

South East Technological University

2024

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**Annual Quality Report:**  
**South East Technological University**  
**Reporting Period 2022-2023**

South East Technological University

2024

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**Annual Quality Report (SETU)**  
**PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM**  
**Reporting Period 2022-2023**

## 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.

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## Guidelines on Completing the Report

The AQR is aligned with QQI's Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and with the ESG (2015). A mapping of the ESG to QQI Core QA Guidelines is included in Table 1 below; the structure of Part A of this report template aligns with the first column of the table. Additional guidance on completing this template and reference material is included in each section. Institutions should adhere to this guidance and 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 **material** changes to QA policies and procedures during the reporting period. Such changes may include the approval and implementation of new policies 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<sup>1</sup>

### Legislation

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

### QQI Documents

#### Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

#### Other QQI Policy Documents

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

### Other National/International References

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

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

## PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

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

## Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the second SETU AQR, for the reporting period Jan 1st 2023 to August 31st 2023, a period of less than 1 year, which, however, realigns the University with the reporting periods of all other Irish HEIs. The AQR has been approved by Governing Body and Academic Council and is submitted by the Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr Derek O'Byrne. SETU is still a relatively new University, having been established in May 2022, under the Technological University Act 2018, and following the merger of Institute of Technology Carlow and Waterford Institute of Technology. Building upon the reputations, rich traditions, and accomplishments of the two Institutes that have been important to the economic, social, and cultural fabric of the South East for over five decades and the rich potential offered through the Technological University model, this University formation has paved the way for a revitalised landscape of higher education development.

As a multi-campus Technological University, SETU offers a wide-ranging variety of higher education options across the region, with major awards at all levels on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), from Higher Certificate (Level 6) to Doctorate (Level 10), as well as associated micro-credential, minor and special purpose awards, from Level 6 to Level 9. It also jointly offers higher education with several international and national partners. SETU is an international, enterprising, and connected university, dedicated to empowering the southeast region of Ireland. By driving sustainable economic, environmental, cultural, and social development, the University will be a cornerstone of the region's progress. The University will achieve this through academic excellence, inclusivity, and a vibrant learning environment. The University's Strategic Plan was published in this reporting period and outlines a vision for "inclusive education, innovation, and impact," offering diverse learners higher education and research opportunities all the way to doctoral level. By fostering a culture of inquiry, innovation, and excellence, SETU challenges its learners, staff, global partners, and stakeholders to contribute their knowledge and values. The University provides a supportive and dynamic environment where everyone is encouraged to learn, grow, and create positive change.

Finally, AQR 2023, the second quality report for SETU, covers the period from December to August 2023, which will bring the University's reporting periods back in line with all Irish HEIs, from September to August.

## 1.0 Internal QA Framework

### 1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

The first AQR described the eight months from SETU establishment in May 2022. This AQR describes the following eight months to September 2023. The governance and management of quality has been further developed and the University published its first strategic plan in this period, to guide future development.

The [SETU Governing Body](#) ratified an interim [Academic Council](#), to meet the legislative requirements to have an Academic Council in place from Establishment Day. This Council met the University's academic governance and management of quality requirements pending the establishment of a permanent Council to meet the long-term needs, the design of which will be described in the next AQR reporting period. The new structure will be 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 to produce a conceptual framework underpinning their design recommendations. The design criteria include the size and structure of the Academic Council, the committee format, membership, and legislative requirements amongst other aspects. The new Academic Council is to commence in Q1, 2024, in the next AQR reporting period.

The interim SETU Academic Council committee structures in place during the reporting period includes four working committees:

- Research
- Academic Development, Learning and Teaching
- Academic Quality and Regulations Committee
- Student Experience,

Each committee had a set Terms of Reference and associated Work plan. Academic Council also had a Standing Committee to ensure essential academic operations continued in the summer period.

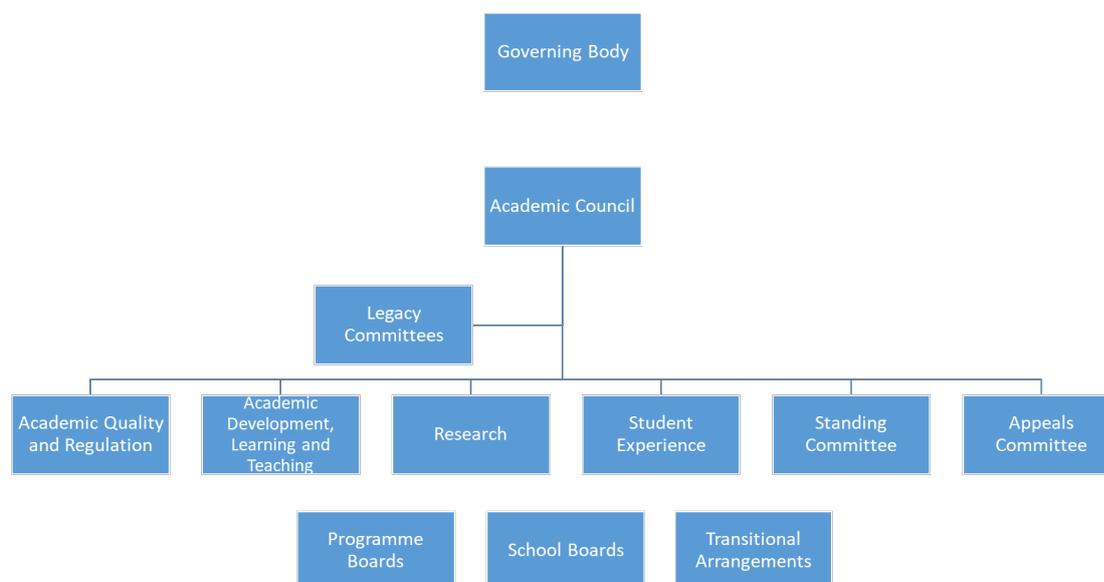


Figure 1.2 SETU Governance Structure

The Research, Academic Development, Learning and Teaching, Academic Quality and Regulations Committee and Student Experience committees met monthly during the academic term, in the reporting period. The Standing Committee met twice during the summer.

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 Presidents for Academic Affairs & Registrar, 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 individual Quality Manuals ([here](#) and [here](#)) for the reporting period, supported by a comprehensive set of regulations and the approval processes managed through relevant School/Faculty Boards, Executive Management Team and Academic Council. SETU has joint and double degrees, which are publicly available for reading ([link](#) and [link](#)).

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. Double BSc degree with the Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology (NUIST) ([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

### 2.1 Programme Development and Approval

As for the first reporting period, the antecedent Institutes operated their original programme development procedures in the reporting period, while the University progresses a new process, with the first significant progress being made in replacing the first phase (of two phases) of both evaluative processes for new awards (Programme Evaluation - Stage 1 or PE1). Both original processes were inspired by the ESG and sectoral norms, so there are strong overlaps in approach. For example, both were two-phase evaluations with the academic phase being the latter and more substantial of the two, and where demand for the new award must be established early in the process. The new conception phase (PE1) emphasises on programme alignment with Institute strategy, national context and meeting resource requirements, as well as the new award's approach to Employability and EDI. The second evaluative stage remained distinct in this reporting period. The Academic Quality and Regulations Committee initially consider the evaluation panel's report and the proposing team's response, before recommending AC approval or requesting further input from the proposing team.

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 managing the Quality Review process for Schools and Units. This work includes support and guidance to Heads of Schools 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 websites ([link](#)) and ([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

To ensure students' smooth academic progress, the Interim Quality Framework (IQF) mandates clear and well-defined approach for admissions, promotions, and graduations. This approach continues to be reviewed and updated to maintain effectiveness. Additionally, the IQF emphasises providing learners and stakeholders with relevant information, support, and guidance throughout their learning journey. This information covers various aspects like pre-enrolment awareness, enrolment procedures, introductions to programs, assessment methods, transfer options, and awards. In line with this requirement, the University initially adopted the quality frameworks from the former Institutes of Technology, ([here](#) (Section A) and [here](#) for taught programmes, and [here](#) (Section D) and [here](#) for research programmes), which are undergoing ongoing review and harmonisation to create a unified framework for the entire University.

SETU strives to be an open University, by offering diverse entry routes to its programs, 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 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. Additionally, the University participates in the National Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education project, recognising prior learning experiences gained outside of formal education. Recognising achievements beyond academics, SETU offers a High-Performance Entry 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. Finally, the University's participation in the HEAR and DARE initiatives, alongside a dedicated Access Officer, provides additional support for students seeking admission.

After admission, a University-wide introductory session 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, in this reporting period, approved an honorary doctorate (D. Univ.) award standard.

The existing and future awards will be benchmarked against the NFQ and this includes the future development of smaller awards, including micro-credentials, a small number of which (of less than 5 ECTS) are currently being trialled on a pilot basis.

The Interim Quality Framework has retained a two-stage process for the evaluation of new awards and, as mentioned earlier, the Academic Quality and Regulations Committee is entrusted by Council to take the lead on evaluating and recommending to Council.

## 2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Academic Development, Learning & Teaching (ADLT) 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 committee also has an Academic Integrity (AI) remit and is represented on the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), which QFI 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 ([link](#)). The [SETU Academic Integrity](#) webpage provides staff and students with relevant information on referencing, academic writing, academic integrity principles and guidelines.

The ADLT committee established 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, with a view to issuing further guidelines at the start of the 2023-24 academic year.

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.

Some issues that remain include convergence on Marks & Standards; procedures to assure the quality of teaching and learning, including student membership of Programme Boards and their involvement in programme approvals; the merging and reporting on the student feedback process, and reporting on the impact of National Forum funding on the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE), and the expansion of staff training to address an ever-evolving higher education landscape. The N-TUTORR funding for the TU sector has also positively impacted work in this area.

Finally, Academic Council approved the Supporting and Determining Student's Fitness to Continue in Study - Policy and Procedure, which will be presented to Governing Body in the next reporting period.

### 3.0 Learner Resources and Support

SETU 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](#) and [link](#));
2. Teaching and Learning Centre ([link](#));
3. Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning ([link](#));
4. Computer services ([link](#) and [link](#));
5. Virtual learning ([Blackboard](#) and [Moodle](#)) support;
6. Computing and Maths Learning Centre [support](#);
7. SETU Research Support Unit ([link](#));
8. Access support ([link](#) and [link](#));
9. Retention Office ([link](#));
10. International Office ([link](#) and [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 Life & Learning provides a comprehensive suite of services catering to holistic needs ([link](#) to all listed supports); 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](#) and [link](#));
2. Student Assistance Fund ([link](#) and [link](#));
3. Careers Development Centre ([link](#) and [link](#));
4. Student Counselling Service ([link](#) and [link](#));
5. Disability Service ([link](#) and [link](#));
6. Orientation / Induction Support ([link](#));
7. Peer to Peer Mentoring ([link](#) and [link](#));
8. Student Handbook ([link](#) and [link](#));

Student Finance is managed by the Office of the Vice President of Corporate Affairs and Finance. Student finance can be complex, so a dedicated web-page was created with information on budgeting, fees and grants ([link](#)).

Finally, the national StudentSurvey.ie (formerly the Irish Survey of Student Engagement) offers a means for the student voice to be captured and work began in this reporting period to develop dashboards, in the iSAID Project, which can be used to display, action, and embed findings from the survey.

## 4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

The University continued to develop its own QA policy and procedures for the design, approval, delivery, assessment and monitoring of research programmes. The policy and procedures for this reporting period were therefore the procedures in place at University establishment, to be found in the Quality Manuals, which are available publicly [here](#) and [here](#). These set out the regulations in respect of registration, enrolment, supervision, transfer and assessment of research candidates.

In addition, the Quality Manuals are also supported by a webpage dedicated to research policies and procedures ([link](#) and [link](#)). These include policies for:

- Research Practice
- Postgraduates
- Project Management
- Data Protection
- Technology Transfer Office
- Research Ethics

The Academic Council is supported by a Research Committee and Postgraduate Research Programme Boards. These bodies assist the Academic Council in the performance of its functions in relation to programmes of research leading to higher degree awards.

Structured Doctorate programmes had been successfully operated in many areas across the University. The broadening of these programmes University-wide began in this period. To initiate this process, the Academic Council solicited proposals from all Schools, requesting them to outline their strategies, highlight their key strengths, and showcase their established record in research and postgraduate education within their respective fields. These proposals were then sent to an external evaluation and consideration, which acknowledged the proposals' strengths, while offering constructive feedback on key challenges and recommendations for further development across the University. These recommendations will form the basis for the next phase of the Structured Doctorate program's expansion, with details to be reported in the upcoming AQR reporting period. This approach will be incorporated across the University ensuring that all students have taken suitable, developmental modules during their research programme.

Each school or department houses its own Structured Doctorate programme, managed 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 interdisciplinary 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 10-credit Level 9 modules in Research Methods and in Mentoring ([link](#) and [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.

## 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 staff. The Governing Body-approved policies and procedures supporting recruitment are readily available within the Governing Body's Statements and Policies section. Furthermore, the University prioritises continuous improvement by offering dedicated resources for education and development across academic, administrative, and support staff ([link](#)). 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 NTUTOR 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](#).

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 School of Education and Lifelong Learning also provides development opportunities to staff, by providing modules from their portfolio of programmes, including the two Masters in Education in Teaching and Learning ([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 ([link](#)) 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.

Finally, the Centre for Technology-Enhanced Learning ([link](#)) and the 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. 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). 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;

Privacy Notices on:

3. General Privacy
4. Student Data Privacy
5. Staff Data Privacy

Relevant Data Collection Notices to report and perform analyses:

6. Student Data Collection Notice
7. HEA Data Collection Notice

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 actively engages 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.

## 7.0 Public Information and Communication

SETU prioritises transparency and open communication, ensuring that information regarding its activities reaches all corners of the University community and other stakeholders. Prospective and current students can readily access insightful details about programs, learning outcomes, teaching methods, and University resources, empowering them to make informed decisions about their academic journey. Graduates are able to stay connected to the University community, access valuable alumni resources, and celebrate SETU's ongoing achievements and contributions. University stakeholders like partners, funders, and collaborators are equipped with 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. school 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. agenda and minutes of Governing Body meetings;
9. information on complaints procedures;
10. 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 for applying all presented ([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 annually 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 regulations (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	

<b>2. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
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	24/05/2024

<b>3. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
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

<b>4. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
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

<b>5. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
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	

<b>6. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
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	

<b>7. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
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	

<b>8. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
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
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<b>9. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
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

<b>10. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
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

<b>11. Type of arrangement</b>	<b>PRSB</b>
Name of body:	The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

Programme titles and links to publications	The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy <a href="https://iacp.ie/register-of-accredited-courses">https://iacp.ie/register-of-accredited-courses</a> 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	BSc in Software Systems Practice
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	06/05/2017
Date of next review	06/05/2022

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	06/05/2024

<b>4. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Collaborative programme</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Teagasc
Programme titles and links to publications	Various Programmes
Date of last review	09/05/2022
Date of next review	06/05/2023

<b>5. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Collaborative programme</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	WLRFM/Beat102-103FM
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Radio Broadcasting and Presenting
Date of last review	17/12/2019
Date of next review	16/12/2024

<b>6. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Collaborative programme</b>
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

<b>7. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Collaborative programme</b>
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

<b>8. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Linked provider</b>
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

<b>9. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Linked provider</b>
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

	<p>Prevention, Education &amp; 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 &amp; Attitude (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Social Policy (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Equality &amp; Diversity (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Leadership &amp; Organisational Development (Level 6 Special Purpose Award) Certificate in Introduction to Counselling &amp; 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 &amp; 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:  <a href="https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETUC_Register_of_Linked_Provision_v_12_0_Jan24.pdf">https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETUC_Register_of_Linked_Provision_v_12_0_Jan24.pdf</a></p>
Date of last review	01/03/2021
Date of next review	05/03/2026

<b>10. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Linked provider</b>
Name of body (/bodies):	Irish National Stud
Programme titles and links to	Certificate in Thoroughbred Breeding Link: <a href="https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETUC_Register_of_Linked_Provision_v_12_0_Jan24.pdf">https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETUC_Register_of_Linked_Provision_v_12_0_Jan24.pdf</a>

publications	
Date of last review	01/05/2023
Date of next review	01/05/2024

<b>11. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Linked provider</b>
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

<b>12. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Linked provider</b>
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: <a href="https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETUC_Register_of_Linked_Provision_v_12_0_Jan24.pdf">https://www.itcarlow.ie/public/userfiles/files/SETUC_Register_of_Linked_Provision_v_12_0_Jan24.pdf</a>
Date of last review	19/03/2019
Date of next review	20/03/2024

<b>13. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Linked provider</b>
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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

<b>14. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Linked provider</b>
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

<b>15. Collaborative provision</b>	<b>Linked provider</b>
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
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[Higher Education Institution]

2024

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**Annual Quality Report (Institution)**  
**PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**  
**ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT**  
**Reporting Period 2022-2023**

## 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 advice, 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<sup>2</sup> 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;

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<sup>2</sup> 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

- 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.

## 1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

The ongoing merger of the two antecedent institutions and the realisation of the University goal, have dominated quality implementation and developments in the reporting period. An SETU Quality Framework was adopted, and the Academic Council decided that an Academic Delivery Framework would help guide programme design and delivery and work on this will begin in the next reporting period. The lateness and uncertainty around the Leaving Certificate results continues to be an issue for the start of Year 1 and Council decided to continue the Year 1 approach developed in the previous reporting period for September 2023. Generative Artificial Intelligence is the greatest threat to Academic Integrity of assessment, but also presents such an opportunity that it may be considered a desirable Graduate Attribute in future years.

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 on 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's Student Charter was launched in this period and serves as a formal testament to the shared values and guiding principles embraced by both the University and its student body. The Charter strengthens the existing culture of respect, empowerment, and active engagement within the University community. Furthermore, the Charter establishes a shared commitment to a code of conduct defined by inclusivity, tolerance, transparency, and professional conduct.

The University will expand its doctoral programme and as a key step along that path, Academic Council invited all Schools to submit structured doctorate proposals, identifying their strategy, key strengths and their established track record of research and education in their field. The submissions were evaluated externally, the report from which recognised the merits of the submissions, highlighted some key challenges and made recommendations for the next phase of development. This next phase will be reported on in the next AQR reporting period.

The University will participate in the Cinnte Review process, with an expert panel due in October 2025. The preparations began in this reporting period with the establishment of a Steering Group and the formal agreement with QQI of the external panel dates to visit the University. The formation of Workgroups and development of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) all feature in the next reporting period.

## 1.3 Governance and Management

### 1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

**Guide:**

Include the meeting schedules for all significant academic governance bodies, e.g. governing authority, academic council (or equivalent), quality committee, for the reporting period.

*Please delete guide text before submission.*

Body	Meeting dates between January-August 2023
Governing Body	<b>6 Meetings</b> ( <a href="#">link</a> ) 10 <sup>th</sup> Jan, 7 <sup>th</sup> Feb, 7 <sup>th</sup> March, 4 <sup>th</sup> April, 2 <sup>nd</sup> May, 6 <sup>th</sup> June
Academic Council	<b>7 Meetings</b> ( <a href="#">link</a> ) 31 <sup>st</sup> Jan, 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb, 21 <sup>st</sup> March, 25 <sup>th</sup> April, 23 <sup>rd</sup> May, 13 <sup>th</sup> June Standing Committee Meeting 22 <sup>nd</sup> August
Academic Development, Learning and Teaching	<b>5 Meetings</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> Jan, 7 <sup>th</sup> Feb, 7 <sup>th</sup> March, 28 <sup>th</sup> March, 9 <sup>th</sup> May
Student Experience	<b>4 Meetings</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> Jan, 23 <sup>rd</sup> March, 12 <sup>th</sup> May, 8 <sup>th</sup> June
Academic Quality and Regulations Committee	<b>8 Meetings</b> 20 <sup>th</sup> Jan, 10 <sup>th</sup> Feb, 17 <sup>th</sup> Feb, 10 <sup>th</sup> Mar, 31 <sup>st</sup> Mar, 12 <sup>th</sup> May, 18 <sup>th</sup> May, 2 <sup>nd</sup> June
Research Committee	<b>6 Meetings</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> Jan, 7 <sup>th</sup> Feb, 7 <sup>th</sup> March, 28 <sup>th</sup> March, 9 <sup>th</sup> May, 30 <sup>th</sup> May
Ethics in Research Committee	<b>9 Meetings</b> 31 <sup>st</sup> Jan, 7 <sup>th</sup> Feb, 13 <sup>th</sup> Feb, 8 <sup>th</sup> March, 30 <sup>th</sup> March, 12 <sup>th</sup> May, 19 <sup>th</sup> May, 7 <sup>th</sup> June, 16 <sup>th</sup> June

### **1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments**

No changes have been made to the Leadership and Management team in this reporting period. However, the University launched its first Strategic Plan, *Connecting for Impact*, was officially published in May at a number of public events across the southeast region. This will see the creation of new management positions to deliver the University's goals, such as in Sustainability.

The University also commissioned an external review of its organisational structures, to which all SETU staff were invited to contribute suggestions. This will lead, in the next reporting period, to the implementation of the University's management structure.

## **1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review**

### **1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews**

No periodic reviews occurred in the reporting period. The preliminary conversations in relation to Programmatic Reviews have begun. Also, the Cinnte Institutional Review Steering Group was formed in this period.

## 1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels<sup>3</sup> involved in IQA

### Guide:

As the external QA agency responsible for oversight of institutional IQA system, QQI collects and makes a range of data available, including diverse data relating to internal QA processes through the AQR. The criteria for the engagement of peer reviewers (both internal and external) is part of the internal institutional-led QA process. The information in this section provides data and transparency in relation to peer reviewers/evaluators and their involvement in institutional-led internal QA systems.

*Please delete guide text before submission.*

### (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
<b>Number of review/ evaluation processes</b>	35	0	0	0	16	19	0
<i>of those:</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>On-site processes</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Desk reviews</b>	9	0	0	0	6	3	0
<b>Virtual processes</b>	26	0	0	0	10	16	0
<b>Average panel size for each process type*</b>	6.0	0	0	0	4.4	6.0	0

\* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

<sup>3</sup> QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

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

### Guide

Details in respect of the composition of the panels convened by the institution for review/evaluation/approval processes that concluded during the reporting period should be set out below. Panel composition should be represented as whole numbers rather than as percentages.

'Similar institution' denotes an institution with a similar scope and mission - for an IoT, this might be another IoT or a university of applied science, for example.

*Please delete guide text before submission.*

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	27	10	17	0	9	18	0	0	0	19	8
Secretary	7	1	6	0	7	0	0	0	0	7	0
Academic/Discipline Specific	63	36	27	0	0	49	14	0	0	60	3
Student Representative	7	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	0	7	0
QA	26	7	19	0	0	26	0	0	0	23	0
Teaching & Learning	42	25	17	0	0	38	4	0	0	42	0
External Industry /Third Mission	56	23	33	0	53	3	0	0	0	0	3

## 2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Academic Council commissioned a new [Quality Framework](#), which was published in the reporting period. The new QF links the University strategy to its quality policy and procedures. The Framework provides an overview and guiding principles for the overarching policy and procedures for quality assurance, the governance framework, procedures for quality assurance in teaching, learning and research, on-going monitoring and review, the learner voice, procedure for the design, development and validation of programmes, admission, progression and completion, staff development, learner supports and information management.

Also during the period, Academic Council approved [Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes](#), which would come 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 should 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. This was formally established in the next reporting period, but the Council approved the terms of reference and membership in June 2023.

In this reporting period, each of the University's progenitor Institutes' Quality Manuals continue to be operated. The principles behind this decision were to not rush the required work to bridge the relatively small number of differences between both Quality Manuals, while never disadvantaging a student and their education, where differences did occur.

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 [Policy Management Framework](#) 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 ([link](#)). The Body's membership consists of external stakeholders, as well as learners and staff. The interim Academic Council normally met once per month on average during an academic year and its meeting minutes are publicly available on the SETU website ([link](#)). Having established these essential governance bodies, both bodies have tackled the challenges of creating a nascent University, which while drawing heavily on the insights and experience of its constituent members, will be much more than the better of its two constituent parts. This has led to the appointment of the first president, the commissioning of a strategic plan and the commissioning of an organisational plan, the latter two of which will return results in the next reporting period.

The University recognises the benefits in replacing the interim Academic Council with a Council designed to deliver stronger representation and more representative decision-making and consequently worked on a new Council design, which will be implemented and populated in the next reporting period.

### 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 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 has commissioned a Strategic Plan for Global Partnerships and Internationalisation, which shall be completed in 2024.

An external panel evaluated and approved the proposal to expand SETU's collaboration with NUIST, China, which would see dual SETU-NUIST degrees delivered in Nanjing. The programmes delivered are BSc(H) in Applied Computing (International), BSc(H) in Internet of Things (International), BSc(H) in Software Engineering (International), BEng (H) in Electrical and Automation Engineering (International), BEng (H) in Information Engineering (International) and the MEng in Electronic Information Systems.

## **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.

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

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

No.	<b>Relevant objectives</b> Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	<b>Planned actions and indicators</b>  <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation. If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i>
1	Academic Council	Implementation of the new Academic Council design (including a new committee structure) is to commence. A key initial element of this is staff elections to Council, which will start in Q4, 2023. The new Council will be formed in Q1, 2024, commencing with an induction session and training for members.
2	Joint Quality Committee	As part of the new Academic Council design, the terms of reference and membership of a Joint Quality Committee will be determined. This will be a joint committee of Governing Body and Academic Council and will have oversight of the periodic cycle of academic and service reviews. The Joint Quality Committee will be 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. The committee will be formed after the establishment of the new Academic Council.
3	Academic Delivery Framework	A University working group will be established to develop a new academic delivery framework for SETU. Terms of reference and membership of the working group will be set. The working group will report to Academic Council

		on its outputs and will interact and engage with members of other international universities in developing the framework.
4	Ongoing Alignment of Policies, Procedures and Processes	Alignment of policies, procedures and processes will continue across the University. Some of the areas of focus will be student expected behaviour, academic misconduct, academic integrity, and student dignity and respect.

### 3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

#### 3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Linked Provision Review	None	Linked Provision Review
Programmatic Reviews	None	Programmatic Reviews

#### 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: Addressing Educational Disadvantage

SETU designs its educational provision to maximise educational opportunities to inclusively serve the region. The University has had a successful partnership since 2008 with An Cosán, a pioneering community education organisation, to combat educational disadvantage and broaden access to higher education for marginalised individuals. The collaborative efforts provide holistic, supportive, and engaging educational programs that cater to the specific needs and interests of diverse communities.

A current collaborative project takes a multifaceted approach, with involves a range of deliverables, from bespoke programmes to doctoral-level research:

- Tailored higher education programs, encompassing major and minor awards, are designed to align with the aspirations and abilities of community participants, opening doors to academic pursuits they might not have considered before;
- Participatory action research fuels the project, actively involving both community practitioners and learners. This fosters mutual understanding and ensures programs effectively address relevant challenges; and
- A PhD study delves deeper, exploring the collaboration's effectiveness and providing valuable insights into how Higher Education and Community Education providers can work together to bridge the gap and reach underserved populations.

Beyond this program delivery and research, a dedicated dissemination plan ensures that the learnings and successful model inform and inspire others in this space, from all potential and actual stakeholders, to national policy makers. This includes sharing their practices to help shape national policy and encouraging wider adoption of similar partnerships to create a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape. This three-year project promises to be a transformative force, empowering individuals and communities while paving the way for a future where higher education is truly accessible to all.

## **Case Study: Lifelong Learning – an Integrated Approach**

The establishment of South East Technological University (SETU) in May 2022 and the subsequent publication of the SETU Strategy 2023-2028 Connecting for Impact offered the University an opportunity to define the purpose of Lifelong Learning in a Technological University, agree a vision and mission for Lifelong Learning and begin a process to integrate Lifelong Learning activity across all SETU campuses.

The SETU Strategic plan sets out the vision of the University to be a leading global technological university with a transformative impact on our community. The plan states that SETU offers a student-centred education and is committed to Lifelong Learning, access, equality and inclusion, and to the provision of a comprehensive educational offering. SETU is a significant and leading provider of Lifelong Learning programmes nationally, with over 6,500 enrolments in Lifelong Learning, a number of strategic linked partners, who collaborate with SETU in offering third level programmes nationally and a small but growing research base.

Prior to the establishment of SETU, a number of working groups comprised of staff from IT Carlow and WIT worked together in the preparation of the SETU application for designation as a Technological University. The Engagement working group conducted research into national and international models for Lifelong Learning, a review of Lifelong Learning across all campuses and initial research into how Lifelong Learning could be represented in the new university. This work has fed into the current strategic initiative to integrate Lifelong Learning activities across SETU and to develop a strategy for Lifelong Learning at SETU (as per objective 4.1 in the SETU Strategic plan).

The plan for integration of Lifelong Learning activity across SETU is informed by the SETU Strategic Plan and has four central tenets:

- People (staffing of Lifelong Learning, management, support and academic)
- Programmes (a full portfolio review of all Lifelong Learning programmes offered in SETU)
- Policy (the underpinning policies supporting students, staff and stakeholders in SETU)
- Processes (a review of existing processes supporting the SETU student from recruitment and promotion, through to registration, teaching and support and retention and completion)

The integration plan is guided by the values set out by SETU to be a student-centred University and to offer a consistent high-quality learning experience to students. This integration plan is underway since August 2022 and overseen by a Lifelong Learning management group with representatives from across SETU Lifelong Learning.

### **Progress Up to August 2023**

1. **People** (staffing of Lifelong Learning, management, support and academic)

Four in-person consultation meetings with staff from Lifelong Learning took place during this period. The purpose of these meetings was to introduce all staff across all campuses to each

other, define the current operations of Lifelong Learning at SETU and to identify areas that required review as part of the integration process.

A full review of the management structure for Lifelong Learning was completed in July 2023. The initial outcome of this review was the advertisement and recruitment of a Head of Lifelong Learning (SL3) with a specific remit to integrate Lifelong Learning activity across SETU.

A second review of the administration structures supporting Lifelong Learning was initiated during this period. The outcome of this review is on-going and will continue during AY 2023/24.

2. **Programmes** (a full portfolio review of all Lifelong Learning programmes offered in SETU)

The initial steps to conduct a review of the entire programme portfolio was commenced in September 2022 with the establishment of a management group to identify all Lifelong Learning programmes across SETU and to develop the first SETU prospectus for Lifelong Learning and associated marketing and promotional campaigns.

The first fully integrated SETU Lifelong Learning prospectus was launched in April 2023 and the promotional activities included joint print and radio campaigns, joint open evening in person and online sessions and the development of SETU Lifelong Learning marketing collateral.

This initial step towards integrated Long Learning @ SETU was well received and work on the integration of Lifelong Learning programmes will continue in AY 2023/24.

3. **Policy** (the underpinning policies supporting students, staff and stakeholders in SETU)

The identification of all relevant SETU policies (a number still in transition from the legacy institutes) was completed during the staff consultation processes and work of the Lifelong Learning management group during the period up to August 2023.

An administration working group was established to document, review and report back on policy implementation and potential areas of difference. A workplan has been agreed and is overseen by the Lifelong Learning management group. An example of policy integration achieved during this reporting period is a common fee refund policy for all SETU Lifelong Learning students. This work continues during AY 2023/24.

4. **Processes** (a review of existing processes supporting the SETU student from recruitment and promotion, through to registration, teaching and support and retention and completion)

The work relating to processes includes practices across all SETU campuses. The two legacy institutions have certain differences in relation to systems used (Student records system and the virtual learning environment are two examples here). These University wide systems are not owned by Lifelong Learning but do impact our work in relation to how we support Lifelong Learning students in a consistent way.

Staff members are involved in a number of change projects (Banner upgrade and new VLE are examples) and report back to the Lifelong Learning management group on an ongoing basis. A significant milestone achieved during this period was a fully integrated Lifelong Learning section on the new SETU web site. A fully integrated approach to Springboard+ funding calls and the Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3 was also achieved during this period.

This work of process review and work practices is on-going. It is monitored on a monthly basis and will continue in AY 2023/24.

The work on the integration of Lifelong Learning activity will continue in AY 2023/24.

The priority in AY 2023/24 is the development of a Strategy for Lifelong Learning at SETU and this will be delivered by June 2024. Consultation across the University has begun and will continue, the work highlighted above during AY 2022/23 will form an important component of the new strategy and the continuing integration of Lifelong Learning across SETU.

## **Case Study:** Empowering Students through PATH Funding

Thanks to funding from PATH, SETU launched two impactful programmes that will have positive outcomes for two marginalised groups: ATTAINS (Assistive Technology Training Assisting INdependent Success) and Brighter Futures.

**ATTAINS** introduces students with specific learning disabilities from under-represented groups to assistive technology (AT) tools and strategies to support independent learning. ATTAINS extends training to teachers, staff, and even parents, creating a supportive network for students. Since 2020, it has impacted 142 participants across 16 organisations, with plans to reach over 450 students in the near future. Feedback highlights improved confidence and individualisation in learning experiences.

**Brighter Futures** fosters a welcoming environment for Traveller children, nurturing their engagement and educational continuity. The programme offers weekly workshops covering identity, schoolwork, cultural pride, reading, and role models. Additionally, it provides Traveller awareness training to educators, integrates cultural modules into curriculums, and guides parents and children on educational pathways. Recognising its positive impact on participation, progression, and stakeholder connections, SETU is committed to expanding and sustaining Brighter Futures.

Both programs, supported by PATH funding, demonstrate SETU's dedication to empowering diverse students and creating an inclusive educational landscape.

## **Case Study:** Shaping Education for Success and Inclusion

### **Shaping Education for Success and Inclusion**

SETU is committed to preparing its students for the future, both professionally and civically. This includes ensuring its curriculum reflects evolving job demands, civic responsibilities, and social needs, particularly in areas like sustainability and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Additionally, the university is actively enhancing its learning infrastructure and support systems to empower every student to succeed.

**WorkAbility Programme:** Recognising the specific challenges faced by autistic students entering the workforce, SETU has developed a pilot WorkAbility Programme. This engaging initiative equips students with the skills and confidence to navigate work placements and graduate roles, leading to successful employment outcomes.

**Collaboration with Specialisterne Ireland:** To further amplify this support, SETU partners with Specialisterne Ireland, a specialist consultancy providing employment support to neurodivergent individuals. Their Interview Skills' Programme helps students ace interviews and showcase their talents, boosting their employability.

**Expanding Accessibility:** This program, currently offered at one campus, will be expanded across SETU in the coming years. Additionally, further partnerships with Specialisterne Ireland are planned to refine the service and reach more students.

This initiative exemplifies SETU's unwavering commitment to equality and inclusion. By investing in diverse student populations and providing targeted support, SETU ensures every individual has the tools and opportunities to thrive.

SETU continues to be proactive in expressing its commitment to inclusion, and believes in the quality and tangible impact of this programme.

## **Case Study:** Championing Collaboration and Expanding Educational Opportunities

### **SETU: Building Bridges and Bolstering the Region**

SETU understands the immense value of collaboration and is actively strengthening its partnerships within the region. This focus has three key objectives: maximising regional cohesion and impact, dynamically responding to emerging skill needs, and ultimately boosting regional productivity, growth, and sustainability.

One crucial aspect of this approach involves addressing equity and access to higher education. By partnering with Further Education (FE) institutions, SETU offers degree programmes at a local level. This initiative tackles various barriers typically hindering participation, such as high CAO points, financial constraints, and limited support systems. By starting their journey in familiar surroundings and receiving personalised guidance, students build confidence and are better equipped for long-term success. This initiative aligns seamlessly with SETU's core values of diversity and equity, and its strategic goal to address student migration trends from the region.

Building on the initial success of the partnership with the Laois and Offaly ETB, offering Bachelor of Business (Hons) and Bachelor of Science in Software Development (Hons) programmes, SETU plans to expand its reach to other ETBs in the southeast. This partnership saw 29 students embark on their academic journeys in 2023, marking a promising start. The interest expressed by four additional ETBs for 2024 collaborations paves the way for wider access to higher education within the region.

In addition to the two 2023 existing programmes in Business and Software Development, mentioned earlier, the following programmes are being explored for 2024 provision:

- Bachelor of Science in Biosciences & Biopharmaceutical - Abbeyleix FET to SETU Carlow
- Bachelor of Business in Hospitality and Tourism - Carlow Institute to SETU Waterford
- Bachelor of Science in IT Management- Ormonde College Kilkenny to SETU Carlow

Other programmes are at discussion stage, but if running, are more likely to be from September 2025.

## Case Study: Embracing International Collaboration for Sustainability

SETU is committed to extending its reach and impact beyond national borders through collaborative, international partnerships. By actively engaging with the international community, SETU aims to:

- **Enhance reputation and attractiveness:** Strengthen its standing as a leading institution, attracting both students and researchers worldwide.
- **Drive regional inclusivity and outward-looking qualities:** Foster a vibrant and connected region, open to innovation and collaboration.

A leading example of this commitment is SETU's participation in the EU-CONEXUS European University, an alliance of nine universities across Europe. United by the shared challenges and opportunities presented in **Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability**, this initiative tackles environmental, economic, and societal challenges faced by coastal communities. By collaborating with institutions like La Rochelle University (FR), Klaipeda University (LT), and others, SETU contributes to research, education, and innovation that benefits not only its own region but also the broader European landscape.

"Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability" encompasses a wide range of disciplines, from coastal engineering to social sciences, all working towards improving the lives of coastal inhabitants.

Within this framework, EU-CONEXUS focuses on four key areas:

- **Coastal Engineering:** Protecting and developing coastal landscapes;
- **Environmental Science and Biodiversity:** Ensuring the ecological health of coastal environments
- **Life Sciences and Biotechnology:** Harnessing scientific advancements for sustainable solutions
- **Social, Cultural and Human Sciences:** Understanding and addressing the diverse needs of coastal communities.

EU-CONEXUS fosters collaboration through various initiatives:

- **Joint programmes and research:** Students and researchers can participate in collaborative projects and initiatives;
- **Increased mobility:** Enhanced exchange of ideas and skills through increased staff and student exchanges;

- **Micro-credentials and joint degrees:** Acquiring specialised skills and qualifications across borders;
- **Innovation networks:** Partnering with industry and communities to support sustainable development.

By actively participating in EU-CONEXUS and pursuing other international partnerships, SETU demonstrates its commitment to global engagement and its dedication to tackling shared challenges for a brighter future.