South East Technological University

2025

Annual Quality Report
South East Technological University
Reporting Period 2023-2024

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Annual Quality Report (SETU)
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

Guidelines on Completing the Report

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

Submission Process and Timeline

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

Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report – where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- Provide reflections on what worked well, but also what may have been tried but did not work.

Report Structure

Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR comprises a record of each institution's current QA policies and procedures and should provide links to those policies and procedures. Private HEIs may provide links to the policies and procedures approved by QQI during initial access to validation (IAV) or reengagement. It is the responsibility of each HEI to ensure before submission of the AQR that all links are correct and functional, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available. Given that the AQR is submitted in respect of a discrete reporting period, it may be helpful for institutions to establish a SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for each reporting period that contains the current versions of their policies and procedures, and that hyperlinks to these versions of the documents be provided in the AQR

Part A is to be completed only if there have been <u>material</u> changes to QA policies and procedures during the reporting period. Such changes may include the approval and implementation of new polices or procedures, or significant amendments to existing ones.

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

Part B of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**. Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period – these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on specific thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. Further, institutions may include case studies to share good practice on topics of their choosing, demonstrating QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, institutions are encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

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

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

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	**QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.**	**QAG Core Sub-section Title**	**ESG Standard No.**	**ESG Standard Title**
1.0 - *Internal QA Framework*	2.1	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - *Programme Development and Delivery*	2.3	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - *QA of Research Activities and Programmes*				
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
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*				
9.0 - *Details of Arrangements with Third Parties*			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
2.0 - *Programme Development and Delivery*	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - *Monitoring and Periodic Review*			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - *QA of Research Activities and Programmes*	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for **South East Technological University** 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 SETU Academic Council and is submitted by Dr. Paul O'Leary

This is the third SETU AQR, for the reporting period September 1st 2023 to August 31st 2024. The AQR has been approved Academic Council and is submitted by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Teaching and Learning Dr Derek O'Byrne.

South East Technological University (SETU), was established in May 2022 under the Technological Universities Act 2018. As the sole university within the South East region, SETU fulfils a key national objective in higher education: the creation of regionally-focused universities.

The establishment of South East Technological University (SETU) has ushered in a refreshed landscape of higher education within the region. This has built on the valued standings and accomplishments of its constituent Institutes, which had significantly contributed to the economic, social and cultural development of the South East region for over five decades, and leveraged the transformative potential of the Technological University model.

As a multi-campus Technological University, SETU offers a comprehensive array of higher education programs across the region, encompassing a broad spectrum of awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), from Higher Certificate (Level 6) to Doctoral Education (Level 10), alongside a diverse range of associated micro-credentials, minor and special purpose awards from Level 6 to Level 9. Furthermore, SETU engages in collaborative higher education initiatives with several international and national partners.

SETU is an internationally-oriented, enterprising, and well-connected university dedicated to empowering the South East. Through driving sustainable economic, environmental, cultural, and social development, the University aims to serve as a cornerstone of regional progress. This objective will be achieved through a commitment to academic excellence, fostering an inclusive and vibrant learning environment. The University's Strategic Plan outlines a vision for "inclusive education, innovation, and impact," providing diverse learners with access to higher education and research opportunities, including doctoral studies. By cultivating a culture of inquiry, innovation, and excellence, SETU encourages its learners, staff, global partners, and stakeholders to contribute their knowledge and values. The University provides a supportive and dynamic environment that fosters individual and collective growth and encourages the creation of positive change.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

The University's Quality Ethos draws from the Mission, Vision and Values set out in its Strategic Plan. Included in The University's Values are that:

- We place students at the centre of what we do;
- We promote excellence;
- We work collaboratively.

Fulfilling SETU's mission demands a collaborative and positive environment, in which all stakeholders actively promote quality assurance and enhancement. This collaborative approach underpins good governance, builds public trust, and ensures the University remains adaptable to evolving needs, while consistently maintaining high standards. To cultivate this culture and achieve high-quality outcomes, SETU developed a comprehensive Quality Framework, approved by the Governing Body in February 2023. This overarching framework encompasses all aspects of University activity across all units, departments, and functions.

The framework is informed by and draws from the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) 2015 and the Technological Higher Education Quality Framework (THEQF), as well as the statutory and regulatory environment in which Irish education operates, in the QQI Core Statutory QA Guidelines and other relevant topic- and sector-specific QA guidelines.

The Framework sets out the underpinning quality philosophy of the University, the purpose of the framework, how the University approaches quality assurance and enhancement, and twelve principles that guide the development of quality assurance and enhancement activities across the University. The Framework is being embedded across all University units and functions, driving continuous improvement efforts. It is also aligned with SETU's Strategic Plan, ensuring a unified approach to achieving quality.

The Quality Framework gives voice to each of the University's values – for example, student centrality links to Quality Framework Principle 3 (Learner -Centred Learning); promoting excellence links to Quality Framework Principle 1 (Policies and Procedures for Quality Assurance) and Principle 5 (Development of Staff); and working collaboratively links to the Quality Framework in its totality.

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

South East Technological University (SETU) has focused on building a strong foundation of quality assurance and governance, since its establishment in May 2022. In accordance with the Technological Universities Act (2018), SETU established a Governing Body and Academic Council, which respectively oversee the University's overall operations and academic affairs. The Governing Body comprises seventeen members, encompassing external experts, staff representatives, and student representatives. A robust competency framework guides membership selection, ensuring the presence of a diverse skillset necessary to effectively support the Governing Body's functions. Current membership is available in the Governing Body section of the SETU website. The Governing Body is supported by seven committees/sub-committees:

- Audit & Risk Committee
- Finance & Capital Investment Committee (FCIC)
- Commercialisation Committee (a sub-committee of the FCIC)
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee
- Joint Quality Committee (a joint committee of Governing Body and Academic Council)
- Nominations Committee
- Policy Committee

Further information about each of the committees is available on the Governing Body section of the website, where all activities and meeting minutes are also published to promote communication, openness and transparency. In addition, the Governing Body Chairperson, together with the University President, organise University-wide webinars both to inform and engage with the SETU community on University matters.

Following its own interim Code of Governance and a commitment to continuous improvement, an internal review of Governing Body effectiveness has taken place during this reporting period. This internal review took the form of a self-assessment evaluation questionnaire completed by members to generate proposals for improvements. The review outcomes were considered by Governing Body in April 2024. The Code of Governance requires an external review of effectiveness be carried out in the future, by an independent third party. Academic Council is responsible for the University's academic governance and reports to the Governing Body. In this AQR reporting period, in Q1, 2024 the interim Academic Council was replaced with a new Council design, approved by Governing Body. A design group proposed the new Academic Council structure to Governing Body, based on a design developed by an externally chaired SETU working group, following an examination of academic governance structures in a number of international universities and having pursued the remit to 'recommend a structure that connects SETU with national and international best thinking in the academic governance space'. The design criteria included the size and structure of the Academic Council, the committee format, membership, and legislative requirements amongst other aspects. Academic Council has a dedicated webpage to

ensure its Procedures, Terms of Reference and minutes are publicly available. Four committees of Academic Council have been established: Taught Studies Programmes, Teaching and Learning Committee; Research and Research Programmes Committee; Student Experience Committee; and Joint Quality Committee (JQC). Each committee has a set Terms of Reference and associated Workplan. Academic Council also had a Standing Committee to ensure essential academic operations continued in the summer period.

Furthermore, SETU has appointed several key leadership roles, with further appointments in the next reporting period. This approach to governance reflects best practices within the Irish higher education sector.
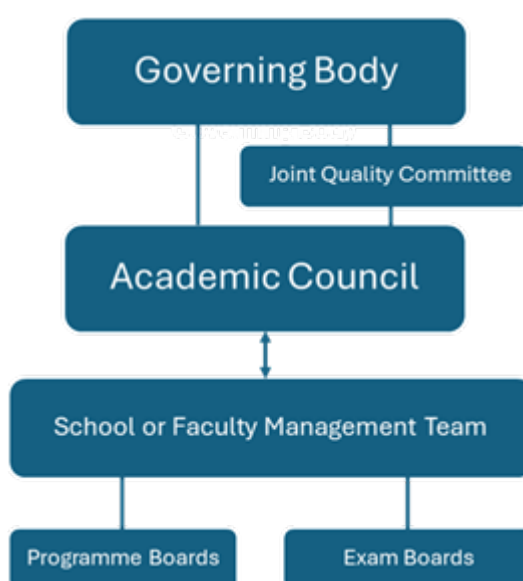
University Structures for the Management and Governance of Quality

The executive management of South East Technological University and its academic and administrative systems rests with the Executive Management Team which, through the President, is directly answerable to the Governing Body. Each member of the senior executive is responsible for and represents, at this forum, distinct academic or professional service faculties or departments. Overall responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement, academic standards and programme validation rests with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Teaching and Learning, with the assistance of the Assistant Registrars and the Head of Quality Promotion and Academic Policy Development.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

The quality assurance of collaborative programmes was guided by the national guidelines (IHEQN and QQI):
- Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (QQI)

- Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision (IHEQN-QQI)

These are implemented as a comprehensive set of regulations and the approval processes managed through relevant School/Faculty Boards, Executive Management Team and Academic Council.

Current agreements in place include:
1. The BA (H) in International Business, which is a double degree programme with the Munich University of Applied Sciences (link);
2. The Master of Science in International Business/Master of Business in Internationalisation Collaborative Programme, which is a joint degree programme with the École Supérieure de Commerce, Bretagne, Brest (link);
3. Joint Educational Partners with Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology (NUIST) (link);
4. Joint Educational Partners with Henan University of Animal Husbandry and Economy (HUAHE) (link);
5. Joint Educational Partners with Colleges Ontario (link);
6. Joint Educational Partners with TAR Malaysia (link);
7. Joint Educational Partners with Ghana Accra Business School (link);
4. BA (H) International Business which is a double degree with the Hochschule Hannover University of Applied Sciences and Arts (link);
5. Double BA Visual Communications and Design with Jilin Normal University China (link);

Apart from agreements with other HEIs, there are also agreements in place with other organisations and industry bodies:
1. Certificate in Radio Broadcasting and Presenting with WLR FM and Beat 102-103 (link);
2. MA in Social Justice and Public Policy, a collaborative provision with Social Justice Ireland (link);
3. Teagasc and SETU collaboration agreement to establish and deliver educational programmes (link);
4. The Higher Diploma in Arts in Television Production, which is co-delivered by SETU with Nemeton TV (link).

The University also has long-standing collaborations with Carlow College St Patrick's, An Cosán and the Irish Defence Forces and currently offers over thirty programmes through these collaborations. They are our linked providers of these programmes.
Other national linked providers include:
- Gestalt Institute of Ireland with programmes including the Master of Arts in Gestalt Psychotherapy
- Tivoli Institute with programmes which includes the Master of Arts in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (Clinical)
- Dublin Art Therapy with programmes which includes the Master of Science in Creative Art Psychotherapy: Working with Young People

- Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport which provides programmes including Higher Certificate in Supply Chain Management.
- Irish National Stud with the Certificate in Thoroughbred Breeding programme.

Through Extended Campus, SETU provides various programmes in partnership with several third party organisations.

Internationally, the University has collaborative provision agreements with the Carlow International College of Technology, which in collaboration with Henan University of Animal Husbandry and Economy, China.

The University has signed progression agreements with partner Colleges of Further Education, to offer preferential entry to students who successfully complete a linked QQI FET programme and who meet certain criteria. The Colleges of Further Education progression agreements are presented on the University website.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

Principle 2 of the SETU Quality Framework emphasises the development of programmes that align with national and international standards and best practices. To successfully achieve this Principle, it is crucial to incorporate the perspectives of both internal and external stakeholders, ensuring each programme's relevance to their needs. The University prioritises strong collaborations with regional and national industry, and educational partners to inform and enhance curriculum development and review. These partnerships enrich the student experience, bolster career readiness, and support the university's commitment to widening access and promoting lifelong learning. Furthermore, Principle 2 highlights the importance of employing appropriate assessment methods that effectively measure student achievement of learning outcomes. Finally, Principle 2 underscores the need for a learner-centred approach in all programme design, review and delivery.

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

The University is producing a Policy for Programme Development and Validation. A Policy on the Principles of Academic Delivery is also in development. Both will be reported on in the next AQR reporting period.

Principle 10 of the SETU Quality Framework mandates regular monitoring and review of all university programmes to ensure they meet their objectives. While Programme Boards are established within the new SETU structure, the policy for cyclical programme review will be produced in the next reporting period. Currently, regulations and policies from the antecedent institutions remain in effect.

The establishment of the Joint Quality Committee (JQC) is a critical step towards developing new policies and procedures for the review of programmes, academic areas, and support services within SETU.

SETU prioritises student engagement in quality assurance processes. Students actively participate in programme development and review, and their feedback has been systematically collected through University-wide surveys like StudentSurvey.ie and the International Student Barometer. A strong partnership with the SETU Students' Union, including a robust class representative system, ensures student voices are heard and considered. In the next reporting period, the new SETU 100 initiative will commence, to further enhance student engagement by providing an innovative platform for collecting diverse student feedback and facilitating co-creation of educational experiences. This commitment to a student-centred approach ensures that SETU's education will be relevant, responsive to the needs of a diverse student body, and effectively prepare students for success.

Staff training and supports for QA are available from the Quality Promotion Office and on the VLE, which hosts a number of documents and videos, from preparing Learning Outcomes to the relevant NFQ (EQF: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.). The Quality Promotion Office also promotes and enables continuous quality improvement across the academic and administrative units, primarily by supporting the Quality

Review process for Faculties and Units. This work includes guidance to Heads of Faculties and Directors of Units, as well as academic and administrative staff; engaging and liaising with reviewers; advising on the implementation of recommendations in the review report; analysis of all review process findings.

Transparency around the programme development process is another key to guaranteeing quality and maintaining public confidence in the quality of our awards. Panel reviews are published for public reading on the SETU website (link). This publication is to assure all stakeholders that all SETU activities are at an appropriate standard and are fit for purpose, and to facilitate their ongoing enhancement and development.

Finally, in terms of programme development, the University has a dedicated Continuous Professional Development week in February each year, during which staff are offered training on a wide range of topics, including QA processes, such as for new programme development or modifying existing programmes and creating NFQ-appropriate module descriptors.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

SETU is deeply committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities. The University exceeds national targets set by the National Access Plan (2022-2028), successfully recruiting students from priority groups and building a student body that reflects the diverse demographics of Ireland.

To achieve this, SETU has implemented a range of initiatives, including pre-access programmes, targeted orientation sessions, and outreach activities such as College Awareness Week, school visits, and tailored bursary workshops. The University actively engages with marginalised communities through initiatives like the Leaving Certificate revision programme for DEIS schools and School Taster Days.

Furthermore, SETU demonstrates its commitment to inclusivity through collaborative projects with DEIS schools, the Sanctuary Scholarship Programme for asylum seekers, QQI-FE workshops, and tailored support for part-time learners. The University actively participates in national quality assurance initiatives for access programmes, such as HEAR and DARE, and offers the first year of select tertiary honours bachelor's degree programmes in further education settings to expand access opportunities.

Peer mentoring, small class sizes, and targeted financial, academic, and mental health support services are core to promoting a supportive environment, especially for students with disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Person-to-person support is provided by access teams to present crucial guidance and assistance with bursaries. Retention initiatives such as the Brighter Futures Programme have significantly improved retention rates and increased engagement among Traveller students.

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is the foundational framework for recognising and facilitating learner progression across programmes and institutions. The University curriculum is designed to enable seamless transitions between NFQ levels, with Level 8 awards often incorporating pathways to Level 6 and Level 7 awards, allowing students to easily navigate their educational journeys. SETU actively collaborates with further education and training (FET)

providers to facilitate student admissions into first-year programmes and through advanced entry routes, particularly via tertiary programmes.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) also welcomes a diverse student population and has developed greatly in the University in the reporting period, with approximately one-fifth of full-time students entering through non-traditional avenues annually.

Beyond progression through NFQ levels, SETU has developed several initiatives to support students who find themselves in unsuitable programmes. These initiatives include the CAO First Year Transfer scheme, Cross-Campus Transfer scheme, and Internal Advanced Entry process.

SETU strives to be an open University, by offering diverse entry routes to its programmes, aiming to be as accessible as possible. This commitment is evident in the abundant sources of information, found across various platforms, including the University website, prospectus, and links on CAO, Qualifax, CareersPortal, and similar sites.

Furthermore, SETU actively participates in initiatives that expand access to postgraduate education. Through the Human Capital Initiative, the University offers fully and partially funded industry-led postgraduate courses in science and engineering, targeting individuals seeking to upskill in high-demand fields.

Recognising achievements beyond academics, SETU offers a Rising Stars scheme acknowledging accomplishments in innovation/entrepreneurship, sports, and active citizenship. SETU also offers a Mathematics Entry Exam for students who have not achieved the entry grade in maths, required for some programmes. This provides another opportunity for students to achieve that grade by attempting a paper at the Leaving Certificate ordinary level and is open to all Leaving Certificate applicants, including those students who sat Foundation maths.

After admission, a University-wide orientation is held by the President and senior management, faculty and staff and current students. This provides information on their chosen programme delivery, formation and assessment, student supports, and insights into student life in their new community.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

In one of its earliest actions, the University approved its own generic awards' standards and, subsequently, approved an honorary doctorate (D. Univ.) award standard.

Existing awards are and future awards will be benchmarked against the NFQ and this includes the future development of smaller awards, including micro-credentials.

The Quality Framework has retained a two-stage process for the evaluation of new awards and, the Taught Studies Programmes, Teaching and Learning Committee is entrusted by Academic Council to take the lead on evaluating and recommending assessors' reports to Council.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Taught Studies Programmes, Teaching and Learning Committee (TSPTLC) Committee of Academic Council oversees the University's teaching, learning and assessment activities and is the

policy formation and oversight committee tasked with the development of teaching learning and assessment policy.

The Student Experience Committee has an Academic Integrity (AI) remit and was represented in the reporting period on the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), established following the passing of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training-Amendment) Act 2019. This NAIN representation was important in helping the University deal with AI, especially in the face of the growing challenge posed by Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) and, to some extent, in establishing the University's Staff and Student training in this reporting period.

The university's academic integrity training and support programmes, for staff and students, represent a unified and consistent approach to supporting and upholding academic integrity and is available on the two VLEs.

The SETU Academic Integrity VLE pages provide staff and students with relevant information on referencing, academic writing, academic integrity principles and guidelines.

The Student Experience committee has a Gen AI Working group, to inform council on developments and advise on a suitable University-wide response. Council issued Guidelines on the use of Gen AI in this reporting period, as a live document due to the fast development pace.

While the underlying principles are the same, the external examining process is different in both predecessor Institutes. At present, while external examining is a key component in assessment QA, one model proposes module examiners, supported by overarching School Examiners, while the other model uses programme-based examiners. Clearly both models have merits and the final University version of external examining will be informed by the benefits and experiences of operating each model.

Finally, Academic Council approved the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Disciplinary Procedure in this reporting period and will approve new Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes in the next reporting period.

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3.0 Learner Resources and Support

SETU is committed to delivering an education that prioritises students, founded on the values of accessibility, equality, and inclusion. The university is continuously adapting its learner support to match the unique profiles, economic backgrounds, and regional ambitions of its student population. Supporting such a diverse student body is a key challenge for SETU's Learner Resources and Support staff. With the University's strong regional focus, most students come from the southeast, often juggling part-time work and studies. This has led to the adoption of more flexible learning options, including remote access, asynchronous materials, and condensed course formats. Furthermore, SETU actively supports under-represented groups, particularly students with disabilities, requiring specialised resources and services. Finally, with ambitions to offer lifelong learning, the University aims to attract more part-time learners and to expand its extended campus activities, which can be well supported by a curriculum increasingly geared towards flexibility. Micro-credentials, special awards, and online/block delivery options cater to students with limited time or specific needs.

For these reasons and the expanding demands of the entire student body, academic support is a crucial component in their learning. SETU academic support activities include:

1. Library resource (link);
2. Teaching and Learning Centre (link);
3. Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning (link);
4. Computer services (link);
5. Virtual learning (Blackboard and Moodle) support;
6. Computing and Maths Learning Centre (link);
7. SETU Research Support Unit (link);
8. Access support (link);
9. Retention Office (link);
10. International Office (link);

SETU understands that academic success is intertwined with overall well-being. Recognising this, the University extends support beyond the classroom, offering various initiatives to nurture student development. The "Reach" and "Hear" programs help open doors for diverse populations, while Student Support Services provides a comprehensive suite of services catering to holistic needs (link); as do many of the above academic resources.

From academic guidance on study skills and research to workshops on communication, leadership, and career preparation, students receive support tailored to their individual growth. Moreover, mental health and wellness resources, coupled with peer support groups, create a safe space for navigating personal challenges. Financial aid and budget assistance ease concerns about education affordability, while disability services ensure an inclusive learning environment. Social inclusion initiatives further cultivate a welcoming and supportive community for all students. This commitment

to providing well-rounded support empowers SETU students to thrive, both academically and personally, setting them on a path for success beyond the classroom.

The general support activities include:
1. Student Life & Learning / Student Services (link);
2. Student Assistance Fund (link);
3. Careers Development Centre (link);
4. Counselling Services (link);
5. Disability Support Services (link);
6. Orientation / Induction Support (link);
7. Peer to Peer Mentoring (link);
8. Academic Writing support (link);
9. Student Handbook (from individual programmes);

Student Finance is managed by the Office of the Vice President of Finance. Student finance can be complex, so dedicated web-pages exist with information on scholarships, fees and grants (link). Finally, the national StudentSurvey.ie (formerly the Irish Survey of Student Engagement) has offered and will again in the future offer a means for the student voice to be captured. The SETU iSAID Project, has produced dashboards which can be used to display, action, and embed findings from the survey.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

SETU has put in place a comprehensive governance structure for research and innovation. This includes the Vice President for Research, Innovation and Impact, the Academic Council Research and Research Programmes Committee (R&RP), and the Postgraduate Studies Committee, all supported in the reporting period by Research Programme Boards and Research Examination Boards. The Research Ethics Committee oversees all research involving humans and animals. SETU has also made two appointments, a Data Compliance Officer and a Research Integrity and Compliance Officer, to foster a culture of data protection and ensure adherence to research ethics and data management standards.

The SETU Research Degree Regulations (link) set out the regulations for the delivery of research degrees, in this case, Masters by Research, Structured PhD and Professional Doctorates. This document establishes the underlying philosophy of research degrees, details the University's approach to quality assurance in the delivery of research degrees and outlines the principles of research degrees at SETU. The Graduate Studies Operational Procedures identifies roles and responsibilities of research degree stakeholders and outlines the academic processes associated with research degrees, in line with the SETU Research Degree Regulations.

The Office for Research, Innovation and Impact leads quality assurance in research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and graduate studies. SETU supports its researchers through the Research Support Unit and Technology Transfer Offices. A unified approach to research data management (PURE) will be implemented across the university in the next reporting period. The PURE portal will serve as the main access point for information on researchers, research units, and their outputs, impacts, and projects. It will also provide public profiles for researchers and research postgraduate students and will be the primary source for reporting research funding and expenditure.

SETU's research infrastructure is organised into three main entities: Institutes, which are the largest research units; Centres, which are mid-sized; and Groups, which are smaller units. These research bodies must report annually to the Office for Research, Innovation and Impact, which in turn reports to the Governing Body and Academic Council. Additionally, all research bodies at SETU undergo periodic reviews.

Structured Doctorate programmes haved been successfully rolled out across the University. A unified approach has been incorporated across the University ensuring that all students take suitable, developmental modules during their research programme. Each Faculty or department houses its own Structured Doctorate programme, managed in the reporting period by a dedicated Research Programme Board. These boards include all active research supervisors within the programme, contributing expertise and diverse perspectives. Their tasks include selecting qualified students, providing consistent progress monitoring, and collaborating on assessment procedures. This approach ensures a well-organised and cohesive experience for doctoral students within each programme. An internal website has been established on SharePoint for researchers, to enable ready access to appropriate forms and regulations for this board (link).

The nature of research supervision has changed in recent years, reflecting the inter-disciplinary nature of research and the consequent benefit of different approaches to research supervision. Often supervision is in teams, who can more readily identify an appropriate education plan from the structured modules on offer. To complement the proposed supervision teams' skills, the University offers Research Mentoring support (link).

The importance of ethical behaviour in higher education and in higher education research has been underpinned by the Research Integrity training (provided by Epigeum (link)).

The Research Ethics Committee (link), a sub-committee of SETU's Academic Council, scrutinises all research, which involves humans and animals, to ensure it is compliant with statutory requirements and is conducted to the highest ethical principles, which emphasise the rights and welfare of subjects (both people and animals), treating all with dignity and ensuring that those who participate in research, whether subjects, researchers, other stakeholders and/or SETU are not put at risk.

SETU TU RISE is a €13.6 million, four-year project, co-funded by the Irish government and the EU's ERDF, aimed at establishing South East Technological University (SETU) as the primary innovation driver in the South East region of Ireland. It will achieve this by enhancing SETU's engagement and impact through collaborative knowledge sharing, benefiting the civic, economic, and social well-being of the area. The project aligns with national and regional development plans, including NDP Ireland 2040, the RSES for the Southern Region, and Impact 2030.

The project is comprised of 5 objectives that have developed as work packages and led by the Vice President for Research Innovation and Impact and the Head of Research. The project Steering committee is chaired by the President of SETU.

The project objectives are as follows:

1. To engage effectively with enterprise and the region, delivering innovation and knowledge transfer via enhanced R&I support and training infrastructure, underpinned by robust governance.
2. To increase SETU's research, innovation and impact by augmenting central office support and enterprise engagement structures, combined with faculty positions to leverage academia-enterprise R&D partnerships and inform a research-led curriculum.
3. To elevate SETU's research and innovation performance in areas of regional specialisation through (a) attracting and fostering new talent and (b) releasing latent capacity to generate greater impact via collaborative knowledge transfer.
4. To enable regional enterprise to identify and manage the challenges and opportunities relating to climate change and the digital transition. This will include activities directed at rural and micro enterprises.
5. To enhance regional impact and foster sustainable economic growth by increasing the number of enterprises supported through and engaged with the university's R&I and entrepreneur support ecosystem.
6. The overall aim of this project is to position SETU at the centre of a quadruple helix model of innovation as per the diagram below.
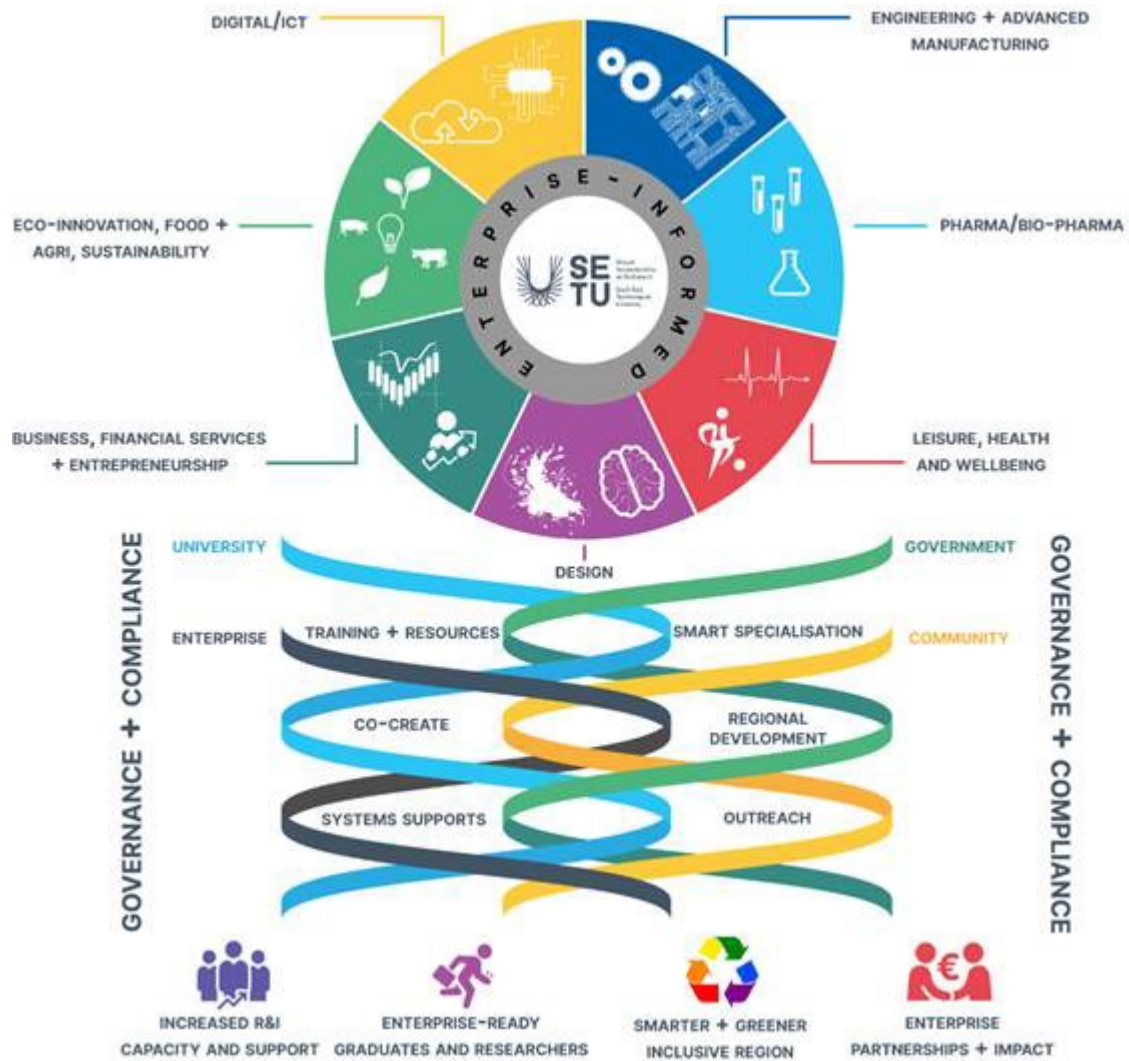
5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

At SETU, staff recruitment and development are guided by principles of fairness and transparency. This ensures the institution attracts and retains competent academic staff. All relevant policies and procedures supporting recruitment and performance management are readily available within the Policies and Documents section. Furthermore, the University prioritises continuous improvement by offering dedicated resources for education and development across academic, administrative, and support staff The University has a dedicated staff resource to education and development of staff (academic, administration and support), including the organisation of an annual training and development week in semester 2.

The University has a strategy to ensure the quality of its academic staff and for providing them with a supportive environment, in that it:

- follows clear, transparent and fair processes for staff recruitment, appointment, promotion and dismissal that recognise the importance of teaching and learning;

- offers opportunities for and promotes the professional development of academic staff;

- encourages innovation in teaching methods through its Masters modules in Education, in-house training, online webinars and National Forum initiatives, especially the Strategic Alignment for Teaching & Learning Enhancement (SATLE) funding, along with the similarly themed N-TUTTOR project;

- provides opportunities and promotes professional development for all staff and postgraduate learners to undertake training through the Centre for Teaching and Learning and the Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning; recognise excellence in teaching through internal academic awards criteria and through national, public awards such as the Teaching & Learning Awards (link).

SETU's initiatives in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are led by a Vice-President, for whom this is their primary remit. The University was conferred with a legacy Bronze Athena Swan Award and is committed to achieving equity of opportunity for all and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion amongst our learners, our leaders and our staff. This includes providing support to Departments and faculties to develop bespoke Gender Action Plans and apply for Athena Swan Awards. Associated policies and procedures, including the South East Technological University Gender Equality Action Plan can be found here. The University will apply for the Athena Swan Bronze in the next reporting period.

Recognising the value of ongoing staff development, SETU offers a robust support system through its Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) (link). This Centre provides both accredited and non-accredited programmes, encouraging evidence-based and self-reflective teaching practices across the University. Moreover, the TLC fosters collaboration by actively engaging with the National Forum and colleagues both domestically and internationally.

The Faculty of Education & Lifelong Learning also provides development opportunities to staff, by providing modules from their portfolio of programmes, including the Masters in Education in Teaching and Learning (link, link and link), for continuous professional development, with modules, offered as

Minor Awards or as contributors to a Major Level 9 award, in Adult Learning, Research Supervisory Skills, Blended Learning, Academic Enquiry, Applied Pedagogy, Mentoring, Curriculum Development and Assessment, Content and Interaction for Teaching & Learning Online, Education Research Methods, Education Research Project and Independent Learning Project.

Finally, the Centre for Technology-Enhanced Learning and the aforementioned Teaching and Learning Centre (link) run training workshops and a community of practice to support the development and utilisation of the eLearning infrastructure.

6.0 Information and Data Management

Data plays a vital role in guiding decisions, tracking progress, and reporting performance at SETU. The University diligently collects, analyses, and uses relevant information to support strategic planning and efficient management across all facets of its operations. Information and Data Management is undergoing further development with SETU strategic plan goals to create both a 'Digital Campus Strategy' and to transition to unified university IT systems. The Connecting for Impact strategy document underscores the significance of data in planning and monitoring progress, such as improving engagement with partner ETBs, tracking non-traditional learner groups, workforce development planning, monitoring EDI goal performance, and assessing research performance.

A diverse network of formal and informal processes fuels this data gathering and analysis, contributing significantly to the University's internal quality assurance mechanisms. Additionally, this information will inform reviews of academic and support services, ensuring informed panels recommend paths to continuous improvement.

Recognising the value of transparency, SETU actively shares information with the public in many cases and also with various key stakeholders. Prospective and current students, graduates, the general public, and external partners can access a wealth of details through the University's website. This includes programme prospectuses, learning outcomes, qualification details, teaching methodologies, assessment procedures, and progression opportunities.

Furthermore, SETU maintains a robust student record system, called Banner, recording each student's journey from registration to programme completion. The University spearheaded a significant upgrade to this system nationally, enhancing its flexibility and data recording capabilities both within SETU and across the country. This system generates valuable data, enabling the University to profile its student population, monitor progress and success rates, and identify dropout trends. These insights not only fulfil external reporting requirements, but also inform targeted programme improvements. For instance, access, progression, and award statistics are analysed during programme reviews to help drive positive change.

Finally, SETU acknowledges its responsibility to protect personal data entrusted to it in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and has a Data Protection Office to oversee this responsibility (link). Dedicated policies and procedures governing data protection are readily available on a designated webpage, ensuring transparency and compliance with legal requirements (link) and include:

1. Data protection policy;
2. Data Protection Procedures (link);

Privacy Notices on:

3. General Privacy (link);
4. Student Data Privacy (link);
5. Staff Data Privacy (link);

Relevant Data Collection Notices to report and perform analyses:

6. Student Data Collection Notice (link);

7. HEA Data Collection Notice (link);

SETU Data Inventory & Records Retention

8. Data Retention Policy (link);
9. Data Inventory and Records Retention Schedule (link).

Also included are contact details to seek further information on campus and for the Office of the Data Commissioner, as well as downloadable forms for Data Protection related procedures.

Gathering student feedback is an integral part of SETU's information strategy and to continuously improve the learning experience. Beyond dedicated student representatives on various governing bodies, programme boards and programme evaluation panels, the University has actively engaged with the national studentsurvey.ie. Feedback from this survey is meticulously analysed and discussed at the Academic Council, publicly shared through the Quality Promotion Office, and readily available to all individual schools for internal use, through the iSAID interface.

Further solidifying this commitment to data-driven improvement, SETU has established clear policies and regulations governing data collection, analysis, and utilisation. These guidelines extend to programme boards, whose responsibilities include gathering and analysing various data points. This data encompasses teaching and learning strategy outcomes, student performance including examiner reports, award distribution analysis, and recommending necessary remedial actions when needed. By carefully collecting, analysing, and utilising student feedback alongside other crucial data, SETU ensures a constant feedback loop that informs strategic decisions and ultimately results in an enhanced learning experience for all students.

In this reporting period, the University established the Centre for Organisational Research, Data and Analysis (CORDA) to underpin its approach to evidence-informed decision-making and quality assurance. CORDA will play a critical role in monitoring and reporting on the student life cycle.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

SETU is dedicated to maintaining transparent and accessible public communication, ensuring that all stakeholders, such as prospective and current students, alumni, partners, and the general public, can easily find relevant information about the University's activities, standards, and achievements. SETU especially aims for effective communication and collaboration practices, which facilitates smooth cooperation across various support areas, including the library and registry, thereby enhancing support for both staff and students.

In this reporting period, a newly revamped SETU website (link) has been launched to serve as a key platform for disseminating information to diverse audiences, including staff, students, prospective students, and external partners. In the next reporting period, the website will be more widely utilised to publish quality data and analysis related to University activities. Expanding the scope of data published on the website is recognised as an important goal for SETU, and its resolution is considered a high priority by University teams.

SETU prioritises transparency and open communication, ensuring that information regarding its activities, standards, and achievements reaches all corners of the University community and other stakeholders. Through initiatives such as the recent establishment of the University data centre, CORDA, SETU aims to identify additional data sources that can be communicated effectively to the public and its stakeholders, ensuring an ongoing commitment to transparency and continuous improvement. Prospective and current students can readily access insightful details about programmes, teaching methods, and University resources, empowering them to make informed decisions about their academic journey. Graduates can stay connected to the University community and celebrate SETU's ongoing achievements and contributions. University stakeholders may also examine vital information about SETU's mission, values, and strategic goals, facilitating meaningful engagement. The wider public also gains a deeper understanding of the University's societal impact, research activities, and contributions to regional development, fostering a sense of connection and appreciation.

This commitment to open information underscores SETU's values of transparency and accountability, building trust and strengthening relationships with all stakeholders. It routinely provides, to the public, an extensive range of quality assurance and other documents including:

1. this annual report;
2. all of its quality policies and procedures;
3. outputs of quality processes including:
    a. programme validations;
    b. faculty review reports (commitment to future publication);
    c. CINNTE institutional review report (commitment to future publication);
4. operational and financial policies, including data protection and freedom of information policies;
5. statutory information such as annual reports and strategic plans;
6. advice and guides to students, including handbooks;

7. programme information including award levels, progression opportunities and indicative programme content;
8. minutes of Governing Body meetings;
9. minutes of Academic Council meetings;
10. information on complaints procedures;
11. contact information on a variety of telephone, email, webpage and social media channels.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, individuals have a right of access to information held in the University's records, a right to have official information relating to them amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading and a right to have made known to them the reasons for decisions that have materially affected them, provided it does not conflict with the public interest and the right of privacy of individuals. The University supports such access for the general community to information about how the University operates, as well as to aid individuals in framing requests, by creating a dedicated webpage explaining how the Act relates to SETU and the process and relevant forms (link).

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

At SETU, quality review is a robust, cyclical process embedded within the University's approach to quality. This comprehensive approach emphasises several key elements: continuous monitoring and self-reflection; benchmarking; external peer review; student feedback; and transparency and oversight.

In terms of continuous monitoring and self-reflection, the University recognises that regular monitoring allows early identification of strengths and weaknesses, while self-evaluation fosters proactive improvement.

Benchmarking also plays an important role as the University recognises that it does not operate in isolation. By comparing performance to similar HEIs, the University can identify best practice and areas for further development.

Independent, external peer review, through external experts, students, and other stakeholders can bring fresh perspectives, providing invaluable insights into a reviewed unit's effectiveness and strategy.

Student voices matter and can play a crucial role in understanding the learning experience, ensuring students' own perspectives inform improvement efforts.

Transparency and oversight can also contribute positively. Reviews can contribute long lasting positive impacts. Publication of findings, as well as reporting and discussing at Academic Council ensure transparency and contribute to informed decision-making.

The type of review determines the cycle, with programme reviews occurring periodically and others following longer timeframes. Independence is paramount, with panels comprised of external experts, students, and stakeholders who receive unconscious bias training (for interview panels) and maintain strict confidentiality. To guarantee thoroughness, reviewers are compensated for their time and

engage in a deep dive into submitted materials and presentations. Each review culminates in recommendations for improvement and a concrete action plan developed by the reviewed unit. This commitment to ongoing review and monitoring extends across all SETU activities, reflecting the University's dedication to continuous improvement and adherence to good governance principles:

1. internal review of activities (including. programme management structures), which may also include user feedback (i.e. students or employers);

2. external review of the activities, which may be defined by the interim dual approaches (e.g. external examining), the commissioned review of an activity (e.g. the proposed enhancement of the Structured Doctorate scheme in the next reporting period) or from the production and evaluation of a self-evaluation report;

3. the quality of programmes is monitored on an ongoing basis. Programme Boards, which include student members, report annually to Academic Council. External Examiners validate the quality of assessment activity and work with staff on the ongoing development of programmes.

While academic quality processes are being established, the University is examining and redesigning its approach to ongoing monitoring and review of all areas. During this period, legacy policies and procedures continue in place to ensure continuity.

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	14
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	0

1. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in Construction Project Management Master of Science in Innovative Technology Engineering Master of Science in Sustainable Energy Engineering Master of Engineering in Electronic Engineering Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Sustainable Civil Engineering Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electronic Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Building Services Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic Engineering Bachelor of Engineering in Manufacturing Engineering Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering

	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Management and Engineering Higher Certificate in Electronic Engineering Higher Certificate in Mechanical Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	01/03/2022
Date of next review	

2. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI - Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) General Nursing BSc (Hons) Intellectual Disability Nursing BSc (Hons) Psychiatric Nursing
Date of accreditation or last review	06/05/2023
Date of next review	

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Architecture (Honours)
Date of accreditation or last review	06/03/2022
Date of next review	01/03/2027

4. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BA (Hons) in Psychology BA (Hons) International in Psychology
Date of accreditation or last review	07/01/2024
Date of next review	01/02/2029

5. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	King's Inns
Programme titles and links to publications	(Approved qualification to sit the entrance exam) BA (Hons) in Law BA (Hons) in Legal Studies with Business LL.B. (Hons) degree No set accreditation period set by the PRSB. Ongoing engagement with PRSB Registrar maintained
Date of accreditation or last review	06/05/2021
Date of next review	

6. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Teaching Council of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Teaching in Further Education and Adult Education Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching in Further Education (P/T) Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching in Further Education (F/T) No set accreditation period set by the PRSB. Ongoing engagement with PRSB Registrar maintained
Date of accreditation or last review	06/05/2021
Date of next review	

7. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
Programme titles and links to publications	(Exemptions from sitting some CIMA exams) BA (Hons) Finance & Investment BA (Hons) Accounting Bachelor of Business (Hons) Accounting B Business Studies (Economics & Finance) B Business Studies (Accounting) B Business Studies (Hons) Bachelor of Business (Hons) BA (Hons) International Business B Business Studies Ordinary Bachelor of Business BSc Retail Management B Business Studies (Marketing) Master of Business (Accounting) Ongoing relationship with Body.
Date of accreditation or last review	06/05/2019
Date of next review	

8. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Accountants Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	(Exemptions from sitting some CA Proficiency 1 (CAP1) exams) Bachelor of Business (Honours) Accounting Stream BA (Honours) Accounting BA (Honours) Finance & Investment HDip in Business in Accounting
Date of accreditation or last review	06/05/2019
Date of next review	06/05/2024

9. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Certified Public Accountants Institute (CPA)

Programme titles and links to publications	(Exemptions from sitting some CPA exams) BA (Hons) in Accounting BBS (Hons) 4 years (Accounting Stream) BBS (Ord) BBS (Ord) in Financial Services BA (Hons) in General & Corporate Administration Higher Diploma (Level 8) in Business in Accounting Higher Certificate in Business Masters in Accounting No set accreditation period set by the PRSB. Ongoing engagement with PRSB Registrar maintained
Date of accreditation or last review	06/05/2023
Date of next review	06/05/2024

10. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
Programme titles and links to publications	(Qualification exemptions on programme/module completion) BA (HONS) ACCOUNTING BA FINANCE & INVESTMENT BACHELOR OF BUSINESS (HONOURS) ACCOUNTING BACHELOR OF BUSINESS (HONOURS) ECONOMICS AND FINANCE BACHELOR OF BUSINESS (HONOURS) HRM, MANAGEMENT OR MARKETING HIGHER CERTIFICATE IN BUSINESS STUDIES No set accreditation period set by the PRSB. Ongoing engagement with PRSB Registrar maintained
Date of accreditation or last review	06/02/2024
Date of next review	06/02/2028

11. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
Programme titles and links to publications	The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy https://iacp.ie/register-of-accredited-courses Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Integrative Counselling and Art Therapy Master of Arts in Gestalt Psychotherapy Postgraduate Diploma in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy Master of Arts in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy
Date of accreditation or last review	01/03/2019
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	5
Collaborative programmes	4
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	8

1. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology (NUIST)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Software Systems Development; Bachelor of Science (H) in Applied Computing (International) Bachelor of Science (H) in Internet of Things (International) Bachelor of Science (H) in Software Systems Development (International) Bachelor of Engineering (H) in Electrical and Automation Engineering (International) Bachelor of Engineering (H) in Information Engineering (International) BSc in Software Systems Practice Master of Engineering in Electronic Information Systems
Date of last review	06/05/2021
Date of next review	06/05/2026

2. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	École Supérieure de Commerce, Bretagne, Brest
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in International Business/Master of Business in Internationalisation
Date of last review	06/05/2024
Date of next review	

3. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Social Justice Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	MA in Social Justice and Public Policy
Date of last review	06/05/2021
Date of next review	

4. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Teagasc
Programme titles and links to publications	Various Programmes
Date of last review	09/05/2022
Date of next review	

5. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	WLRFM/Beat102-103FM
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Radio Broadcasting and Presenting
Date of last review	16/12/2024
Date of next review	

6. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Nemeton TV
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Diploma in Arts in Television Production, which is co-delivered by WIT with Nemeton TV
Date of last review	06/05/2021
Date of next review	06/05/2024

7. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Munster Technological University
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Business in Investment Fund Administration Postgraduate Diploma in Business Certificate in Business Certificate in Regulated Investment Funds
Date of last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/05/2026

8. Collaborative provision	Linked provider
Name of body (/bodies):	Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport Ireland (CILT)

Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Certificate in Business in Sustainable Supply Chains, Digitalisation & Logistics (NFQ Level 6, 120 Credits - Major Award) Certificate in Sustainable Supply Chain and Logistics (NFQ Level 6, 60 credits - Minor Award) Certificate in Purchasing Strategies (NFQ Level 6, 10 credits - Minor Award) Certificate in Managing Sustainability in Transport & Logistics (NFQ Level 6, 10 Credits - Minor Award) Certificate in Digitalisation in Transport and Logistics Management (NFQ Level 6, 10 Credits - Minor Award) Certificate in Warehouse & Transport Management (NFQ Level 6, 10 Credits - Minor Award) Certificate in Customs & Dangerous Goods Awareness (NFQ Level 6, 10 Credits - Minor award) Certificate in Customs Compliance & Trade Facilitation (NFQ Level 6, 10 Credits - Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Custom Clearance Procedures (NFQ Level 6, 10 Credits - Special Purpose Award)
Date of last review	31/05/2023
Date of next review	03/04/2024

9. Collaborative provision	Linked provider
Name of body (/bodies):	An Cosán
Programme titles and links to publications	BA in Applied Addiction Studies and Community Development (Level 7) BA in Leadership and Community Development (Level 7) Certificate in Leadership and Social Enterprise (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Applied Addiction Studies and Community (Level 6) Certificate in Leadership and Community Development (Level 6) Certificate in Social Analysis (Level 6) Certificate in Community Leadership (Level 6) Certificate in Group Work & Facilitation Skills (Level 6) Certificate in Learning to Learn at Third Level (Level 6) Certificate in Introduction to Social Enterprise Development (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Community Leadership (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Technology Enhanced Learning (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Transformative Community Education (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Citizenship and Social Action (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Introduction to Community Development (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Introduction to Community Leadership (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in the Nature and Context of Addiction (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Drug Prevention, Education & Awareness (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Community Development Practical Approaches (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Understanding and Managing Conflict in a Community Development Context (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Reflective Practice, Knowledge, Skills & Attitude (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Social Policy (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Equality & Diversity (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Leadership & Organisational Development (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in

	Introduction to Counselling & Motivational Interviewing (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Approaches to Treatment and Rehabilitation (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Community Development and Technology (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Research Methods and Practice (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Project Cycle Management in the Community & Voluntary Sector (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Leadership and Social Change (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Leadership in Practice (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Drugs and Crime in a Global Context (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Community Drug Work and Leadership in Practice (Level 7 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Communications (Level 6 Special Purpose award) Certificate in Critical and Ethical Thinking in a Changing World (Level 6 Special Purpose award) Certificate in Foundations in Adult Learning (Level 6 Special Purpose award) Certificate in Personal and Professional Development (Level 6 Special Purpose Award, 60 credits) Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETUC_Register_of_Linked_Provision_v_12_0_Jan24.pdf
Date of last review	01/03/2021
Date of next review	05/03/2026

10. Collaborative provision	**Linked provider**	
Name of body (/bodies):	Irish National Stud	
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Thoroughbred Breeding Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETUC_Register_of_Linked_Provision_v_12_0_Jan24.pdf	
Date of last review	01/05/2023	
Date of next review	01/05/2024	

11. Collaborative provision	**Linked provider**
Name of body (/bodies):	Gestalt Institute of Ireland - Irish Gestalt Centre

Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Arts in Gestalt Psychotherapy Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Gestalt Psychotherapy Certificate in Gestalt Theory (Level 9 – 30 Credit Minor) Certificate in Clinical Supervision (Level 9, Special Purpose, 20 credits)
Date of last review	01/02/2020
Date of next review	05/03/2025

12. Collaborative provision	Linked provider
Name of body (/bodies):	Dublin Art Therapy College
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Science in Creative Art Psychotherapy: Working with Young People (90 credits Level 9) Bachelor of Arts in Integrative Counselling and Art Therapy, with exit award of minor Level 6 after Stage 1, Higher Certificate after Stage 2 and Bachelor degree after Stage 3 Link: https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETUC_Register_of_Linked_Provision_v_12_0_Jan24.pdf
Date of last review	19/03/2019
Date of next review	20/03/2024

13. Collaborative provision	Linked provider
Name of body (/bodies):	The Tivoli Institute
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Arts in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (Clinical) Postgraduate Diploma in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (Clinical) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling (Clinical) – 3 years ab initio Honours Degree with Minor Award exit of Certificate after stage 1 Certificate in Psychotherapy Theory (Level 9 – 30 Credit Minor)
Date of last review	01/03/2020
Date of next review	06/03/2025

14. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Irish Defence Forces

Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Communications Technology Management PG Dip in Science in Communications Technology Management BEng in Electronic Engineering (Military Communications Systems) Higher Certificate in Engineering in Electronic Engineering MEng in Weapons, Ordnance, Munitions and Explosive Engineering Certificate in International Counter-Improvised Explosive Device/Device Disposal (10 credit, Level 9) MSc in Military Engineering Management PG Dip in Science in Military Engineering Management BA in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies BA in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies (Logistics) Certificate in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies (minor award Level 7 30 Credits) Higher Certificate in Arts in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies
Date of last review	05/03/2021
Date of next review	06/03/2026

15. Collaborative provision	**Linked provider**
Name of body (/bodies):	Carlow College St Patrick's
Programme titles and links to publications	Research and Collaborative Development Initiatives Master of Arts in Irish Regional History Higher Diploma in Politics and Society Certificate in Child Developmental Psychology Certificate in Creative Writing (Fiction) Certificate in Creative Writing (Poetry) Certificate in Creativity and Social Media Certificate in Cultural Heritage Certificate in Cyberpsychology Certificate in Introduction to Theology Through the Creative Arts (Cinema, Literature and Music) Certificate in the Psychology of Gender and Sexuality Certificate in Revealing Hidden Voices (Oral History) Certificate in World Religions, Peace and Conflict
Date of last review	06/03/2019
Date of next review	05/03/2025

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

South East Technological University

2025

Annual Quality Report (SETU)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2023-2024

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.6), **Part B** of the AQR focuses specifically on the effectiveness and impact of the IQA framework on the QA activities and developments across the institution during the reporting period.

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

Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. The institution is encouraged to reflect on what worked well and what did not, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks and feedback/judgement) and detail how they led to specific improvements of and enhancement in QA activities.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact[2] of QA activities within the totality of the institution's QA system.

Section 1 pertains to internal quality assurance implementation and developments since the previous reporting period.

Section 2 considers the institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and their impact on a range of activities including academic integrity.

Section 3 relates to IQA developments and plans for the next reporting period.

Section 4 provides an opportunity for institutions to showcase IQA in action through case studies in relevant thematic areas.

Institutions are invited to use case studies to demonstrate quality in action and to highlight areas of practice for dissemination at any point in this part of the report.

Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:
- Be between half a page and two pages in length;
- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;
- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear and concise concluding paragraph with an overview of the key outcomes/learning.

Although case studies will generally be in written form, institutions may also provide links to audio-visual/multimedia case studies. QQI does not prescribe a format for case studies.

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[2] The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education have considered impact and measures leading to development and improvement specifically in terms of teaching and learning. See: https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/NF-2020-Insights-from-Practice-About-Impact-in-Teaching-and-Learning-web-ready.pdf. This is a very useful reference, though impact in the context of this report should be considered

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

Since its establishment the University has made significant progress in establishing a unitary quality assurance and governance framework and associated structures, policies, regulations and procedures. Furthermore, the alignment of the Quality Implementation and Developments to the SETU Strategic Plan, Connecting for Impact, demonstrates a clear roadmap for the university as it continues to establish itself. The development of a Joint Quality Committee (link), comprised of Governing Body, Academic Council and student members, places quality at the heart of SETU's activities.

The SETU Quality Framework (link) and the new Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes (link) are fundamental pillars of quality. The University also aligned core academic policy and processes, including access, transfer and progression (ATP); recognition of prior learning (RPL), assessment; credit accumulation and awards. Academic integration will begin in the next reporting period with four new posts created to drive this essential step. SETU has inherited a suite of awards that include similar programmes and titles across campus locations, which requires evaluation and a coherent approach that meets the needs of the students, the region and the University itself.

This section of the report reports on the University's ambition of offering a uniformly high-quality educational experience in a changing higher education landscape, with some key developments already achieved and with others identified as being in train.

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

The central role of quality assurance and enhancement in the University are captured in the following five strategic themes:

1. To increase the type and variety of awards and to enhance the process by which awards can be created as a means of being more flexible and responsive (ST-A);
2. To meet the QA performance criteria, across teaching & learning, research and the student experience, of the Technological University (ST-TU);
3. To enhance learning opportunities across access and life-long learners (ST-L) and international student (ST-IS) markets,
4. To enhance industry focus by offering greater pathways for continuous professional development and up-skilling in industrial and commercial settings (ST-IF);
5. To improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of administration and quality assurance governance (ST-E).

This strategic focus to quality assurance and enhancement systems supports the University's strategic objectives. These objectives are supported by the five existing QA strategic themes (ST-). Consequently, the University will be known:

I.   For our provision of high-quality educational experiences to students that are student centred and responsive to learner needs (ST-A, ST-IS);

II.   As an accessible new University that offers a wide range of learning opportunities, access and progression routes and flexible modes of engagement with learning that reflect learner needs and societal change (ST-TU, ST-IS);

III.   As a research-led organisation with a demonstrably impactful, innovative, and dynamic research community (ST-TU);

IV.   For being deeply embedded in regional discourse, policymaking, economic, social and cultural activity and as a driver of regional change (ST-L, ST-IF);

V.   For our international profile that finds expression in the approach of our students and staff and in our extensive partnerships (ST-IS);

VI.   As an effectively governed and managed organisation that is strategically focussed and demonstrates quality in all its activities (ST-E, ST-A).

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

The University will participate in the CINNTE Review process, with an expert panel due in October 2024. The preparations continued in this reporting period through the Steering Group and seven delegated Working Groups, totalling over 100 staff and students.

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		
2		
3		
4		
5		

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Governing Body	10 Meetings (link) 2023: 12th Sept, 4th Oct, 24th Oct, 5th Dec 2024: 16th Jan, 27th Feb, 9th April, 21st May, 18th June, 4th July
Academic Council	9 Meetings (link) 2023: 19th Sept, 17th Oct, 14th Nov, 5th Dec 2024: 5th March, 16th April, 7th May, 4th June, 18th June
Academic Development, Learning and Teaching / Taught Studies Programmes, Teaching and Learning	8 Meetings 2023: 5th Sept, 3rd Oct, 24th Oct, 21st Nov, 2024: 19th March, 23rd April, 14th May, 11th June
Student Experience	4 Meetings 2023: 8th Sept, 24th Nov 2024: 9th April, 31st May
Academic Quality and Regulations Committee / Joint Quality Commitee	5 Meetings 2023: 6th Oct, 27th Oct, 24th Nov 2024: 9th April, 31st May
Research / Research & Research Programmes Committee	8 Meetings 2023: 5th Sept, 3rd Oct, 24th Oct, 21st Nov, 2024: 19th March, 23rd April, 14th May, 11th June
Ethics in Research Committee	9 Meetings 31st Jan, 7th Feb, 13th Feb, 8th March, 30th March, 12th May, 19th May, 7th June, 16th June

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

Some changes have been planned and some completed to the Leadership and Management team in this reporting period. The University is moving to a structure, in which the University President will be supported by three high-level executive functions led by Senior Vice Presidents (Academic, Operations and Finance) and by a University Secretary attached to the President's Office. The Senior Vice Presidents will be supported by a functional structure led by Vice Presidents and the University has commenced re-allocating previous positions to enable this to develop. From January 2024, university-wide responsibility was assigned to five Vice Presidents in Academic Affairs, Teaching & Learning; Student Experience; Finance; Global Partnerships; and Governance. The University has also recently completed the recruitment of new senior posts: Vice President People, Culture & EDI; Vice President Research, Innovation & Impact and an Associate Vice President for Sustainability.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review
1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

No periodic reviews occurred in the reporting period. Conversations in relation to Programmatic Reviews are ongoing. Also, the CINNTE Institutional Review Steering Group submitted the Self Evaluation Report and Institutional Profile documents in this period.

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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

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels[3] involved in IQA

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

Guide

Details in respect of review/evaluation processes that concluded during the reporting period should be set out below.

Please use whole numbers rather than percentages.

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	52	52	0	3	46	6	0
of those:							
On-site processes	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Desk reviews	10	10	0	0	10	0	0
Virtual processes	42	42	0	0	36	6	0
Average panel size for each process type*	9	9	0	5	9	9	0

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

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[3] 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

	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
Type of Expert/ Role on Panel		*Male*	*Female*	*Other, or unspecified*			*UK, incl. NI*	*Other European*	*Outside of Europe*	*Similar*	*Different*
Chair	42	27	15	0	5	37	0	0	0	0	11
Secretary	42	0	42	0	42	0	0	0	0	0	0
Academic/Discipline Specific	110	79	31	0	0	81	29	0	0	110	0
Student Representative	11	9	2	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0
QA	84	5	79	0	84	0	0	0	0	0	0
Teaching & Learning	141	79	62	0	36	76	29	0	0	105	0
External Industry /Third Mission	20	12	8	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0

(iii) Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Cinnte Institutional Review	Oct 6-11th 2024	2020

Linked Provision Review	The Tivoli Institute, Gestalt Institute of Ireland	2025
Programmatic Reviews	Faculty of Engineering, Department of Nursing	2018

(iv)   Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
SETU Programmatic Review Cycle	All Faculties	-

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Academic Council approved <u>Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes</u>, which came into effect from September 2023. These regulations apply to all taught programmes of the University and to all students of taught programmes of the University (including Professional Master's programmes, micro-credentials, the taught elements of research degrees, and independent modules). All members of the University community now follow and implement these regulations, which includes (but is not limited to) students and staff members of SETU. The regulations address, amongst other areas, entry requirements, the academic delivery framework, assessment, progression, and awards. The Council also established a working group to create a new academic delivery framework, which started work in the current reporting period and will complete its work in the next reporting period.

The University's quality culture is not confined to academic spheres but extends to robust corporate governance and a commitment to ongoing organisational, resource and staff development and improvement. Apart from the Strategic Plan mentioned earlier, an organisational redesign was also commissioned in the reporting period to spur growth into an effective and holistic university. Furthermore, the University will continue the ethos of its antecedent Institutes in promoting accountability, transparency, and the public provision of information. In practice, this will mean continuing to publish the outcomes from quality review processes, to foster excellence in corporate as well as academic governance. To realise this ambition, the following non-academic policies and procedures were approved: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Recruitment & Selection Appeals Procedure, Code of Conduct for Staff Members, Voluntary Campus Transfer Policy & Procedures, Protected Disclosures Policy, Email Policy and IT Acceptable Usage Policies, Research Policies (Conflict of interest, Intellectual property & Consultancy). The <u>Policy Management Framework</u> details the processes surrounding the lifecycle of policy development and provides staff with guidance on policy development that is consistent, inclusive and to a high standard.

2.0.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Part A Section 1.0 of this report describes the overall governance, executive management and academic management structures, led by the SETU Governing Body. The SETU Governing Body's meeting minutes are publicly available on the SETU website (<u>link</u>). The Body's membership consists of external stakeholders, as well as learners and staff. The Academic Council normally meets once per month on average during an academic year and its meeting minutes are publicly available on the SETU website (<u>link</u>).

2.0.2 Programmes of Education and Training

Measurement, reporting and publication are key aspects of good academic governance. Throughout the reporting period, the University has continued to meet monitoring, evaluating and reporting requirements, for example programme board reports and external examiner reports.

Opportunities for Staff training and development continue to be offered through bespoke training, from induction training in September to the University's Professional Development week in February. Moreover, dedicated initiatives such as the N-TUTORR national project, a collaboration across the Technological Higher Education sector to transform the student experience Digital Skills, Education for Sustainability, Leadership & Employability. Finally, the University also operates the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) Funding, to drive teaching and learning innovation and enhancement in areas such as Education for Sustainable Development, Digital transformation and best practice in upholding and cultivating academic integrity.

2.0.3   Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

Staff education and upskilling continues to be a key strategic pillar in SETU. The University encourages and supports the professional and personal development of its personnel with the aim of performing their duties at the highest possible level, in order to achieve the University's strategic goals and for the purpose of self-fulfilment. As part of this development, the University underpins staff development through:

- opportunities to pursue levels 9-10 teaching and research for staff knowledge and skills development, in both advanced level education and applied research;
- continue to support and strengthen networks with industry, regional and community organisations in education and research.

As mentioned in the previous sub-section, new staff are offered dedicated Induction training and all staff are supported in pursuing additional education. The University has a dedicated staff resource to training and development, and procedures in respect of training and development of staff (academic, administration and support), including the organisation of the annual Professional Development week in semester 2.

2.0.4   Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Through the Teaching and Learning Centre and the Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning, the University supports all staff and learners with a range of academic supports, webinars and a community of practice.

2.0.5 International Update

In this reporting period, the University began work on the TrustEd Ireland (International Education Mark), which shall be completed in 2025. This will ensure a quality experience for international learners at SETU from pre-enrolment through to the completion of their programme of education and training.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity encountered a new threat in the reporting period in the form of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI). While it is recognised that Gen AI can be a positive learning tool and is likely to be a skill required of the University's graduates, in the short term it posed a challenge to continuous assessment. The University recognises the benefits of taking assessment out of the examination hall, thereby reducing the importance of memory in qualifying students' insights and abilities. However, Gen AI poses a new category of threat to the assessment paradigm. Academic Council produced Staff and Student Guidelines and organised staff workshops across the University, which were very well attended and engendered significant debate, suggestions and even early good practice. Academic Council will be guided in the future by a dedicated Gen AI Steering Group.

The University also continued with the variety of initiatives reported in the previous AQR, to counter the challenge of maintaining Academic Integrity. This included the Epigeum Academic Integrity training, offered to both staff and students on the Virtual Learning Environments (distinct staff and student modules). Furthermore, academic writing sessions continue to be offered for all students to join on a voluntary basis.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1QA 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 *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).*
1	Academic Council	The first full year of operation for the new Academic Council design (including a new committee structure).
2	Joint Quality Committee	The Joint Quality Committee of Governing Body and Academic Council will begin its oversight of the periodic cycle of academic and service reviews. The Joint Quality Committee is responsible for ensuring the overall quality of the University based upon reviews of aggregated data and other information and through its interaction with relevant University bodies arising from reviews.
3	Academic Delivery Framework	The University working group will develop a new academic delivery framework for SETU. The working group will report to Academic Council on its interim and final outputs.
4	Ongoing Alignment of Policies, Procedures and Processes	Alignment of policies, procedures and processes will continue across the University.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Please provide a composite update on new and continuing objectives arising from previous reviews here.

Please before submission.

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Programmatic Reviews: Dept. Of Nursing	June 2024	2016
Programmatic Reviews: School of Engineering	June 2024	2017

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

The CINNTE Review of SETU will take place in Quarter 4 of 2024. The preparation for this review is ongoing.

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Case Study: Design of the new SETU Academic Council

In October 2022, the Governing Body appointed an Academic Council Design Working Group. The overarching purpose of the Design Group was to 'recommend a structure that connects SETU with national and international best thinking in the academic governance space'. The design that emerged has features that one would associate with traditional governance structures (committees, representation from academic and non-academic areas, student members) which maintain a link to past councils but also has features that are novel, including:

Ten Academic Staff members were elected to Academic Council on the basis of skill characteristics. These skill characteristics have been identified with reference to SETU's strategic objectives and specific requirements in legislation. The characteristics are: Research, Innovation and Doctoral Supervision; Educational Enhancement and Curriculum Design; Learner Support and Learner Experience; Collaboration and Sustainability; and Experience and Engagement with Business, Enterprise and the Professions. This helps to connect Academic Council directly to the University's strategic objectives and to support their delivery.

A Joint Quality Committee has been established, which reports to both Academic Council and Governing Body. This committee is responsible for ensuring the overall quality of the University based upon reviews of information, including aggregated data, and through its interaction with relevant University bodies arising from reviews. The establishment of this committee ensures that a quality focus is central and connected to both Governing Body and Academic Council.

In the case of three committees, their membership consists of members of Academic Council, co-opted/nominated specialists and nominees from each Faculty. The inclusion of Faculty nominees supports the maintenance of a close connection between Academic Council and the Faculties and enhances the two-way flow of communication on academic matters, including academic quality.

Case Study: Addressing the challenges of Digital Education

Digital education is increasingly important to the university, with demands for more online teaching, learning and assessment. However, digital education also poses challenges in faculty development, quality, maintaining engagement, support and academic integrity. SETU's inaugural Digital Education Conference (DEC) 2023 sparked meaningful debate among 150 delegates about addressing these challenges and also the transformative opportunities for education in society.

SETU's Digital Education Conference addresses the complex set of challenges that the transition to digital education presents HE, particularly in maintaining quality and fostering student engagement. Ensuring academic rigour and interest in delivery also necessitates a fundamental shift in instructional design, requiring academics to adapt traditional teaching methods and create engaging, interactive digital content. Simultaneously, fostering student engagement in online environments is paramount, necessitating strategies to combat feelings of isolation and maintain motivation. It is a challenge for universities to create opportunities for meaningful interaction between students and faculty, facilitating online collaboration, and addressing technological barriers that can disrupt learning. Ultimately, the success of digital education hinges on universities' ability to adapt their practices, embrace innovative approaches, and continuously evaluate and improve their online offerings to ensure both quality and engagement.

The conference brought educators, researchers and industry professionals together to share and discover innovative uses of technology in an ever-changing teaching and learning environment. People from across the education ecosystem engaged in practical and theoretical discussions on the potential impact of advanced technologies on the learning experience and explored emergent technologies such as GenAI. Delegates came from the US, Italy, UK, Belfast, Donegal, Dublin, Kerry, Wexford, Athlone, Cork, and Limerick and heard from leaders in the educational and political fields acting as keynote speakers. The conference stimulated dialogue and debate in our education landscape as we emerge from the turbulent times of COVID-19 which forced a rapid and widespread adoption of online and remote learning, demonstrating its viability and necessity. DEC also navigated through the emergent developments of Generative Artificial Intelligence, to illuminate the transformative opportunities of education in our society.

This event showcased the excellent work that the School of Education and Lifelong learning in SETU and many other schools within our university, across our partner universities (MTU, ATU, TUD, TUS, DKIT) and the HE sector.

DEC offered a dynamic forum for the exploration and advancement of pedagogical practices in the digital age. This conference will become an annual gathering to serve as a crucible for the exchange of innovative ideas, research findings, and best practices in the realm of digital education. As HE in Ireland navigates the ever-evolving landscape of technology-enhanced learning, this conference provides a platform for educators, researchers, and experts to engage in critical dialogues, share insights, and collaboratively shape the future of education in the digital era.

With a diverse array of sessions, workshops, and keynote presentations, DEC23 fostered a holistic understanding of the multifaceted challenges and opportunities that digital education presents.

This will become an annual event hosted in SETU (with DEC24 preparations already underway) to promote excellence in digital education.

Case Study: Reducing Barriers to Entry in the Family Carers Ireland Partnership

In May 2023, SETU published its inaugural strategic plan, *Connecting for Impact*. This roadmap sets out the University's aspirations for the next five years and outlines strategies to achieve them. A key goal is the expansion of flexible third level programmes for adults across the South East region opening up greater opportunities to access University level programmes. In addition the strategy sets out the goal of the creation of a UNESCO Learning Region in the South East, fostering a supportive, inclusive environment for students while ensuring equitable access to education for all.

The *Family Carers Project* originated from a partnership established in 2018 between SETU's Faculty of Lifelong Learning and Family Carers Ireland (FCI). SETU's Faculty of Lifelong Learning specialises in delivering flexible, part-time higher education programmes ranging from QQI Level 6 to Level 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Meanwhile, FCI provides vital support to over 500,000 family carers across Ireland, who care for loved ones including children or adults with disabilities, older adults, individuals with chronic illnesses, and those facing terminal illness or addiction.

This partnership laid the foundation for SETU's successful 2021 *Case Study* application for Higher Education Authority (HEA) Systems Performance funding. Following the award of €1 million in HEA funding, SETU launched the *Supporting Family Carers Across Ireland Project*. This three-year initiative, running from January 2022 to December 2024, represents a collaborative effort between SETU and FCI to address the educational needs of family carers nationwide. The project has now been extended to December 2025, ensuring its impact will continue to grow.

The *Family Carers Project* embodies SETU's commitment to inclusive education. This groundbreaking initiative focuses on reducing the barriers family carers often face when pursuing higher education, offering targeted and funded programmes designed to meet the unique needs of family carers. As the first project of its kind within Irish higher education, it exemplifies the power of collaboration between universities and community stakeholders. To date, the initiative has welcomed 605 participants across 27 programmes.

These educational programmes cover areas such as healthcare management, nutrition, psychology, and communication–critical skills for providing high-quality care. Educated caregivers are better equipped to navigate complex healthcare systems, advocate for improved policies, and engage effectively with healthcare providers. Beyond caregiving,

higher education offers family carers opportunities for personal growth, independence, and a renewed sense of purpose. It also fosters peer support networks and inspires others within their communities by showcasing the transformative potential of education.

"Completing the course has changed my life for the better, I feel it gave me an identity outside of being a family carer"

SETU presented 253 family carers with academic awards at its Carlow campus on Friday, 15th November 2024.

Another important strand of the *Supporting Family Carers Across Ireland Project* is SETU's groundbreaking decision to become the first Higher Education Institution in Ireland to join the Family Carers Ireland *Caring Employers Programme*. Through this initiative, SETU provides targeted supports to staff who care for family members, fostering a network of caring employees within the University. As part of this effort, SETU conducted a staff survey in December 2024, where 127 respondents shared their perspectives on the types of support that would be most beneficial to them as family carers. The survey highlighted the unique challenges faced by caring employees. This project continues to play a vital role in identifying and addressing these needs, ensuring SETU evolves as a supportive and inclusive workplace for family carers in keeping with SETU's strategic objective to build a

'university culture that cultivates a strong sense of shared community, acknowledges and values employees, and fosters well-being and happiness'.

Case Study: Sustainability in the Arts Festival

The Sustainability in the Arts Festival is a multidisciplinary initiative focused on embedding sustainability in the curriculum and contributing towards the creation of a culture of sustainability in the university and wider community. It is largely student-led with learners exploring how the SDGs relate to them in their own discipline areas and producing outputs that reflects this. A wide variety of innovative approaches to showcase teaching and learning are evident in the festival including visual art and graphic design exhibitions, music performances, cooking demonstrations, language posters, research posters and presentations. The strength of the project lies in the collaborative approach and peer learning inherent in this both from a student and educator's perspective. The level of learner engagement is notable as they take responsibility for their own contributions and engage in meaningful assessments with tangible outputs that are showcased and celebrated beyond the confines of the classroom.

Funded by SATLE and the Growth Hub Bursary, the Sustainability in the Arts Festival was piloted in 2023 as a 1-day event on one SETU campus with the intention of learning from the experience and building on this the following year. Although it was a small-scale event, the festival clearly stimulated the interest of the students and wider university community, while also enhancing their understanding of the SDGs and challenges associated with sustainability. One student commented that:

"It has broadened my vision on sustainability, it's not only about recycling and carbon footprint, I've learned that things that I do every day has an effect and I can change how I operate my life compared to huge world goals that I have little to no control over. It's the small steps."

This expanded into a 3-day event in 2024 encompassing the Waterford, Carlow and Wexford campuses, additional subject areas, and local and international partners with funding from both SATLE and N-TUTORR. Further growth resulted from this, and the 2025 festival will run for a full week with new local, national and international collaborations. This exponential growth clearly exemplifies the impact of the initiative on learners, peers, and the wider community.

The festival platform was chosen as an ideal mechanism to promote inclusivity and collaboration, while encouraging student-led initiatives and ensuring broad impact. This approach also stimulated investment in their own learning and served to empower the students to lead specific aspects of the festival. The integration of creative disciplines

including undergraduate programmes in music, visual art, graphic design, culinary arts, languages, and postgraduate studies in internationalisation formed the basis for a rich and diverse learning environment where students and staff could benefit from the knowledge and skills of others.

This also resulted in the identification of specific modules where the principles of sustainability could be integrated and the development of projects that could be incorporated into the festival. For instance, art and design colleagues decided to focus on artefacts made from recycled materials or sustainable printing for student assessment portfolios, while culinary colleagues focused on sustainable foods in cooking practical exams, and music research students undertook projects exploring the connection between music and the SDGs. This innovative platform showcased learning to a broad audience far beyond the classroom, thereby leading to increased investment by learners and arguably a higher standard of work.

The Sustainability in the Arts Festival was the first of its kind in Ireland, and as such it attracted the attention of representatives from the SDSN (Sustainable Development Solutions Network). This led to retired Ambassador David Donoghue, who was one of those responsible for drafting the global SDGs, facilitating a staff session and engaging with students at the 2024 festival. This collaboration also led to members of the festival team being invited to highlight the festival as an example of good practice in the sector at Reach '24 (a new arts and sustainability festival) in Queen's University Belfast (QUB). Music and visual arts students were invited to install and perform an immersive experience they created for the SETU festival at Reach '24. This clearly illustrates the impact of the initiative on the wider HE sector.

The integration of international partners added further depth to the festival by bringing perspectives from other cultures and providing peers with an opportunity to experience different teaching approaches and explore possibilities for future collaborations. This has been realised as initially Georgia Southern University was the only international partner, and now further connections have been developed with European universities including La Rochelle in France and Zadar in Croatia.

The theme of "Land, People, Culture" was selected for the 2025 festival, and initiatives exploring cultural sustainability, indigenous knowledge, respect for the land, identity, and legacy were suggested by students. They will examine the impact of people and culture on the land and develop projects together with others, which lead to reflective discussions and

positive actions towards better use of resources, energy conservation and sustainability of the planet.

The main outcomes of the festival are detailed below:

Student engagement

Qualitative feedback has demonstrated a positive impact on students' learning, including growth in confidence, ability to drive change, and the value of innovation and creativity to create awareness and solutions.

Community engagement

Feedback from local schools' engagement with festival outreach programme; positioning SETU as a welcoming university which promotes sustainability and SDGs while embracing real-world challenges in novel and inspiring ways.

Student Skills development

Through interdisciplinary projects students developed collaborative, problem solving and creative skills; e.g. culinary, language, design and art students worked together to create recipe posters for sustainable foods.

Teaching and Assessment

The festival has enhanced awareness of how students can demonstrate their learning through transdisciplinary projects, thereby creating assessments that are both meaningful and relevant to students' lives and futures.

Case Study: BA in Employee Support and Wellbeing

Employee support and wellbeing are paramount in all workplaces, but they hold particular significance where the nature of the work can be demanding and often stressful. Such roles can include dealing with vulnerable populations, navigating complex regulations, managing high workloads with limited resources, and experiencing emotional labour, all of which contribute to elevated stress levels. SETU is currently working with the Irish Prison Service, An Garda Síochána, Electricity Supply Board and the Irish Defence Forces, through the BA in Employee Support and Wellbeing, to prepare future Employee Support and Wellbeing Officers within those organisations. The course is not currently open to the general public.

The wellbeing of these employees directly impacts the quality and effectiveness of services in these organisations; burnout, stress, and low morale can lead to decreased productivity, errors in service delivery, negative public interactions, and the risk of increased absenteeism and employee turnover. Furthermore, these organisations have an ethical responsibility to care for their employees who dedicate themselves to public service, demonstrating a commitment to fair treatment, a healthy work environment, and valuing employees as essential assets. Prioritising employee wellbeing also aids in attracting and retaining qualified individuals, reducing recruitment costs, and fostering a positive organisational culture. Ultimately, when public service employees feel supported and valued, they are more likely to be motivated, provide high-quality services, and build public trust in the institutions they represent.

The BA in Employee Support and Wellbeing is a 12-month programme (level 7, 60 credits), which provides graduates with an interdisciplinary grounding and the required knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to the role of Employee Support and Wellbeing Officers in the workplace that complies with best practice, policy and legislation in Ireland.

The programme develops the students' knowledge and skills in relation to the practice of Employee Support and Wellbeing and concentrates on real world, workplace problems. The processes and procedures for managing and coping with problems are explored and the interpersonal skills needed are identified and practised. For example, modules explore substance misuse and addictions; common mental health problems; bullying and harassment; health and wellbeing in the workplace and evidence based practices that aim to promote a healthier work environment. This degree programme further develops

practitioners' knowledge and skills for their roles as employee support and wellbeing officers and provides an evidence base for graduates and their practice.

Case Study: Embedding Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in SETU - the Role of Faculty Advisors

The development of a robust approach to RPL is identified in Connecting for Impact SETU Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028, to maximise educational opportunities that enhance access and progression pathways.

Phase 1 of the RPL pilot programme has led to a new role of Faculty RPL Advisor has been created for academic staff, to pave the way for the expansion and mainstreaming of RPL practice, both for admission and exemption purposes. The aim is to support a coherent, structured and consistent approach to RPL practice across SETU thereby supporting learners and staff to enhance and scale up RPL as a pathway. While some Faculties/Schools are actively engaged in RPL practice this model will allow for a more consistent and formalised approach, by ensuring a shared understanding of RPL, agreed processes and procedures and capacity building across all Faculties.

The newly appointed RPL Advisors have all completed a micro-credential in RPL and are members of the RPL Committee. They are also or have recently been directly engaged in the delivery/support of RPL services.

As part of the model, a dedicated email address has been set up, and all RPL Faculty Advisors can access this shared email account and respond to RPL enquiries based on discipline areas. Also, an rplhub space on the VLE is being developed and will provide a central spot for resources for staff.

The RPL Faculty Advisors will

- Act as a point of contact for applicants, students and SETU staff and Faculty/School office staff in relation to RPL
- Liaise with Faculty Heads and Heads of Department in relation to the review and processing of RPL applications
- Conduct screening and initial review of RPL applications
- Provide preliminary advice to RPL applicants
- Record RPL Data on applications, progression and outcomes.
- Liaise with the RPL Hub and RPL Project Lead
- Explore opportunities for RPL for Enterprise
- Attend bi-monthly meetings of the RPL Committee and RPL Community of Practice sessions and events

- Engage in upskilling opportunities in the field of RPL
- Participate in committees appropriate to the RPL project and attend meetings convened by management

Over time it is hoped that this model will enable a more consistent and sustainable approach to institution wide RPL practice.