely) involved in the process of certifying academic credentials supplied by graduates seeking employment and/or professional training opportunities abroad. A project to bring the application process for these services online was suspended in 2023-24 due to NUI's recently expanded statutory function in relation to Seanad Éireann but has been resumed more recently.

iv. Collaborative and Transnational Provision

NUI has not materially updated its specific policy and guidelines for collaborative and transnational provision during the reporting period. The recently updated and republished (May 2020) core regulatory and procedures document for new or significantly changed academic programmes applies to all taught provision in the recognised colleges, including collaborative or transnational programmes leading to NUI qualifications.

NUI's 2013 [*Guidelines for Collaborative and Transnational Provision*](#) remain in effect. Internal revision of the document was completed during the reporting period but consultation began only in 2024-25. The revision of NUI's (2013) *Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct* is in the final stages.

v. Procedures for Making Awards

The regulations and procedures for making awards are the responsibility of the recognised college, however NUI has a long-standing [*policy*](#) on the usage of titles of degrees and other qualifications, which was reviewed and re-published in January 2020. While recent sectoral developments regarding non-major awards had prompted internal discussions regarding the content of this policy, the ongoing sectoral work on a potential convention (during the reporting period) prevented concrete revisions. This policy will now be revised during 2024-25.

NUI also provides guidance with regard to marks bands and generic grade descriptors for NUI degrees. As reported in the previous AQR, NUI has undertaken an extensive review of the NUI Grade Descriptors in partnership with the CUs, with a view to publishing a refreshed document in 2025 (this could fall within the 2025-26 reporting period).

vi. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

NUI has not materially updated specific policies or guidelines in this area during the reporting period. However, a number of relevant documents are under or coming up for review at this time:

- NUI (2019) [*Guidelines for the Periodic External Review of Programmes Leading to NUI Degrees and Other Qualifications in Recognised Colleges that are also Linked Providers of NUI*](#) - revised late 2024, consultation early 2025.
- NUI (2020) [*Regulations, Procedures and Guidelines for the Approval of New Programmes and Changes to Existing Programmes in the Recognised Colleges*](#) - for review in 2025.

While the teaching, learning and assessment strategies adopted for individual programmes are the responsibility of the recognised college, the quality of teaching staff is a core criterion for

recognition by the University of any college seeking recognised status and assurance of same will form part of the approved QA system in any recognised college.

The provisions in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 relating to academic integrity and academic misconduct have gained higher prominence in teaching, learning and assessment and student discipline strategies and policies across the university sector. As a member of the IUA Registrars' Committee and the IUA Quality and Qualifications Subgroup, NUI continues to monitor developments in this area and update the recognised colleges accordingly.

vii. Learner Resources and Support

In line with NUI policy on quality assurance in the recognised colleges, learner resources and supports for students are primarily the responsibility of the recognised college itself. However, NUI has oversight of these supports at various stages of its business with the recognised college: when a HEI applies to NUI for [recognised college status](#); when academic programmes leading to NUI qualifications are submitted for approval or re-validation by Senate;⁸ when a periodic, external programme review is undertaken of a programme(s); when NUI conducts an [institutional quality effectiveness review](#).

viii. QA of Research Activities and Programmes

As stated, NUI is not a provider institution and does not offer research programmes directly to students. NUI ensures advice is aligned to the policies and procedures for research quality adopted in the NUI constituent universities. As mentioned in Section i above, *NUI Policy, Regulations and Procedures for the approval of NUI Research Degrees in the Recognised Colleges* was revised and published in May 2023.

The University also has a statutory function to appoint extern examiners for research degrees in the constituent universities and the recognised colleges. A [new policy](#) on the appointment of external examiners for research degree programmes in the recognised colleges was published in November 2022.

Higher Doctorate Degrees on Published Works

⁸ See n.10.

NUI also offers [higher doctorate degrees](#) on published work, which are awarded directly by the University to scholars who have, over a sustained period, published a substantial body of ground-breaking and influential work in a field of specialisation and who have achieved outstanding distinction internationally in that field. The Higher Doctorate Degrees Committee reviewed stakeholder surveys from the CINNTE review and recommendations from NUI staff following an internal review of the process during the self-assessment stage. From this, a number of procedural improvements were identified. A benchmark exercise will be repeated once the recent improvements have had a cycle of applicants.

ix. Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

NUI does not have a direct role or responsibility in relation to the recruitment, development and support of staff in the recognised colleges, however the quality of teaching staff in the recognised colleges is important to the University and this has its roots in NUI's statutes. Any institution seeking recognised college status with the University must - at the time of application - provide information and assurances as to the 'competencies of teaching staff'.

x. Information and Data Management

There have not been any material updates or changes to policy, procedures or guidelines in this area during the reporting period. However, NUI Senate considered and approved a proposal for the development of a formal policy relating to the notification of new programmes with specific reference to graduate data collection and submission to NUI. The policy itself was approved outside the reporting period.

The use of information and data for quality assurance and enhancement is a requisite part of NUI's approval of linked provider's approved QA policies and procedures. Annual reports from appointed extern examiners form a core part of this information set for enhancement and NUI provides updates to the Senate from time to time on recurring issues arising from extern reports (across the recognised colleges and the constituent universities).

NUI also requires that recognised colleges (as linked providers) provide updates on the outcomes of information and data-management processes, for example, major curriculum or assessment decisions adopted on foot of student feedback on modules and programmes. Enhancement actions related to information and data-management are further developed during specific programme reviews and formed a significant part of the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report from the IPA in preparation for its institutional review in 2021-22.

xi. Public Information and Communication

NUI publishes information on its website in relation to the structure and governance of the University, its strategy and academic and QA policies, regulations and guidelines. NUI's internal culture is to prioritise the accuracy of information that we make accessible to our users, and to the public generally. We have published the NUI web privacy policy, Freedom of Information documentation and the NUI data protection policy on our website.⁹

¹¹ NUI's [Web Privacy Policy](#), [Data Protection Policy](#) and guidance on [Freedom of Information](#) requests are available on the website.

2.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

2.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	0 (Please note RCSI has a number of arrangements with PRSBs and submits a separate AQR)
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	0

3.0 Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	RCSI has a number of collaborative partnerships and provides information on these in their AQR.
Joint/double/multiple awards	
Collaborative programmes	
Franchise programmes	
Linked providers (DABs only)	

1. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Linked provider
Name of body:	Institute of Public Administration
Programme titles and links to publications	All IPA programmes leading to awards on the NFQ. Details of the programmes (Levels 6-10) can be found on IPA's page of the IRQ website.
Date of last review	2021-22 (full institutional review of QA effectiveness)
Date of next review	2028

NUI has in its awards portfolio a range of approved RCSI collaborative and transnational programmes that have evolved from a number of collaborative partnerships. As a DAB in its own right, further information on these programmes can be obtained directly from RCSI.

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
---------------------	--------------

PRSBs	0
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	0

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	0
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	1

1. Collaborative provision	Linked provider
Name of body (/bodies):	Institute of Public Administration
Programme titles and links to publications	All IPA programmes leading to awards on the NFQ. Details of the programmes (Levels 6-10) can be found on IPA's page of the IRQ website: https://irq.ie/providers/institute-of-public-administration?id=90aca4de-dbf1-4889-b6b9-f9ac06a1deb8&ref=%257B%2522search%2522:%2522institute%2520of%2520public%2520administration%2522%257D The next institutional review of QA effectiveness will take place by September 2029.
Date of last review	08/09/2022
Date of next review	

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Definition:

Per the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision, an articulation agreement may be defined as a process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advance standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree awarding body. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the parties.

Articulation agreements - Total number	0
--	---

National University of Ireland
2025

Annual Quality Report
National University of Ireland
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

Strategic Context

During the review period (2023-24), NUI was in the first year of the new [Strategic Plan 2023-2027](#). The new strategic plan marked a more ambitious positioning for the University in a number of areas, however, the key role of quality assurance remains deliberately consistent with past strategic plans. Under Strategic Pillar 1, Education and Research, Objective 4 states that NUI will 'ensure that quality assurance policies are appropriate and quality enhancement continues to be a priority'. The new strategy explicitly articulates excellence as a value and commits NUI to continuous improvement in all its activities, including quality processes.

QA Developments for Recognised Colleges

The previous AQR committed NUI to a holistic review of NUI's suite of regulations, policies and procedures starting with the overarching quality assurance framework - the approval and publication of NUI's (2023) [Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework](#) (during the previous reporting period) was the first step in this process. A broad review of policies and quality mechanisms relating to NUI degrees and qualifications led to a number of proposals presented to Senate during the reporting period. Some of these arose from sectoral developments, e.g. consideration of minimum contribution to collaborative degrees, and some of the proposals were more directly related to actions in the (CINNTE) Institutional Implementation Plan, e.g. the establishment of an NUI quality forum. The Senate approved a proposal (developed with the NUI Registrars' Committee) to review the NUI Grade Descriptors (the review commenced following the reporting period). As noted in the previous AQR, the [policy](#) relating to the approval of QA procedures in the recognised colleges was reviewed during 2022-23 but was approved and published during the current reporting period (November 2023).

Internal QA Planning, Monitoring and Improvement

The review and reflection prompted by the CINNTE review of NUI brought focused attention to the system of QA policy development and review. NUI, with new personnel, established a formal cycle of policy review, and completed a review of the overarching framework of quality assurance and enhancement. The core principle of maintaining the standard of quality set by constituent universities across the federation remains central to NUI, and the review of NUI Grade Descriptors along with the establishment of a formal federation-wide policy on quality during the reporting period demonstrated this.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.
1	Ongoing review and enhancement of QA management and related policy documents (on the new three-year cycle) [Ref: NUI Strategic Plan 2023-27, Pillar 1, Objective 4, QQI QAG Core 2.1 and 2.2.]	This is ongoing, though the consultation period is longer for some policies than others, which sometimes has implications for subsequent policy reviews. Some policies are still in the old five-year cycle but most will move to the three-year cycle by the end of 2025.
2	CINNTE Review Report / Institutional Implementation Plan (IIP) Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Establish an NUI federation-wide quality mechanism (policy, forum etc, tbd) for the discussion of standards and quality assurance and enhancement in the federation accompanied by appropriate documentation and monitoring. ii. Progress other actions (from the IIP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Senate decided that the most appropriate mechanism for quality assurance and enhancement matters would be the existing NUI Registrars' Committee. ii. All other actions were completed or progressed as far as possible except one (which was delayed due to personnel changes and expanded statutory responsibilities). The progress report was submitted in late 2024.
3	Statutory requirements of DABs (QAA Act 2012)	The MAA continued to support IPA's activity of programmatic review (IPA personnel change impeded progress somewhat during the reporting period).

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
NUI Senate	9 November 2023 18 January 2024 2 May 2024
NUI-RCSI Working Group Executive	24 October 2023 5 January 2024 10 April 2024
NUI-IPA Steering Committee	12 October 2023 8 January 2024 17 April 2024

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

NUI Senate has significant responsibility for the governance of NUI’s quality assurance system. Extern examiners, quality-related policies (and changes to them) must be approved by Senate. As previously reported, the most recent **Senate** was **constituted** in November 2022. During the reporting period, our Chancellor stepped down (January 2024), which prompted an election that took place outside the reporting period.

Chancellor: Dr Maurice Manning MA, DLitt *(to January 2024)*

Registrar: Dr Patrick O’Leary BSc, PhD

Chief Officers of the Constituent Universities

Professor Orla Feely, Vice-Chancellor, President, University College Dublin (until 31/12/25)

Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, President University of Galway

Professor Eeva Leinonen, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, President, Maynooth University

Professor John O’Halloran, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, President, University College Cork

Nominated by the Government

Professor Pat Clancy

Dr Barbara Doyle Prestwich

Mr John Hurley

Professor Aoife Ahern

Elected by the Governing Authority, University College Dublin:

Ms Cliona de Bhaldrath

Professor John Dunnion

Dr Kelly Fitzgerald

Professor Patrick Guiry

Elected by the Governing Authority, University College Cork:

Dr Valerie Mannix-Boyle

Professor David Kerins

Mr John Fitzgibbons

Professor Maeve Conrick

Elected by the Governing Authority, University of Galway:

Prof Michal Molcho

Dr Rachel Hilliard

Professor Tom Acton

Ms Edel Browne

Elected by the Governing Authority, Maynooth University:

Professor Thomas O'Connor

Professor Christine Griffin

Dr Niamh O'Reilly

Dr Tony Gaynor

Elected by Convocation, 05 October 2022:

Dr Ruth Casey

Ms Linda O'Shea Farren

Ms Mary Anne Carlin

Dr Marian McCarthy

Mr Michael Smyth

Mr Paul O'Donovan

Mr James Doorley

Dr John Crowley

Co-Opted:

Professor Stephen Byrne, Deputy President and Registrar, University College Cork

Professor Aidan Mulkeen, Vice-President Academic, Registrar & Deputy President, Maynooth University

Professor Colin Scott, Registrar and Deputy President, University College Dublin [May 2024]

Professor Pól Ó Dochartaigh, Deputy President and Registrar, University of Galway

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

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

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels¹⁰ 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	11				6	5	
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes							
Desk reviews	11						
Virtual processes							
Average panel size for each process type*	1.5				1.3	1.8	

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

¹⁰ 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											
Secretary											
Academic/Discipline Specific	17	10	7			3	11	1	2	17	
Student Representative											
QA											
Teaching & Learning											
External Industry /Third Mission											

There were no quality reviews during the reporting period (personnel changes in IPA delayed the review of the MEconSc).

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

2.1 Extern Examining Processes

During the reporting period, enhancements to the internal processes were maintained but, due to personnel changes, significant further enhancement was not possible. Standard operating procedure documents were developed to support the personnel changes which has improved the quality of the processes and procedures from an NUI perspective. The personnel changes will have longer-term benefits in that all external examiner activity is now within the same broad team rather than split across Academic Services & Registry and the Registrar's Office.

A briefing document for new examiners (in RCSI and IPA) was developed and published on the NUI external examiners' webpage during the reporting period.

NUI is a partner (with all IUA institutions) and co-author on the ExPeRA project report, which was close to completion by the end of the reporting period.

2.2 CINNTE Review of NUI

The CINNTE review of NUI was the first external institutional review of NUI and constituted an unprecedented opportunity for NUI to critically reflect on its strategy, operations and quality assurance processes. The review report was finalised in July 2023 and the Institutional Implementation Plan was developed, approved by NUI Senate, and submitted to QQI during the reporting period.

The review report identified 13 recommendations for NUI, including the following Top 5 recommendations:

1. The panel recommends that NUI put in place the appropriate means to ensure that it meets its responsibilities as an awarding body by assuring its oversight of those awards for which it is jointly responsible.

The main relevant action was implemented: 'Registrar will bring a proposal to Senate in Nov 2023 regarding the establishment of a mechanism for quality assurance and enhancement.' NUI Senate decided that the best forum for quality matters would be the NUI Registrars' Committee, and this is now an established activity for that Committee. In addition, NUI Senate approved a proposal to introduce a policy regarding notification of new programmes. Senate approved a federation-wide quality policy during the reporting period.

2. The review panel recommends that NUI produces further synthesis reports of external examiner reports including analysis of developments over time of all members of the federation and formally shares these with members.

There were two actions relating to this recommendation:

- i. Add section to thematic analyses of EE reports on previous reports ('Key issues in previous reports' / 'Similarities and Differences' This has been done,
- ii. Send thematic reports to Academic Council (or equivalent) in each member institution. This is planned for 2024-25 (personnel changes prevented it during the term of the institutional implementation plan.

3. The panel recommends that NUI strongly considers the appointment of a student council, using the established pool of student leader resources, i.e., SU sabbatical officers and part time officers from RCSI. The panel also suggests that NUI uses its association with NStEP which already has established partnerships with UCC, University of Galway and MU.

NUI Senate approved terms of reference for the NUI Student Council during the reporting period. NUI liaised with the member institutions, secured nominations and scheduled an inaugural meeting of the NUI Student Council (which took place outside the reporting period).

4. The panel recommends the establishment by NUI of an official forum for the discussion of standards and quality assurance and enhancement in the federation accompanied by appropriate documentation and monitoring.

See comments relating to Recommendation 2 above.

5. Given the NUI's unique oversight of the NUI matriculation process over their CUs and RCs, the panel recommends that the NUI consider collecting longitudinal data on the impact of NUI matriculation exemptions on the longer-term progression and academic success of students. This would contribute new evidence to inform national best practice regarding the impact of pre-requisite subjects on access and progression.

Five actions were identified in relation to this recommendation. Four actions were completed but in doing so it was established that the project could not proceed as envisaged in the recommendation. None of the other required partners were in a position to commit to the project. NUI, and the relevant partners, had data protection concerns.

The full Follow-on Report was submitted to QQI outside the reporting period.

2.3 NUI and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs)

As noted in the previous AQR, NUI codes of conduct (for Senate members and for employees) reference NUI's commitment to the UNSDGs in its services, activities and operations. The new [Strategic Plan 2023-2027](#) devotes one of the four strategic pillars to sustainability.

NUI has completed the project to move the matriculation exemption application process online, which successfully went live during the reporting period.

2.4 Third-mission activities, societal and community engagement

Third-mission Activities

The most recent strategic plan has a renewed and more explicit commitment to EDI, sustainability and social justice, broadly construed.

The NUI Denis Donoghue (inclusion-focused) award to foster success and facilitate excellence, continued to support undergraduate students from under-represented groups in higher education, increasing the value of awards to over €50,000 in its second year.

During the reporting period, NUI established a Public Sector Duty working group and conducted its first equality and human rights assessment exercise. The action plan was developed outside the reporting period.

Societal and Community Engagement

NUI, while different from provider institutions, has a long history of promoting academic scholarship and research with public audiences. NUI regularly collaborates with the Dublin City Council Archaeological Conservation and Heritage Unit and co-organised and hosted the annual Viking lecture as part of the Dublin Festival of History in October 2022.

NUI's Education and Society Committee 'Higher Education Today and Tomorrow' seminar series had two events during the reporting period:

Professor Mary Gallagher (UCD) delivered a lecture, '[Canaries in the mines and much more: Ten reasons for HEIs to treasure languages now](#)', reflecting on developments and challenges with two years left in the life of the Languages Connect strategy.

Dr Katriona O'Sullivan (Maynooth University) delivered the Dr Garret FitzGerald Memorial Lecture, '[Potential and Poverty: How can we ensure everybody thrives?](#)' with a response from Dr Niamh O'Mahoney (UCC), NUI's Dr Garret FitzGerald Post-doctoral Fellow in Higher Education Studies 2022.

NUI regularly opens the door of 49 Merrion Square to the public during heritage and culture events.

2.5 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

As mentioned in previous AQRs, initiatives related to academic integrity are the responsibility of the recognised colleges. However, NUI continues to provide guidance in this area drawn from the practices of the constituent universities and wider sectoral policy developments. Through its membership of the IUA Committee of Registrars and the IUA Quality Committee, NUI is fully aware of the legislative provisions on academic cheating in the updated Quality and Qualifications Act (2019) and we have discussed the implications of this legislation, as well as providing information on QQI's activities in this regard, to the IPA.

NUI monitors and, where possible, attends NAIN activities. NUI will continue to update its QA policies and procedures with reference to arrangements to ensure academic integrity in the recognised colleges. Regular steering committee meetings provide a forum to discuss quality enhancement and share experiences and information in the recognised colleges.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation. If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i>
1	Ongoing review and enhancement of QA management and related policy documents [Ref: NUI Strategic Plan 2023-27, Pillar 1, Objective 4, QQI QAG Core 2.1 and 2.2.]	The MAA (with input from Quality Team) will continue to review and revise quality policies on the approved schedule.
2	Related to CINNTE objectives/IIP - complete documentation of external examining processes	The MAA with the relevant EA who has taken on administrative support for external examining will develop (where necessary) the final documentation on NUI processes.
3	Statutory requirements of DABs (QAA Act 2012)	The MAA will continue to support IPA's activity of programmatic review.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
IPA Programme review: MEconSc	2024-25	(prior to return to NUI as linked provider, schedule delayed due to COVID)
IPA Programme review: Professional Diplomas in Management Development and the Management of Change	2024-25	(prior to return to NUI as linked provider, schedule delayed due to COVID)

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Following leadership change and institutional review (and related actions), IPA is planning a portfolio review. As this is in the early stages, details are yet to be confirmed.

