Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest
2025

Annual Quality Report
Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest
Reporting Period 2023-2024

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Reporting Period 2023-2024

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

CONTENTS

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template[1]

Legislation

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

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

Other QQI Policy Documents

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

Other National/International References

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

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

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

Introduction and Overview of Institution

The Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS) is one of twelve state universities in Ireland. Designated a Technological University on October 1st, 2021, TUS is an independent autonomous Designated Awarding Body (DAB), with powers to make awards from Level 6 to Level 10 of the National Framework of Qualifications. TUS has both a regional and national impact with circa 15,000 students and 1,800 staff, located in its campuses in Athlone, Limerick, Thurles, Clonmel and Ennis, as depicted in Figure 1.1. TUS is defined by its geographical reach and regional composition, bordering almost half of Ireland's 26 counties. Thus, TUS has the potential to transform the availability and accessibility of university education in the regions it serves and provides leading student-centred higher education that is research-informed, regionally relevant and accessible to all. Supported by the EU commission, TUS leads the Regional University Network – European University (RUN-EU) in creating one of several new European Universities. We are particularly proud that TUS is the first Irish HEI to lead, and hold the Presidency, of a European University, thereby enabling deeper and sustained impact for the benefit of all our stakeholders.

Figure 1.1. Geographical Profile of TUS Campus Locations.

A key milestone for TUS was the approval by Governing Body of the inaugural TUS Strategic Plan and its launch in March 2023. The strategy outlines our values, purpose and long-term vision, and identifies a range of strategic priorities and enablers (Section 1.0 Internal QA Framework). It provides the focal point for the development of a vibrant TU that places students at the heart of all we do and that engages effectively, internally and externally, collaborating with students as partners, industry and employment sectors, stakeholder bodies and more widely with community and society. Performance against the Strategic Plan is being tracked through specified key indicators of success, as part of a broader implementation framework. TUS has also entered into a Performance Agreement with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in accordance with the System Performance Framework 2023-28 and there is alignment between the strategic plan implementation framework and the performance objectives identified in the Performance Agreement. As outlined in the agreement, *"the fundamental objectives now are continued development of the operational and organisational structure, functions, and outputs of the*

TU and monitoring of the Strategic Plan implementation and Performance Agreement to strengthen TUS's contribution to the achievement of national strategies".

TUS offers a diverse portfolio of programmes in a range of areas including science, engineering, health and welfare, business, hospitality, social sciences, informatics, sport, teacher education, and art and design, inter alia. Reflecting the diverse programme portfolio, there has been significant growth across all elements of education provision including full-time, part-time, undergraduate, postgraduate, apprenticeship and flexible and lifelong learning, with a total student population of circa 14,500 students in the 2023-24 academic year reporting period (Figure 1.2).
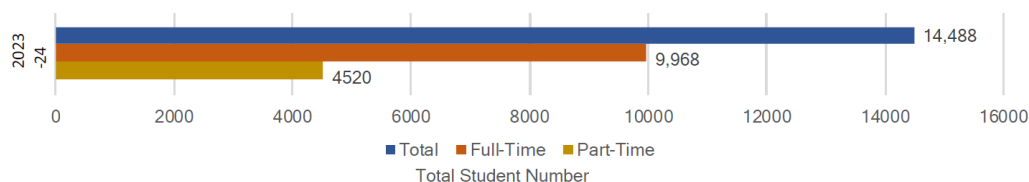
Figure 1.2. Profile of the Growth in Student Numbers in TUS 2023-24.

The total number of students across a range of domains in the 2023-24 academic year is further provided in Figure 1.3.
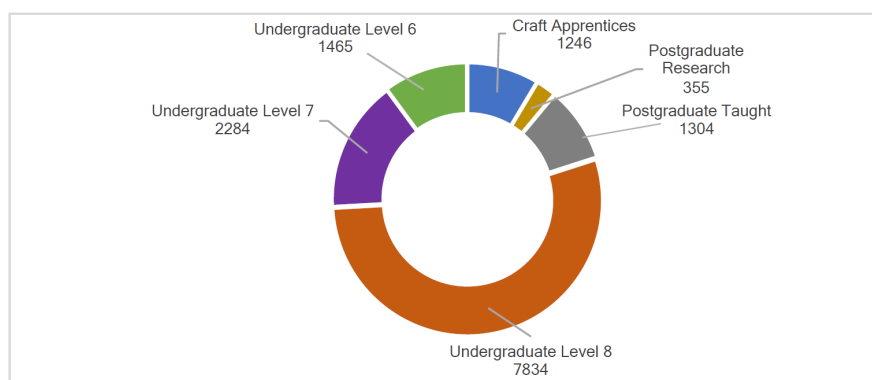
Figure 1.3. Profile of the TUS Student Population 2023-24

The Research Development and Innovation (RDI) activities of TUS span the entire RDI continuum and support regional and national industry and other stakeholders. The emerging scale of research capacity in TUS is evidenced by research expenditure of €28.3m in 2023, with 355 research students registered in the 2023-24 reporting period. The TUS research model provides progression opportunities for students and staff and enables research collaboration.

TUS is committed to student engagement through its educational philosophy and inclusive learning experience, with a distinctive focus on active and engaged learning and in wider graduate attributes, to enable all of its students to realise their full potential. The admission of students from alternative access routes, and through a range of successful access initiatives, is a core consideration. Students are supported through the student lifecycle by an extensive range of services, and dedicated staff, to help them reach their full potential in a supportive and enjoyable environment.

With over 5,000 graduates annually and through deep engagement with, and support for, industry, innovation and enterprise, TUS is contributing to the development of viable and vibrant communities and

to economic, social and sustainable development, both regionally and nationally. TUS graduates have significant success in gaining employment with over 90% of graduates securing employment or further study for graduates of the 2022 - 2023 academic year, with 81% of graduates finding full-time employment (Source: Latest HEA Graduate Data 2023). The data also indicates that 90% of taught postgraduates are in employment nine months after graduation, with 90% of TUS research postgraduates also in employment.

The preparation of this Annual Quality Report (AQR) has been co-ordinated by the Quality Office with contributions from a broad cross section of the TUS Community. The AQR is presented to both Academic Council and Governing Body and is endorsed by the President and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Registrar.

1.0   Internal QA Framework

The Internal Quality Assurance framework adopted by TUS is consistent with the *QQI Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines, QQI Core Quality Assurance Guidelines (Sections 2.1, Governance and Management of Quality; 2.2 Documented Approach to Quality Assurance; 2.10 – Other Parties involved in Education and Training)* and *ESG 1.1 (Policy for Quality Assurance).*

TUS is committed to academic quality (assurance) and continuous improvement (enhancement) and is cognisant that the twin purposes of accountability and continuous improvement are at the core of all quality assurance activities. Taken together, these are fundamental in creating trust and public confidence in the Technological University's performance.

The TUS Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026 provides the fulcrum for all activities of the Technological University and quality assurance and enhancement plays an important and integral role in delivering on the *Values*, *Purpose* and *Vision* of TUS as outlined in the inaugural strategy. The TUS Strategic Plan states as an overarching value that

"*We operate in an agile manner where integrity and excellence underpin all we do. We are honest, fair and ethical in our focus on doing the right thing through our words, actions and beliefs.*"

This is supported by the following TUS Value Statements relating to specified themes including:
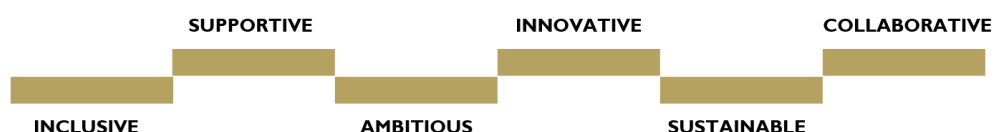
Figure 1.4. TUS Values

Table 1.1. TUS Value Statements

	Value Statements
Inclusive	*We embrace diversity as a key strength where everyone is included and has an equal opportunity to progress and achieve.*
Supportive	*We care about our people and their well-being, and we maintain a student centred ethos in all we do.*
Ambitious	*We set high standards and are courageous in our actions to deliver impact and achieve our potential.*
Innovative	*We are forward-looking and encourage creativity and exploration that fosters unique ideas and inspires transformative change*
Sustainable	*We are thought leaders and adopt a whole of institution approach to the challenges of sustainable development.*
Collaborative	*We are open, connected and engaged in bringing people together to develop, co-create and share knowledge for the benefit of our region and beyond.*

The Values of TUS are supported by the TUS *Purpose Statement*, *Vision to 2030* and *Strategic Priorities* and *Enablers*.

Purpose Statement

"The Technological University of the Shannon provides leading student-centred higher education that is research-informed, regionally-relevant and accessible to all."

Vision to 2030

"To be a catalyst for sustainable change through education that transforms lives, our region and the world beyond.

The Strategic Plan sets out how the TUS strategy will be achieved through a series of specified Strategic Priorities and Enablers

Table 1.2. TUS Strategic Priorities

	Priorities
Education	*Provide a relevant high-quality education offering, focused on interdisciplinarity, delivered in a flexible way to cater to a diverse cohort of students, across multi-campus locations.*
Research	*Deliver impactful applied research, growing the research community, engaging in next generation thinking and tackling issues at a regional, national and global level.*
People and Organisation	*Operate as an integrated organisation, where everyone's potential can be realised, and where all individuals are provided with equal opportunities.*
Connecting Communities	*Build and enhance relationships and partnerships to drive the sustainable development of our region and make an impact nationally and internationally.*

Table 1.3. TUS Strategic Enablers

	Enablers
Leadership & Resources	*Lead to embrace opportunity, navigate challenges and optimise use of university resources through a highly effective organisational structure.*
Reflective Practice & Continuous Improvement	*Embed reflective practice to build a culture of continuous improvement throughout the university.*
Governance & Policy	*Govern and operate in a manner that is transparent, manages risk, ensures accountability, optimises performance and aligns with policy.*
Communication, Technology & Digitisation	Communicate and connect with stakeholders through practices, technologies, and digitisation methods that achieve impact.
Campus Development & Facilities	*Invest in and develop our infrastructure to enable our ambitions.*
Sustainable Development	*Support sustainable development and embed UN SDG integration across all activities to generate positive impact.*

The TUS Strategic Priorities and Enablers are carefully linked to an associated series of Strategic Objectives and Expected Outcomes to 2026. TUS will draw upon these core enablers to deliver on its priorities. Performance against the enablers will be tracked as part of the broader implementation framework. Full details of the strategic plan are available at: TUS Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026

1.1   Governance and Management of Quality

TUS is cognisant of its obligations under the Technological Universities Act (2018) as a designated awarding body up to Level 10 of the National Framework of Qualifications and is committed to national and international best practice in its governance and management. TUS recognises that a quality culture is supported by strong academic and corporate governance and a commitment to accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement with a collaborative and collegiate approach to quality assurance and enhancement.

TUS takes a multi-layered approach to the governance of quality management, with fora such as *Governing Body, Academic Council* and their associated *Sub-committees* and *Working Groups*, in addition to the TUS VP and Deans Councils and Technological University Management structures. These fora and committees play a lead role in reviewing and designing Technological University-wide strategies and processes to maintain and continuously improve academic quality. The TUS Interim Code of Governance was approved by Governing Body in October 2021 and is available at: TUS Interim Code of Governance
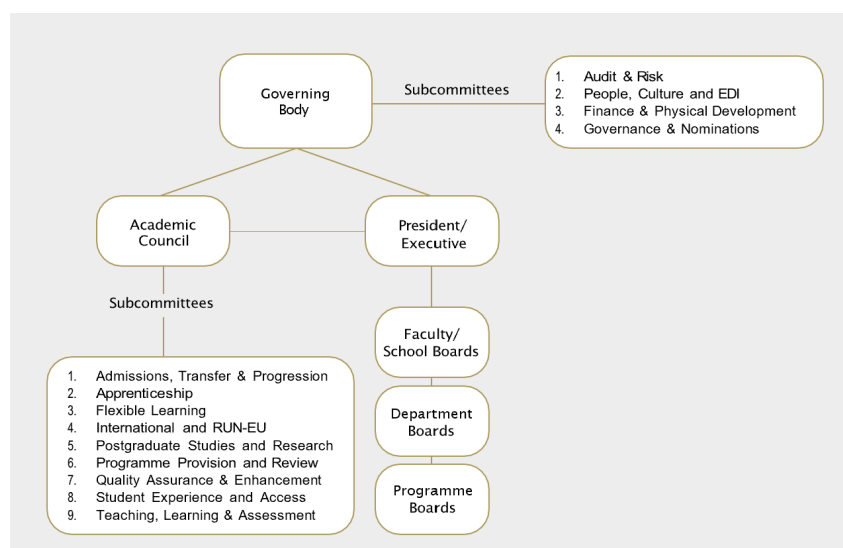
Figure 1.5. Representation of Overall TUS Governance Fora

Governing Body has a statutory responsibility under Section 16 of the 2018 Act to approve the election process and composition of Academic Council and to review its functions. Accordingly, TUS Academic Council Documentation has been developed and approved by both Academic Council and Governing Body. It specifies the Constitution, Composition, Membership, Standing Orders and Bylaws of Academic Council. The Bylaws of Academic Council includes details of its Subcommittees, Board of Appeal and Standing Committee. The documentation is available at TUS Academic Council Documentation 2022 - 2025

TUS complies with statutory and regulatory requirements relating to quality assurance and quality improvement under the Technological Universities Act (2018), the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) as amended (2019) and the Standards and Guidelines for the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) and with national statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. TUS Academic Council, by statute, maintains academic standards within the Technological University. The Academic Council is committed to continuous improvement with new initiatives being

continuously designed and implemented to embed quality policies and practices throughout its operations. Faculty/School Boards, Department Boards, and Programme Boards play a key role in the quality assurance and enhancement and in implementation in line with statutory requirements. Students are considered academic partners at TUS. Student representatives are full members of Governing Body, Academic Council and Academic Council Subcommittees and are also represented on a range of other fora including Working Groups and Programme Boards. Their input and counsel is respected and valued to ensure comprehensiveness and equity for learners.

TUS appointed an Interim Senior Management structure upon designation as a TU. This included a Vice Presidents (VP) Council and a Deans Council. The VP and Deans Council were merged in December 2022 to form a single VP & Deans Council. Details of the associated management responsibilities and reporting structure are outlined in Figure 1.6. The interim structures served TUS well in its early years and have initiated the journey of TUS as a TU. TUS recognises the importance of developing a state-of-the-art management structure that is an enabler of the vision of the TUS Strategic Plan. An organisational design process involving external consultants and wide stakeholder consultation was undertaken and implementation of a proposed new organisational and reporting structure has been initiated.
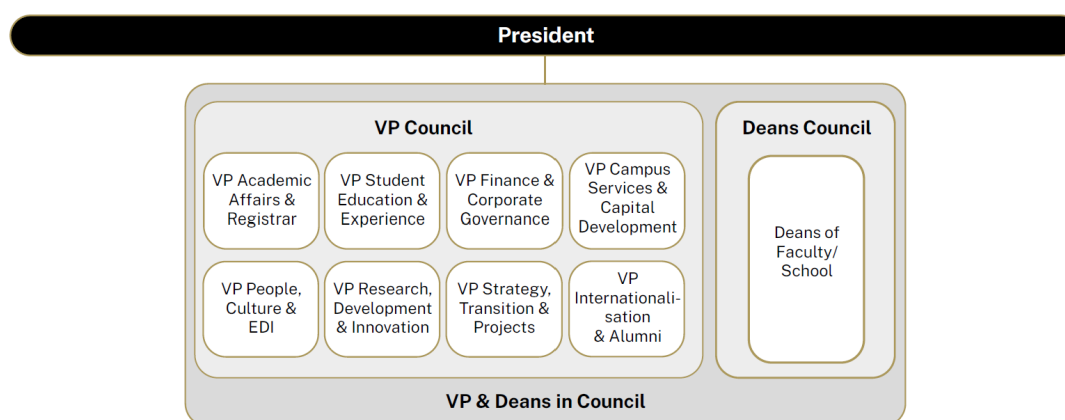
Figure 1.6. TUS Senior Management & Organisational Structure.

1.1.1 TUS Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework

The approach of the Technological University to the development and implementation of Quality Assurance and Enhancement systems and processes is effective, accountable and robust. TUS's Quality Assurance is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015), and with national guidelines and criteria for QA procedures, as overseen by the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) authority. TUS's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures are implemented in its campuses and learning centers across the counties of Westmeath, Limerick, Tipperary and Clare. These policies and procedures govern the design, delivery and review of its academic programmes on the NFQ framework from Level 6 to Level 10, whilst also assuring quality across its craft apprenticeships, and adult and continuous education programmes.

As an autonomous designated awarding body, TUS operates a consolidated quality framework that is

built on a set of overarching guiding principles. TUS draws on eight guiding QAE principles established by the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) in its Technological Higher Education Quality Framework (THEQF). TUS has adopted and adapted the Principles for its Internal QAE and these are illustrated in Figure 1.7.
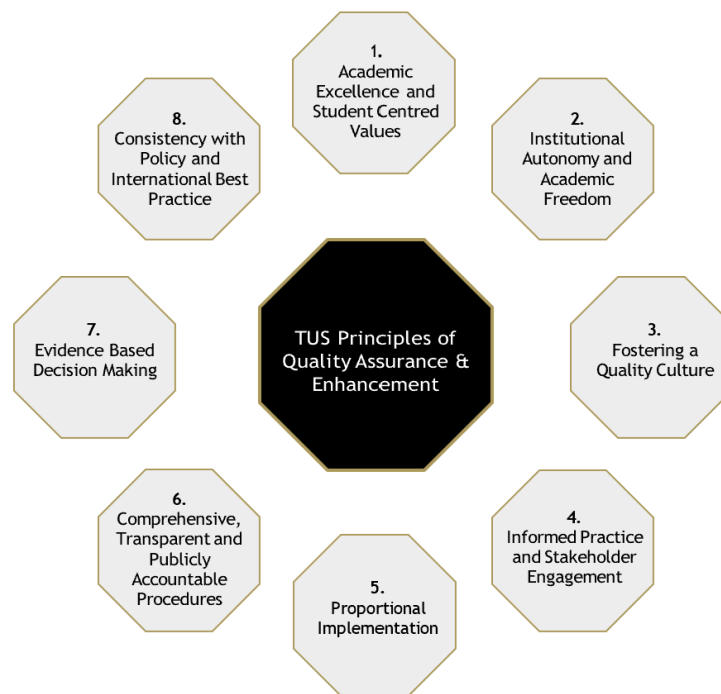
Figure 1.7. TUS Principles of QAE (adapted by TUS from THEQF)

The TUS Policy on Quality Assurance and Enhancement 2022 - 2025 outlines the TUS Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework. Guided by the overarching principles outlined in Figure 1, the TUS Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework involves a holistic cross-organisational approach. The approach of TUS to the development and implementation of Quality Assurance and Enhancement systems and processes is effective, accountable and robust, and meets statutory obligations. The QQI Core Statutory Guidelines (2016) stipulate that the Quality Assurance System is embedded and maintained on a cross-organisational basis, including all levels of management, administration, teaching staff and learners.

To achieve compliance and have a fit for purpose quality assurance system the overarching components include three pillars (as illustrated in Figure 1.8):
 1) developing and implementing a comprehensive suite of TU-wide policies and procedures;

 2) establishing and conducting a broad range of internal reviews; and,

 3) participating in annual monitoring and reporting to QQI (through AQR and Dialogue Meeting), in addition to participating in external Cyclical Review.
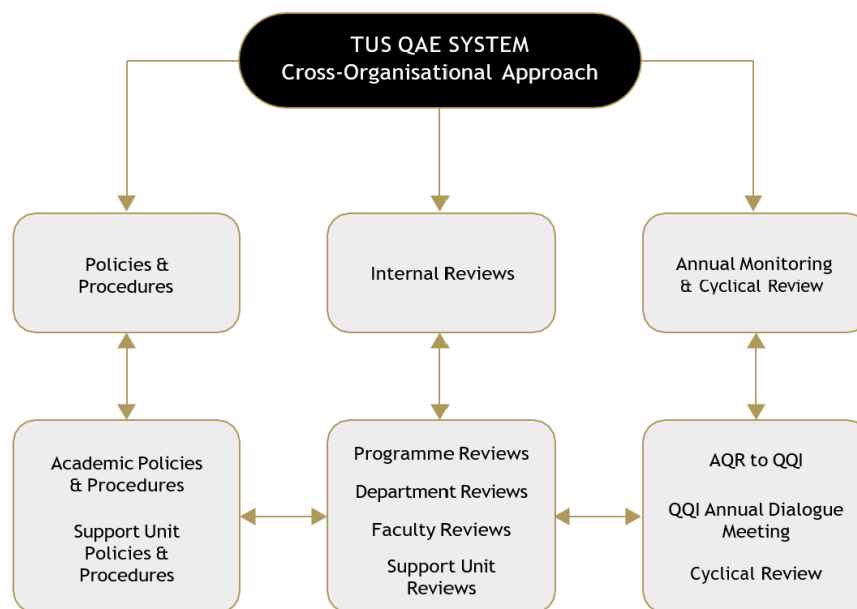
Figure 1.8. Overview of the Cross-Organisational Approach to QAE

1.1.2   TUS Stakeholder Engagement

TUS engages a broad range of stakeholders, internal and external as appropriate, at all levels of governance and in the design, development and validation of its teaching, learning, research and related activities. Both academic and industry stakeholders are engaged to review both new and existing academic programmes and research activities. External Examiners and Professional Accreditation Bodies are examples of critical stakeholders who formally quality assure the nature, content, teaching and assessment academic programmes, both taught and by research, on the National Framework of Qualifications.

As outlined in Section 1.1., student representatives are constituent members of all Governing Fora including Governing Body, Academic Council and its Subcommittees, Programme Boards and in various Working Groups. The student voice is represented on programme boards with regular feedback provided to enhance the quality of the programme content, and the teaching, learning and assessment of programmes. The class representation system plays an important role in this aspect. The Student Union representatives work closely each year with the Quality Office to promote and encourage student participation in the annual Student Survey.ie campaign.

TUS partakes in a range of industry fora across its broad region. It also works with the educational sector to ensure that eligible students can readily and efficiently access programmes in TUS. This includes a wide range of marketing activities within the region and structured engagement programmes with second level schools and further education providers. Through its student outreach programme prospective students learn about TUS and the academic opportunities available.

1.1.3   TUS Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook

TUS Quality Assurance documentation has been collected and collated into the TUS Quality Assurance Handbook. The handbook is maintained by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Subcommittee and its content is reviewed annually by Academic Council. Consequently, relevant content areas are continuously improved through periodic reviews to assure their comprehensiveness, adequacy, and completeness. The handbook is published in full on the TUS website (www.tus.ie). The handbook contains a TUS European and National Quality System Resources document that contains ready access to relevant Legislation, Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, Award Standards and IHEQN Documents. The constituent documents, regulations, policies and procedures provide a systematic approach to govern quality assurance and to promote and enhance quality.

The TUS Guide to Effective Practice that Supports Equity in Technological University Communications is a constituent document of the Handbook. This serves as an approved reference point and guidance for Technological University Staff and assists in producing Technological University documentation, including Policies and Reports, inter alia, that take account of accessibility principles and supports inclusivity. Accordingly, all documents in the handbook are formatted with consistency while aligning to the guidelines.

A systematic document naming system is used to identify documents which refer to TUS policies and procedures. In this context, policies are preceded by 'TUS' title to enable clear differentiation between TUS and external documents. They also include the in-date period after the document title indicating when next revision is due. The handbook is divided into a range of Volumes in different thematic areas for ease of access and reference:
    Volume 1: Overarching System of QAE
    Volume 2: Governing Body & Academic Council
    Volume 3: TUS Strategies
    Volume 4: Academic Regulations, Policies & Procedures
    Volume 5: Student Support Policies & Procedures
    Volume 6: Quality Enhancement Resources
    Volume 7: Appendix

TUS's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures are implemented in all campuses and learning centers. These policies and procedures govern the design, delivery and review of its academic programmes on the NFQ framework from Level 6 to Level 10, whilst also assuring quality across its Craft Apprenticeships, and Adult, Life-Long Learning and Flexible Education Programmes. At TUS, all Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes come within the authority of Academic Council including procedures, standards, and academic content. TUS operates mutually supporting processes and procedures to promote and maintain high quality research and these are described in detail in Section 4.0 of this AQR.

1.1.4 TUS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Governance Structure

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is a key priority for TUS. An Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) Steering Committee was established in 2022 to oversee and provide guidance and direction for the achievement of equality, diversity, and inclusion objectives across TUS. This committee, which is chaired by TUS' President, includes representatives from Faculty, Human Resources, Student Support Services, EDI, RDI and Student's Union. A number of sub-committees report to the EDI Steering Committee. An EDI Sub Committee of Governing Body has also been formed and provides updates to Governing Body on EDI related initiatives underway in TUS. The committee structure through which the EDI strategic goals are achieved is illustrated in Figure 1.9.
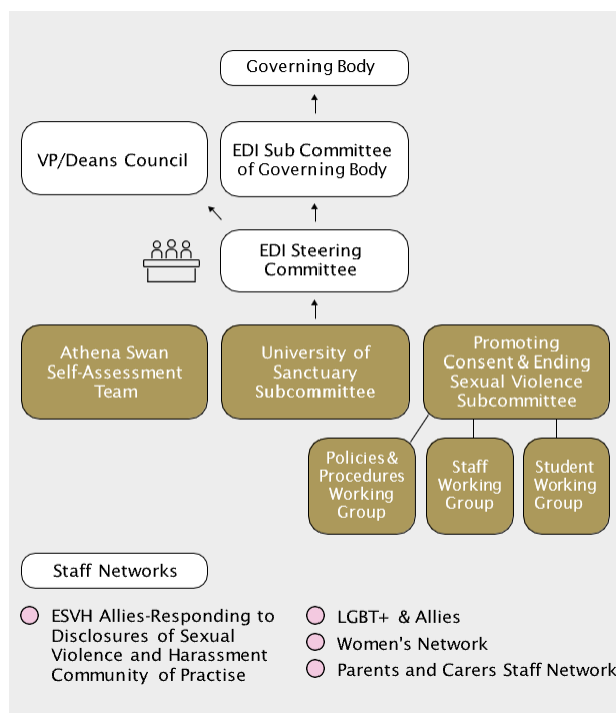
Figure 1.9. Overview of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Structure

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

The QA procedures for collaborative provisions are consistent with ESG 1.1 and 1.2, QQI Core QAG, IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision; QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012, the European Approach to the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

TUS Policies for Collaborative and Linked Provision ensure that learners enrolled on collaborative or transnational programmes (whether at home or overseas) that lead to a TUS Award and receive an equivalent learning experience to that of learners studying at TUS. Academic Council has approved a number of collaborations with national and international agencies, bodies and providers including:

- Equal Ireland, Tuam Road, Galway.

- Gurteen Agricultural College, Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary.

- Pallaskenry Agricultural College, Co Limerick.

- Atlantic Aviation, Shannon, Co Clare.

- Atlantic Air Adventure Centre, Shannon, Co Clare.

- University of Limerick

In May 2023, TUS Academic Council approved the TUS Policy and Procedures for Collaborative Provision (National and Transnational). This policy governs all aspects of development of collaborative programmes nationally and transnationally, including joint awards. All collaborative programmes are subject to annual monitoring and periodic review (programmatic review) as outlined in Section 1.9.

TUS currently does not have any linked provider relationships. Should the University wish enter into linked provider relationships in the future, the TUS Policy on Linked Provision and Linked Provision Framework sets out the approach to establishing any prospective linked provider relationships.

2.0   Programme Development and Delivery

As a Designated Awarding Body, subject to the Technological Universities Act (2018) and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012), as TUS is a self-accrediting institution and responsible for the validation/re-validation of programmes leading to awards in its name, including joint awards. It is also responsible for monitoring the quality, and academic quality assurance, of those awards. TUS policies and procedures for programme development and delivery are consistent with QQI Core QAG, the ESG and IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision.

A particular function of TUS Academic Council under Chapter 5 (17) (3) (a)(b) of the 2018 Act is designing and developing programmes for the technological university and supporting the implementation of those programmes). The Academic Council subcommittees on *Programme Provision and Review*, *Flexible Learning* and *International and RUN-EU* play a particular role in advising Academic Council on matters relating to programme development and portfolio provision. Their Terms of Reference can be accessed at: AC Subcommittees Responsible for Programme Development. The TUS approach to academic quality assurance for programme validation/re-validation ensures that a learner may attain the knowledge, skill or competence for the purpose of an award which is consistent with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and fulfils requirements in relation to Technological University and national policy on access, transfer and progression.

TUS offers a range of awards in accordance with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) from Level 6 to Level 10 of the framework and includes both taught and research programmes. The NFQ is an explicit reference point for the TUS Policy and Procedures for New Programme development and validation. The awards offered by TUS are accordance with the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Designated Awarding Bodies (2016) and the *Joint-Sectoral Protocol between Designated Awarding Bodies and Quality and Qualifications Ireland for the Inclusion of Qualifications within the National Framework of Qualifications (2022)*.

TUS operates systems for ECTS credit accumulation and credit transfer consistent with the Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Credit in Irish Higher Education and consistent with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation Scheme (ECTS). TUS observes norms and practices to ensure that it is appropriate that its awards be regarded as awards included within the NFQ at the appropriate respective levels. This enables the statutory inclusion of relevant TUS qualifications within the NFQ, in a consistent, transparent manner, in line with the *Joint Sectoral Protocol between DAB's and QQI for the Inclusion of Qualifications within the National Framework of Qualifications (2022).*

Major awards
The TUS Major Award Types are presented in Table 2.1 and include the typical credit volume or credit ranges for each major award type from Levels 6-9 in the NFQ.

Table 2.1. TUS Major Award Types

NFQ Level	Award Type	ECTS Credit Volume/Range
Level 6	Higher Certificate	120
Level 7	Bachelor Degree	180
Level 8	Honours Bachelor Degree	180-240
Level 8	Higher Diploma	60
Level 9	Postgraduate Diploma	60
Level 9	Masters Degree (Taught)	60-120
Level 9	Masters Degree (Research)	120
Level 9	Doctor of Philosophy	-

TUS Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards

TUS Special Purpose Awards are stand-alone awards with a distinctive identity reflecting a clearly defined purpose. While Special Purpose Awards are stand-alone awards, their ECTS Credits can be derived from a Major Award. Supplemental awards are for learning which is additional to a previously completed award and are not at a higher level than the initial award. The volume of learning for TUS Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards is between 10 and 60 ECTS credits

TUS Microcredentials

TUS Microcredentials are developed in accordance with the TUS Policy on Microcredentials at NFQ Level 6 – 9 of the NFQ and carry an ECTS Credit range of 1 – 9. Upon successful completion a Certificate of Completion is issued for the Microcredential. Academic recognition for the completion of the Microcredential will be added to the European Diploma Supplement for TUS Graduates.

All programmes offered through collaborative provision, nationally and transnationally, require full validation in line with TUS Policy for Collaborative Provision.

2.1   Programme Development and Approval

The validation processes operated by TUS ensure that its academic programmes are robustly and successfully validated, and revalidated, thereby achieving adherence to statutory requirements including: 1) the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act* (2012), and 2) the *QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (for all providers)* (2016). They also align with the European Standards and Guidelines (2015), including the Standards; 1.2 Design and Approval of Programmes, 1.3 Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment; 1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification; 1.6 Learning Resources and Student Support; and 1.9 On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes.

The following distinct Validation Processes operate at TUS:
1. Validation and approval of new Programmes leading to Major Awards;
2. Validation of Programmes including Minor/Special Purpose/Supplemental Awards and Microcredentials;
3. Revalidation of Existing Programmes (Programmatic Review);
4. Modification of an Approved Programme in advance of Programmatic Review.

The development, validation and approval of new programmes and programme revalidation is conducted in TUS in accordance with the relevant procedures as outlined in TUS New Programme Validation Process Outline.

A rigorous, systematic, and consistent process for the design and development of programmes is implemented at TUS with all the relevant stakeholders included. External expertise and reference points are an integral part of programme design and a core element of all programme validation events.

There are five overall stages within the programme development process, and these are summarised as follows.

Table 2.2. Stages of New Programme Development

		Overall Stages of New Programme Development at TUS
1	Preliminary Scoping and Academic Council Approval to Develop	This phase marks the genesis of programme development and usually occurs within the relevant Faculty. The primary step within this phase is the securing of preliminary approval for the development and submission of an application to the relevant subcommittee of Academic Council.
2	Preparation and Development of New Programme Document	This occurs within the appropriate Faculty and involves detailed discussion at New Programme Board meetings. An evidence base is generated from appropriate research and comprehensive internal and external stakeholder engagement. This phase results in the development the draft New Programme Document.
3	Internal Review	An Internal Review process is conducted by an appropriately constituted panel including membership from TUS and potentially including external stakeholders.
4	External Review and Validation	The External Review includes the review of the proposed programme by the External Panel on behalf of Academic Council. The Panel makes a recommendation to Academic Council with respect to the Validation outcome. The New Programme Board responds to the External Panel Report and actions the findings as appropriate.
5	Academic Council Approval of New Award	This phase involves the Academic Council consideration of the Validation Panel Report and Programme Board Response following by Academic Council Approval of the New Award, as appropriate.

TUS continues to develop links and to consult with the community, and with industry and professional bodies, to inform the development and review of programmes and modules, to ensure that they are responsive to existing and emerging stakeholder needs. TUS is committed to making a regional impact and works closely with industry and community stakeholders to support sustainable development. Working with Regional Skills Fora, TUS combines the capacity to audit regional skills needs, identify gaps and respond proactively. The resulting applied focus of programmes ensures that TUS graduates will continue to be highly sought after and recognised regionally and nationally as having a high level of expertise, skill and competency with multiple career opportunities.

In an approach that underpins the *Values* and *Purpose* of TUS, the University is committed to enabling the development of robust Graduate Attributes which have been purposefully formulated to elucidate the key commitments TUS makes when preparing graduates for work and life, irrespective of discipline

area. Accordingly, the TUS Graduate Attributes Framework informs programme design resulting in a broader interpretation of the knowledge, skills, and competences which students are required to develop in higher education in keeping the NFQ. This is particularly relevant to the demand for non-routine, creative problem solving, and the requirement to be able to cooperate, collaborate and communicate with others as global citizens in a digital world. The framework is available at TUS Graduate Attributes Framework.

Apprenticeship Programmes

The Academic Council Subcommittee on Apprenticeship is responsible for advising Academic Council on matters relating to Apprenticeship, having regard to Chapter 9 (1)(i) of the Technological University Act (2018) in supporting the development of a skilled labour force including, where appropriate, engaging in the education and training of apprentices. The Terms of Reference can be accessed at: Terms of Reference: Academic Council Sub-Committee on Apprenticeship Apprenticeship education remains an important part of the education provision of TUS. A range of Craft apprenticeships are offered across TUS including, Carpentry and Joinery, Electrical, Heavy Vehicle Mechanics, Motor Mechanics, and Plumbing. Apprentices earn while they learn and build valuable work-ready skills in a chosen occupation.

The learning offered by TUS in collaboration with SOLAS, is grounded in the academic and practical experience needed to enable graduates to undertake a qualified craft apprenticeship role. The quality assurance of Apprenticeship programmes in TUS are governed by similar processes, procedures and policies that govern TUS taught programmes. TUS also maintains close on-going links with SOLAS. The apprentice is fully supported by the academic staff during the apprenticeship and has full access to all the facilities and supports of the Technological University. Apprentices are employed by a SOLAS-approved employer for the duration of the programme which is generally between 2-4 years. Apprenticeship programmes provide at least 50% workplace-based learning. TUS is also playing a significant role in the development of New Generation (Post 2016) Apprenticeships under the Statutory Apprenticeship model as both a Coordinating and Collaborative Provider.

TUS Academic Council has approved an *Apprenticeship Strategic Implementation Plan for Apprenticeship* provision which sets out a holistic roadmap for the development of the apprenticeship model in a manner closely aligned with the National Strategy and the TUS Strategic Plan. The Vision for Apprenticeship provision at TUS, as set out in the Implementation Plan, states that: *"TUS to be a leading provider of high-quality, industry-led national, apprenticeship programmes that cultivates skilled and agile professionals, fosters innovation and collaboration, and enhances competitiveness nationally with a particular focus on the Midwest and Midlands regions"*. To further enhance and expand the provision of apprenticeships across TUS, the strategic implementation plan outlines a range of priorities aligned with the four strategic priorities of the TUS Strategic Plan. The associated objectives and key enablers are summarised in the *TUS Apprenticeship Logic Model*. Full detail of the strategy are available at: Apprenticeship Strategic Implementation Plan.

TUS is committed to achieving excellence in apprenticeship and skills education. Progression from all levels of apprenticeship is encouraged in related cognate areas through flexible learning and advanced entry to full-time programmes. In TUS, students from apprenticeships have successfully progressed from Level 6 through all levels of the NFQ including up to doctoral level.

Postgraduate Research Degree Provision
The Quality Assurance Procedures for Postgraduate Research Degree provision is outlined in Part A, Section 4.0.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

TUS procedures for admissions, transfer, progression, recognition, and certification are established and implemented in a transparent manner and in accordance with ESG 1.4 and the *QQI Policy on Access, Transfer and Progression (revised 2015)*. Cognisant of the national policy on Access, Transfer, and Progression, TUS is committed to fair, transparent and consistent access, transfer and progression opportunities for all students. TUS welcomes applications from people from every background and endeavours to make the application process as transparent, applicant focused, efficient, and effective as possible.

TUS has established a subcommittee of academic council to review and monitor policy on Admissions, Transfer and Progression. To ensure that students are treated with respect, equity, empathy and professionalism, the subcommittee makes recommendations to Academic Council relating to the recruitment, selection, admission, progression, retention, and exclusion of students in accordance with Section 17 (3) (e) of the TU Act, 2018. Furthermore, the subcommittee advises Academic Council on the development of policy relating to this particular area of activity.

The Admissions Office supports prospective students from initial enquiry, through to application, registration and in conjunction with student support services through to induction. The work encompasses CAO, Advanced, Part-time, International and Nonstandard entry routes. TUS endeavours to make the application process as transparent, applicant-focused, efficient and effective as possible, with all applicants carefully assessed on the basis of published entry requirements and entry paths outlined in relevant publications. TUS offers learners access to and progression pathways into and along the NFQ from Level 6 to 9 taught programmes and Level 9 and 10 research programmes. Procedures for learner admission, progression, and recognition include:

- fit-for-purpose admission, progression, and certification policies and procedures;
- comprehensive student induction;
- processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on learner progression and completion rates;
- recognition of prior learning, including the recognition of formal and non-formal learning.

Entry to postgraduate taught programmes is managed through the Admissions Office and the Graduate Studies Office manages the admission of postgraduate research students. Academic Council approved the TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations 2023 - 2026 and these regulations specify the criteria and the requirements for the students, supervisor(s) and TUS with respect to approval of research programmes and admission of students to those programmes.

TUS offers learners access and (ladders of learning) progression pathways into and along the National Framework of Qualifications from Level 6-9 and Level 10. Within these pathways, flexible modular options are available for learners and include different entry points, part-time and flexible study options, electives and embedded awards. Procedures for learner admission, progression, and recognition include:

- Fit-for-purpose admission, progression, recognition of prior learning, and completion policies and procedures;
- Comprehensive Student Induction;
- Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on learner progression and completion rates;
- Recognition of prior learning, including the recognition of formal and non-formal learning such as experiential and certified learning.

Admissions

The Admissions criteria for each programme are provided in the TUS Prospectus and are consistent with national norms and requirements for entry. They are available at: TUS Undergraduate Prospectus Policies and procedures for student access, transfer and admission are managed by the TUS Admissions Office. These outline the operational admissions procedures and the various categories of students entering TUS. TUS Admissions Office Procedures are available at the TUS Admissions Website

TUS provides all students with an online registration facility. Application to TUS for Year 1 programmes is through the Central Applications Office (CAO) system. TUS recommends those eligible for offer and instructs the CAO to make the appropriate offer. Application to second and subsequent years is managed directly by TUS. FETAC Level 5 and Level 6 award holders are eligible for advanced entry to 2nd and subsequent years of approved programmes in cognate areas.

To assure the quality of TUS's engagement with students during their transition:
1. A Student Handbook is provided to all new entrants for ease of entry to third level education. Available at TUS Student Handbook

> The Student Handbook provides details related to:
> - Campus Life Information
> - Student Experience
> - Library
> - Computer Services
> - Examinations and Assessment
> - Research Development and Innovation
> - Data Protection and Freedom of Information
> - Health and Safety
> - Study Guide
> - Student Policies
> - Student Insurance
> - Public Information and Acts
> - Campus Maps.

2. The TUS Connect and Engage Programme. TUS have developed a comprehensive student induction and progression programme called Connect and Engage. This structured, activity-based programme is geared towards getting new students settled in and acquainted with other students and their campus. It provides students with the opportunity to actively engage in college life, get to grips with your course, join a club or society and develop a personal toolkit to live a healthy balanced and enjoyable lifestyle. The schedule includes an array of events and

activities ranging from support services to essential information for progressing students, first year induction together with 8 themed weeks of activities to help students enjoy a positive student experience. supports the transition of all students to TUS. Sample schedule available at: Connect and Engage.

Transfer

TUS accepts transfer requests from students who have completed a discrete element of a programme of study. The applicant must have successfully completed an award stage and have sufficient credits and attained the learning outcomes from the modules on that stage to enable transfer into TUS. Students may apply to transfer to the second or subsequent year of a cognate programme and the transfer will be subject to places being available in TUS. Internal transfers will take place with due regard to equity of treatment of students, including current school leavers and in accordance with the Technological Universities commitments to the CAO process. As a participant in the CAO process, TUS abides with agreements with the CAO which govern the admission of first year students. Transfer criteria are specified in TUS Admissions Office Website, in addition to the Internal Transfer Policy and the Admissions Office Policies and Procedures, Chapter 11, Internal Transfer for TUS Midlands and Midwest, respectively.

Progression:

TUS is guided by the principles of progression as outlined in it's academic regulations available at: TUS Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes. Section 4, titled Progression, details all aspect of student progression including programme level and credit, workload, stage progression, award level progression, limitations of progression, compensation, failed elements, deferral, aegrotat award and posthumous award. Data is collected, monitored and acted upon with regard to learner progression and completion rates and relevant statistics are presented to Academic Council, annually. Such information is used to inform the quality assurance of programmes through Programme Boards, Programmatic Reviews, and programme portfolios managed by Departments and Faculties, and the TUS Strategic Plan.

Recognition of Learning (RPL):

TUS recognises the importance of providing access to education and providing lifelong learning opportunities. The philosophy underpinning the Recognition of Prior Learning is to enable and encourage people to enter or re-enter formal education, leading to qualifications, by awarding exemptions or recognising credit for what they already know from the programme curriculum. TUS recognises the qualifications and prior learning of students and recognises Prior Certificated Learning and/or Prior Experiential Learning. The related regulations and procedures are outlined in the: TUS Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning. The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate the prior learning, by preparing and submitting adequate evidence, under the guidance and advice of the institution.

Certification:

The regulations and procedures for certification are outlined in the academic regulations available at: TUS Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes Section 3, Award Classification. And Section 3.4, Standards for Awards at Different Classifications.

TUS Access Initiatives

Through the work of the TUS Access Service, targeted strategies and initiatives are delivered to facilitate entry to, and successful participation in, higher education for underrepresented students. These access initiatives include partnering with local community groups and with the Active Learning for Adolescents early school leaver programme. TUS offers a one-year ACCESS programme for adult learners. The course equips candidates with the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to progress to third-level education at TUS. The access course gives students an understanding of discipline-specific basics and enables them to make informed decisions about their future third level education. TUS also offers an Access to Apprenticeship Programme initiative.

Building on the refugee and asylum seeker programmes established in Institutes of Technology in 2017, the TUS Sanctuary Award is an initiative of University of Sanctuary Ireland to encourage and celebrate good practice of universities, colleges and other education institutes welcoming refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants into their university communities and fostering a culture of welcome and inclusion for all those seeking sanctuary. In June 2022, TUS was successfully designated as a University of Sanctuary, the first TU in Ireland to be so designated following its successful application. This was in recognition of TUS's work to make higher education more welcoming and inclusive of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

Established by the Department of DFHERIS in a joint initiative between the HEA and SOLAS, the National Tertiary Office was tasked with the development of integrated programme pathways from further education to higher education, as part of the government's ambition for a unified tertiary education system. 'Tertiary Education Programmes' are co-designed and co-delivered by HEI's and Education and Training Boards (ETB's), to provide seamless transitioning pathways. As part of a pilot phase, 23 tertiary programmes commenced nationally in September 2023, across Business, ICT, Arts, Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction and Health and Welfare. TUS and the Limerick Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) are collaborating on the delivery of two TUS Programmes.

- Bachelor of Science in Mobile and Web Computing.
- Bachelor of Business in Business.

2.3   Procedures for Making Awards

As a Designated Awarding Body, TUS Academic Council had adopted the QQI Award Standards. TUS has robust procedures for ensuring that its awards are consistent with the relevant award standards and that programme development and validation procedures ensure that graduates of awards at the cognate levels of the NFQ will have attained the requisite standards of knowledge, skills and competency. The procedures are consistent with QQI Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies, Section 6. Thus, the NFQ is a core reference point during programme design and the specification of programme learning outcomes that align to award standard at the respective levels is a central element. Module learning outcomes and module assessment strategies are in turn aligned. The associated procedures are detailed in TUS procedures for programme development and review. These procedures assure that TUS Awards are consistent with awards of the NFQ at the respective award levels. The procedures are available at:

- TUS New Programme Validation Process Outline
- TUS Programmatic Review Process Outline

The use of Academic Module Manager software for programme development supports the alignment of programmes to the NFQ levels and the TUS adopted award standards. This software used for programme development requires extensive mapping to ensure that: a), Programme Learning Outcomes map to the relevant Award Standards, b), Module Learning Outcomes map to the Programme Learning Outcomes and c), the module assessment strategies are mapped to individual module learning outcomes. Ensuring that the standards of knowledge, skill and competency are appropriately articulated is a key part of programme validation.

Programme validation includes an assessment of the following criteria:

a) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes are specified in a manner consistent with the relevant TUS Awards Standards and with the NFQ Award-type descriptors;

b) the Module Learning Outcomes are specified at the appropriate level of the NFQ and use measurable active verbs;

c) the programme's prerequisite learning specification includes the knowledge, skill and competence specified at lower NFQ levels.

d) the programme is designed to enable learners to move from the minimum access standard to the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and that this is explicit, realistic and viable.

e) learners who are judged qualified to access the programme should be able to graduate from that programme subject to their making a reasonable effort and complying with the programme's conditions.

To assist programme teams a guide for Academics in writing and using learning outcomes, available at: Writing and Using Learning Outcomes, A Guide for Academics

2.4   Teaching, Learning and Assessment

TUS has a range of QAE procedures for assuring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. These policies and procedures are consistent with QQI Core QAG Section 2.5 – Teaching and Learning; ESG 1.3; Assessment: QQI Core QAG Section 2.6 – Assessment of Learners.

A key priority of the TUS Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026 is to "provide a relevant high-quality education offering, focused on interdisciplinarity, delivered in a flexible way to cater to a diverse cohort of students, across multi-campus locations". In delivering high quality education, the strategy is supported by the Putting Learning First, TUS Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2022 - 2025. The strategy sets out an Educational Philosophy that *"that co-creates an inclusive learning experience through leadership in teaching, active learning, research, scholarship, industry and civic collaboration*". The strategy commits TUS to a framework for an internationalised curriculum that is values-driven with overarching principles and a focus on knowledge creation, co-creation and intellectual leadership. In addition, the University is committed to providing an inclusive approach to curriculum design which is based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a framework that allows educators to apply a flexible approach to learning, teaching and assessment, for a diverse student population. A direct result of a UDL approach is accessibility for all learners, with more student-centred learning experiences. TUS is also cognisant that at a national and European level, the enhancement of digital skills for staff and students is a key factor in the provision of an enriched learning experience in higher education.

The *TUS - Putting Learning First Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy* is comprised of three interconnected elements, namely a TUS Graduate Attributes Framework, TUS Curriculum Design Approaches and seven key pillars that support excellence in learning, teaching and assessment. The TUS Graduate Attributes have been developed from the educational philosophy and are the overarching components that inform the principles and approaches for curriculum and programme design in the Technological University. These in turn inform the goals and objectives of the seven complementary pillars, designed to support excellence in learning, teaching and assessment (Figure 2.1).
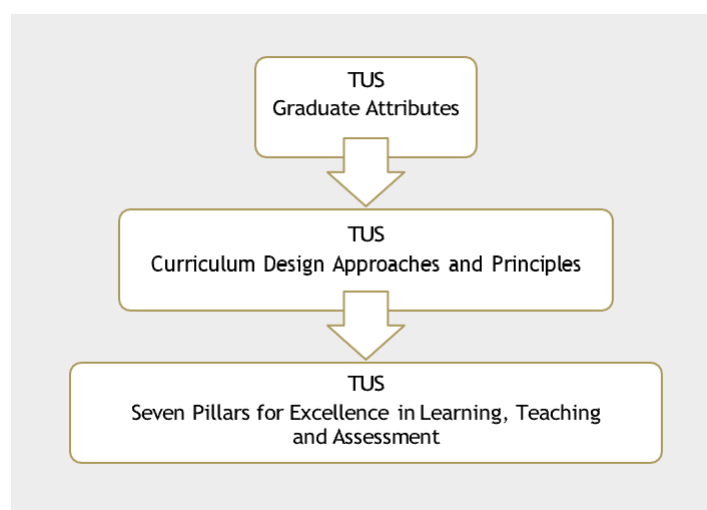
Figure 2.1 TUS Positioning of Graduate Attributes in Curriculum Design

TUS Graduate Attributes inform programme design resulting in a broader interpretation of the knowledge, skills, and competences which students are required to develop in higher education in keeping the National Framework of Qualifications. This is particularly relevant to the demand for non-routine, creative problem solving, and the requirement to be able to cooperate, collaborate and communicate with others as global citizens in a digital world. The TUS Graduate Attributes Framework is available to programme design teams and is included in Module Manager for programme mapping.
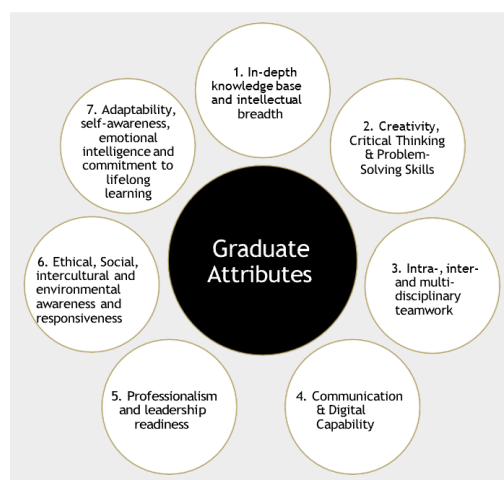
Figure 2.2 TUS Graduate Attributes

The Graduates Attributes Framework is complemented by a TUS Curriculum Design Approach. In this, TUS commits to a framework for an internationalised curriculum that is values-driven with overarching principles and a focus on knowledge creation, co-creation and intellectual leadership. It further commits to inclusive and student-centred models of curriculum design. The Graduates Attributes Framework Curriculum Design Approach are further supported by seven pillars supporting excellence in Teaching, Learning and Assessment. Each of the pillars support the pursuit of excellence and the enrichment of the learning experience of all learners and are further supported by a set of goals for development and implementation.

Figure 2.3. Seven Pillars Supporting Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learners are at the core and focus of activity in TUS and the increasing diversity of the learner population and the diversity of learner needs are recognised and valued. Student centred learning is characterised by pedagogies of care and positive transition, engagement through active and applied learning coupled with an emphasis on deep and authentic learning and assessment. The student-centred learning approach is further supported by the use of constructive alignment in which excellence is facilitated in a system where all aspects of delivery, and assessment of learning activities, are aligned to the intended learning outcomes. Constructive alignment to learning outcomes places the learning process at the centre of all activities while the active learning pedagogy places student centred learning firmly at the core and this dual emphasis fosters deep authentic learning. Student engagement in the learning process is stimulated by their direct involvement in discussion, debate dialogue, teamwork, presentations, project work, and work placement. It is complemented by other higher cognitive learning activities such as analysis, enquiry, exploration, evaluation amongst others in all the different contexts they emerge during a programme.

Assessment
Assessment is widely recognised as a key driver of learning in Higher Education and, in Ireland, there is now a significant focus on the authenticity of assessment and on academic integrity. This coincides with a focus on the continuum of Assessment OF/FOR/AS learning by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. Effective and authentic assessment has the potential to positively influence student engagement across five key domains of; cognitive, social, behavioural, collaborative and emotional development. Assessment can therefore be a key enabler of 21st century graduate attributes such as; critical thinking, creative problem solving, effective team-work, collaborative decision making and inter-disciplinary thinking. There is a commitment to continually review assessment practices in TUS to ensure they correspond to best practice nationally and internationally. The TUS procedures for assessment are outlined in detail in the TUS Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes. These regulations and procedures are consistent with the QQI Assessment and Standards (Revised 2022). Overall procedures for the assessment of students regulate the authority, role, responsibility and accountability of all persons and committees involved with assessment procedures. Such persons may include: Students; Internal and External Examiners; Department, Faculty/School Deans and Heads of Department; Department, Faculty/School Boards; Programme Boards; Boards of Examiners; Appeals Boards; the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar; Assistant Registrars, Academic Council; Governing Body and President.

External Examining:
External examining verifies that the content, teaching and assessment methods and their standards are appropriate for the nature and level of the academic award being reviewed. The selection, approval, and appointment of external examiners is central to the quality assurance practices of TUS as it invokes the support, guidance and insights from recognised professionals in various disciplines. The main purposes of External Examining at TUS are to ensure that:

a) the academic standard for each award and award element is set and maintained by the Technological University at the appropriate level and that student performance is properly judged against this;

b) the assessment process appropriately measures student achievement against learning outcomes, and is fair and fairly operated;

c) the Technological University is able to ensure that the standards of its awards are comparable with those of peer Higher Education Institutions.

Feedback is provided annually on the quality of learning via external examiner reports. External examiner reports are issued to department management and to relevant staff members for action and response. All reports and indicated consequent actions noted are reviewed by the Academic Council Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance and Enhancement. Full details of the TUS External Examiner Policy are available at: TUS External Examiners Policy and Procedure for Taught Programmes

Academic Integrity

Responsibility for demonstrating academic integrity lies with the enrolled learner and this "includes compliance with ethical and professional principles, standards, and practices by individuals or institutions in education, research, and scholarship". Academic integrity is relevant to all areas of academic endeavour undertaken by the enrolled learner. This includes, but is not limited to, all activities related to the achievement of academic credit for awards; all methods of learning practice including in the classroom; research; online, distance and work-based learning; in all methods of assessment; and in academic scholarship. TUS places significant emphasis on academic integrity and is represented on the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) established by QQI. TUS considers the NAIN forum an important instrument for the sharing and dissemination of information relating to the current issues, initiatives and best practice in the academic integrity sphere. From the TU perspective, academic integrity is nurtured through academic leadership which embeds the principles of academic integrity in its teaching, learning and assessment policies and practices. The TUS approach to academic integrity is outlined in TUS Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

The TUS approach to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Learner Resources and Support aligns with QQI Core QAG 2.7 - Supports for Learners; ESG 1.6 and the QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners. TUS has established an *Academic Council Subcommittee on Student Experience and Access* which provides governance for a broad range of areas to support the student experience including learner resources and student supports.

TUS is a dynamic and vibrant multi-campus community with a student-focused educational experience that fosters a culture of academic excellence. A supportive learning environment has at its core, a warm and welcoming ethos, where student well-being is cultivated and prioritised. Students are at the heart of our collaborative learning community which fosters diversity, inclusion, and social integration. TUS encourages student engagement outside the formal learning space where students may avail of the many opportunities to participate in activities that support their academic, cultural, social and sporting interests and preferences. This extra-curricular engagement contributes to student development and ultimately an optimal third level experience which will enable students to maximise their potential. By being an active participant in college life, students not only position themselves for their career but as the architect of their own future.

3.1 Policies and Procedures

TUS Academic Council has approved a range of Student Support Policies and Procedures as follows:

TUS Student Code of Conduct and Discipline

TUS Student Policy on Dignity and Respect Dealing with Harassment and/or Bullying among Students

TUS Student Complaints and Problem Resolution Procedure

TUS Student Reasonable Accommodation Policy

TUS Policy for Provision of Lecture Recording as a Reasonable Accommodation

TUS Policy and Procedures on the Provision of References for Students/Graduates of the Technological University

TUS Student Death Protocol

TUS Child Protection Policy

TUS Child Safeguarding Statement

These policies play important roles in supporting students as they progress through the student lifecycle. The Reasonable Accommodation policy outlines the TUS commitment to take all reasonable actions to support students across the full range of their disabilities/specific learning difficulties/ongoing health conditions, including but not limited to: sensory and physical disabilities, specific learning difficulties, mental health conditions, significant ongoing illness, and students with Autism.

3.2   Learner Resources

General Resources and Support

Within budgetary requirements, TUS is strongly committed to the provision of appropriate resources for all programmes. During programme validation and revalidation, resources are considered, in line with the validation criteria for a programme to be viable. Any deficit is identified and reported to Academic Council. The use of Academic Module Manager software for programme development supports the identification of resource requirements for the delivery of each module and each programme. During module definition and validation these requirements are explicitly listed and reviewed. TUS endeavours to continuously improve available resources. The academic, social and cultural experience of the student is central to the ongoing development of learner resources.

TUS is multi-campus Technological University and is growing with major capital investment in campus development and in new buildings/building upgrades. These buildings will accommodate science laboratories, flat teaching facilities, computer labs, tutorial rooms, 'break-out' and meeting spaces inter alia. Such infrastructural developments will also provide for the expansion and improvement of the learning resources available to TUS students.

TUS Campus Development Initiatives

Student Accommodation

TUS submitted an application in Q2 2024 to the HEA that identifies a number of student accommodation projects across the regions of TUS. The process remains ongoing. TUS are taking part in a development process by DFHERIS and the HEA for the creation of Design Standards for purpose-built student accommodation currently.

Pathfinder Project Moylish

As part of the Energy Efficiency & Decarbonisation Pathfinder 2023 programme operated by the HEA and SEAI, TUS secured funding to undertake a Stage 1/2a Design Report for developments to Blocks 12, 14 and 15 on the Moylish campus. The project would reduce the energy consumption and carbon emissions by over 70% across the 3 x Blocks and would enable refurbishment works to the existing buildings interior and new extensions to the Blocks.

STEM Building Athlone (PPP)

The construction stage of the project is expected to be completed in February 2025. Decant and mobilization will take place in the subsequent months before the building goes live as a teaching facility in September 2025

ASIT Building (Moylish)

A new planning application has been lodged for the building with Limerick City & County Council. Subject to relevant approvals, the construction stage is planned to commence in 2025.

Connected Campus Clonmel

A Preliminary Business Case has been submitted in partnership with Tipperary ETB for a major development at Kickham Barracks in Clonmel. The project would renovate 5,000sqm of protected structures on the site and develop another 5,000sqm of new build space to create a new campus in the town centre.

Thurles Regional Sports Campus

The detailed design stage for the proposed development will commence in October of 2024. The project has also been submitted for LSSIF funding and aims to develop state of the art sporting facilities in partnership with Tennis Ireland, Tipperary County Council and Tipperary GAA.

City North Sports Arena

A planning application has been lodged and a Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) application has been submitted with project partners Cycling Ireland. The planning application remains live with Limerick City & County Council; further information has been requested, and TUS is currently preparing a response to same.

APT Extension & Retrofit

The new facility at the Athlone Campus was officially opened on 27 September 2024 by Peter Burke, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The €5m construction contract developed 1,400sqm of space via extension and refurbishment for the Applied Polymer Technology gateway at the Athlone Campus.

Northgate Street Building

In partnership with Westmeath County Council, TUS are in the process of developing plans for a full refurbishment of the Northgate Street building in the heart of Athlone. The original building is a protected structure and was constructed in the 1840s as the administration building for a Workhouse. It was extended three times in the 1930s, 60s and 90s.TUS are assessing funding opportunities presently which will ultimately determine the viability of the proposed project.

Apprenticeship Capacity

In partnership with the Engineering Faculties, TUS has submitted applications (Preliminary Business Cases) for capital funding for increased capacity for apprenticeship training at Coonagh, Thurles, Athlone and Moylish. Building on recent investments across TUS, the proposed projects would result in significant increase in TUS apprentice delivery meeting local, regional and national needs.

Additional campus upgrade projects and general refurbishments at TUS can be accessed through the following link:

TUS Campus Services and Capital Development Newsletter

TUS Library (Space, Services, Collections, Skills & Expertise)
The library is central to the intellectual and academic life of TUS, where students and staff needs are the top priority. TUS Library leads through the provision of knowledge collections and learning services, training for information, digital and media literacy skills, and systems and expertise supporting scholarly communications and research. The TUS Institutional repository is hosted and managed by the library to make TU research available and accessible to the public. The library focuses on wide engagement with the TUS learning community at all levels from undergraduate programmes through to academic research, and collaboration across the organisation for the benefit of all learners. The Library endeavours to ensure provision of learning spaces onsite and online that are suitable for personal and collaborative learning. Staff in these spaces are committed to fostering learning, creativity, and

innovation through ensuring access to quality library resources and services, through the expertise and commitment of our library staff and by safeguarding a library environment that is both supportive and engaging for all learners. Alongside quality information resources, the library is committed to ensuring that students possess the core skills to locate and access the correct information when and where they need it and have the supplementary skills to know how to evaluate and use the information effectively and ethically. These goals are met through the library's annual library induction programmes and information and library skills sessions which cover learning to learn, information literacy and research skills across all libraries and in collaboration with academic departments. The Library have developed LibGuides, a collection of specialised research and subject guides and how-to tutorials which inform our learners about various library facilities and services, subject specialist guides for academic departments, as well as information resources to support learning and research. Library staff are trusted and proud colleagues and partners in TUS collaborating with all stakeholders in the wider TUS learning community from students to academic staff, postgraduates, researchers, alumni and our wider communities.

3.3   Learner Supports

Students in TUS have access to many supports and services outlined in this report including an induction and orientation programme 'Connect & Engage', Access, Disability, Student Counselling, Student Health Service, Learning Support, Careers and Employability, Pastoral Care, Peer Assisted Student Support, Mentors, Laptop Loan Scheme, and Societies. TUS also has a vibrant Sports Office and an active Students' Union who work collaboratively with student services in supporting students. The comprehensive Student Induction Programme 'Connect and Engage' is detailed in Section 2.2.

Access Service

TUS Access Service is committed to promoting access to higher education for under-represented groups and the TUS Access agenda flows from a philosophy of equality and social inclusiveness. TUS Access Service operates initiatives in partnership with schools, community organisations, and Further Education providers (Cf. Section 2.2 Access Initiatives). The aim of the service is to support widening access for under-represented students by delivering targeted strategies to promote, facilitate entry to and participation in the academic programmes and student life of the Technological University for students who are currently under-represented in third-level education. These include:
- Students who experience socio-economic disadvantage;
- Students with Disability and/or Specific Learning Difficulty;
- Mature Students;
- Irish Travellers and other Ethnic Minorities;
- Lone Parents;
- QQI Entrants;
- Part-Time Students.

Further information available at: Access Services - TUS

Disability Service

The Disability Service provides a range of supports and services to students with disabilities/specific learning difficulties/ongoing health conditions, to enable them to become independent learners and skilful graduates. Students are encouraged to contact the service as early as possible to discuss, in confidence, any facilities and supports they may require during their course of study. Supports are determined through the completion of an individual needs assessment which informs an individual

learning plan for the student. Types of Disability/Specific Learning Difficulties/Ongoing Health Conditions include:

- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD);
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD);
- Blind/Vision Impaired;
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing;
- Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) - Dyspraxia /Dysgraphia;
- Mental Health Difficulty;
- Neurological Conditions (including Epilepsy & Brain Injury);
- Physical Disability;
- Significant Ongoing Health Condition;
- Specific Learning Difficulty (including Dyslexia & Dyscalculia);
- Speech and Language Communication Disorder.

Further information available at: Disability Support - Midwest - TUS   Disability Support - Athlone - TUS

Student Counselling Service

TUS Student Counselling Service provides free, confidential professional psychological counselling, available to all registered students of TUS. The service is staffed by professional, qualified, and experienced psychologists, psychotherapists, and counsellors. The service aims to provide accessible, available, and student-friendly support for students when a personal issue or crisis arises which affects their wellbeing, happiness, their capacity to cope, relationships, or learning. The service also provides daily crisis and emergency appointments. The work of TUS Student Counselling Services (TUS SCS) is best described with reference to the four foundational pillars as identified by the Comprehensive Student Counselling Service Model (PCHEI 2022).

Further information available at: Counselling - TUS

Student Health Service

Whether students are sick or injured, managing a chronic health condition, or working to develop a healthier lifestyle the Student Health service is available to support. Student Health provides confidential, professional medical care to registered students. Our nurse led service is free and confidential and operates as an addition to a student's own family doctor or specialist medical service. Student Health services are available from Monday to Friday throughout the academic year. A GP service is available to all students within 3km of their campus and GP services are available on site in our Moylish and Athlone campuses to cater to the larger numbers of students. Doctor visits are subsidised, costing only €15 to the student and free for medical card holders outside a 5km radius of the relevant campus.

In addition to providing medical care and emergency attendance on campus, the Student Health service is committed to facilitating health promotion activities and delivering supportive measures to assist students in ways that keep them committed to their studies, including referral to wider services such as counselling, access, and disability support. Our ethos is centred around the premise that students who develop a healthy lifestyle in an environment that supports healthy choices are likely to have the best academic outcomes. The Athlone campus also offers am award winning, HSE funded nurse led sexual health, contraception and health promotion service to students on site. This confidential, self-referral

service tailored to students' requirements provides comprehensive care including testing, treatment and follow up of sexually transmitted infections, vaccinations, contraception services, pregnancy care, referrals, health promotion and education.

Further information available at: Student Health - TUS

Learning Support

Learning Support is available to all students with approximately 20% of students availing of support every year. We promote a supervised self-help model to empower the student and to focus on building their skills and confidence in a supportive and encouraging environment. This process is underpinned by the principles of active learning, with the student leading the process. Students experience challenges with different areas of their study. During their time in TUS students can avail of one-to-one consultations, group workshops and seminars to help improve their academic skills. Students who may have always struggled with writing or perhaps want to improve their writing skills, for the level of writing required at 3rd level, can avail of writing skills resources. Free tuition is available to all registered students, who self-refer or are referred, across a range of subjects. The Learning Support delivery model in TUS Midlands and TUS Midwest currently but it is noteworthy however the key deliverables outlined above apply across all campuses.

Further information available at: Learning Support Unit - TUS

Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Care Service works across our six campuses to create a caring and supportive community for our students. A Chaplain, from the Diocese is based in Midlands while a staff appointed, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, is based in TUS Midwest campuses. This service plays a significant role in delivering a person-centred supportive environment while engaging with our students in times of need. The Pastoral Care service, by its nature, works quietly and often unseen, but provides a very effective bridge to other services and supports both within the Technological University and locally within the communities TUS serves. Reflection rooms are available for prayer and meditation to students on our Moylish and Athlone campuses to cater for our larger student populations on this campus.

Further information available at: Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care - TUS

Peer Assisted Student Support Programme

Peer Assisted Student Support (PASS) is a formal academic peer learning initiative where second year students, known as PASS Leaders, facilitate PASS sessions with first year students with training provided through the PASS Leadership module. PASS aims to help first year students with the transition to higher education and to TUS supporting first year students in their learning through collaborative groupwork during their first semester at university. PASS Leaders are recruited and trained to work almost exclusively in pairs (or triads) to facilitate weekly timetabled collaborative groupwork sessions. PASS sessions are held within programme cohorts, for example, Veterinary Nursing Leaders facilitate sessions exclusively for Veterinary Nursing first year students.

PASS and the associated module are now under the remit of the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development (CPID). The placement of PASS in CPID helps to ensure the quality and provision of adequate resources. The Module Coordinator for PASS oversees the recruitment, selection and

training of Leaders. Quality is ensured at all stages of the initiative through assessment, debriefs, observations and reflection. PASS Leaders complete a portfolio of their work through a journal, including reflection on sessions, the knowledge and skills gained, and their overall experience. Quality is ensured at all stages through class representation at Programme Boards and the External Examiner review process, culminating in the Examination Board. Additional professional support staff and academic support have helped to ensure the growth of PASS while maintaining the same quality standards through training, observation and debriefs.

Further information available at: PASS - Athlone - TUS

Mentors
All the Midwest first year students are assigned a Mentor. The administration support for the provision of the Mentoring Programme is facilitated by the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator. Mentors are comprised of staff from across the TU. The supportive relationship between Mentor and Student enhances the learning environment and encourages students in reaching their full potential.

Further information available at:

TUS Societies
TUS is a member of Board of Irish College societies which is made up of societies officers across Ireland, who come together to ensure students have the best student experience possible. Awards ceremonies are held annually, and respective Institutional societies officers nominate their best societies for a number of different awards. TUS emphasizes social development and co-curricular achievements as a support to academic excellence. A broad range of societies have been formed by students that not only provide exceptional opportunities for personal development but also give students the chance to interact with industry professionals and to learn the practicalities of event management. Students are encouraged to enrol in societies and to play an active part. TUS has appointed a Societies Officer whose primary role is to support students who undertake voluntary roles in the TUS societies. Societies provides a safe space for all students and encourage and promote equality & diversity.

TUS Students Union
The Students' Union is the representative body for the students of TUS and represents student views at an TU wide-level, on various committees and bodies throughout TUS and communicates them to management in TUS. The Students' Union works actively to resolve student issues and acts as a channel of communication to bring student issues to the attention of Management. The Students' Union acts as a voice for every student to enhance the college experience by providing social, academic and cultural support that is effective, reliable and inclusive. The Students' Union is dedicated to providing a multidisciplinary service of advice and understanding.

Further information available at: Home - TUSSU - A Union For Solutions

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

The TUS approach to the Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes is consistent with the *QQI Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes; Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes (2019); HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education, The 'Salzburg' Principles, The 'Salzburg II' Recommendations*; and the *National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland.*

Research activity is a defining hallmark of higher education, informing teaching and learning, and adding to the global body of knowledge. It is the ambition of TUS to grow postgraduate research activity and develop its research activities in line with the TURN Report. At the heart of TUS's research activity is the ambition to be a strategic knowledge generator and technology transfer partner of choice for companies and organisations facing the challenges of achieving sustainable competitive advantage in their marketplace. The 'knowledge square' of research, innovation, education and society are the drivers of knowledge-based research at TUS delivering impact, value and innovative solutions for our society and economy. TUS operates mutually supporting processes and procedures to promote and maintain high quality research. In TUS 'research' covers a wide variety of activities but always represents a careful study or investigation based on a systematic understanding and critical awareness of knowledge. It covers innovative work in the whole range of academic, scientific, technological and professional fields, engineering, nursing and healthcare, business, humanities, hospitality, tourism and creative and digital arts. In all of these contexts, 'research' is understood to involve the integration of rigour, reflection and critique.

In the provision of research, TUS aligns with the relevant statutory guidelines and with the TURN Report.

a) The provision of opportunities to students to progress to research degree programme of study is a key aspect of the TUS approach to its overall Access, Transfer and Progression agenda and signifies an important progression opportunity for students. It also contributes significantly to research-led teaching at TUS and ensures that academic activities to remain at the forefront of the disciplines offered in addition to maintaining links with industry and wider society.

b) The development of Research Degree Programme (RDP) provision is an integral element of supporting TUS ambitions in line with the TURN Report.

c) At TUS, each Research Degree Programme (RDP) is distinct and is considered individually beyond the point where the thesis/exegesis (or equivalent) has been submitted. This is because for a supervised RDP, unlike a taught programme, a specific learning outcome can only be determined after the programme is complete.

d) Supervised RDPs at Level 9 and at Level 10 are assessed in accordance with the *QQI Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Research Degree Programmes* (2017).

e) Principal supervisors are drawn from an extensive panel who are themselves engaged in advanced study and research, and other activities relating to practice in the subject and/or discipline area concerned.

4.1 Governance of Research Degree Provision at TUS

Academic Council is responsible for overseeing all aspects relating to the academic activities of the Technological University. As such, all Research Degree Programmes come within the authority of Academic Council including procedures, standards, and academic content. In accordance with Section 17 (3) (d) of the Technological Universities Act (2018) Academic Council is responsible for *"making recommendations to the technological university on programmes for the development of research"*. To assist in fulfilling this function, TUS Academic Council has established a subcommittee titled *Postgraduate Studies & Research* and its Terms of Reference are available at: [Terms of Reference Postgraduate Studies & Research](#)

The subcommittee is responsible for ensuring coherence and complementarity between the Research Development and Innovation (RDI) functions of the Technological University and its graduate research agenda through the provision of Research Degree Programmes, advising Academic Council on all matters relating to the quality assurance, development, structure, delivery, assessment of such programme. In this regard, the subcommittee has the following general responsibilities:

a) developing and monitoring of the Technological Universities research strategy, policies and regulations and reporting to the Academic Council on matters related to postgraduate research degrees.

b) recommending approval (or non-approval) of postgraduate research degree programmes, supervisors and examiners to Academic Council.

c) annual monitoring of progress of postgraduate research degree students. The Postgraduate Studies and Research subcommittee is provided with a progression status report following annual progression reviews.

d) developing and monitoring of the Technological University's RDI strategies, policies and regulations and advising Academic Council on activities and matters related to RDI.

The TUS Research Ethics Committee is an integral part of the overall TUS research governance ecosystem and is tasked with the maintenance and oversight of the TUS Research Integrity Policy and TUS Research Ethics Policy. Communicating to Academic Council via the Postgraduate Studies and Research Subcommittee, the Research Ethics Committee is responsible for ensuring that the ethical performance of research at TUS is to the highest standards, and for ensuring the accuracy and authenticity of the research record. Decisions of the Research Ethics Committee are conveyed to the Academic Council for noting, rather than approval, and simultaneously disseminated to Faculties.

4.2 Qualification Requirement and Award Standards

Masters

The qualifications available to research students are Master of Arts (MA) / Master of Science (MSc) / Master of Business (MBus) / Master of Engineering (MEng), Master of Law (LLM).

TUS's Generic Standards for the Master's Degree sets the standard (of knowledge, skill and competence) to be acquired for the Master's Degree by research. The Master's Degree is awarded to a research student who has carried out a programme of research and has attained the standard specified by TUS in accordance with the level indicators and award-type descriptors of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Research Master's graduates should have a mastery of principles and leading theories of their discipline and subdiscipline, competence in appropriate research

methods, an ability to manage complexity, integrate knowledge and contribute to the literature in a field. Required taught modules must also be completed.

Examiners are required to assess the student using the thesis as evidence and satisfy themselves that the student has attained the standard. The examiners are required to assess under eight learning outcome strands (knowledge, skill and competence) described in the award standard. The examiners may request a viva voce. To recommend the award the examiners must be convinced that the student has attained the required learning outcomes.

<u>Doctor of Philosophy</u>

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Level 10 in the National Framework of Qualifications is available to research students who successfully complete a Research Degree Programme (RDP). To be eligible for consideration for the award of a Level 10 (Doctoral) degree, the learner must accumulate the requisite credits as specified in the Academic Regulations for Research Degree programmes as outlined in the *TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations 2023-2026*.

The Doctor of Philosophy award is made on the basis of knowledge, skill and competency normally gained through a validated supervised RDP resulting in the production of a thesis/exegesis and artistic/creative work/product (where appropriate). The Doctor of Philosophy award is conferred for advanced levels of achievement, in which the research student demonstrates outstanding scholarship and ability. The research student must demonstrate that they have conducted original, independent research, have a broad knowledge of a particular field of study, comprehensive knowledge of the specialist area upon which their research is focused, and have made a novel contribution to knowledge in their field. TUS offers Structured PhD programmes incorporating elective modules complementary to the field of research and where required taught modules must also be completed. Examiners are required to assess the student (*viva voce*) using the thesis as evidence and satisfy themselves that the student has attained the standard for the award. The examiners are required to report under each of the eight learning outcome strands (knowledge, skill and competence) described in the standard.

4.3   Quality Assurance of Research Activities including Policies and Procedures

A significant development in the enhancement of graduate level education at TUS has been the approval of the following:

- [TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations 2023-2026](#)

- [TUS Article-based PhD Thesis/PhD Thesis by Publication 2024-2026](#)

- [Framework for the Development of Professional Doctorate in the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest 2024-2026](#)

- [TUS Submission Specifications for PhD and Master's Theses 2024 – 2026](#)

- [TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations for Professional Doctorates 2024 - 2026](#)

Due to the cross-campus nature of graduate studies, TUS initially operated transitional arrangements reflecting legacy structures as it developed an integrated approach to QAE. However, the legacy structures differed with respect to management roles and process flows and support functions. Under the current structure, the VP of Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) has ultimate oversight of

QAE of Graduate Education with the Dean of Graduate Studies, Head of the Graduate School.

The research regulations provide for a variety of research functions to support postgraduate students and their Research Programmes from registration right through to graduation, adopting a 'life cycle' approach to graduate research education. This includes the Graduate School, a Graduate School Programme Board and Faculty Research Committees (FRCs) to ensure quality and transparency. All proposed research programmes are considered through the Academic Council subcommittee on their academic merits. The research proposal, resource deployment and supervisory arrangements are assessed by the Graduate School and the FRCs prior to registration to optimize quality in resource provision.

In relation to governance, monitoring and capacity building, some important aspects of the TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations include:

- an FRC established in each faculty to further embed research within faculties and departments;

- the Graduate School operates to both support and monitor compliance and to support the effective operationalisation of the regulations within faculties in conjunction with the FRCs;

- the TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations 2023-2026 explicitly clarify the responsibilities of research students and supervisors and operationalise effective training and support systems for supervisors and students.

The Graduate School has also developed a compendium of TUS Research Forms to support the implementation of its research regulations and to enhance operational efficiencies.

4.4 Supports for Research Students at TUS

TUS operates a comprehensive range of supports for Masters and PhD by research students. This includes training and development for staff and students organised by the Graduate School and Graduate Research Offices. Candidates and their supervisors are supported through all stages of the research degree programme.

A thorough induction programme has been developed for incoming research students and supervisors to educate them on postgraduate policies and procedures and support them in their research projects. All new research post- graduate students attend mandatory research postgraduate student induction. This induction provides an overview of governance and compliance structures within TUS, as well as an introduction to the researcher support services and the research community. TUS also provides formal Research Integrity Training through the Epigeum training platform. General and discipline specific training in health and safety protocols are provided by the TUS Health and Safety Officer in collaboration with the Graduate School and Graduate Research Office. The programme of support offered on TUS campuses broadly aligns with the principles enshrined in the European Charter for Researchers and European Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Based on demand, a broad range of work- shops are available under the following broad areas:
- Research Skills and Techniques;
- The TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations 2023-2026;
- Research Management;
- Optimising Personal Effectiveness;

- Communication Skills;
- Networking and Teamworking;
- Research Career Management;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in research;
- Grant writing;
- Mentorship for Supervisors
- Academic Entrepreneurship.

Workshops are assessed annually by the Graduate School and are added to when needed to optimise quality in provision.

TUS Library provides research skills instruction, access to scholarly knowledge resources and one-to-one consultation to postgraduate students and supervisors, including access to the scholarly collections supporting postgraduate teaching and research. Postgraduate students and supervisors can avail of training and advice on publishing and disseminating their research, managing their academic profile and engaging in best practices in Open Research.

Additional training and development opportunities at other institutions/organisations over the course of the research degree programme are identified jointly by the student and their Supervisors. TUS Library supports research data management from the individual researcher to the university research profile. This involves the integration of research data from databases such as ORCID, Scopus and SciVal applications within the PURE research management system.

As a financial support, bursaries have been awarded to research students under the President's Doctoral Scholarship scheme (PDS) annually on a competitive basis from seed funds. Applications have been growing since this scheme was first initiated. In 2023/2024, TUS was successful in attaining €12 million in funding through the TU RISE initiative to grow postgraduate numbers, advance human capital development in the area of research and strengthen innovation in the TUS through academic entrepreneurship. Postgraduate students are also encouraged to present at relevant conferences both nationally and internationally and are supported to produce peer reviewed publications in highly ranked journals prior to and after graduation.

5.0   Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

TUS has a range of policies and procedures for Academic Staff Recruitment, Development and Support which are consistent *with QQI Core QAG 2.4 - Staff Recruitment, Management and Development; ESG 1.5; Teaching Staff* and the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, *National Professional Development Framework for All Staff Who Teach in Higher Education.*

5.1   Staff Recruitment

HR recruitment policies are consistent with the approved norms for the sector, including the conditions laid out in applicable circular letters relating to recruitment and selection. All recruitment is supported by the definition of job specifications. Selection and recruitment practices are regulated and controlled in line with the State's governance requirements. Successful candidates are selected based on merit following a fair, consistent and equitable process. TUS is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to developing, maintaining and supporting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion in employment in which staff are treated equitably and where they can realise their potential. TUS is committed to promoting a work environment free from discrimination on the grounds of *Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Race or Member of the Travelling Community*, in accordance with the relevant legislation. Following interview, successful candidates are offered positions pending receipt of satisfactory references and the successful candidate must submit evidence (original copies) of academic, professional or technical qualifications. The TUS Recruitment, Selection & Appointments Policy has been developed, with associated processes and procedures being rolled out to ensure that staff are suitably qualified and experienced for the roles that they are recruited to. Newly recruited members of staff participate in an intensive induction programme delivered by HR. Local induction within Faculties/Department is also provided to familiarise new staff with their designated roles and responsibilities.

5.2   Staff Support

In addition to providing centralised administration of recruitment and employment contracts, TUS HR Offices provide advice on various leave and flexible work options available, pensions (including retirement information) and benefits (such as Bike to Work Scheme, Gym Membership, Tax Saver Commuter Scheme and VDU Eye Examination). The TUS Employee Assistance Scheme is a 24/7 free and confidential support service designed to assist staff in dealing more effectively with any personal or work-related problems faced. The service is operated confidentially by Spectrum Life, the largest provider of employee health and wellness services in Ireland.

TUS has developed and approved a range of leave and flexible working policies to support staff, and each are available on the TUS HR webpage:

> TUS Adoptive Leave Policy
> TUS Annual Leave Policy
> TUS Bereavement Policy
> TUS Career Break Policy
> TUS Maternity Leave Policy
> TUS Force Majeure Policy
> TUS Parental Leave Policy
> TUS Carers Leave Policy

TUS Parents Leave Policy
TUS Paternity Leave Policy
TUS Workshare Policy (PMS Staff)
TUS Job Share Policy (Academic Staff)
TUS Marriage and Civil Partnership Leave Policy Equal Opportunities Policy

TUS Policies on Blended Working and Flexitime are currently under development. TUS HR Managers provide best practice advice and assistance on the operation and implementation of grievance, dignity and respect, and disciplinary procedures. Nationally agreed disciplinary and grievance procedures are in operation within the TU. The TUS Dignity and Respect at Work Policy and Procedure has been approved by Governing Body is now available on the TUS HR website.

5.3   Staff Development

TUS is committed to supporting and investing in its staff to facilitate their development. Support for professional development encompasses staff at all levels and in all categories. TUS offers Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to staff and the approach enshrines the commitment to supporting staff to develop their skills and competencies through the acquisition of academic qualifications, in line with the needs and objectives of the TU. While work is ongoing for the development of a TUS Staff Development Policy, legacy policies are implemented in
TUS Midlands: Professional Development Policy
TUS Midwest: Continuous Professional Development Policy
Regular training workshops are made available to Academic and Professional, Management & Support (PMS) staff to support their day-to-day activities. All staff have unlimited access to LinkedIn Learning which gives them an opportunity to supplement existing skills and learn new ones.

5.4   Staff Development in Teaching and Learning

TUS Academic Council has a dedicated *Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning* with specific Terms of Reference to assure the Quality of its teaching and learning policies and practices. TUS works closely with the HEA National Forum for Teaching and Learning. The National Forum highlights that CPD of staff should facilitate "meaningful personal and professional development in a variety of ways". Therefore, it is important that TUS ensures that the CPD training and supports for staff are flexible and suit the needs of staff collectively and individually. Best practice suggests that they should be inclusive, promote peer collaboration and be underpinned by the scholarship of quality teaching and learning. TUS is committed to supporting and investing in its staff to facilitate their development. Staff support and training are aligned to both TUS and National teaching and learning principles. These include TUS's Putting Learning First, TUS Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy 2022 To 2025 and the National Professional Development Framework for all Staff who Teach in Higher Education which was published by the National Forum in August 2016. All staff development activities are aligned with the strategy and are informed by the key themes of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, in addition to the TUS Future Advanced Skills Academy (FASA) established under the RUNEU project, and other HEA-funded initiatives focusing on increasing access to higher education.

Non-Accredited CPD
The diverse unaccredited CPD programme spans a broad range of relevant and important themes and evolves annually in accordance with emerging needs. The work includes dedicated staff development days in addition to a suite of ongoing seminars, workshops and support sessions and Community of

Practice events. A theme for staff development is identified that ties with key TUS strategic priorities and each day includes keynote speakers followed by a range of bespoke workshops for skills development. The CPID Centre work closely with their colleagues in the Teaching and Learning Centres in Regional Consortium partner organisations including UL & MIC. Lunch time sessions, regional workshops, seminars as well as Regional Teaching Awards are some of the joint activities that are organised and offered to TUS staff. The collaborative partnership extends the range of non-accredited CPD offerings for TUS staff and provides an opportunity for staff to meet and discuss with peers in the regional partners. The National PD Framework also highlights the importance of "personal and professional digital capacity and the application of digital skills and knowledge to professional practice". Approaches for improving digital skills and capacity with TUS have focused on two main areas, putting technology in place that is accessible to staff and providing support and training on how to implement digital tools in the classroom.

Accredited CPD
TUS has a comprehensive suite of accredited CPD opportunities in Teaching and Learning available to Academic Staff.

> Accredited Programmes
>
> - Master of Arts in Academic Practice (90 ECTS Credits)
> - Postgraduate Diploma in Learning, Teaching and Assessment (60 ECTS Credits)
> - Postgraduate Diploma in Academic Practice (60 ECTS Credits)
> - Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (30 ECTS Credits)

These programmes contain a rage of embedded Special Purpose Award Certificates which range from 10 to 15 ECTS credits. Many of the programmes are delivered in the evenings online to provide flexibility for participants.

5.5 TUS Academic Staff Qualifications

As part of the overall approach to CPD, TUS supports academic staff to achieve higher awards. The TUS Academic Staff Doctoral Bursary Awards Programme is a tuition fee and time-release award to support academic staff who wish to undertake a Doctoral Programme, transfer from an existing Master Programme to a Doctoral Programme or complete their existing Doctoral Programme.

6.0   Information and Data Management

The QA procedures for collecting, analysing and using relevant information about TUS's programmes and its activities are consistent with QQI Core QAG Section 2.8 and ESG 1.7 Information Management. TUS recognises that Information Management is funda- mental to support and enhance its overall functions, operations and decision-making processes. It plays a critical role in strategic planning and decision making at all levels within the organisation and supports research and analysis across a broad range of academic and business processes, including academic administration, student support and success, resource and budget management and compliance, to mention but a few. Accordingly, it plays a vital role in improving operational efficiency and effectiveness. The TUS strategic plan identifies Reflective Practice and Continuous Improvement and Communication Technology and Digitisation among its key strategic enablers and effective use of information, institutional data and evidence is integral to these enablers.

There are a wide variety of information systems used in TUS including a range of core business systems, with additional specialist and more bespoke systems that support individual functions and processes. Some are part of a collective suite of systems managed by Educampus, a company set up to provide IT system support to the HEI sector. These include:

- Banner - Student Record Management System;
- Agresso - Financial Management System;
- CoreHR – Staff Record Management System;
- Koha – Library Record Management System.

Supplementary systems include the curriculum management system, Academic Module Manager (AMM), the examinations management system (GURU) and Digitary Credential Management System. Other important information systems include the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle, and Scientia Timetabling. A wider list of systems utilised at TUS is available at: TUS Information Systems

TUS has a MIS Business Intelligence & Development Unit (MIS/BIU) that supports data collation and information processing. The MIS/BIU function enables a single source of data and information to support management activities such as strategic planning in the context of targets and KPI's, service delivery and future planning.

The collation and verification of student data is of particular importance and student data is submitted to the HEA twice annually via Student Record System (SRS) reports for statistical purposes. These are based on two census dates, November 1st and March 1st, with SRS extracts deriving data directly from Banner. They are used to analyse student trends under a diverse range of categories including at organisational/faculty/department and programme levels. These are used in various strategic discussions and contribute to decision making at multiple levels. SQL Server Reporting Services are used to generate SSRS Reports. SSRS Reports derive data live from systems such as Banner, Timetabling System, and CoreHR. These have been developed by the MIS/BIU Offices with the engagement and input of managers and other relevant stakeholders. Their objective is to improve the use and review of data and to optimise reports to enable reliable and relevant data extracts.

Evidence Based Decision Making

Decision making strategies are formulated using evidence derived from electronic/digitised datasets which rely on both complete and comprehensive data, where data integrity and quality are assured. Statistical data from the various information systems form the basis for educational and financial decisions at executive and management levels. Extracts from information systems are also used to supply and inform a wide range of reports and statistics to various external agencies such as the HEA and DFHERIS or to inform funding applications under various calls. Data is also provided for freedom of information requests, press reports and in-house annual reports.

Management use SSRS reports and Power BI to ensure data integrity and consistency in analysis and presentation. Further roll-out of access to such reports across TUS is planned to enhance effectiveness. This includes the development of management report platforms and dashboards with access granted based on needs and roles. These platforms supplement the standard reports available through SSRS extracts. They offer the advantage of being easier to access for a wider range of users and are more user friendly. They also have an export feature for further analysis and reporting within excel.

Consistency in defining key data sets in relation to student statistics has been identified as a priority, particularly in light of the integration and standardisation of approaches. A TUS Definitions and Methodology for Student Statistics Reports has been approved by academic council to support this consistency by defining the various measures of student success, including Retention, Completion, Progression/Non-progression and determining the associated statistical profiles under various categories including programme, department, and at TUS-wide levels.

Information and Data Compliance

TUS is continuing to develop its infrastructure supporting information management through the introduction of a data management system which records all the data elements processed and provides a central training function around data management and cybersecurity for the university. The TUS Data Protection Policy covers all processing activities that involve Personal Data and Sensitive Personal Data (special categories of Personal Data) whether in electronic, cloud based, or physical format, in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Acts, 2018. The IDCO and Computer services department are working together towards the development of a university data governance structure.

The IDCO manages the publication of records required by the Model Publication Scheme under Freedom of Information. The TUS Website provides downloads, and links to relevant records and appropriate sections of the TUS website. The IDCO is actively developing an Open Data publication procedure and has an assigned Data Officer. The IDCO manages the implementation of Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Open Data publication, and Protected Disclosures, inter alia.

TUS have a Protected Disclosures policy as required by the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 (revised by the 2022). The Policy provides a clear reporting structure for protected disclosures. The Designated Person for protected disclosures is situated in this office. There is a dedicated section on protected disclosures on the TUS Website.

Information sessions and training are circulated to employees via the Data Management system for the various functions within the office. The IDCO are represented on the TUS Ethics committees. The office is also represented on national forums for data protection, freedom of information, open data, and protected disclosures.

Additionally, the following TUS policies govern information security, acceptable usage and ICT standards.

TUS Information Security Policy

TUS Acceptable Usage Policy

TUS ICT Standards

General Academic Information

A broad range of general academic information is generated and collated annually through the ongoing work of TUS governance and management processes and through the processing of the programme and student lifecycle. This spans a broad range of activities and includes meeting packs and minutes from governance fora such as academic council, subcommittees, faculty, department and programme boards inter alia. These records are retained systematically for relevant periods in accordance with the TUS Data Retention and Records Management Policy by the relevant functions.

The national Student Survey yields TU-wide data that is analysed and presented to management to enhance decision-making in relation to the student experience. TUS also participates in the annual Graduate Outcomes Survey as a key performance indicator relating to careers and employability. TUS Library systems provide students and staff with access to search and retrieval of books, journals, dissertations, reports and other materials which have been purchased or subscribed to by TUS, as well as open access and material created by library staff.

Research Information Management System (RIMS) - PURE

Upon designation as a Technological University, a strategic management decision was made to make the Implementation of a Current Research Information Management System (CRIS/RIMS) a priority. Funding was sought and awarded for the purchase of a suitable system under the Technological University Transformation Fund, and Elsevier's PURE solution was selected from the national tender framework. The implementation of PURE in TUS will allow the collection and storage of quality metadata on research activities, researchers, and outputs such as; publications, artefacts, datasets, and patents; grants and projects; academic service and honours; and media reports in a single integrated IT research ecosystem. The public facing aspect of PURE (the portal), will increase visibility of all research activity within TUS. The funding for this project has also continued through into TUS TU RISE.

PURE will support the key reporting metrics as established by the Technological Universities Act (2018), and tracking of Research (Strategic Priority 2) Objectives set-out in our Strategic Plan 2023-2023 . The project will play a key role in enabling TUS to achieve the national goal of 100% open access to research publications by 2030, as outlined in the National Action Plan for Open Research 2022 - 2030. It will also facilitate the capturing and reporting of additional research activity, such as editorial work, conference

hosting, peer-reviewing to name but a few, as well as enabling reporting on an extended range of research outputs. Noted in several places in Impact 2030 is the need for capturing outputs, impact and metrics that fall outside of the traditional publication and citation data used for evaluation, PURE will facilitate this need.

Work commenced on this project in 2023 and phase one of the project, the TUS PURE portal and Researcher Profiles went "live" on April 25th, 2024. Integration with the HR system (CORE) allowed for creation of research active staff profiles in PURE. Staff profiles were then linked to external data sources where available (e.g. Scopus, SciVal, ORCID) allowing for a centralised, interoperable researcher profile.

Similarly, integration with the Student Record System (Banner) will result in research student profiles, also linked with the external sources listed above and establishing the staff/student supervisory relationship(s) in PURE. This phase of the project has commenced, and we anticipate student research profiles will be in place by early November. Integration capabilities was key to choosing PURE as TUS's Research information system, creating, and populating both staff and student records from reliable systems and reducing re-entry of data. PURE also allows for cataloguing of equipment, we will work with our researchers over the coming months to source data on TUS equipment they would like made available on the portal. Having equipment catalogued in PURE, not only allows for a web presence on the portal, but we can link equipment to outputs and awards, highlighting their impact.

The library will transition from using Research@THEA as the TUS Institutional Repository to PURE. Again, allowing a single point of entry for all research related activity, with the added benefit of both statistical information and reporting capabilities.

7.0   Public Information and Communication

The TUS approach to Public Information and Communication is consistent with *QQI Core QAG Section 9, Public Information and Communication* and ESG *1.8 Public Information*. TUS engages internal and external stakeholders through a variety of media, including print, broadcast, online and social. The goal of such activity is to ensure the Technological University achieves brand salience regionally, nationally and internationally with the goal of boosting student numbers and attracting and retaining top talent – ultimately ensuring the continued prosperity of the Midlands and Midwest region.

TUS publishes information about its programmes of education, training, research and related services which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible. The goal includes engaging in outreach and providing relevant accurate information to key stakeholders such as prospective and current students, alumni, industry, business and enterprise, community groups, and national agencies, among a wide variety of others. The goals also include the promotion of transparency, accountability and public trust in the activities and services offered.

One of the primary public information sources for TUS stakeholders to acquire information is the TUS website, www.tus.ie. TUS publishes information about its activities that is relevant, easily accessible, accurate and in line with the principles set out in statutory guidelines. The website is a vital source of public information for the large and diverse audience. It plays an integral role in the life of the TUS community including current and prospective students, staff, and a diverse range of external stakeholders. It provides up-to-date information on activities, news and events in addition to information on TUS academic Faculties/Departments and a range of other internal and external services offered by TUS. All approved TUS policies and procedures along with any other governance related materials are also published through the website.

The public can access information on TUS governance structure and on its QAE framework, its full suite of academic policies and procedure in the Quality Handbook and quality assurance activities including evaluations and findings from quality reviews and annual reporting. These are available at: https://tus.ie/quality/. Information publicly available includes:
- ✓ TUS Interim Code of Governance;
- ✓ TUS Academic Quality Assurance Handbook;
- ✓ TUS Academic Council Documentation 2022 – 2025;
- ✓ TUS New Programme Validation Reports;
- ✓ TUS Programmatic Reviews;
- ✓ Annual Quality Review (AQR);
- ✓ TUS CINNTE Institutional Profile
- ✓ TUS QQI CINNTE Report
- ✓ TUS Annual Reports.

Learner Public Information

TUS ensures that all information about its activities, including education, training and research programmes, is clear and readily accessible for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public. For current and prospective students, the online prospectus for TUS provides clear and transparent information on the University's undergraduate programme offerings,

including the Admissions criteria for each programme. The information is published through the various communication channels that provide programme information. The principal TUS publications include:

TUS Student Handbook
TUS Undergraduate Prospectus
TUS Undergraduate - CAO
TUS Graduate School and Research
TUS Flexible and Online Learning Programme Guide International Study at TUS
International Study at TUS

In terms of TUS Research information Management, the Library have created a single curated location to share their research outputs that are accessible to the public. This is available at TUS Research Repository.

TUS Public Communication & Social Media

TUS communicates across several social media platforms with updates provided regularly on news and events with press releases posted to https://tus.ie/news/. TUS has a presence on; Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn and Snapchat. The official TUS social media accounts are managed by the Marketing & Communications Office. Each social media platform has its own distinct audience, meaning that messages and communications are tailored for each specific platform.

Links are available at:

•   TikTok: https://www.tiktok.com/@tus_ie
•   Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/tus_ire/
•   LinkedIn: https://ie.linkedin.com/school/tus-ie/
•   Twitter: https://twitter.com/TUS_ie
•   Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/TUoftheShan-non
•   Snapchat: https://www.snapchat.com/add/tus_ie

TUS Brand

The TUS brand symbolises our identity, heritage, and uniqueness and has been of considerable importance to successfully establishing a TUS identity since designation. The TUS logo represents the heritage and connections between the Midlands and Midwest regions. The symbol of the bridge represents the connections held between our regions and communities either side of the River Shannon. The water represents the vital resource the Shannon has provided us through the years. TUS has provided staff with branding resources including TUS logos, email signatures and virtual backgrounds. For consistency of approach, TUS has provided users with TUS Brand Guidelines. Signage has been incrementally changed across TUS campuses to reflect the TUS identity. Further details available at: TUS Brand - TUS

8.0   Monitoring and Periodic Review

TUS implements a variety of processes to enable ongoing monitoring and periodic review, and these are consistent with *QQI Core QAG Sections 2.1, Governance and Management of Quality, 2.2, Documented Approach to Quality Assurance and 2.10.3 - Expert Panellists, Examiners and Authenticators, and 2.11 - Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review.*   They are also consistent with *ESG1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance and 1.9 Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes.*

Academic Council and its subcommittees play a central role in the reporting and annual monitoring. This is supported through evidence-based reporting at discrete stages of the academic year including: (a) monitoring of student success and a range of student statistics (including retention, progression, completion); (b) the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment activity; and, (c) the monitoring of student support services, and the performance outcomes associated with such usage. There are a variety of ongoing specific processes in TUS, including:

- policy reviews;
- new programme reviews;
- programmatic reviews;
- professional accreditation of programmes;
- support unit reviews;
- annual student surveys,
- external examiner reports;
- module evaluations.

The Student Voice

TUS recognises that incorporating the student voice into activities is an integral part of QAE and plays a vital role in shaping and improving the overall student experience. This enables effective engagement between students, staff and TUS and contributes to both decision-making and continuous improvement. TUS engages with the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) and values the initiatives and support the programme provides. The NStEP philosophy that "student engagement is underpinned by the idea that students are partners and co-creators within a learning community" has informed the development of the Education philosophy of TUS as outlined in the Putting Learning First: Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy that "TUS is a dynamic learning community that co-creates an inclusive learning experience". This provides overarching context for the centrality of student engagement as learning partners at TUS.

TUS students are members of key governance fora such as Governing Body, Academic Council, Subcommittees, Programme Boards. They also participate in a range of bodies such as working groups on policy development, external validation/revalidation panels, and focus groups/ surveys for internal reviews, where their input is highly valued.

The annual Student Survey (StudentSurvey.ie) is a particularly valuable source of student feedback and is designed to seek students' views on their experience of higher education. TUS participates annually in the under- graduate student survey and bi-annually in the postgraduate research student survey (PGR). TUS is committed to the survey which facilitates increased transparency in relation to the student experience and benchmarking with other higher education institutions.

Industry & Employer Engagement

TUS places particular emphasis on practical and applied learning and its engagement with industry and employers is a vital part of ensuring that programmes are relevant to contemporary needs. Such engagement helps to ensure that programmes align with industry standards and requirements and meet the needs of employers. There are diverse modes of engagement with employers at TUS, including both formal and informal and these are mutually beneficial. Regular and ongoing interactions include, *inter alia*:

- Engagement with Regional Skills Fora;
- Work Placement and all associated interactions;
- Guest lecturers (in TUS and On-site)
- Programme- and Module-specific site visits
- Partnership for Final Year Project/Masters Dissertations
- Sponsorship of Student Awards
- Industry-specific CPD

There are also the less frequent but key points of interaction where diligent industry engagement shapes existing and new programmes, including inter alia:

- Industry consultations for new programmes;
- Survey participation;
- Module-specific syllabus input;
- Industry panel members in validation/re-validation panels;
- Conference and showcase events;
- Career Fairs;
- Graduate recruitment.

Faculty, Department and Programme Boards

A Faculty/School Board exists within each Faculty/School, whose function is to advise the Dean of Faculty/School on strategy and on the academic and resource requirements of its departments/programmes. Similarly, Department Boards exist for each department and their function is to advise and assist the Head of Department at tactical and operational levels with regard to the academic and resource requirements of programmes/modules within the department. Programme Boards monitor the effectiveness of the delivery, assessment and quality for all programmes and also report on risk factors which are actioned appropriately. The Programme Board meets at least once each semester with student representatives being constituent members.

Programmatic Review

Programmatic reviews are conducted in accordance with transitionary arrangements incorporating legacy policies as approved by TUS Academic Council in the TUS Programmatic Review Process Outline.

The typical Programmatic Review Panel includes representatives from Industry and Academia, capable of making national and international comparisons with regard to the specific suite of programmes. Normally, panel members are drawn from higher education and awarding institutions, professional bodies, regional and national industry representatives, and multinational corporations. In order to make its judgements, the panel reviews the Programmatic Review Documentation, discusses the programmes/ modules with Programme Boards, students, graduates, and external industry/employers

stakeholders. The output of the external panel results in a Programmatic Review Report with a programme board response to the report presented to Academic Council via subcommittee.

Any proposed changes to existing programmes outside of programmatic review require Academic Council approval. Major changes may require revalidation of the programme if the nature and scope of changes significantly change the award.

Professional Regulatory and Statutory Bodies
TUS has valued relationships with a broad range of Professional Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PRSB's) and values the associate professional accreditation and recognition of the respective programmes. There are over 40 TUS Programmes that carry such recognition, and the bodies involved are listed in Section 9.0. The associated review and accreditation process assures students and employers that programmes meet specific standards of quality and relevance, and this directly feeds into quality assurance and enhancement of programmes, as part of an ongoing cycle of review.

External Examiners
The TUS External Examiner process forms a central pillar in the quality assurance of the programmes delivered by TUS. It enables the verification by independent third parties that assessment methods allow for the evidential demonstration and achievement of the learning outcomes to the relevant standard and level being assessed. External Examiners submit a report annually via the Examinations Management System and issues raised are responded to and actioned by Programme Boards. The reports and their responses are monitored by the Academic Council Subcommittee on QAE. Further details are available at: TUS External Examiners Policy and Procedure for Taught Programmes.

Strategic Review of Service Delivery Units
TUS is committed to broadening the range of reviews to include all Support Units in line with national policy and its obligations as a DAB. To this end the TUS Governing Body has approved the TUS Policy on Strategic Review of Technological University Support Units to facilitate these reviews within an approved framework. Under this policy, the review and self-evaluation include a broad range of considerations within the context and culture of the individual Service Delivery Unit. These considerations are broadly informed by the management principles specified in the ISO9001:2015 Quality Management Standard.

9.0   Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1   Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	24 PRSBs All PRSB's Listing
Awarding Bodies	1
QA bodies	0

1. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic Engineering with Computer Systems (including Higher Certificate). Electronic Engineering with Computer Systems - BEng - TUS
Date of accreditation or last review	2023/2024 Academic Year
Date of next review	2027/2028 Academic Year

2. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Veterinary Council of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Veterinary Nursing – BSc Veterinary Nursing - BSc - TUS
Date of accreditation or last review	2023/2024 Academic Year
Date of next review	2027/2028 Academic Year

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Precision Engineering Precision Engineering - BEng (Hons) - TUS
Date of accreditation or last review	2023/2024
Date of next review	2027/2028

4. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering in Agricultural Engineering https://tus.ie/courses/us769/
Date of accreditation or last review	2023/2024
Date of next review	2027/2028

5. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Management https://tus.ie/courses/us884/
Date of accreditation or last review	2023/2024
Date of next review	2027/2028

9.2   Collaborative Provision

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	2
Collaborative programme	13
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

Collaborative Programmes Listing

1. Collaborative provision	Collaborative Programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Limerick Clare Education and Training Board
Programme titles and links to publications:	Bachelor of Science in Mobile and Web Computing Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mobile and Web Computing
Date of last review	2023
Date of next review	To be determined.

2. Collaborative provision	Collaborative Programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Limerick Clare Education and Training Board
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Business in Business (Honours) Bachelor of Business in Business (Honours)
Date of last review	2023
Date of next review	To be determined

3. Collaborative provision	Joint Award
Name of body (/bodies):	TUS / University of Limerick
Programme titles and links to publications	Professional Master of Education in Art and Design with Digital Media Professional Master of Education in Art and Design with Digital Media
Date of last review	2022
Date of next review	2027

4. Collaborative provision	Joint Award
Name of body (/bodies):	TUS / University of Limerick
Programme titles and links to publications	B.Ed. (Hons) in Art & Design Teacher Education https://lit.ie/courses/lc115
Date of last review	2022
Date of next review	2027

5. Collaborative provision	Collaborative Programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Atlantic Aviation
Programme titles and links to publications	B.Sc in Aircraft Maintenance Engineering. https://tus.ie/courses/aircraft-maintenance-engineering-bsc/
Date of last review	2022
Date of next review	2027

6. Collaborative provision	Collaborative Programme
Name of body (/bodies):	TUS/ DCU
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Ed (Hons) Technology, Engineering and Graphics (Post-Primary) Technology, Engineering and Graphics (Post-Primary) - BEd (Hons) - TUS
Date of last review	2023
Date of next review	2028

9.3   Articulation Agreements

Articulation Agreements - Total Number	250	Non EU Listing	EU and Erasmus Listing

1. Articulation Agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Khmelnytskyi National University
Programme titles and links to publications	Memorandum of Understanding
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	11th December 2023
Date of next review	11th December 2026
Detail of the agreement	Memorandum of Understanding for exchange of students, staff and researchers, as well as cooperation on research activities.

2. Articulation Agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	National Institute of Design
Programme titles and links to publications	Memorandum of Understanding
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	14th March 2024
Date of next review	14th March 2029
Detail of the agreement	Memorandum of Understanding for exchange of students, staff and researchers, as well as cooperation on research activities with Limerick School of Art and Design, TUS

3. Articulation Agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Universidad Panamericana
Programme titles and links to publications	Memorandum of Understanding
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	24th April 2024
Date of next review	24th April 2029
Detail of the agreement	Memorandum of Understanding for exchange of students, staff and researchers, as well as cooperation on research activities and Summer programmes.

4. Articulation Agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Universidad Del Valle De Atemajac
Programme titles and links to publications	Memorandum of Understanding
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	24th April 2024
Date of next review	24th April 2029
Detail of the agreement	Memorandum of Understanding for exchange of students, staff and researchers, as well as cooperation on research activities and Summer programmes.

5. Articulation Agreement:	
Name of body (/bodies):	Foshan University
Programme titles and links to publications	Memorandum of Understanding
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	21st May 2024
Date of next review	21st May 2027
Detail of the agreement	Memorandum of Understanding for exchange of students, staff and researchers, as well as cooperation on research activities.

Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest]

2025

Annual Quality Report

Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest

Part B: Internal Quality Assurance Enhancement & Impact

Reporting Period 2023 – 2024

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT

1.0   Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1   Strategic QA Updates

1.   <u>TUS Strategy</u>

A key milestone for TUS was the approval by Governing Body of the inaugural TUS Strategic Plan and its launch in March 2023. The inaugural TUS Strategic Plan was launched by the Minister of State at the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Mr. Niall Collins, on March 10th, 2023. It is available at: <u>TUS Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026</u>.

The development of the strategy was a collaborative and collegial process involving comprehensive stakeholder engagement, both internal and external to TUS. The involvement of stakeholders was central to the connectivity and creativity that characterises the resulting plan which is rooted in the technological university, while also being ambitious for it and the regions and communities it serves. The Strategic Plan outlines our values, purpose and long-term vision, and identifies a range of strategic priorities, objectives and enablers (Section 1.0 Internal QA Framework) and is a key driver of strategic development and quality enhancement activity across TUS. TUS has developed an associated strategic plan implementation framework and is actively monitoring implementation through a comprehensive suite of KPI's and associated metrics. This involves the tracking of progress towards a range of targets and KPI's, linked the respective strategic priorities and objectives with annual/bi-annual reporting depending on the particular priority or target.

The HEA Systems Performance Framework process complements the Strategic Plan as a key driver for the next phase of development. Its key themes including Teaching and Learning, Research and Innovation, Access and Participation, and Engagement align with the TUS strategic direction and priorities. Under the systems performance framework process, TUS and the HEA have agreed the <u>Performance Agreement 2024 – 2028 between the HEA and TUS</u>.

TUS has placed a specific focus on identifying synergies, mapping and evaluating the major strategic initiatives to the Systems Performance Framework and in turn aligning to the overall TUS strategic direction and priorities, as laid out in the Strategic Plan. Accordingly, there is alignment between the strategic plan implementation framework and the performance objectives identified in the Performance Agreement. As outlined in the agreement, *"the fundamental objectives now are continued development of the operational and organisational structure, functions, and outputs of the TU and monitoring of the Strategic Plan implementation and Performance Agreement to strengthen TUS's contribution to the achievement of national strategies".* Building on the current strategic plan, the Performance Agreement acknowledges the connectedness of the priorities that define the ecosystem of TUS as an ambitious and evolving university. The university has a specific focus on mapping and evaluating TUS's major strategic initiatives to identify synergies and enable TUS to maximise impact from these key priorities.

This ongoing programme of development and activity represents the next phase in the strategic advancement of TUS as an accessible, progressive and impactful TU that reflects the educational demands and economic needs of the regions and nationally.

2.   <u>QQI CINNTE Cyclical Review of TUS</u>

The QQI CINNTE review of TUS was conducted during the 2023-24 academic year, as part of a national programme of CINNTE Reviews. CINNTE evaluates the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of each institution. As part of the preparation for CINNTE, TUS conducted a comprehensive programme of self-evaluation which commenced in April 2022 and culminated in the submission to QQI of an Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) in February 2024. This was followed by the Main Review Visit to TUS by the QQI appointed independent international review panel in April 2024. As part of their review, the panel met with circa 270 TUS stakeholders, including students, staff and a broad range of external stakeholders.

The resulting Institutional Review Report 2024: Technological University of the Shannon was published by QQI in October 2024. The review team have noted *"there is clear evidence of the effectiveness of the governance and quality systems at each level of the organisation* and that they are satisfied that *"excellent progress has been made towards the establishment of robust and appropriate governance structures".* The review team commended TUS for *"for its ambitious vision that pervades key initiatives"* and for its excellent range and quality of involvement with communities and stakeholders. The rapid progress made since TUS designation in developing and embedding a quality culture at all levels, including quality assurance structures and processes was recognised. The review team also noted TUS compliance with relevant European and National statutory quality assurance guidelines and requirements.

The review team noted that TUS staff are "*strongly motivated to contribute positively to institutional development and integration with the goal of making TUS greater than a sum of its parts".* TUS views as important the observation that *"the university enjoys great respect and commitment from local and regional stakeholders, among the industry, practitioner bodies and other educational institutions"* .

The review team noted that TUS has made considerable progress in developing research capacity and commended the number of successful research institutes doing regionally relevant work and for demonstrating considerable progress in winning research funding and producing scholarly publications. There is also recognition of the importance of the Regional University Network-European University (RUN-EU) which "*has advanced internationalisation through numerous partnerships in education, research, and funded student and staff exchanges*". The report highlights the importance of internationalisation and notes that, from its inception, "*TUS has been committed to facilitating the inward and outward flow of students and staff between international partner institutions*".

TUS places elevated emphasis on student-centred approaches and this is epitomised in our shared values: Inclusive, Supportive and Collaborative. The review team noted that they "*were greatly encouraged by student feedback on communication with their lecturers and the wider university management*" and commended TUS "for the enthusiasm and professionalism of all Student Support Services staff who ensure an outstanding commitment to Student Engagement". It is noteworthy that the review team commended TUS for an "*unwavering commitment to students on Access and Widening Participation Pathways*". It acknowledges the TUS commitment to Apprenticeship education and finds that "*TUS shows great initiative in offering programmes for flexible learners, as well as students enrolled in part-time programmes*". The review team also noted the HEA finding that TUS has the highest percentage of honours degree graduates in the country in employment nine months after graduation.

The Report provides a total of 13 Commendations and 15 Recommendations. TUS has initiated a process to reflect fully on the recommendations including the detailed narrative underpinning each, to

inform the development and implementation of a TUS CINNTE Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). This QIP Planning process is ongoing and will involve further consultation with key stakeholders. In this context, the CINNTE Report provides an important reference point and opportunity to guide and support the next phase of development of the University.

The top 5 review team commendations and recommendations are:

Top 5 Commendations

1. The review team commends TUS for its ambitious vision that pervades key initiatives and guides its collaboration with students, communities, local government, enterprise and business.

2. The review team commends TUS for its unwavering commitment to students on Access and Widening Participation pathways. This commitment is in terms of awareness of needs, the quality of support provided and the dedication to creating opportunities for the fulfilment of personal and educational aspirations, especially for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. 3. The review team commends TUS for the enthusiasm and professionalism of all student support services staff who ensure an outstanding commitment to student engagement.

3. The review team commends TUS' creative engagement with the Regional University Network European University (RUN-EU) Initiative for the strategic development of research, education and outreach activities benefitting the student and staff experience and research activity.

4. The review team commends TUS for demonstrating considerable progress in winning research funding and producing scholarly publications.

Top 5 Recommendations

1. The review team recommends that TUS, notwithstanding the progress made on integration to date, develop a unified operational model across the university. This should align with university objectives and be strongly promoted.

2. The review team recommends that TUS give serious consideration to supporting the development of Heads of Departments' important role as middle managers who make a significant contribution to the effective functioning of the institution. The avenues of upward mobility are limited for them due to the flat organisational structure and a lack of fixed terms of office or clear role descriptions.

3. The review team recommends that the university, in fulfilment of its ambitions for research development, take steps to ensure that every PhD student is embedded in a research culture, all supervisors can demonstrate and maintain the currency of their expertise to supervise students and projects, a code of practice for research supervision is regularly communicated, monitored and reviewed in line with the Framework for Doctoral Education

4. The review team recommends that TUS review current practice for student communication and develop a coordinated strategy that addresses students' needs across all modes of programme delivery, and all stages of the student journey from application to completion of studies, to ensure timely access to pertinent academic and pastoral information.

5. The review recommends that TUS prioritise overall workforce planning, development and wellbeing in an agile manner to ensure the sustainability of continued high-quality service and academic provision. While a quality culture has become embedded in the university, there is an opportunity to

simplify administrative and operational structures as well as lighten bureaucratic requirements. This will enhance the agility of the university, allowing it to respond to emerging opportunities.

The report's recommendations provide a valuable roadmap to guide and inform the next phase of our development as a vibrant university. In accordance with the QQI schedule, an Institutional Action Plan was developed and submitted to QQI three months after publication of the report. Accordingly, a comprehensive programme of development and enhancement activities is underway at TUS as part of this action plan.

3.   TUS Leadership of the RUN-EU Alliance

An initiative of the European Commission, the European Universities initiative is a flagship element of the European strategy for universities to create a centralised European Education Area. The initiative is entering its second cycle and sets the ambition to expand to 60 European Universities alliances involving more than 500 higher education institutions. TUS was a partner of one alliance during the first cycle, the Regional University Network-European University (RUN-EU), which involved seven founding members in its first phase. In the second cycle of the initiative, TUS is proud to be the new RUN-EU coordinator for Phase 2, making it the first Irish University to lead, and hold the Presidency, of a European University, with RUN-EU now expanded to include nine full and one associate member

Location of RUN-EU Alliance Members.
Includes O.M. Beketov University at Kharkiv, Ukraine, with which TUS is establishing a long-term partnership.

With funding of €14.5m for a four-year period from 2024 to 2027, the capacity of the expanded alliance is indicated by its profile of circa 100,000 students, 11,000 staff and 100 research institutes, centres and groups. The alliance will strive to secure sustainable economic, social, cultural, and environmental progress of its regions and stakeholders. TUS membership aligns closely with its ambition to develop a TU that reflects the educational demands and economic needs of Ireland's Midlands and Midwest regions while contributing to the European Education Area goal of enhanced mobility opportunities and recognition of qualifications across the EU. Accordingly, participation and leadership of RUN-EU will greatly enhance mobility opportunities for TUS students.

The RUN-EU Mission is supported through the development of:

- Future and Advanced Skills Academies (FASA), which promote and develop joint student-centred, challenge and work-based flexible learning activities, including Short Advanced Programmes and European Degrees, through collaborative and pedagogically innovative inter-university and interregional approaches to higher education.
- European Innovation Hubs (EIH), which will stimulate and create joint interregional research, innovation and regional stakeholder engagement projects and activities across the alliance.
- European Mobility Innovation Centre (EMIC), which will build and share expertise in innovative physical and virtual mobility initiatives and will assess the quality of new mobility activities.

RUN-EU supports the TUS internationalisation agenda and provides a coherent umbrella that nurtures existing and new relationships to stimulate break-through, cross-disciplinary research themes and reinforce our culture of dynamism, diversity and resilience. Critical to our international research strategy is the European Universities Initiative envisaging Europe as a global hub and a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international co-operation and academic exchange. RUN-EU will deliver on the core objectives of the European Research Area by "*fostering the free movement of researchers, scientific knowledge and innovation, and encouraging a more competitive European industry.*"

4.   National Technological University TransfOrmation for Resilience and Recovery (NTUTORR)

In collaboration with the TU sector, TUS was a project partner on the National Technological University Transformation for Recovery and Resilience (N-TUTORR) project. This is an innovative collaboration across the Technological University sector that allows TUS to implement transformative change, innovative practice and enhance the student experience. In this context, the programme, which is funded by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan is an ambitious sectoral initiative that aims to transform learning, teaching and assessment within the sector. Combining the strengths of student empowerment, staff development and technological transformation, the project will have a lasting impact on the sector by harnessing learnings from the Covid-19 pandemic and building resilience, while aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

The NTUTORR Programme project aimed to deliver transformative change for the Technological Higher Education sector and is an innovative collaboration across the Technological Universities focused on transforming the student experience. NTUTORR was awarded €32 million of which TUS was awarded an initial allocation €5 million. TUS will work with staff and students on a number of projects that focuses on enhancing digital capabilities and will provide quality and equality of access to students within TUS, and in so doing will also support access for vulnerable and marginalised groups. Core themes or streams of N-TUTORR included:

1. Student Empowerment (transforming the student experience through learner empowerment);
2. Staff Capabilities (transforming teaching, learning and assessment by developing academic, management and support staff); and,
3. Digital Ecosystems (enhancing digital infrastructure to deliver on student empowerment and staff capability in a sustainable manner).

The NTUTTOR initiative led to a broad range of associated activities across TUS in the reporting period and these are outlined in Section 2.14 *NTUTTOR Activities During the Reporting Period*.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Relevant objectives	Planned actions and indicators	Progress during 22/23
1	1. Supporting staff in curriculum design informed by the TUS, Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. 2. Implementation of the MA in Academic Practice and associated awards. 3. Supporting Professional Development of TUS Staff through the design, delivery, and implementation of non-accredited programmes 4. Engagement in educational projects: sectoral, national, and international. 5. Support staff to further advance their research in the scholarship of learning teaching and assessment.	1. Continue support and guidance for faculties and departments undergoing programmatic review to implement the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy in relation to embedding the TUS educational philosophy, seven pillars, curriculum design framework and graduate attributes framework during programme design and review. 2. Commence the delivery of the MA in Academic Practice through the associated Special Purpose Awards (SPAS), three per semester and the dissertation module. Facilitate the RPL process for staff in recognition of prior learning. 3. Offer a range of non-accredited professional development opportunities focusing on current themes such as Artificial Intelligence, Academic Integrity, Universal Design for Learning and digital education to include practice-sharing across the university. 4. Project engagement: • SATLE Higher Education Learner Programme (HELP) in	CPID devised and implemented professional development sessions focusing on continued awareness raising of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. Reference to the strategy was explicitly embedded in professional development activities both accredited and non-accredited. Support was provided specifically for the Departments of Social Care. 2. The TUS MA in Academic Practice commenced in semester one 2023-2024. 71 participants completed SPAS in 2023-2024 and a further 11 commenced on the year-long dissertation module. 8 participants will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma, and one participant will exit with a Postgraduate Certificate. 3. A schedule of professional development opportunities across a range of these was devised and implemented. See XXXXX for full details. 4. Project engagement: Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning enhancement (SATLE) • HELP project Linktree was selected to provide a one stop shop approach to sharing student information. The SATLE funded TUS Student Engagement and Digital Media Enhancement project enabled a Digital Media Champion role within TUS Student Support Services. The post supports all TUS campuses up to Dec 2024, playing a pivotal role in enhancing student engagement and building awareness of student supports and services during this period. As part of Phase 2, student-centred social media initiatives were developed for all six TUS campuses to ensure the new TUS digital media student engagement platform is promoted extensively and that student engagement is optimised through dynamic social media channels including Instagram, TikTok and LinkedIn. This project has proved highly successful with significant engagement stats e.g. in this reporting period we have gone from Zero to 289,000 Tik Tok views. Working collaboratively with colleagues to target specific cohorts of students toward positively impacting student retention of target National Access Plan cohorts, this SATLE funded role also supports activities within the TUS Second Shot programme. • Developing Open Education Resources (OER) and Open Education Practices in and beyond TUS. DOERs face-to-face and online training

	6. Further development of the TUS digital ecosystem and the physical environment. 7. Establishing CPID as an academic unit through engagement in the academic governance of the university.	collaboration with Student Services across all campuses. • Developing Open Education Resources (OER) and Open Education Practices in and beyond TUS. • NTUTORR funded project in collaboration with SETU Carlow, for the development of Academic Integrity Staff and Student Interactive Programmes. • RUNEU, develop a Short-Advanced Programme (SAP) and offer online seminars with RUN EU colleagues. 5. Provide guidance and support for staff to publish educational research and present at educational research conferences. Consult with the Graduate School to provide professional development opportunities in educational research. Publish the next in the compendium series focusing on "Internationalising the Home Curriculum". 6. Establish the Digital Technologies Innovation Laboratory to support research and development in digital education and enhance the scholarship of digitally enhanced learning, teaching, and assessment. Review CPID membership of the university committees to ensure parity and consistency with other academic departments.	Training sessions were delivered on behalf of the DOERs across the DOERs project partners in TUS, SETU, MU and DkIT with 44 staff in attendance. Post training sessions were also provided. Training has also been facilitated for specific cohorts in TUS (54 staff and students), including staff from the Library, Academic Writing Centre, CPID, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion by the OER Librarian. DOERs OER survey A TUS OER survey developed and circulated in in TUS in late 2023, in consultation with DOERs project partners. 70 responses were received to the TUS survey which have informed the development and the delivery of subsequent training and engagement. The TUS survey has been adapted and reused in SETU, MU and DkIT. DOERs training materials Infographics have been created to address points raised in the survey, and to share information more broadly about copyright and OER in an engaging and accessible way. These are openly licensed and can be reused. An OER awareness raising video was created to accompany a TUS training sessions, which has been viewed 18 times. DOERs project outputs, such as PowerPoint slides, infographic, in-class activities etc. will be shared using the National Forum Resource Hub and the DOERs Project Zenodo page. To date, two infographics have been added to Zenodo, which have received 149 views and 88 downloads. DOERs conference presentations. Academic and Special Libraries Conference in March 2024. Poster presentation: 'Open Educational Resources at TUS: Pressing Forward to Provide Access for All'. A Conference Pressbook was created to accompany the poster, which remains accessible. This book has been viewed by 81 individuals with 535 total page views. OER24 Conference in March 2024 Presentation: 'DOERs in SoTL: supporting a culture of OER/P-enabled pedagogy', DOERs Platform development - Pressbooks A key objective of DOERs project is to provide access to high quality, recent and relevant OER. Pressbooks, a web book publishing platform is the Open Press • Learning Enhancement Projects (LEPs)and Communities of Practice (CoPs) CPID funded LEPs and CoP focusing aligned to the themes of the National Forum - Academic Integrity, Education for Sustainable Development and Digital Transformation.

A full report of the outputs and impact of SATLE funding was provided to the HEA National Forum.

5. CPID collaborated with the Graduate School in the design and facilitation of the Global Conversations perspectives series.   Five international experts contributed to the series.

The Compendium of Approaches on Internationalising the Home Curriculum was released initially to coincide with the CINNTE review panel visit.

6. A Capital Projects proposal to establish the Digital Technologies Innovation Laboratory (DTIL) was approved in 2023-2024. In collaboration with the Estates Office a location was identified on the Athlone campus, with the design of the space completed for the summer works projects. The laboratory will enable CPID to carry out research in the area of emerging technologies. It will facilitate postgraduate students and academic staff from TUS to complete funded research in digital teaching innovation. Funded by NTUTORR, the DTIL is equipped with existing licensed technologies as per the TUS digital ecosystem and emerging technologies. DTIL will assist TUS enhance quality by:

- building capacity in educational research through a community of practice model for funded postgraduate and faculty research projects.

- ongoing testing/evaluation of existing licensed technologies in a rapidly changing digital environment to ensure TUS students experience state-of-the-art technologies.

- informing decision-makers regarding investment in digital solutions informed by testing of emerging technologies.

- supporting the creation of learning objects and for synchronous online teaching or the use of augmented and virtual reality as an immersive educational environment in a variety of settings.

7. The membership was reviewed to ensure adequate representation. In addition, CPID was directly involved in policy development, specifically the TUS Digital Badge Policy which enable a quality assured process for the awarding of TUS Digital Badges.

NTUTORR

The NTUTORR funded project has led to the development of two interactive programmes focusing on Academic Integrity which will be piloted with students in and staff in 2024-2025. CPID staff facilitated a range of NTUTORR professional development sessions for staff and students in 2023-2024.

RUN EU Short Advanced Programmes (SAP)

Two members of the CPID team collaboratively developed a SAP, specifically related to interculturalism titled: 'Who are we? Mapping the Identity of the RUN-EUer'. The aim of this SAP was to develop students' intercultural skills to enable them to operate within

			several cultures at the same time. SAP pedagogical approach includes problem-solving tasks, discussions, project work, role-plays, presentations, live sessions, independent work and site visits in Austria. The SAP was open to all RUN-EU Degree Students and offered in Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences, Austria in November 2023. RUNEU partners involved included: Polytechnic of Leiria; Häme University of Applied Sciences; Széchenyi István University; NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences and Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences who coordinated the SAP. CPID team members were involved in the design and facilitation of additional SAPs focusing on themes relating to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and social inclusion. The CPID expertise in SAP design will be used to support further development.
2	TUS Strategic Plan Strategic Priority 3, Objective 3: Create an inclusive Technological University people are proud to be part of and where our diverse population has a voice	1a. Apply for a full Athena Swan Bronze Award by June 2024. This application will be based on detailed consultations including an all-staff survey, focus group discussions, and detailed analysis of staff and student data. The Athena Swan Application will include a detailed Gender Equality Action Plan outlining specific actions to support an inclusive culture. 1b. Support the development and embedding of a TUS Women's Network, LGBT+ & Allies Staff Network, Parents and Carers Network, and other relevant EDI Networks.	1a. Athena Swan application was submitted in June 2024, which included a detailed action plan. 1b. The following Networks were supported during AY 23/24: TUS Women's Network: launched in October 2023. Membership: 86 LGBT+ & Allies Staff Network: supported Pride themed campus work in Moylish and Midlands, organized TUS Pride Week in AY 23/24. Membership: 31 Parents and Carers Network: Organised one event in AY 23/24. Network is still in developmental stage. Membership: 10 Disability and Allies Staff Network: This network has grown out of an event to celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities which took place in Dec 2023. Network currently in developmental stage. Membership: 10
3	TUS Strategic Plan Strategic Priority 3, Objective 1: Provide opportunities and supports that nurture capabilities, promote wellbeing and inspire the growth, development, training and mobility of our people.	Provide EDI related trainings to staff and monitor uptake. This will include training on Supporting Neurodiversity, Supporting disclosures related to sexual violence and Harassment, supporting race equality	During Academic Year 2023-24, staff had access to a TUS EDI Moodle page, which included self-paced trainings on multiple aspects of 9 grounds of discrimination. (table below)

During Academic Year 2023-24, staff had access to a TUS EDI Moodle page, which included self-paced trainings on multiple aspects of 9 grounds of discrimination.

Training Type	Number of completers
EDI in Higher Education Online Module developed for staff in Irish HEIs	36
Unconscious Bias training by Legal Island	36
All trainings under "gender"	24
All trainings under "sexual orientation"	18
All trainings under "religion"	18
All trainings under "disability"	77
All trainings under "race", including "Let's Talk about Race" module developed by IUA	47

5		All trainings under "traveller community"	10
		Ending Sexual Violence & Harassment, including UoG Active Consent online trainings	12
		EDI Role Play Game for Administrators developed by TiLT (Trinity College Dublin start-up campus company)	46
		EDI Role Play Game for Academics	14
		Completed All trainings	25

In addition, the following facilitated trainings were provided:

Training title	Date	Total Attendance
EDI & Mental Health Training for Managers	April 2024	37
Traveller Culture Awareness	October 2023	17
Understanding and Supporting ADHD Webinar -	16th May 2024	99
Neurodiversity training	January and April 2024	101

#			
4	TUS EDI Strategy Goal 2:

To ensure that our vision statement for EDI is supported and embedded in policies and procedures that are implemented across the TU and monitored and reviewed on a regular basis | Ensure EDI related policies are accessible and available to all staff and students, where relevant. This should include Gender Identity and Expression Policy and Procedure, Student and staff member name change procedure, EDI Policy, Policy and Procedure to address Sexual Misconduct. | The Gender Identity and Expression policy and name change procedure are available on the TUS EDI webpage. Consultations on the draft TUS EDI Policy and draft Policy and Procedure for Responding to Sexual Violence and Harassment took place during AY 23/24 |
| 5 | HEA Race Equality Implementation Plan:

HEI commitments to develop Institutional Race Equality Action Plans | Facilitate Race Equality Forums on all TUS campuses to:
a. engage with staff and students from all ethnic backgrounds to gain a more in-depth understanding of people's perspectives and lived experiences in TUS,

b. to assist in the review and development of policies, procedures | |

		and TUS -wide strategies for tackling racism and ethnic group harassment, inequality, and discrimination, c. to help foster a TUS-wide culture in which all members of our TUS community can participate and fulfil their potential regardless of ethnicity, race or minority group membership. This feedback will inform the development of a TUS Race equality action plan	An external consultant facilitated four Race Equality Staff forums during AY 23/24. These resulted in a series of recommendations which have informed the draft Race Equality Action plan. This draft will be discussed at TUS EDI committees during AY 24/25.
6	Embedding and deepening TUS actions on Sustainable Development across the University	1. Appoint Director of Sustainability to lead sustainability agenda for the University 2. Formally establish University Sustainability Committee and relevant sub-committees as mechanism to drive change in the organization 3. Complete TUS SDG Strategy building on experience from Advanced HE strategic planning exercise 4. Establish central resource hub on sustainable development, ESD and climate action which is accessible to staff, and where relevant, students 5. Prepare submission to THE Impact Rankings with a view to submission in December 2024 6. Continue implementation of measures as outlined in TUS Climate Action Plan with a particular focus on monitoring and	1. The appointment of the Director of Sustainability has been delayed as part of the wider delay in finalising the TUS organizational structure. 2. The University Sustainability Committee (USC) has been established and is chaired by the President of TUS. It reports directly to a sub-committee of the TUS Governing Body and has separate sub-committees focused on Education and Research for Sustainable Development, Estates & Operations and Engagement. 3. The TUS Strategic Planning process will be led by the USC and an overall approach to develop this strategy has been agreed. The strategic plan development process will utilise futures thinking approaches to enable its design 4. A new dedicated section on the TUS website has been developed and will evolve to show actions, provide resources for staff and students and facilitate reporting 5. Submission to the THE Impact Ranking has been delayed as University focuses on development of its strategic plan and completion of mapping against the EUAC Sustainability Leadership Score Card. 6. The TUS Climate Action Plan is reviewed on a 6 monthly basis. Progress has been made across a range of measures including increased provision of EV charging, LED Lighting, retrofit planning and mobility actions. Next submission in Dec 2024. A Climate Action Roadmap working group has been established 7. The Certificate in ESD was successfully offered in 2023/24 with 22 learners completing the programme. A specific SDG digital badge is available as part of the N-TUTORR digital pack back for students.

		reporting, building renovation and sustainable transport 7. Continue roll out of capacity building measures for staff e.g. Cert in ESD and students (NTUTORR Digital Back Pack) Establish Green Campus Committee on Moylish Campus and integrate into University Sustainability Committee structure.	A new Green Campus Committee on the Moylish campus has not yet been formally established but initial conversations have commenced. The Green Campus committee in Tipperary (focused on Thurles and Clonmel campuses) has submitted it application for re-designation of its green flag and the Athlone Committee is preparing its first submission.
7	Develop TUS Tertiary Education Offerings	Continue to work to support the staff and students on the current tertiary programmes. Explore and identify additional programmes to be offered as part of the Tertiary project. These include the following potential programmes: • Business and Computing programme to be delivered in the LCETB Ennis campus • Construction Studies to be delivered in LCETB Kilmallock Road campus. (This included a recent site visit to the construction studies labs and facilities in both the TUS Midwest and Midlands campuses by members of the LCETB Construction studies programme team.) • Programme offerings for 2024/2025 were launched in February 2024 and promoted across both TUS and LCETB. • Explore TUS Midlands collaboration with regional ETBs	**Steering Group/Working Group Meetings** Steering group and working group meetings have been held throughout the academic year to identify potential Tertiary programmes and to discuss progress with existing programs. The Tertiary Managers met with different programme teams to identify potential tertiary programmes across LCETB and TUS. Four programmes were offered in February 2024 for the 2024/2024 Academic Year: B.Sc. in Mobile and Web Computing (Mulgrave Street Campus) B.Sc. in Construction Management (Raheen Campus) B.Bus. in Business at the (Ennis Campus) B.Bus in Business and Computing (Ennis Campus) **Student Supports** Student Induction Sessions were developed for students registered on both Tertiary Programmes. This included a Student Induction Day in LCETB held in September 2023 followed by a Student Welcome Session held in October 2023 at the TUS Moylish campus. This welcome session included sessions with the VP Academic Affairs and Registrar, Programme Head of Departments, the Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager and Library Supports. Students were given a tour of the Moylish campus. Further support sessions were held in semester two with students from the Business programme in LCETB Ennis participating in a Library Academic Writing session held at the TUS Ennis campus in April 2024. In May 2024 the Head of Department and staff from the Business programme team visited students at the LCETB Ennis campus. Students from the Mobile and Web Computing Programme in Mulgrave Street visited the Moylish campus in February 2024 to meet with students attending the programme in Moylish.

Throughout the year the Tertiary Managers have met with the Tertiary students. In September 2024 the first cohort for students from the Tertiary Programmes progressed to Stage 2 of the programme at the Moylish Campus.

Tertiary Student Progression Numbers

Tertiary Programme Student Progression: Stage 1 2023 - 2024	BBs in Business	Mobile and Web Computing
Campus	Clonroad Campus, Ennis	Mulgrave St., Limerick
Registered Intake	10	12
Numbers who completed & passed Stage 1.	8	9
Registered /Progressed to Year 2	6	8

National Developments

TUS/LCETB has been involved in national working groups looking at communication strategies and funding models for Tertiary Programmes across the sector. The TUS Tertiary Managers have participated in meeting with the HSE, the National Skills Network and the Department of Education to explore the potential development of Tertiary programmes within the respective disciplines including Occupational Therapy, STEM and Primary School Teaching. TUS has been involved in promoting Tertiary programmes at local, regional and national events including career fairs, radio interviews and local marketing campaigns.

| 8 | CINNTE Review Quality Assurance Handbook | 1. Submit to QQI the finalised Institutional Profile and ISER report.
 2. Facilitate the CINNTE review visit.
 3. Respond to CINNTE Evaluation through developing an action plan for implementation of recommendations
 4. Continue to develop TUS Quality Assurance Handbook and increase awareness of policy development among staff and students. | 1. The TUS CINNTE Institutional Profile and TUS CINNTE Self-Evaluation Report were submitted to QQI in accordance with the TUS CINNTE schedule.
 2. The TUS CINNTE Review visit was successfully conducted in April 2024, in accordance with the QQI Schedule.
 3. The TUS CINNTE Steering Group contributed to the analysis and review of the published QQI TUS CINNTE Report and the development of an action plan to address the recommendations. An Institutional Action Plan was developed and submitted to QQI three months after publication of the report.
 4. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook is published on the external TUS website. To facilitate ease of access a link to the handbook has been established from the Staff Apps Page. |

			There has been ongoing work through Academic Council and its subcommittees in further developing the TUS Quality Assurance Handbook. Policies/documents approved by Academic Council in the reporting period include:
			TUS Student Charter
			TUS Digital Badge Policy
			TUS Definitions and Methodology for Student Statistics Reports
			TUS Policy for Accessible Exam Papers
			TUS Policy and Procedures on the Provision of References for Students/Graduates of TUS
			TUS Policy for Provision of Lecture Recordings as a Reasonable Accommodation
			TUS Policy for Embedded Awards and Exit Application Major and Minor Awards
			TUS Policy and Procedure for Differential Validation of a Major Award

1.3   Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Governing Body & Subcommittees	Meeting Dates
Governing Body	18/9/23, 16/10/23, 27/11/23, 18/12/23, 22/1/24, 19/2/24, 25/3/24, 15/4/24, 7/5/24, 27/5/24, 24/6/24
Audit & Risk Subcommittee	26/9/23, 16/11/24, 9/1/24, 8/2/24, 13/3/24, 16/4/24, 16/5/24
People, Culture and EDI Subcommittee	10/11/2023, 13/3/2024, 13/5/2024, 19/6/2024
Finance and Physical Development Subcommittee	4/10/23, 20/11/23, 29/11/23, 24/1/24, 15/3/24, 26/4/24, 16/5/24, 12/6/24
Governance and Nominations Subcommittee	8/2/23, 6/4/23, 16/5/23, 12/10/23, 6/2/24, 30/5/24

Academic Council & Subcommittees	Meeting Dates
Academic Council	7/9/23, 27/10/23, 1/12/23, 23/2/24, 26/4/24,20/6/24
Quality Assurance & Enhancement AC Subcommittee	17/10/23, 21/11/23, 13/2/24, 16/4/24, 21/5/24
Teaching, Learning & Assessment Subcommittee	6/10/23, 10/11/23, 2/2/24, 22/3/24, 17/5/24
Programme Provision and Reviews Subcommittee	22/9/23, 21/11/23, 19/1/24, 8/3/24, 8/3/24, 31/5/24
Student Experience & Access Subcommittee	29/9/23, 7/11/23, 26/1/24, 15/3/24, 10/5/24
Apprenticeship Subcommittee	26/9/23, 27/10/23, 23/1/24, 12/3/24, 7/5/24
Postgraduate Studies & Research Subcommittee	19/9/23, 24/10/23, 16/1/24, 5/3/24, 28/5/24
Admissions, Transfer and Progression Subcommittee	13/10/23, 17/11/23, 9/2/24, 12/4/24, 19/6/24

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

Role Title	Appointed
Head of Department of Applied Social Science	Dr. Melinda Gushwa
Head of Department of Health, Wellness and Tourism	Dr. June O'Byrne Prior
Head of Department of Sport and Early Childhood	Dr. Amy McGuire
Head of Department of Accounting and Business Computing	Mr. Bernard Tao Cui
Head of Department of Hospitality Tourism and Leisure Studies	Dr. Emma Reardon
Director of Research Support Services, Graduate School and Research	Ms. Lorna Walsh
Careers and Employability Manager	Dr. Aoife Prendergast
Dean of Graduate Studies	Dr. Lisa Moran

1.4   Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of Review (Academic)	Date of completion	Links to Relevant Publications
Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning. Department of Lifelong Learning	7th - 8th February 2024	[Report]
Faculty of Science and Health: Department of Social Sciences.	9th May 2024	[Report]
Faculty of Science and Health: Department of Nursing and Healthcare. Higher Certificate in Dental Nursing	12th February 2024	[Report]

An overview of the Programmatic Review Panels Composition, Profile and Membership is provided at the following link: [Programmatic Review Panel Profile]

Unit of Review (Services)	Date of completion	Links to Relevant Publications
Library and Information Services	26th and 27th February 2024	[Report]
Student Support Services	25th January 2024	[Report]

[Service Units Reviews Profile]

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

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

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	5	3	2		1	2	2
of those:		–	–	–	–	–	–
On-site processes	5	–	–	–	–	–	–
Desk reviews		–	–	–	–	–	–
Virtual processes	5	–	–	–	–	–	–
Average panel size for each process type*	5	–	–	–	–	–	–

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

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

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	_	3				3				X	
Secretary	_	3			3					X	
Academic/Discipline Specific	_	8	4		1	11	1			X	
Student Representative	_									X	
QA	_	3	3			6				X	
Teaching & Learning	_										
External Industry /Third Mission	_	2	3			5					

* Secretary to Panel provides QA oversight

2.0   IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

2.1   Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is acting in an honest, moral and fair way to complete any academic tasks in an academic setting. It is at the heart of all academic activity in TUS and depends on individuals approaching any academic task or research in an honest and ethical way.

TUS Academic Integrity Week

National Academic Integrity Week took place between 17th to 21st October 2023. To mark the event, and to continue to increase understanding and awareness of academic integrity across TUS, there was a range of events held for staff and students on academic integrity, supported by CPID, the Library, the N-TUTORR team, and the Students' Union. This included a broad range of workshops and events and were open to all students and staff to join. These were aimed at increasing knowledge, developing skills in, and promote awareness of academic integrity. Awareness building activities were held throughout the week to encourage the TUS community to be more aware of academic integrity. Posts were made to various social media platforms to encourage interest in the events on offer. The schedule of activities may be viewed at:

- TUS STUDENT Academic Integrity Week 2023

- TUS STAFF Academic Integrity Week 2023

Academic Integrity Workshops

CPID, TUS library and the Academic Writing Centre all provide student and staff workshops with a focus on key aspects of academic integrity. All workshops were offered online, to allow participation from any campus. Topics covered included recognising plagiarism and strategies to avoid academic integrity and ethical issues, referencing and citations, paraphrasing, and critical evaluation of texts. CPID staff facilitated a range of NTUTORR professional development sessions for staff and students in 2023-2024. The NTUTORR project has also led to the development of two interactive programmes focusing on Academic Integrity which will be piloted with students and staff in the 2024-2025 academic year.

TUS Academic Integrity Matters Video

With funding from a National Forum SATLE project during the preceding reporting period in 2022-23, a video was created to share with students promoting awareness of academic integrity, and information about where to get assistance when needed. This was a joint project by CPID and the Students' Union. While this was initiated in the preceding reporting period, the video continues to be a valuable tool to promote and support academic integrity: https://screenpal.com/watch/c3QUQGVtnj6

National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN)

TUS is represented on the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) established by QQI. TUS considers the NAIN forum an important instrument for the sharing and dissemination of information relating to the current issues, initiatives and best practice in the academic integrity sphere   NAIN's work is ongoing, supporting both students and staff, and is focused on preventing academic fraud and misconduct though the development of a positive culture of academic integrity in higher education. The network also develops national resources and tools for higher education providers to address the challenges presented by academic misconduct. In addition, several national workshops presented by NAIN were promoted throughout the university.

2.2   Programmes of Education and Training

Overall Profile

The TUS taught programme portfolio ranges from Level 6 to Level 9 of the NFQ and across all the Broad ISCED Categories. A profile of the number of Programmes at NFQ Level 6 to 9 shows indicates provision across all Broad ISCED Categories for the reporting Academic Year 2023-24.
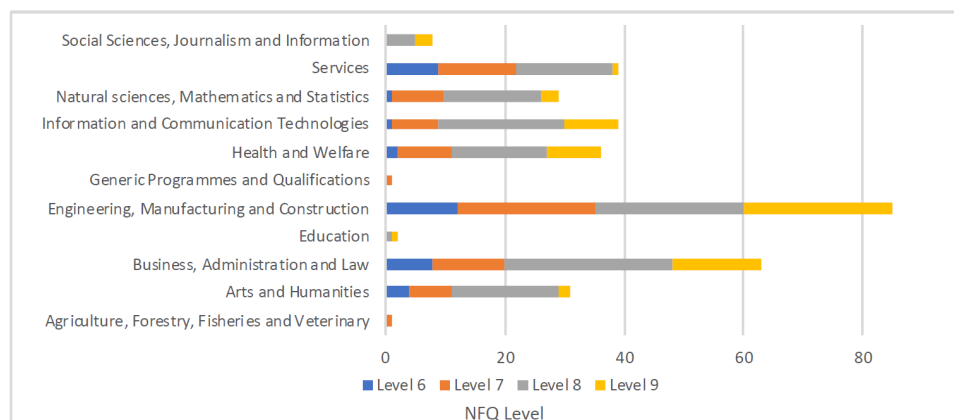
Number of Programmes at NFQ Level 6 to 9 across all Broad ISCED Categories (2023-24)
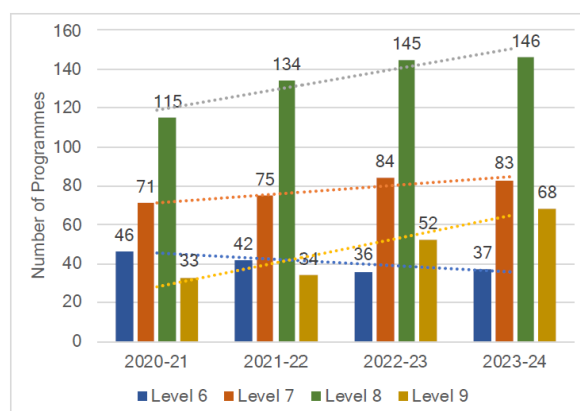
Profile of Programme at NFQ Level 6 to 9 across all Broad ISCED Categories for period indicated

The profile of taught programme provision identifies the number of programmes at the respective NFQ Levels in the indicated broad ISCED categories to which all students enrolled in taught programmes (major awards) at TUS enter. Recent trends across the Higher Education landscape have indicated the popularity of Level 8 entry points by students and this is reflected in the TUS profile with 146 such programmes. The growth of Level 9 taught programme provision is also evident with a total of 68 programmes in 2023-24, including Postgraduate Diplomas and Taught Masters. TUS retains a strong portfolio of Level 6 and Level 7 entry points reflecting its continued commitment to access, transfer and progression pathways and providing choice to students where applicable.

Reflecting the strength and diversity of our programme provision across our campuses, TUS is home to nearly 15,000 students on taught programmes during the 2023- 24 academic year. TUS has had steady growth in its overall student population, with Full-Time students nearing 10,000 and Part-Time students nearing 4,500 in the 2023-24 academic year
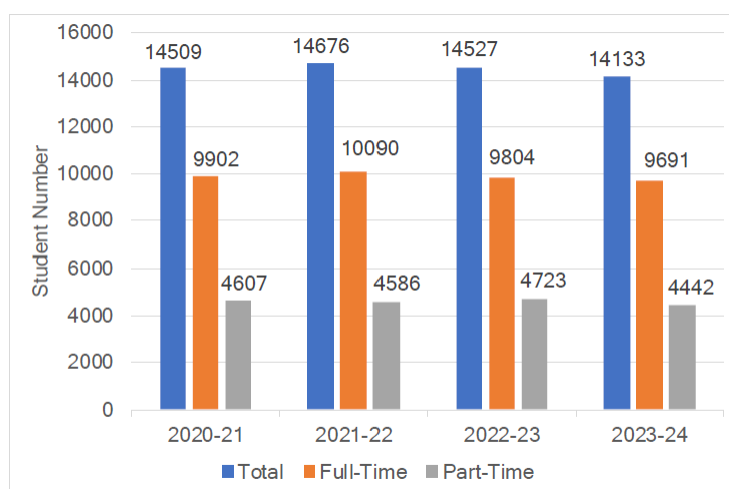
Overall Student Enrolment Trends in Taught Programmes 2020-21 - 2023-24

The TUS student population is enrolled across the range of broad ISCED categories reflecting the diversity of our Faculties, Academic Departments and their associated programme portfolios. The top three ISCED categories include Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction, Business Administration and Law and Health and Welfare.
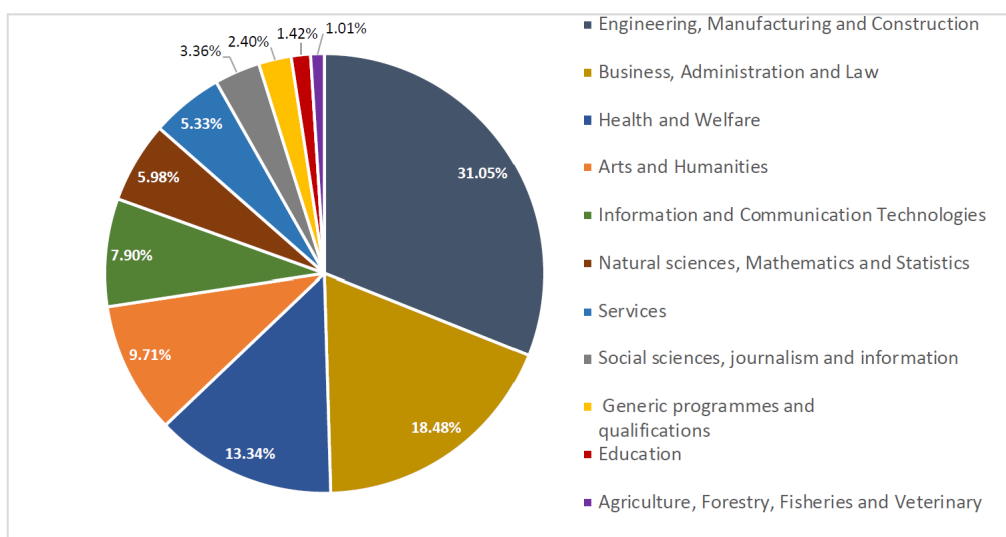
All Students by ISCED Broad Area 2023-24

Programme Validation

1. Major Awards

There was a total of 17 new programmes (postgraduate and undergraduate) and 8 Differential Validations validated in the reporting academic year, 2023/2024.

Department	Programme Title(s)	Report
Department of Lifelong Learning 18.06.2024	Higher Certificate in Talent Management Bachelor of Business in Talent Management & Organisational Change (Level 7 Add-on) Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Strategic Talent Management & Employee Engagement Level 8 (Add-on)	Report
Department of Lifelong Learning 17.06.2024	Bachelor of Business in Sustainable Procurement, Logistics & Supply Chain Management, Level 7 add -on Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Strategic Procurement, Logistics & Supply Chain Management, Level 8 add -on Higher Certificate in Procurement, Logistics and Supply Chain Management	Report
Department of Fine Art 11.06.2024	Master of Fine Art in Fine Art	Report
Department of Applied Social Sciences. 10.06.2024	Master of Art in Social Work	Report
Department of Accounting and Business Computing. 13.05.2024	Higher Certificate in Arts in Social Enterprise & Community Development	Report
Department of Business and Management. 08.05.2024	Master of Science in Leadership	Report
Department of Sports and Early Childhood Education. 25.04.2024	Master of Science in Applied Sports Performance	Report
Department of Media and Design 20.03.2024	Master of Arts in Instructional and Learning Design	Report
Department of Accounting and Business Computing. 15.03.2024	Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Accounting Technology	Report
Department of Accounting and Business Computing. 14.03.2024	Master of Science in Applied Artificial Intelligence for Business	Report
Department of Sports and Early Childhood Education. 14.03.2024	Master of Arts in Early Intervention and Inclusive Practice for Children	Report
Department of Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism. 12.03.2024	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Physical Education Studies	Report
Department of Sports and Early Childhood Education. 12.03.2024	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Physical Education with Business	Report
Department of Flexible Learning & Department of Mechanical and	Master of Engineering in Autonomous Vehicles	Report

Automobile Engineering. 09.02.2024		
Department of Computer and Software Engineering. 12.12.2023	Master of Science in Software Design with Digitalisation	[Report](#)
Department of Technology Education. 11.12.2023	Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Design Engineering	[Report](#)
Department of Mechanical and Automobile Engineering.15.09.2023	Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Engineering Technology Management	[Report](#)
Department of Information Technology. 14.06.2024	Differential Panel: Master of Science in Computing (Computer Science for Teachers)	[Report](#)
Department of Civil Engineering and Trades. 02.05.2024	Differential Panel: Master of Engineering in Engineering Management Post Graduate Diploma in Engineering Management Master of Engineering in Energy Infrastructure	[Report](#)
Department of Computer and Software Engineering . 02.05.2024	Differential Panel: Master of Science in Software Engineering Master of Science in Software Design with Artificial Intelligence Master of Science in Software Design with Cyber Security Master of Science in Software Design with Cloud Native Master of Science in Software Design with Digitalisation Post Graduate Diploma in Software Engineering with Digitalisation	[Report](#)
Department of Accounting and Business Computing 01.05.2024	Differential Panel: Master of Science in Data Analytics	[Report](#)
Department of the Business and Financial Services 30.04.2024	Differential Panel: Master of Science in Business Analytics	[Report](#)
Department of the Built Environment 30.04.2024	Differential Panel: Master of Science in Quantity Surveying	[Report](#)
Department of Marketing and Digital Communications 29.04.2024	Differential Panel: Master of Business in International and Sustainable Business Strategy	[Report](#)
Department of Marketing and Digital Communications 29.04.2024	Differential Panel: Master of Science in Digital Marketing and Analysis	[Report](#)

Thematic Analysis of Validation Panels

An external validation panel makes an independent impartial judgement on a programme proposal and in accordance with TUS Academic Regulations can recommend approval of a programme subject to Conditions and Recommendations. Conditions are obligatory and must be implemented, and while Recommendations are advisory in nature, there is full consideration given to their implementation by the respective programme boards and they are actioned accordingly. An overview of some of the common themes emerging during external validation panels is available at the following link.

NPV Panel Membership 2023-24

Differential Panel Membership 2023-24

Common Themes Arising From Validation Panels 2023-24

2. Special Purpose Awards Approved During the Reporting Period

Department	Special Purpose Award Programme Title(s)	NFQ Level	ECTS Credits
Department of Business and Management	Postgraduate Certificate in Science in Leadership	Level 9	30
Department of Sport and Early Childhood Education	Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Sports Performance	Level 9	30
Department of Accounting and Business Computing	Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Artificial Intelligence for Business (FT/PT)	Level 9	30
Department of Sport and Early Childhood Education	Postgraduate Certificate in Early Intervention and Inclusive Practice for Children	Level 9	30
Department of Mechanical and Automobile Engineering	Postgraduate Certificate in Autonomous Vehicle Embedded Systems (Level 9, 30 ECTS credits)	Level 9	30
	Postgraduate Certificate in Vehicle Communication for Intelligent Transport Systems	Level 9	30
	Postgraduate Certificate in Hardware and Software Architecture for Autonomous Systems	Level 9	30
	Postgraduate Certificate in Modelling and Simulation for Hazard Identification and Risk Analyses	Level 9	30
	Postgraduate Certificate in Automotive Sensing Technology, Systems and Architecture	Level 9	30
	Postgraduate Certificate in Regulations, Standards and Safety for Autonomous Vehicles	Level 9	30
Department of Computer and Software Engineering	Postgraduate Certificate in Science in Software Design with Digitalisation	Level 9	30
	Postgraduate Certificate in Science in Software Design	Level 9	30
Department of Civil Engineering and Trades	Certificate in Virtual Design and Visualisation Level	Level 8	15
	Certificate in Strategic Management and Leadership	Level 9	10
	Certificate in Data Visualisation and Financial Statement Analysis	Level 9	10
	Certificate in 3D Content and Assets for Virtual Reality	Level 9	20
	Certificate in Scan to BIM	Level 8	10
	BIM and Common Data Environment Data Analytics	Level 7	5
	Certificate in Approaches to Renovation of Traditional Buildings	Level 8	20
	Certificate in Decarbonisation Solutions for the Built Environment	Level 9	20
	Certificate in ICMS WLC and Whole Life Carbon Assessment	Level 8	10

	Certificate in Building Regulation Compliance for Traditional Buildings	Level 8	10
	Certificate in BIM for Facilities Managers	Level 8	10
	Certificate in Energy Renovation Project	Level 8	15
	Certificate in Energy Renovation of Traditional Buildings	Level 8	15
	Certificate in Conservation of Traditional Buildings	Level 8	15
	Certificate in Renovation Management of Traditional Buildings	Level 8	15
Department of Built Environment	ICMS and Whole Life Carbon	Level 8	10
Department of Sport and Early Childhood Studies	Certificate in Foundations of Nutrition for Health and Fitness	Level 7	10
Department of Mechanical and Automobile Engineering	Certificate in Electric Vehicle Technology	Level 7	10
Department of Flexible Learning	Certificate in Personal Leadership and Organisational Growth	Level 9	10

3. Microcredential (Certificate of Completion 1 - 9 ECTS credits)

Certificate of Completion in Site Organisation and Management   (Level 8, 5 ECTS)

Certificate of Completion in Information Systems and Professional Development   (Level 8, 5 ECTS)

Certificate of Completion in Female Athlete (Level 8, 5 ECTS)

Python for Construction Professionals (Level 7, 5 ECTS)

Fundamentals in Energy Renovation (Level 8, 5 ECTS)

Building Defects Detection & Analysis (Level 8, 5 ECTS)

Traditional Building Regulation Energy Compliance (Level 8, 5 ECTS)

Fundamentals in BIM ISO19650 (Level 8, 5 ECTS)

Traditional Building Regulation Energy Compliance (Level 8, 5 ECTS)

ICMS and BIM for Quantity Surveyors (Level 8, 5 ECTS)

BIM & Common Data Environmental Analytics (Level 7, 5 ECTS)

Fundamentals in Electric Vehicles (Level 6, 5 ECTS)

Programme Modification in Advance of Programmatic Review

Programme Boards engage in ongoing monitoring, programme reporting and continuous programme review as outlined in AQR, Part A, Section 1.8. As a consequence of this activity programmes may be adjusted on a continuous basis and this ongoing quality enhancement activity is reflected in the range of changes to Approved Programme Schedules for the reporting period.

Academic Council approved changes to Approved Programme Schedules in the 2023 – 2024 academic year as detailed here:

Changes to Approved Programme Schedules 2023-2024

2.3   Flexible Learning

There has been very significant growth in Flexible and Lifelong learning in the four-year period from the 2020-21 academic year to the reporting year, 2023-24. Research on skills needs has been a core component of the development of new programmes and expansion of delivery. The successful growth in student numbers has been enabled through the design and delivery of industry relevant new programmes, across all academic disciplines, in collaboration with various stakeholders including Regional Skills Managers and industry clusters operating within and across TUS regions.

The number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) students has risen from 620 in 2020-21 to 1,817 in the 2023-24 academic year. This represents a doubling in student numbers over the period, with a total of 3,552 FTE learners supported by TUS at both undergraduate and postgraduate level to acquire new skills

TUS has also seen significant growth in the number of flexible learners undertaking Part-Time programmes with awards of less than 60 ECTS Credits. In the four-year period from the 2020-21 academic year, TUS has supported a total of 7,782 such learners across a range of awards. In total, TUS supported almost 3,000 flexible and lifelong learning students annually to upskill, indicating the scale of provision and the role that TUS is playing in meeting both the needs of society and industry and in fulfilling national and institutional priorities in this area.
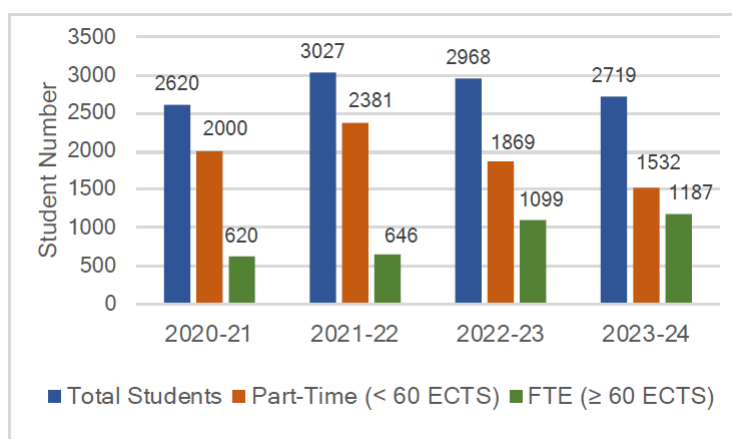
Growth in Total Flexible Learners including FTE and Part-Time
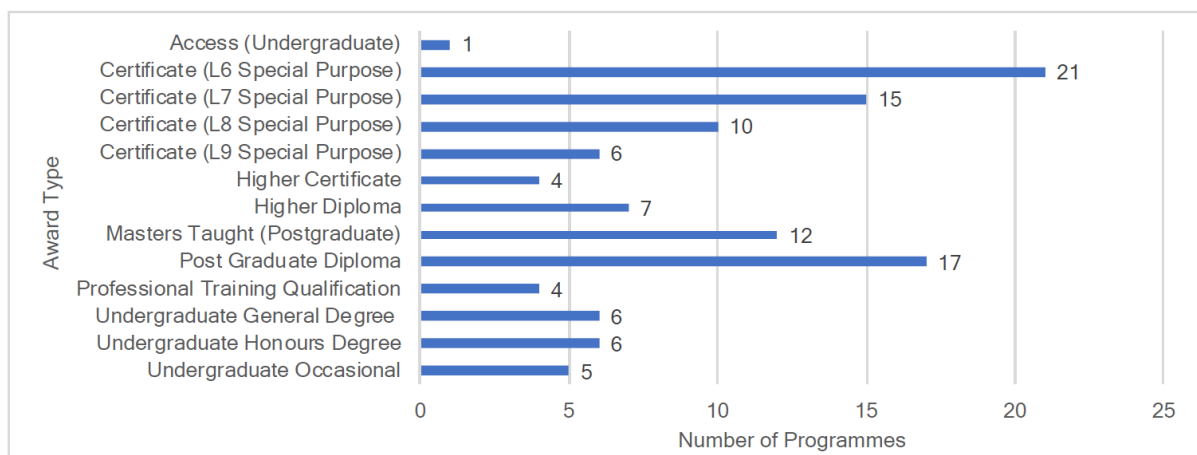
Student Enrolment on the Respective Award Types during the 2023-24 Academic Year

Reflecting this range and diversity of provision across our campuses, there were a total of 2,719 flexible learning students in TUS in the 2023-24 academic year. While these were spread across a range of disciplines the majority were in the Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction (34.4%) and Business, Administration and Law (39.5%) ISCED Broad Codes.
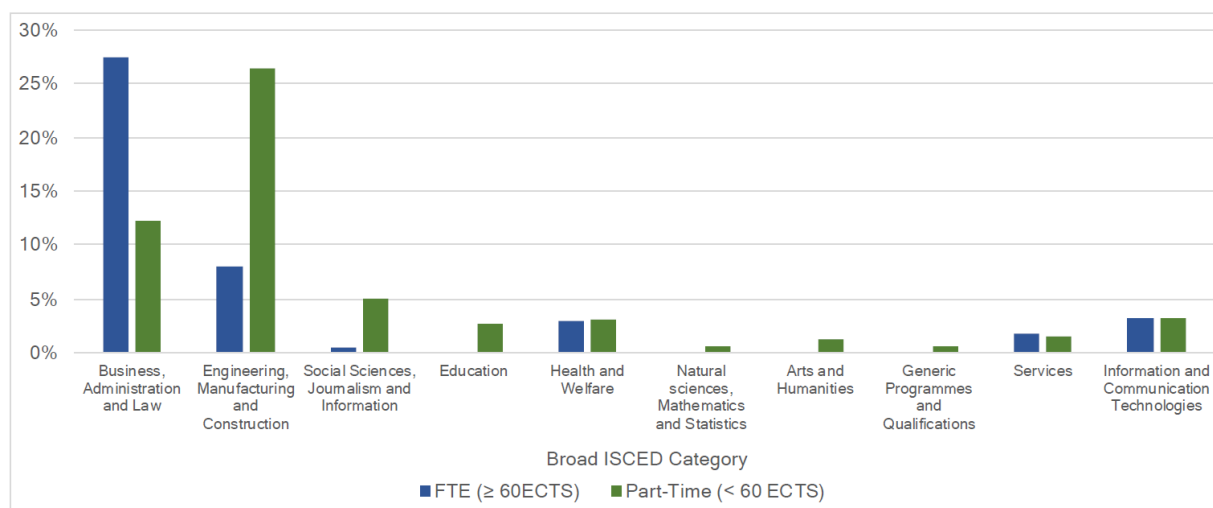
The % of Flexible Learning Student in Respective ISCED Broad Codes for the 2023-24 Academic Year

Future growth in part-time flexible online delivery will include Micro-credentials, Special Purpose Awards, and postgraduate learning, across all levels including delivery nationally and internationally. Given the current trends in lifelong learning, it is important that, irrespective of qualification, each award demonstrates a clear progression route to support the ambition of the lifelong learner. There has been continued growth in the number of programmes delivered online. The impact of free and part- funded upskilling opportunities for the individual learners available via the Springboard, the HCI, the Stimulus and ICT initiatives have been vital components of the recent growth achieved. Blended or on-line delivery is now the main mode in which new flexible part-time programmes are being developed, in response to stakeholder feedback and supported by investment in people, infrastructure and supports for students. Working with industry has made it possible to design new programmes that meet sectoral needs, while also complying with the relevant programme requirements.

TUS is committed to supporting and providing high quality services via new flexible delivery models, access routes, induction and virtual learning environments, including a range of administrative supports from initial contact to online registration, to new engagement and communication channels. Provision of support to part-time flexible learners across the entire student lifecycle has been a priority for TUS. TUS has developed systems to enable the part-time flexible learner to access all services including application, registration, induction, lecturers, tutorials, assessment through to graduation using a range of virtual and digital tools. Academic staff are supported via induction, training and CPD to enhance their engagement and ability to deliver flexible, online and lifelong learning programmes effectively.

2.4 Apprenticeship Provision

Apprenticeship education remains a vital part of the education provision of TUS. A range of Craft Apprenticeships are offered across TUS, in conjunction with An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS), including Carpentry and Joinery, Electrical, Mechanical Automation Maintenance Fitting, Heavy Vehicle Mechanics, Motor Mechanics, and Plumbing. Apprentices earn while they learn and build valuable work-ready skills in a chosen occupation. Apprentices are employed by a SOLAS approved employer for the duration of the programme and provide at least 50% workplace-based learning.

During the 2023-24 academic year, there were over 1,246 Craft Apprentices in TUS through programmes in both Athlone and Limerick. TUS is also playing a significant role in the development of Consortia-led Apprenticeships as both a Coordinating and Collaborative Provider. These apprenticeships have been developed by industry to offer companies the opportunity to grow and develop their talent pipeline.

The range of Consortia-led Apprenticeships offered by TUS reflects the strong engagement with local, regional and national industries and relevant professional bodies. Industries supporting the new apprenticeships are the Limerick for Engineering Group (Industrial Electrical Engineering), Polymer Technology Ireland (Polymer Processing Technology) the Limerick for IT group (Manufacturing Data Integration Engineering), the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (Advanced Quantity Surveyor) and the Precision Turned Parts Manufacturing Association (Precision Machining and Quality Control). Industry in the regions, in conjunction with the regional skills forum managers, have identified shortages of key technical, trade and engineering staff as challenges to the growth and productivity of their enterprises. Key skills requirements include, skilled engineers and craft workers in the electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and built environment disciplines

Craft-Based Apprenticeship Provision (2023-24)

Programme	Campus	Terms			Totals	Phases	No. Students
		1	2	3			
Carpentry & Joinery	Midlands	2	2	2	6	Terms 1-3 (2 P4)	92
Electrical	Midwest	8	8	8	24	Terms 1-3 (4 P4 + 4 P6)	352
Electrical	Midlands	2	2	2	6	Terms 1-3 (2 P4)	95
Fitter MAMF	Midwest	2	2	2	6	Terms 1-2 (2 P6), Term 3 (2 P4)	95
Heavy Vehicle Mechanic	Midlands	3	3	3	9	Terms 1-2 (1 P4 +2 P6), Term 3 (2 P4 + 1 P6)	152
Motor Mechanic	Midlands	2	2	2	6	Terms 1-3 (2 P4)	83
Motor Mechanic	Midwest	2	2	2	6	Terms 1-3 (1 P4 + 1 P6)	85
Plumbing	Midlands	6	6	6	18	Terms 1-3 (4 P4 + 2 P6)	292
Total		**27**	**27**	**27**	**81**		**1246**

Consortia-led Apprenticeships in TUS (2023-24)

| Programme | Campus | NFQ | Duration (Terms) | Current No. Students | | | | No. Students |
				1	2	3	4	
Polymer Processing Technology	Midlands	7	3	15	12	12	-	39
Industrial Electrical Engineer	Midwest	7	2	17	19	-	-	36
Manufacturing Technician	Midwest	6	2	44	46	-	-	90
Total				**76**	**77**	**12**		**165**

In June 2023, Minister for DFHERIS, Mr. Simon Harris opened the new, state-of-the-art, special purpose Apprenticeship facility at the East Campus in Athlone, which will create an active learning space for up to 1,000 apprentices per year, almost doubling the campus's existing capacity.

The new Coonagh Engineering campus opened in January 2024 with a first intake of students. It will form a new hub for apprenticeships in the Midwest, enabling an increase in apprenticeship intake of up to 1,900 in Limerick. Taken together, these developments offer significant potential for the expansion of Apprenticeship provision at TUS, with a potential doubling in capacity into the immediate period ahead.

2.5 Quality Enhancement of Research Provision

TUS Research activities have grown substantially at TUS during the reporting year and continue to have a strong applied focus, delivering specific innovative outputs in partnership with industry, community and other external stakeholders. TUS has 355 research degree students registered in the 2023-24 Academic Year. The number of students registered on a Level 10 Doctoral Degree has increased for the last 4 academic years, and in the 2023-24 academic year, has surpassed those registered on Level 9 Research Masters.
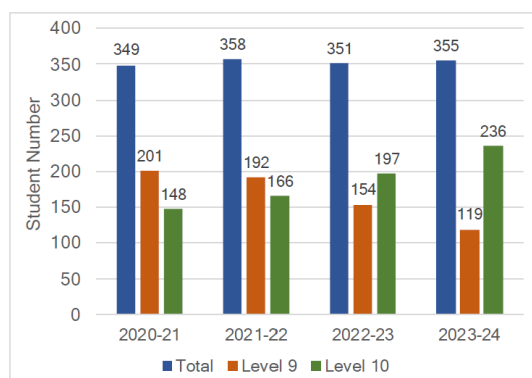
Research Student Trends at TUS
(NFQ Level 9 & Level 10)
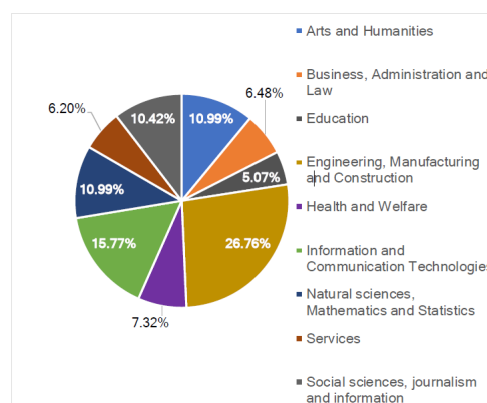
Research Student Registration Per Broad ISCED Code 2023-24 Academic Year

The impact of increased funding and investment in TUS on research outputs is evidenced by the increase in high quality scholarly output. In data obtained from Scopus, October 2024, for the period 2019 to 2024, TUS had a total of 1,164 research publications across a range of academic areas. This involved a total of 576 authors, a citation count of 13,815 (with an average citation per paper of 11.9) and a h5 index score of 42.
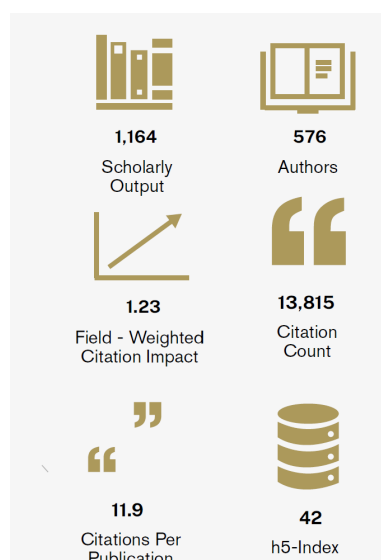
TUS Research Publications Impact Overview
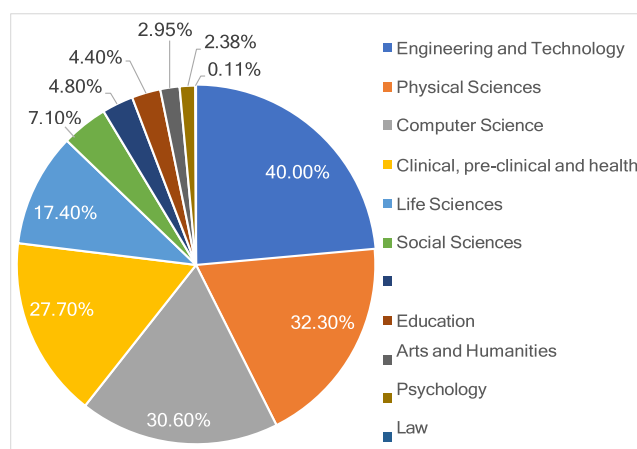
TUS Publications by Subject Area for 2019–2024 (Scopus data to October 2024)

TUS's key strategic areas of focus and growth for the future aims to connect relevant faculties, departments and academic staff with research Institutes and Centres and Groups within the TU. This will help to ensure that RDI activity is transferred to taught programmes given our TU ethos of research informed teaching. A comprehensive range of supports and services are available including training courses and administrative services organised by the Graduate School and Graduate Research Office in TUS Midlands and Midwest, respectively. TUS operates a comprehensive range of supports for Masters and PhD by research degree students. This includes training and development for staff and students organised by the Graduate School and Graduate Research Offices. Candidates and their supervisors are supported through all stages of the research degree programme.

A thorough induction programme has been developed for new research students and supervisors to educate them on postgraduate policies and procedures and support them in their research projects. All new research postgraduate students attend mandatory research postgraduate student induction. This induction provides an overview of governance and compliance structures within TUS, as well as an introduction to the researcher support services and the research community. TUS also provides formal Research Integrity Training through the Epigeum training platform. General and discipline specific training in health and safety protocols are provided by the TUS Health and Safety Officer in collaboration with the Graduate School and Graduate Research Office. The programme of support offered on TUS campuses broadly aligns with the principles enshrined in the European Charter for Researchers and European Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Based on demand, a broad range of workshops were delivered in the 2023-24 reporting year under the following broad areas:

- Research Skills and Techniques;
- Research Environment;
- Research Management;
- Optimising Personal Effectiveness;
- Communication Skills;
- Networking and Teamworking;
- Research Career Management.

TUS Library provides research skills instruction, access to scholarly knowledge resources and 1 to 1 consultation to postgraduate students and supervisors, and provides access to the scholarly collections supporting postgraduate teaching and research. Postgraduate students and supervisors can avail of

training and advice on publishing and disseminating their research, managing their academic profile and engaging in best practices in Open Research. Other training and development opportunities at other institutions/organisations over the course of the research degree programme are identified jointly by the student and their Supervisory Panel.

The Research Institutes and Centres continue to be aligned with key themes and priority areas that evolve and change over time. Continuous horizon scanning and engagement with stakeholders has the potential to identify other areas and themes, which can be incorporated into the RDI portfolio. A number of the themes and areas are interdisciplinary in nature and this approach is supported by many of TUS's Research Institutes and Centres. The primary purpose of designating Research Institutes, Centres and Groups is to enhance focus and recognition on specialist research areas and expertise within TUS. The Academic Council Subcommittee on *Postgraduate Studies and Research* oversees their designation and operation to ensure that quality standards are being maintained and that the research activity remains an integral part of the development of the TUS strategic policy in terms of research.

The designated Research Institutes and Groups encompass a wide variety of disciplines, from Fine Art and Design to Social Sciences, Biotechnology, Interactive Systems. The primary purpose of designating Research Institutes, Centres and Groups is to enhance focus and recognition on specialist research areas and expertise within TUS. The progressive nature and scale of these 3 designations demonstrates a growth path for new research specialisms, growing numbers of researchers and funding and a thriving research culture at TUS, Energy Management, and Sustainable Development. The Research Institutes and Groups all have a focus on developing niche areas of expertise to attract international researchers and external funding to provide innovative products and processes for industry partners and to develop postgraduate research opportunities.

A high-level overview of the designated Research Institutes is provided in the following Table.

Outline Profile of TUS Research Institutes

RESEARCH INSTITUTE	DESCRIPTIONS
LSAD	LSAD Institute for research into Art, Creative Education, Applied/Digital Design Enterprise, Media and Innovation. LSAD acts as a Centre to attract funding to encourage research mobility and to support and grow LSAD research collaborations.
IDEAM (incorporating technology gateway)	IDEAM (Research Institute for Design Engineering, Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Manufacturing) is the industry cluster for smart manufacturing and digital engineering. The Technology Gateway supports industry to improve operational performance, increase competitiveness and reduce carbon impacts, through the application of data-driven methods and advanced digital technologies.
Life, Health and Biosciences (incorporating Shannon ABC)	Life, Health and Biosciences Research Institute develops an integrated approach to understanding the connection between health and bioscience and applies new knowledge to improving health and wellness. Shannon Applied Biotechnology Centre identifies, explores and purifies new bioactive molecules for various industry sectors.
Social Sciences ConneXions	Social Sciences ConneXions aims to promote social inclusion, provide a voice for those who are not heard, and enrich the body of academic knowledge informing social and community practitioners from a variety of disciplines.
SDRI	The Sustainable Development Research Institute (SDRI) delivers TUS's ambition to be at the forefront of sustainable development in the TU Region, by delivering inter-disciplinary research and building new knowledge and delivering positive impacts for and outcomes for society.
BRI	The Bioscience Research Institute supports and enables sustaining and disruptive solutions for the Medtech, Agri-food and the Environment with society to the fore.
PRISM (incorporating APT)	The Polymer, Recycling, Industrial, Sustainability and Manufacturing Research Institute is made up of a multidisciplinary team of world class researchers conducting industrially relevant research in the polymer space. PRISM incorporates the Enterprise Ireland Funded Technology Gateway Centre Applied Polymer Technologies. Applied Polymer Technology provides world class solutions for SME's and Multinational companies throughout the product life cycle from product design through production scale-up and characterisation of final products.
SRI (incorporating COMAND)	The Software Research Institute (SRI) conducts research across cybersecurity, cloud-edge computing, network protocols, immersive multimedia systems, robotic control and multi-robot collaboration. SRI also performs cross-discipline research through collaboration with the Materials Research Institute and Bioscience Research Institute. The COMAND Technology Gateway concentrates on the research and development of prospective interactive media technologies focused on; cross-platform applications, mobile media cloud, 3D sensing, and the interoperability for the Internet of Things.

2.6   International Education

TUS is actively embedding global perspectives in all of the Technological University's activities. This is led by the VP International and the TUS Global Office working with the Faculties, Academic Departments and other support services across TUS. Collectively, the TUS community is working on the development of an internationalised curriculum, further growing international research, widening our partnership collaborations and extending our transnational education network as we grow mobility for both students and staff. The TUS Strategic Plan commits to building and enhancing relationships to drive the sustainable development of our region and to make an impact nationally and internationally. TUS has a vision that through internationalisation it will be recognised as a premier Technological University that promotes and embeds global perspectives in all its activities. This is achieved through the commitment of the TUS community to an internationalised curriculum, transnational research and international education partnerships, and to the development of an extensive staff and student mobility network.
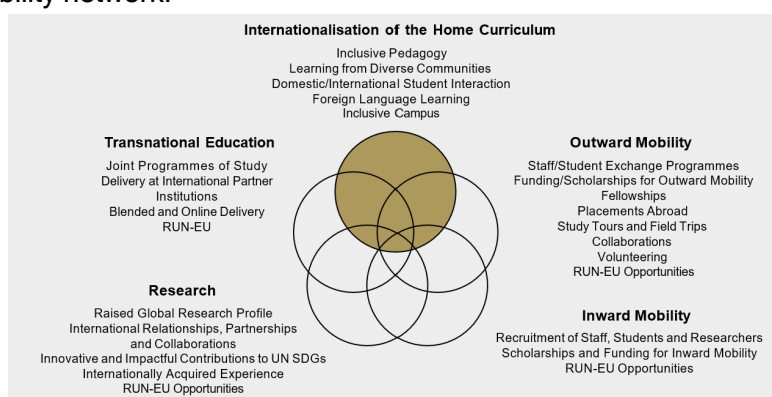
TUS Internationalisation Framework

With a network of over 200 global partners, the TUS International Office is dedicated to enhancing international collaborations in key regions. TUS is committed to developing Student Liaison Offices that create a fully circular support system, enabling seamless interaction between TUS and incoming and outgoing students and graduates. There are overseas TUS International Student Liaison Offices located in New Delhi, India; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Shanghai, China; and Lagos, Nigeria, with International offices located in Athlone and Limerick. In TUS, all academic departments and administrative functions are encouraged to embrace a comprehensive internationalisation agenda. Working with the faculties and departments, the TUS International Offices, located in the Athlone and Limerick campuses, lead in recruitment and provide dedicated support to international students throughout their studies. TUS also has a presence in four overseas international offices located in New Delhi, India; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Shanghai, China; and Lagos, Nigeria. Collectively, these offices promote mobility opportunities for students, staff and researchers to further the internationalisation agenda of TUS for the benefit of its stakeholders.

TUS is committed to aligning with the *QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners*, ensuring transparency and compliance with all principles when considering recruitment, marketing, fees and the provision of supports and services. TUS is also cognisant of the need to support staff to address the needs of a diverse student community. The International Office places a particular focus on supports and services for international learners, ensuring that students are welcomed to a supportive environment that encourages integration with the TUS community at large and puts the well-being of students as a central driver. The team also work to recruit

students from a broad range of geographical locations. Incoming Erasmus mobilities also aid in this with new cohorts of European students joining for a semester and up to a full academic year.

TUS Global Outreach Highlights
• TUS Global appointed two International Student Experience Officers in September 2023, one based at TUS Midwest and one based at TUS Midlands. Their objective is to enhance the international student experience and encourage greater interactions amongst students to share cultural experiences through participation in events, excursions and celebrations across TUS campuses. Students are encouraged to participate in activities to celebrate Diwali, Chinese New Year, Eid and share values and traditions. TUS • Global was awarded "Best Student Experience" at the Education Awards 2024. • In May 2023, the Irish Ambassador to Nigeria, His Excellency Peter Ryan, launched the TUS Africa Liaison Office in Lagos marking a significant milestone in TUS's unwavering commitment to providing enhanced support to parents, students, and agents in Africa. TUS is actively exploring opportunities to establish similar offices worldwide, with a primary focus on expanding our reach and fostering global partnerships. • TUS has one of the highest approval ratings amongst Irish HEIs for Ministry of Education approved undergraduate level programmes in China with nine programmes approved in disciplines of Software Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Pharmaceutical Science, Graphic Design, Hotel Management, Civil Engineering, Business and Accounting at Chinese partner Universities. The associated agreements result in advanced entry to the final year of the Bachelor degree programmes at TUS.

The success of this internationalisation agenda to date is evidenced by a total of 1,850 in-bound international students studying at TUS during the 2023-24 academic year. It is noteworthy that this constituted more than 10% of our full-time student population, representing over 100 countries

Profile of International Inbound Students in the 2023-24 Academic Year
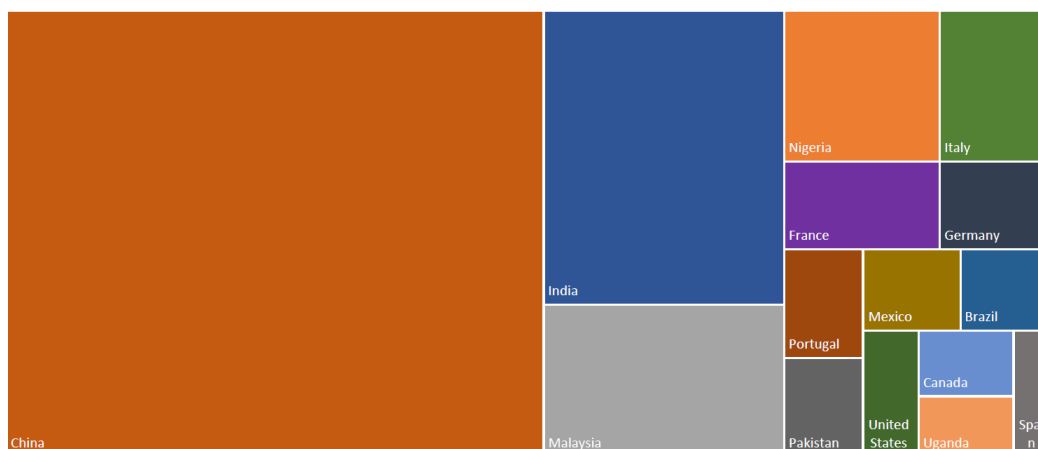
Top Performing Countries for Enrolments, including EU and Non-EU (2023 - 2024)

TUS is committed to providing outbound student exchange opportunities to students and staff in a variety of contexts including expanding study abroad programmes, international placements, summer programmes, short-term training, and educational visits. TUS actively seeks funding from sources such as Erasmus+, embassies, and government-sponsored programmes to support mobility opportunities. The outbound student demographic was also significant involving 370 students across a range of Erasmus and Non-Erasmus initiatives during the 2023-24 academic year, including Erasmus Study, Erasmus Placement and RUN-EU Short Advanced Programmes (SAPs). Additionally, TUS provides scholarships to underrepresented student groups and strives to increase engagement opportunities both at home and abroad, collaborating with community groups on volunteering projects and recognising participation through achievement awards.

Profile of International outbound students in the 2023-2024 Academic Year
(BIP=Blended Intensive Programme; SAP = short Advanced Programme)

Conscious of a growing population of international students and the increasing support and services required by these students, TUS recruited two "International Student Experience Officers" and these officers work to assist students in every aspect of their journey. They collaborate with Student Services on English Language, Academic Writing and Tutorial support, spreading awareness of the availability of these services to international learners. TUS International Offices also encourage staff and students to participate in training to progress internationalisation.

2.7   Staff Development including Teaching and Learning

The Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development (CPID) leads and promotes innovation, diversity and excellence in learning, teaching and assessment, including the use of digital technologies. CPID engaged in the CINNTE review process in 2023-2024. The programme of staff development activities and the approach used to embed the TUS Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, including the TUS Graduate Attributes into practice across the university was commended by the panel.

The flagship MA in Academic Practice was validated in the academic year 2022-2023, with the first cohort of participants commencing in September 2023. The success to date of the accredited CPD flexible pathways is evidenced by the considerable engagement of staff. In the reporting year, 2023-2024, there were 81 participants on SPAs, including the first cohort of 11 participants who commenced the dissertation module, as indicated in the following Figure. A total of 8 members of staff will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma, with one participant exiting with a Postgraduate Certificate.
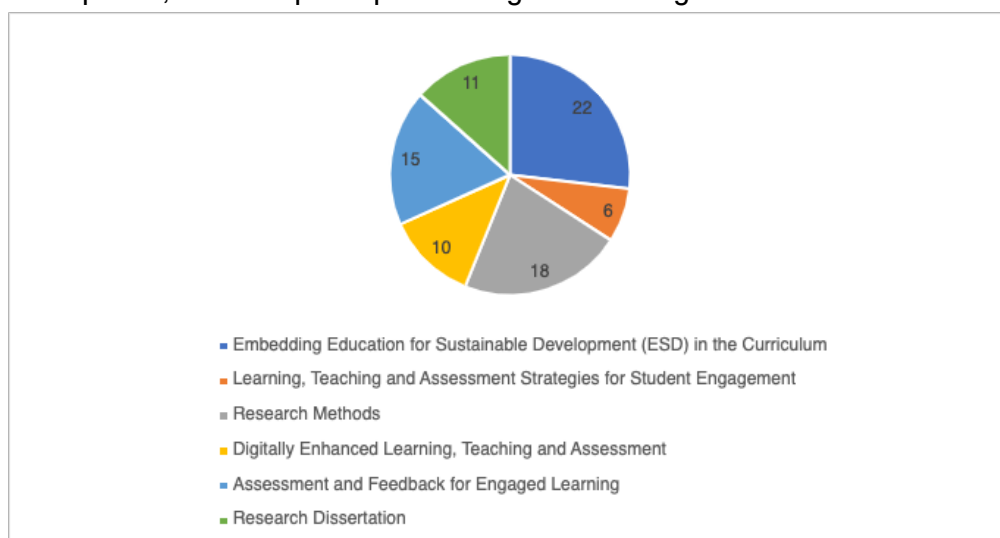
Engagement on the flexible pathway to an MA in Academic Practice 2023-2024

Ongoing Non-accredited Professional Development

A comprehensive suite of non-accredited opportunities was provided, which included a response to the emergence of Generative AI. Throughout the year, there were over 1000 participants at these sessions, which includes repeat engagement. The majority of participants were academic and professional support staff in TUS, with some engagement from RUN EU partners, see Table X. CPID is committed to ensuring the geographically distributed campuses are included. This provision included online and in-person sessions. A novel approach using roadshows focusing on particular themes such as VR and AI was implemented. CPID staff visited all campuses during a dedicated week to engage with staff through workshops, demonstrations and programme development sessions. The themes of the professional development sessions are informed by engagement with the National Forum and the Strategic Alignment of Learning and Teaching Enhancement, the National Academic Integrity Network, NTUTORR, our RUN EU partners in addition to ongoing research activity within the centre. Engagement of TUS staff with non-accredited professional development activities in the reporting period is indicated in the following Table.

Non-accredited professional development	Number of participants
CPID Induction (Academic Staff)	5
CPID Induction (Academic Staff)	13
Moodle Training UDL	12
Academic Integrity Week	210
Creating and Embedding UDL	25
National UDL Symposium	120
Global Conversations Sessions in collaboration with the TUS Graduate School	124
Virtual Reality (VR) Knowledge Sharing Sessions (Online)	26
Virtual Reality Campus Experience Roadshow (NTUTORR funded)	43
CPID February 2024 Sessions: • Intro to OER, • VEVOX – classroom response system • Programme Design and Review, • Peer Assisted Student Support (PASS), • Getting started with Moodle, • Screenpal – for creating digital resources, • Gapfill Quiz Questions in Moodle, • Introduction to H5P-to create interactive resources, • Moodle resources for Accessibility, • AI and Academic Integrity, • Developing Moodle Skills, • Informing Programmatic Review.	165
CPID Lunch and Learn Sessions: • Teaching Tips, • Using SWAY to create interactive learning resources • AI and Academic Integrity, • Screenpal – for creating digital resources,	79
Lightboard Demonstration (Midwest)	8
Staff AI and Academic Integrity Campus Experience Roadshow	40
June 2024 CPID Sessions: • Relational Pedagogy, • UDL for beginners, • Using Turnitin, • Screenpal, • VEVOX Intro, • Vevox Train the Trainer, • Gapfill Quiz Questions in Moodle, • Brickfield Accessibility Toolkit, • Lightboard Technology.	123
Academic Integrity, AI and Assessment Design	38
Academic Integrity and AI in TUS, Faculty of Applied Sciences and Technology, Midwest	45
Inclusive Curriculum Design	27
Intercultural Awareness: TUS International Office staff	14
	Total 1117

Regional Consortium for Staff Development

TUS continued its successful collaboration with the University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College. A comprehensive review of the Regional Teaching and Learning Award commenced in 2023-2024. TUS also supported the planning of the international conference titled 'Navigating the new frontier: Generative AI and Academic Integrity' in conjunction with RTEA partners and the National Academic Integrity Network.

In addition, NTUTORR funded a pilot of the Advance HE Fellowship programmes involving a range of academic staff at different career stages. The purpose is to evaluate the fellowship programmes as a means of recognising excellence in academic practice.

Summary of the spectrum of Activity delivered by the CPID Centre in support of Staff and Staff Development

Accredited CPD Offerings MA in Academic Practice Postgraduate Diploma Postgraduate Certificates Special Purpose Awards (SPAs)	Induction for New Staff (Annual) Day-long induction - effective teaching, effective assessment, digital technologies, pedagogies of care, UDL Mentoring programme for new staff Asynchronous supports in Moodle - New to Teaching? Let's get Started Effective teaching and assessment, digital technologies, pedagogies of care, UDL - accessible resources. FAQ's	Induction for Postgraduate Students (Annual) Day-long induction effective teaching, effective assessment, digital technologies, pedagogies of care, UDL Mentoring programme
Unaccredited CPD (Ongoing) Academic Integrity Digital Technologies Designing Exam papers Designing Assessment Criteria and Rubrics Assessment design including feedback Artificial Intelligence: design of assessment Artificial Intelligence for Educators	On Request (Ongoing) Module and Programme Design Online teaching for student engagement Cultural Awareness Training	Discipline-specific Engagement (Ongoing) Developing asynchronous interactive resources for Social Care, Trauma-Informed Pedagogy in Higher Education, Signature Pedagogies. Engagement with the Student Union - Students as Partners Peer Assisted Student Support (PASS) Student /Fellowships Artificial Intelligence Academic Integrity
Unaccredited CPD (Per semester) Flexible pathway briefing sessions Creating accessible resources Introduction Team-Based Learning Digital Badges Active learning and student engagement Internationalising the Home Curriculum Embedding Education for Sustainable Development Universal Design for Learning Inclusive practice Pedagogies of Care Peer-Assisted Student Support	Design of Learning Spaces (Ongoing) Team-Based Learning Room Redesign of Computer Laboratories - Physical and Technologies Digital Innovation Learning Laboratories Proof of Concept of Digital Technologies Prior to Mainstreaming	Research and Scholarship including Developing Open Educational Resources (Ongoing) Communities of Practice Compendia Supporting Open Educational Practice - development of OER Supporting Dissemination and Scholarly Activities - presenting at conferences Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) CPID Index of Resources Supporting Staff to Engage in Educational Research

2.8 Supports and Resources for Learners

TUS is a dynamic and vibrant multi-campus community. Our investment in high quality student supports ensures that student success and a positive student experience is a key priority. Whether students are new to TUS and need help getting started or in an advanced year of study, student supports play a critical role in ensuring students have access to learning in a student-centred supportive environment and which positively contributes to student access, retention, success, and progression.

Strategic Review of Student Support Services

Following TU integration, and in support of quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) measures in the context of resources and supports for Learners, a Strategic Review of Student Support Services was conducted in 2023-24. The review fell into the following distinct areas of focus:

- An assessment of our compliance with QQI Guidelines
- A review of TUS Student Support Policies
- Self-reflection on the quality of the services we provide to students
- Engagement with Stakeholders (staff and students) within TUS

The following functional units participated:

- Access Service
- Counselling Service
- Student Health Service
- Disability Service
- Chaplaincy/Pastoral Care
- Learning Support

A Strategic Evaluation Report was evaluated on January 24th, 2024, by an External Peer Review Panel (PRG). PRG Commendations and Recommendations were warmly welcomed by Student Support Service (available on request), who are committed to engaging in the next phase of this process and addressing the recommendations outlined in 2024-25 and onwards.

Student Support Services

The following provides an introduction and overview of the ethos and principle focus of each support service and is complimented by the overview of the services provided in AQR Part A, Section A3.0. TUS also has a vibrant Sports Office and an active Students' Union who work collaboratively with student services, in support of students.

A TUS student has access to many supports and services including:

1. Connect & Engage Programme
2. Access Service
3. Disability Service
4. Student Counselling Service
5. Student Health Service
6. Learning Support Service
7. Pastoral Care
8. Mentors
9. Laptop Loan Scheme
10. TUS Societies.

1. Connect & Engage

Connect and Engage is our seven-week Induction and Orientation programme. The programme includes an array of curated events and activities ranging from support services to essential information and all created to support students' transition to college and towards a positive student experience. The programme is delivered in a blended format both onsite and online across all TUS campuses and has 7 themed weeks which ran as follows in this reporting period:

Week	Dates	Programme Activity
Week 1	11th to 15th Oct.	Welcome Back and 1st Year Pre-Arrival Induction
Week 2	18th to 22nd Oct.	Get Connected
Week 3	25th to 29th Oct.	Financial Fitness
Week 4	2nd to 6th Oct.	Mind Your Health
Week 5	9th to 13th Oct.	Mental Health Matters
Week 6	16th to 20th Oct.	Boosting Academic Success
Week 7	23rd to 27th Oct	Community and Culture

2. Access Service

The TUS Access Service is committed to promoting access to higher education for under-represented groups. The Access agenda flows from a philosophy of equality and social inclusiveness and is informed by the National Access Plan: A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028. TUS Access Service operates initiatives in partnership with schools, community organisations, and Further Education providers. Access staff are members of relevant TUS committees and advise on policy, procedure and best practice on issues relating to our commitment in TUS towards the Access Agenda. The work of the Access Service is underpinned by national policy and targets and is supported from various related targeted funding initiatives. Some examples include;

- ✓ **Student Assistance Fund** supporting 2048 students with a budget of €1,262,506

- ✓ A total of 125 **1916 Bursaries** were provided to students in 2023 – 2024 equating to payments amounting to = €142,576. Given the annual bursary stipend for Tier 1 and Tier 2, the total value in 2023-24 of 1916 Bursaries equated to €484,651. In addition to the financial award recipients also receive mentoring support as part of this programme. This fund supports students under-represented in higher education that include students from disadvantaged backgrounds or from communities who have low levels of participation in higher education, Irish Travellers, members of the Roma community, students with a disability, ethnic minorities, further education and training award holders progressing to higher education.

- ✓ In the reporting period, TUS is leading out in the sector across several **National Access Plan (NAP)** target cohorts e.g. 30 Traveller Students and 4 Roma Students enrolled in TUS in 23/24 which represents a significant contribution to the HEA target under NAP 2022-2028 of 119 Traveller Students across all HEI's nationally.

- ✓ **PATH 3** Strand 3 of the Programme for Access to Higher Education 2021 – 2024 supports students from local DEIS schools, mature students, lone parents, members of the Traveller and Roma communities and students from marginalised communities. In 2023-24, PATH 3 projects had an operating budget of €214,447.

- ✓ **PATH 4** - Strand 4 Programme for Access to Higher Education - Phase 1 Universal Design Fund with a budget of €16,746.81. Phase 1 supports the embedding of Universal Design which will benefit all students and in particular autistic students.
- ✓ **PATH 5** - Programme for Access to Higher Education -Traveller & Roma Students with a total budget of €112,698 which amounts to €37,566 per year 2023 to 2025, supporting x 3 Project Initiatives.
- ✓ **College of Sanctuary -** For 2023/2024, 3 Access students and 19 undergraduate Sanctuary scholarships were awarded across all campuses by TUS. In addition to financial support, University of Sanctuary students receive comprehensive one to one support, from our Access Service in the Midlands and the University of Sanctuary Coordinator in the Midwest to enable their successful participation and progression.
- ✓ **Mature Students** are supported in their transition into third-level education and throughout their time in TUS.

3. Disability Service

TUS Disability Services provide a range of supports for students across the full range of their disabilities/specific learning difficulties/ongoing health conditions, including but not limited to: sensory and physical disabilities, specific learning difficulties, mental health conditions, significant ongoing illness, and students with Autism. Services include facilitating individual learning support, dyslexia screening, assistive technology training, alternative assessment formats, examination supports and provision of transport. Educational Support Workers deliver appropriate learning and personal support to students registered with the service. Each student's needs are assessed on an individual basis and in accordance with the evidence presented. In some cases, and in accordance with the presenting need, one to one personal and academic assistance is provided by Servisource and Comfort Keepers who are tendered by TUS for the provision of same.

TUS is fully committed to supporting people with disabilities meet their academic potential. TUS is mindful of our statutory obligation under the Disability Act 2005 to support access to services and facilities for people with disabilities. Students who are registered with the Disability Service can self-refer throughout their time at TUS or may be part of **DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) Scheme.** In 2023/2024TUS admitted 228 students into first year under the DARE scheme. Notably, in 2024 TUS become the first university in Ireland to be officially designated an ADHD-friendly university by ADHD Ireland.

In 2023-2024 there were 1,052 students registered with TUS Disability Services.

In 2023-2024 TUS received an allocation of €289,794.00 from the Fund for Students with Disabilities. These funds **partially fund** the support requirements of students with disabilities. In December 2023 we were successful in an application for contingency funding of €94,025.

4. Student Counselling Service

The TUS Midlands Midwest Student Counselling Service(SCS) provides confidential student-centred, accessible, psychological, mental health and wellbeing support to students across six campuses in the Midlands Midwest. Support is culturally appropriate, and trauma informed. Direct services include clinical intake screening, risk assessment triage, evidence based psychological interventions, referral

to medical/psychiatry, and other mental health or support services as relevant, reporting to statutory bodies where applicable.

In addition to clinical support, the SCS actively promotes positive mental health and wellbeing using a range of focused strategies including workshops, webinars, social media, counselling service newsletters and engaging psychoeducational resources and helpline numbers on the TUS student counselling webpages. Student counselling service collaborate and liaise with the TUS community, external stakeholders, local and regional mental health services, and agencies to provide best care for students and are committed to the ongoing development of out of hours supports for students of the TUS community. TUS SCS continue to partner with 2 providers to provide additional support 24/7 and 365 days a year. These are *Textaboutit* and *Togetherall*, *Textaboutit*, formerly known as Text 50808, is a free, anonymous, text support service available to TUS students.

In the academic year 2023/24: A total of 4,654 clinical hours were provided to students of TUS during the period 1st September 2023 to 31 August 2024 and 921 students used TUS Counselling Services during this period, wait-time from first contact to assessment (first meeting with counsellor) was an average of 6.5 days. The SCS recorded 35.5% of students indicated risk to self on the pre-therapy outcome measure.

5. Student Health Service
The TUS Student Health Service provides a confidential and caring Health Service to all full- time registered students and apprentices throughout the academic year, with an emphasis on preventative medicine and health promotion, whilst responding to the needs and concerns of all our students. The service operates as an addition to a student's own family doctor or specialist medical service.

The nurse-led service is free and confidential. A doctor's service is provided within a 3km radius of each of the 6 campuses in the Midlands and the Midwest. The student fee for the doctor is €15 for registered students and free for Medical Card holders outside of a 5-mile radius of the relevant campus. Students are also informed of the Out-of-Hours Doctor Service for evenings and weekend cover.

In the reporting period, a total number of 5,867 nursing appointments took place across TUS with 1,861 in the Midlands and 4,006 nurse appointments in the Midwest. These figures represent both onsite and telephone consults as this includes 5 campuses across the Midwest. The main age profile for students attending the Student Health Service is 18 – 24-year-olds, with a slightly higher proportion of females attending. There is a diverse number of medical illnesses encountered; treatment plans and care are provided in both nursing and doctor clinics to suit the requirement of each patient.

Sexual Health Service
Funded annually by the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme (SHCPP), this nurse-led service provides comprehensive student sexual health services to the Athlone student population, with support and clinical governance from a local GP and Consultant in Genitourinary Medicine from the public STI services as required. The nurse-led model in Athlone includes confidential sexual health advising, health education and health promotion programmes, access to contraception and a wide range of sexual health services such as assessment and management of all common sexually transmitted infections (STIs), vaccination, partner notification, management of erectile dysfunction,

assessment and management of genital dermatoses, condom distribution and complex case referral pathways. A total of 1039 consultations (80% Nurse 20% Doctor) were provided between September 1st, 2023, and August 31st, 2024, exceeding the annual target by 22%. We are also proud to note that this award-winning service, attracted further accolades in this reporting period when it was 'Highly Commended' at the Irish Healthcare Awards 2023 in the 'Innovation in Primary Care' category.

6. Learning Support Service

The TUS Learning Support Service is available to all students at a no-cost basis. The primary aim of the service is to promote retention through progression. Supports are aimed at;

- students struggling to pass assessments,

- students achieving high continuous assessment marks and who are aiming for First-Class Honours / Higher Merit as appropriate.

TUS promotes a supervised self-help model to empower the student and to focus on building their skills and confidence in a supportive and encouraging environment. Support can be organised via referral from lecturers and professional services or more commonly, self-referral by the students individually or through their class reps for group support. In group settings, the speed of progression through the topic is determined by the student struggling the most. We stick with a topic until everyone "gets it". The support delivered is underpinned by the principles of active learning, with the student leading the process. Students experience challenges with different areas of their study. During their time in TUS students can avail of one-to-one consultations, group workshops and seminars to help improve their academic skills.

TUS Midlands

TUS Midlands has identified key subject areas where students benefit from additional assistance, including tutor support is available to students in Science, Mathematics and Business subjects by 3 full-time staff tutors. This support is offered through the provision of regular (weekly) or "one-off" tutorial sessions in accordance with student demand. All tutorials are student led and attendees decide on the topics to be covered at each session and the speed of progression. During this reporting period the three staff Academic Tutors have 789 regularly attending students. These numbers do not include attendance at additional specific learning support events such as 'Connect with Science' and 'Math's Connect' as these sessions did not require registration to attend.

The tutors delivered a combined total of 13,194 tutorial hours (number of hours delivered multiplied by the number of students in the class) across the areas of math, engineering, IT, chemistry, biological sciences, physical sciences, business, accounting, and hospitality. This number has been affected by numerous factors. Attendance at Business / Accounting tutorials has increased by approximately 30%. Meanwhile, the dynamics of the attendance in STEM areas has changed. A notable increase of "high need" students with disabilities, learning difficulties, mental health challenges and neurodiversity attending tutorials has seen a dramatic increase of up to 300%. The knock-on effect of this is an increase in the number of one-to-one tutorials. This is a very welcome development and demonstrates the normalisation of diversity accessing student support. A reduction generally in class sizes was also noted as being similar to the general attendance issues across the campus.

It should be noted that whilst the number of students attending classes may have reduced in some areas, the number of classes delivered increased as the number of modules covered increased as did

the number of one-to-ones as explained above. For STEM subjects, 1st year demand was highest at 42% followed by 2nd year at 37.5%, 3rd years at 9.2% and 4th years at 3% of total tutorial demand (Other 8.3%: Dept. of Lifelong Learning, Postgrads). Business student demand remained evenly distributed across all years of study which could be attributed to business tutorials being embedded into the faculty.

The Academic Writing Centre (AWC) at TUS Midlands is a resource dedicated to improving students' performance and confidence in all areas of academic writing. The Academic Writing Centre offers a range of services and support including workshops, individual tutorials, and online learning opportunities. The ethos of the centre is to build the students' skill and help them with practical strategies to facilitate their academic writing. The Academic Writing Centre coordinator was engaged on a part time basis only, for Semester One 2023/2024, with the full-time position filled in January of Semester Two of 2024. Throughout the academic year 2023/2024 approximately 350 students availed of writing support from the Academic Writing Centre, the majority of which were from the Faculty of Science and Health. Academic Writing support was provided for students on site and remotely. Writing support was provided through a combination of face-to-face/Zoom/email.

TUS Midwest
In the academic year September 2023 to end of May 2024 a total of 839 students applied for learning support from the LSU of which 30 were for English language support. From September 2023 to May 2024, circa 3,788 tuition hours were delivered. Students availed of between 4 and 10 hours of support depending on the need, with tuition delivered by 48 tutors.

Support for Second Shot Initiative was delivered by a reduced number of 23 tutors between June 1st and August 31st, 2024, an additional 798 hours were delivered to students preparing for repeat examinations.

During this reporting period the LSU Manager post continues to remain vacant following a retirement in September 2023. Casual part-time hours were approved to facilitate the delivery of the service through the academic year. The recruitment of an LSU manager is under review in the context of the review of Student Support Services Structures which is underway.

7. Pastoral Care
A Chaplain, from the Diocese is based in Athlone, while a staff-appointed Pastoral Care Co-ordinator is based in TUS Midwest campuses. Pastoral Care service works across our campuses to create a caring and supportive community for our students and plays a significant role in delivering a person-centered education for our students. This service, by its nature, works quietly and is often unseen, but provides a very effective bridge to other services and support both within TUS and in the communities we serve.

During the academic year 2023-2024, the provision of care and support to our students and staff was delivered through face-to-face meetings, emails, telephone calls, written correspondence, the in-house website and through Teams meetings.

8. Mentoring
During the academic year 2023-2024, there were 58 mentors who are academic staff from across the Midwest campuses. Mentors are nominated by their Head of Department. Each Mentor is

allocated to approximately 40 first year students with agreement by their Head of Department. Mentors sign a 'Memo of Understanding' at the beginning of the academic year, which is approved by the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar.

9. Laptop Loan Scheme

The Government Laptop Scheme is administered by the Library for all TUS campuses. As part of the package of COVID-19 supports for higher and further education institutions approved by the Government on the 22 July 2020, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science allocated €10 million of capital funding for a once-off COVID-19 grant to support disadvantaged students in the higher education sector, in accessing ICT devices. As part of the scheme, TUS was allocated a total of €657,460 to date by the Higher Education Authority. Additional devices (84 I5s) were purchased in June 2024 to start replacing the original batch of I3s who are now encountering different issues with slowness, compatibility, storage and charging. The new batch will be distributed to the new cohort of 1st year as a priority for academic year 2024/2025.

10. TUS Societies

In January 2022 a Societies officer was appointed for TUS to support the work of TUS Societies. TUS Societies forms a central pillar of life in TUS for students and there is a diverse range of Societies for students to join. Joining a society provides the opportunity to learn new skills and meet new people to share the student experience with. It provides students with the opportunity to get to know people with similar interests and expand their network across courses. The diversity of TUS societies means that practically every interest is catered for. Societies provide a huge range of activities both on and off campus throughout the academic year, including:
• Volunteering Opportunities
• Leadership Training
• Trips Away
• Guest Speakers
• Social Nights
• Workshops
• National Awards

11. Pass Programme

In 2023-24, nine PASS sessions were facilitated on 15 programmes involving 258 first year students and 17 Leaders. There was also a focus on expanding the programme to additional campuses. PASS sessions were piloted in 2023-24, one each in LSAD and Clonmel involving 92 first year students and six leaders.

PASS at TUS is part of an international community of best practice. Three staff completed SI-PASS Supervisor Training in 2023-2024.

Further details on Supports and Resources for the reporting period are available at:
SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES FOR TUS LEARNERS: 1ST OCTOBER 2023 – 31ST AUGUST 2024

2.9   Careers and Employability

The TUS Careers and Employability Services support students and graduates to identify, develop and enhance their employability skills toward realising their career objectives and maximising their personal and professional potential. Supports are provided in partnership with academic and professional services to enable students enhance their discipline specific competencies, graduate attributes and employability. Support is available to all students in the form of one to one, group career and educational guidance, workshops, seminars and associated events. The service also provides support to individuals and programme boards in the administration of Student Work Placement. In 2023/2024 approximately 3,700 work placements were facilitated across the University.

TUS formally established a university wide Careers and Employability Service in September 2024, with the creation of the Careers and Employability service in the Midlands Campus. TUS has set a target within its strategic plan of 100% of Level 8 programmes having a work placement component and the integrated service across the organisation will be a critical component to achieve this goal.

The Career and Employability Service has the responsibility for conducting the annual Graduate Survey which forms part of the First Destination Report- Graduate Outcomes Survey. It gives valuable information in relation to those employed, seeking employment and those engaged in further study. A detailed report is used by management & academic staff for programmatic reviews and other TU reporting. https://hea.ie/skills-engagement/graduate-outcomes/

The success of an integrated TUS Careers & Employability Service is evidenced in the HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey for 2023, as released in November 2024. TUS has the highest number of honours degree graduates in the country in employment nine months after graduation, 87.4% of 2023 TUS honours degree graduates are in employment. As many as 96.3% of these TUS engineering, manufacturing and construction graduates are in employment, outperforming the national average by over 16 per cent. According to the national survey, TUS undergraduates are also more likely to take up employment in the regions served by its six campuses, with 57.8% of these graduates currently in employment in the Midwest and Midlands regions, with a further 8% and 5.7% of these TUS undergraduates employed in the neighbouring counties of Galway and Cork. Almost a third of TUS undergraduates from 2023 have taken up employment in Limerick, with 39.5% working in the Midwest region – including Clare and Tipperary. The survey revealed that 23.9% of the 2023 graduates working in Westmeath with honours degrees in information or communication technologies. A further 13.1% of students working in the county have undergraduate honours degrees in the area of social sciences and information.

TUS Careers and Employability services has evolved their service provision to respond to emerging needs of employers. To this end it has successfully implemented the use of AI Tool – 'Career Set', to support 3,000 CV reviews for students while also expanding opportunities to engage with students on our campuses.

A key focus of the Careers and Employability service includes the provision of student career guidance including Employer Liaison, Career Workshops, One to one consultation and mentoring, Interview Preparation, Mock Interviews and Psychometric Testing. Workshops and webinars are held on general topics such as CV preparation, interview skills, preparing for postgraduate study and effective job search. Individual appointments are very popular amongst the student population. Consultations relate

to general career directions, job search, interviews, UCAS applications, CVs, career options, postgraduate applications, difficulties with course, electives, and internal transfer mechanisms. Annually, the Careers and Employability Service organises hundreds of online mock interviews for students from all disciplines within TUS. Relevant employers, academic staff and careers staff participate in these. Two Mock Interview weeks take place in the academic year, one per semester.

Annual Autumn Careers Fair

The annual in-person TUS Autumn Careers Fairs returned to both the Moylish campus on 17th October 2023 and 15th October 2024, and Athlone campus on 18th October 2023 and 16th October 2024 hosting the region's largest employers. These events provided employers and students with a unique space to connect with students at scale and in person, offering an ideal opportunity to engage with a talented pool of students. It created a visible presence for employers on campus shining a spotlight on employability skills for the regions as well as showcasing organisations and the range of graduate roles, industry placements, part-time roles and internships opportunities to offer across all disciplines. The annual autumn careers fairs ensure that there is a collaborative and effective synergy with industry and TUS across regions. This enhances the overall student experience as well as providing highly skilled, work ready, graduates to support the region's economy.

Participants at TUS Careers Fair 2024

2.10 Transitions and Student Success

The appointment of the Head of Transitions and Student Success and the establishment of the Transitions and Student Success function is designed to assist academic managers to maximise opportunities related to three broad areas:

1. The First Year Experience for learners with a particular emphasis on Student Completion, Retention, Progression and Student Success.
2. Access, Transition, and Progression within and to TUS programmes.
3. Collaboration development with a range of partners from European Networks.

The immediate work priorities for the function were set out in the *Transitions and Student Success Strategy*, approved by Academic Council in May 2023. Informed by *Understanding and Enabling Student Success in Higher Education*, three themes were identified to include in this first iteration of the strategy as they related to the core function of supporting student transitions and success:

1. Evidence-based Decision-making;
2. Supporting Transitions and Cultivating Belonging;
3. A strategic Approach to Student Success-Enabling Policies and Practices.

Key Activities in support of the Transitions and Student Success Strategy

- The Transitions and Student Success (TSS) function at Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) achieved strong engagement with local Education and Training Boards (ETBs). A key milestone was the formal signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Longford and Westmeath ETB (LWETB), solidifying that partnership. Additionally, all five partner ETBs were invited to participate in an information day centred on opportunities in nursing, showcasing the collaborative efforts aimed at enhancing educational pathways for students.

  During these engagements, all five ETBs expressed their support and agreed, in principle, to explore a potential project. This project would aim to offer ETB programmes to TUS students who may not be progressing in their studies, should the National Training Office (NTO) release a relevant funding call. This agreement reflects a shared commitment to providing alternative pathways for students, reinforcing the importance of collaboration between TUS and the ETBs to support student success.

- The Transitions and Student Success (TSS) function collaborated with the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) function to launch the Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment (ESVH) ally training event. This initiative aimed to raise awareness and promote a safer, more inclusive campus environment. In addition to this, the TSS function actively participated in a national project focus group, Engaging Men in Gender Equality, which explored strategies to involve men in advancing gender equality. These collaborative efforts reflect the TSS and EDI's shared commitment to fostering a culture of respect, safety, and equality across the university community.

- The second iteration of *TUS Second Shot* focused on increasing student participation and success rates in the autumn repeat exams. This phase has broadened its scope to engage a wider range of staff across the university. A key element of this iteration is the collaboration between 17 different internal TUS central functions, including student support services, academic development, and administrative teams, all working together to support student success. Additionally, the project is

actively supported at faculty, department, and programme levels to ensure that targeted interventions reach students in need.

This iteration also introduced some small-scale pilot projects that provided additional tutorial support for students who had failed their initial exams, offering them a better chance to succeed in the repeats. These pilots are designed to explore effective ways of improving student outcomes through more focused academic assistance.

TUS Second Shot has also gained external interest. A presentation at the national Higher Education Authority (HEA) conference, co-presented by a student, was well received and highlighted the project's collaborative efforts and student-centred approach. Furthermore, a presentation at the *European First Year Experience* (EFYE) conference brought additional attention to the initiative's potential to positively impact student progression in higher education.

- The Transitions and Student Success (TSS) function has actively supported academic faculties and departments at TUS through a range of targeted initiatives aimed at improving student retention. One key measure was the *NTUTORR: A Focus on Retention* workshop series, which was delivered to 11 academic departments. These workshops addressed tactical-level challenges in student retention, equipping staff with practical strategies and insights to enhance student engagement and reduce non-progression. The collaborative nature of these workshops allowed departments to reflect on their retention practices and identify areas for improvement.

  In addition to the workshops, the TSS function conducted collaborative reviews with programmes that have high non-progression rates. These reviews involved working closely with academic teams to analyse the factors contributing to low retention and identify actionable steps to improve outcomes. By fostering a shared understanding of the challenges and potential solutions, the TSS function helped departments develop tailored approaches to better support at-risk students.

  Moreover, the TSS function supported a specific departmental initiative focused on improving retention within an individual academic department. This involved providing expertise and resources to help the department implement targeted retention strategies, creating a framework for ongoing improvement.

- The Transitions and Student Success (TSS) function collaborated with the TUS Quality function to produce the document *"TUS Definitions and Methodology for Student Statistics Reports."* This document aimed to standardise retention-related definitions, addressing inconsistencies inherited from the legacy institutions that formed TUS. By creating a unified framework for student statistics, the document ensures consistency in how student data, particularly around retention and progression, is reported and analysed. This collaborative effort enhances the accuracy of student success metrics, supporting more effective decision-making and aligning TUS's reporting practices with national and institutional standards.

- The Transitions and Student Success (TSS) function plays a key role in facilitating collaboration between external and internal stakeholders at TUS. For example, following interaction with the National Training Office (NTO), the TSS engaged in discussions with internal academic departments to align their initiatives with national guidelines and funding opportunities. Additionally,

the TSS function liaised with European partners responsible for sending students to TUS Athlone, ensuring seamless communication and coordination to support international student success.

Further enhancing collaboration, the TSS worked to disseminate valuable insights from the *College Connect AIRO* project to internal stakeholders. By sharing data and findings from this national project, the TSS helped inform strategies aimed at improving access, retention, and progression for underrepresented student groups. These efforts highlight the TSS function's commitment to fostering strong partnerships that enhance student success both within TUS and beyond.

2.11 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

TUS is proactive in promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and this is reflected in our first Value Statement in the Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026 - *Inclusive*. "*We embrace diversity as a key strength where everyone is included and has an equal opportunity to progress and achieve".* An EDI Steering Committee oversees and provides guidance and direction for the achievement of equality, diversity, and inclusion objectives across TUS. It has a number of subcommittees including an Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team, and Promoting Consent and Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment subcommittees. An EDI Sub Committee of Governing Body was established in 2022 (re-named People, Culture and EDI in 2023) to assist and advise the Governing Body in fulfilling its oversight responsibility in ensuring an appropriate governance structure.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in TUS is directed by VP for People, Culture and EDI. The EDI office has three members working across multiple campuses including an EDI Manager, Senior EDI Officer and EDI Administrator. The TUS EDI Strategy was approved in AY 23/24, and the EDI Office oversees action plans relating to this strategy.

The Athena Swan is a charter established and managed by Advance HE adapted for the Irish context, that recognises and celebrates good practices in higher education institutions towards the advancement of gender equality and building capacity across equality grounds enshrined in legislation. TUS submitted an application for an Athena Swan Bronze Award in June 2024. This submission involved a self-assessment of equality within TUS, using quantitative and qualitative evidence from an a detailed all staff survey, staff focus groups and analysis of 3 years of staff career progression data by gender and grade. This process helped identify both good practice and areas for improvement, and the establishment of a four- year Athena Swan action plan to address challenges identified.

Through the HEA Gender Equality Enhancement Fund, TUS is collaborating with other HEIs on EDI related projects including: embedding EDI in the curriculum; engaging men in building gender equality and developing an Effective Leadership for an Inclusive Higher Education programme for senior managers. During AY 23/24, the EDI in the Curriculum Toolkit was launched, and will be further promoted in AY 24/25.

In 2023, TUS appointed a Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention and Response Manager. This allowed further deepening of work in developing appropriate policies and procedures in responding to and preventing sexual violence and harassment, with in depth consultations being conducted on our draft Policy and Procedure for Responding to Sexual Violence and Harassment. TUS has continued to support a community of practice of staff members (ESVH Allies) who are trained in disclosure handling and serve as initial contacts for students or staff needing to disclose sexual violence or harassment. There are currently 69 ESVH Allies in TUS.

Further details regarding the ongoing work of EDI in TUS can be found in the TUS Website at: https://tus.ie/edi/

2.12 Integration of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

TUS is committed to sustainable development and places a particular priority on deepening the understanding of and sharing expertise in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to mainstreaming sustainable development in all of its activities, in general. Reflecting this ambition, the theme of sustainability has been integrated throughout the TUS Strategic Plan as an overarching goal and critical steps in relation to strategic and implementation planning, funding for integration of SDGs and research and development have been progressed. Since designation, TUS has, and continues to, place a particular focus on deepening the understanding and sharing of expertise and knowledge across the organisation in relation to sustainable development, and the SDGs in particular. Critical steps in relation to strategic planning, funding for integration of SDGs and research are being progressed. A number of key highlights, aligned to specific SDGs are outlined below.

SDG17: Partnership for the Goals

A critical step has seen the formal establishment of a TUS University Sustainability Committee (USC). The USC, chaired by the TUS President, has overall responsibility for developing and implementing a TUS Sustainability Strategy. The strategy, to be developed in 2025, will address sustainability across the dimensions of education, research, operations and engagement and take a whole of institution approach, in line with the National Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Strategy. Specific sub-committees of the USC are being established to focus on Education and Research for Sustainable Development, Estates & Operations and Partnerships/Engagement. Collectively the USC and its sub-committees will monitor progress on TUS achieving the sustainability targets as set out within its strategic plan. The USC will also enable deeper collaboration and partnership with other stakeholders on the SDGs.

In addition to its strategic plan TUS has placed sustainability to the forefront of specific strategic initiatives. Within the Technological Sector Advancement Fund (TSAF) provided through the Higher Education Authority (HEA) TUS has dedicated specific resources to sustainability and appointed a new Sustainability Coordinator in September 2024. This role will enable TUS to gather and collate data on sustainability activities across the University, updating it through its new sustainability hub available on the TUS website. Furthermore, sustainability is highlighted within the TUS System Performance Framework submission to the HEA, this placing sustainability to the forefront of TUS strategic thinking and action.

A central website to communicate TUS activities in the field of sustainability has been put in place and will be updated on a regular basis https://tus.ie/sustainability/.

SDG4: Quality Education

As a partner in the N-TUTORR project which embeds the SDGs across its activities, TUS has maximised opportunities to increase capacity amongst students and staff in relation to the SDGs. The TUS Special Purpose Award, *Certificate in Embedding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the Curriculum* (15 ECTS) has been delivered twice to date. A total of 22 learners completed the programme and it will be delivered on multiple occasions into the future thus growing knowledge and capacity in the organisation. In addition, work has commenced on the development of a compendium of ESD best practices across TUS. Data and information is being harvested from lecturers across the University with a view to making the best practices available to staff in a user friendly manner.

The TUS led Digital Academy for Sustainable Built Environment (DASBE) initiative continues to implement new innovations to deliver capacity building within the construction sector. A suite of new Micro-credentials have received funding and are being validated and implemented from September 2024 (https://dasbe.ie/programmes/micro-credentials/). TUS has also led the development of new VR/AR tools which can be used for education and training in specific sectors. These new innovations have been developed internally within TUS and showcase best practice in application of technology and solutions..

An SDG mapping process was completed on all programmes and research activities on the TUS Thurles campus in 2023. This identified how programmes, and research activities, are aligned with the 17 SDGs and identified potential gaps and opportunities for development. This research has inspired a plan for a TUS wide mapping exercise to be completed on all Level 8 programmes with the ambition to complete this exercise in Academic Year 2024/25.

SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 12 Climate Action

In relation to the TUS Climate Action Plan and Green Campus Committees significant progress has been made in several areas. Extensive work has commenced on planning for building decarbonisation on the TUS Moylish campus through the SEAI Pathway programme. LED lighting installations continue across the TUS campuses and new EV charging stations have been provided in TUS Thurles and Moylish. A new mobility plan including car-pooling facilities have been developed for the TUS Athlone campus. The Tipperary Green Campus Committee has engaged extensively with a new proposed sports development on the Thurles Campus and the Athlone Green Campus Committee is preparing to submit its application for its first green flag. Both committees have a specific focus on integrating opportunities for student learning within the activities of the committees, in line with SDG 4. New capital projects are being designed, and these have purposefully focused on integration of renewable energy solutions to meet energy demands on site.

SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 11 Sustainable Cities & Communities, SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 12 Climate Action, SDG17: Partnership for the Goals

There continues to be growth in relation to sustainability focused research within TUS. The Sustainable Development Research Institute (SDRI) continues to expand its portfolio of research and has secured new funding programmes in relation to smart energy systems, sustainable food systems, biomethane development, circular economy and bioeconomy. Information seminars, to enable SDRI to disseminate its activities across TUS have been organized.

A specific focus on the Just Transition has enabled TUS to partner with Tipperary and Offaly County Councils and other key stakeholders to secure resources to develop new innovative approaches to sustainable and community development in the Just Transition region. Other Research Institutes continue to explore and develop innovations in relation to the bioeconomy, circular economy and clean manufacturing.

SDG6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG1 No Poverty

A game developed by TUS students and graduates on its Clonmel campus has received 3rd prize at a major international games competition in Denmark recently. Madzi, Water Justice in Malawi, received the accolade at the European Games Based Learning Conference held in the University of Aarhus Denmark in early October. The Game is based on the daily challenges faced by a family in rural Malawi as a result of climate change. It highlights the impact of drought on health, agriculture, the environment

and the resultant workload often placed upon children. The game emphasises the efforts being made by individuals, communities and NGOs to develop and implement more sustainable technologies and practices, emphasising the power of collaboration.

The research and development for the game was undertaken by first year Game Art & Design, and Creative Media students in Clonmel. Trocaire provided funding, workshops and primary content relating to their work in Malawi. Malawian Academics and Activists based in Ireland also advised on the project as did students in the Gaelscoil, St Oliver's and Loreto schools in Clonmel. The artwork in the game, which was created by Daria Kravtsova, a graduate of Game Art and Design Clonmel, has come in for particular praise.

Trocaire are currently developing a Teacher Handbook to accompany the game and intend that it will be available to primary and secondary schools through Ireland in the coming months. The game is available at https://tusdigitalartslab.itch.io/madzi

SDG5: Gender Equality

TUS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team has conducted extensive work on a wide range of topics with specific focus being placed on Equality. This has included ensuring that specific data is available on gender profiles, gender pay gaps. These are available at https://tus.ie/edi/data-reporting/

2.13 Innovation and Enterprise

TUS is strategically positioned as a catalyst for regional development, with a strong focus on innovation and enterprise. In alignment with its Strategic Plan, TUS has taken decisive steps to impact the enterprise ecosystem at local, national, and international levels through a wide range of initiatives. These efforts include the operation of enterprise and acceleration centres, the delivery of entrepreneurship and innovation programmes, and the promotion of research commercialisation and industry partnerships.

During this reporting period, TUS secured €12 million in funding under the HEA's TU RISE initiative, which aims to enhance research, development, and innovation capacity across key regions in Ireland. As part of this initiative, the Innovation & Enterprise team leads Work Package 3 (WP3), which focuses on strengthening innovation functions, driving entrepreneurship, and commercialising intellectual property.

In addition to TU RISE, TUS benefits from Knowledge Transfer Ireland's KT Boost Programme, which supports the identification, protection, and commercialisation of intellectual property, enhancing TUS's knowledge transfer capacity, further aligning with national and institutional goals for research commercialisation.

Through these initiatives, as well as its network of incubation centres and comprehensive enterprise support programmes, TUS fosters meaningful interactions with stakeholders across its campuses and regions. TUS remains dedicated to nurturing a pro-innovation culture, supporting entrepreneurs, researchers, and industry partners, while contributing to significant regional and national economic impact.

TUS Enterprise & Acceleration Centres

TUS operates four campus-based enterprise and acceleration centres, along with a virtual centre that supports community enterprise centres across the Midlands and Midwest regions. These centres include the Hartnett Enterprise Acceleration Centre (HEAC, Moylish), Midlands Innovation and Research Centre (MIRC, Athlone), Questum Acceleration Centre (Questum, Clonmel), and Thurles Chamber Enterprise Centre (TCEC, Thurles). Additionally, TUS supports the Croom Community Enterprise Centre (CCEC) in County Limerick and serves on the board of Innovate Limerick, which operates The Engine in Limerick City Centre. TUS also collaborates with various incubation and acceleration networks, such as the Irish Incubation Centre Managers Network, New Frontiers Programme Managers Network, Student Inc Consortium, ESA Space Solutions Ireland Consortium, and the Irish Knowledge Transfer Association. As a partner in the Forge Design Factory, Limerick, TUS contributes to fostering a dynamic ecosystem of designers, industry partners, and stakeholders in the Midlands and Midwest regions to drive innovation and support companies in gaining a competitive edge through design-led innovation. Furthermore, TUS collaborates with its RUN EU partners, designing and delivering a Digital Badge in Innovation & Entrepreneurship, and contributing to Short Advanced Programmes (SAPs). Through its Innovation & Enterprise unit, TUS provides substantial support to a wide range of companies and entrepreneurs each year, including 69 client companies based in its four campus enterprise centres, as well as others engaged in its programmes and mentorship initiatives (see Table 1: Innovation & Enterprise Programmes). These activities generate significant economic impact, contributing both direct and indirect employment across the regions.

TUS Incubation and Acceleration Support Programmes

TUS offers a comprehensive suite of enterprise programmes, including two national founders' programmes: New Frontiers, funded by Enterprise Ireland, and Student Inc, a summer accelerator programme supported by the HEA. Significant development work was undertaken during this reporting period for the new TUS Works programme, part of the TU RISE HEA-funded initiative, which is set to launch in Q4 2024. Additionally, TUS collaborated with its RUN EU partners to design and deliver a Digital Badge in Innovation & Entrepreneurship, further enriching its offerings. These programmes highlight TUS's dedication to nurturing entrepreneurship and innovation by providing tailored support to resident clients, as well as TUS students, researchers, staff, and the general public, aimed at fostering innovation and enterprise activities.

These programmes are aligned with key strategic frameworks and policies, such as the National Skills Strategy 2025 and the HEA System Performance Framework, focusing on skill development in creativity, innovation, and industry engagement. They also support the Government's Enterprise White Paper 2022-2030, which aims to create a competitive and innovative business environment. The TUS Strategic Plan emphasises collaboration with industry and the promotion of innovation, as reflected in initiatives such as New Frontiers, Student Inc, ESA Space Solutions Ireland, Empower and the Digital Badge programme. These initiatives are central to TUS's efforts to bridge academia and industry, reinforcing Ireland's leadership in technology and economic development.

The following table illustrates the engagement across the various TUS incubation and acceleration centre programmes for the reporting period.

Innovation & Enterprise Programmes

Programme	Description	Number of Participants
New Frontiers Midwest Phase 1	5-week part-time programme and bootcamps, focuses on business concept development, offering initial training and market research to validate business ideas. An additional session is held post programme for those who submit a business case for review and feedback.	35
New Frontiers Midwest Phase 2	6-month intense programme. Delves deeper, providing intensive support, mentorship, and resources for business development. €15k stipend. Whole programme valued at €30k for each participant.	11
New Frontiers Midwest Phase 3	3-months tailored programme, offers ongoing support to established businesses, focusing on scaling, securing investment, and market expansion. A further €7.5k in funded is awarded to participants and continued access to office space. Note that we were funded for two participant stipends in Phase 3 in the Midwest, however we offer some unfunded places also and, in this period, we had 10 participants take part.	10
New Frontiers TUS-MU Phase 1	(as above)	28
New Frontiers TUS-MU Phase 2	(as above)	15
New Frontiers TUS-MU Phase 3	(as above)	3
Empower	Second-level student programme designed to support the development of entrepreneurial and innovation skills- ecosystem builder	42
Student Inc	During the period, TUS and its partners worked to expand the accelerator programme into a nationwide initiative and applied for funding to support its viability and growth. As a result, the full programme was paused at TUS, though we ran a short workshop on Circular Economy Business Models for 16 people and continued our startup / venture clinics.	16
RUN EU Digital Badge in Innovation & Entrepreneurship	This programme was designed for those interested in developing essential skills and knowledge to transform their research into viable commercial outputs and included topics such as new venture creation, commercialisation, and intellectual property management.	66
Lunch & Learn Workshop Series	The Lunch & Learn workshop series, hosted at the Hartnett Enterprise Acceleration Centre supported by Limerick Chamber Skillnet, are workshops designed to offer practical insights and skills to entrepreneurs and professionals. These sessions are accessible to individuals at various levels of business experience, providing valuable takeaways in a compact, lunchtime format.	322

Note: This table presents 548 entrepreneurship engagements across the various TUS incubation and acceleration centre programmes.

In addition to these programmes, the innovation and enterprise team run startup clinics and workshops and entrepreneurs-in-residence programmes with acclaimed entrepreneurs and business leaders, co-direct Startup Grind and host various events throughout the year to bolster the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem including the inaugural New Frontiers Technology Gateway Centres and Clusters full day event led by TUS New Frontiers Midwest and MTU New Frontiers Cork. The following provides a profile of the impact of TUS Enterprise & Innovation activities.

Impact of TUS Enterprise and Innovation Activities

• A total of 69 companies were based in the 4 campus incubation centres (HEAC, MIRC, Questum and TCEC).
• More than 300 people based on and offsite were employed by the TUS incubation centre clients in the reporting period.
• 200+ new entrepreneurs and innovators were supported through our programmes, initiatives, startup clinics, and entrepreneur in residence supports. Programmes included:
  ✓ New Frontiers Phase 1 Evening Programmes and Bootcamps
  ✓ New Frontiers Phase 2 Entrepreneur development programme (2 regional iterations during 2023)
  ✓ New Frontiers Phase 3 Scale-up phase
  ✓ Empower
  ✓ Student Inc.
  ✓ Academic programmes including a Digital Badge and contributions to SAPs
• Lunch & Learn Innovation & Development Workshop Series, in partnership with Limerick Skillnet.
• New Frontiers Gateway & Cluster Event in Limerick – 70 attendees from across the Midwest, Athlone, Cork and Kerry.
• TUS designed, developed and facilitated range of awards:
  ✓ Athlone Chamber Business Awards
  ✓ Limerick Chamber Regional Business Awards
• In Knowledge Transfer Ireland's *Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey 2023,* published in August 2024, TUS ranked second among all Research Performing Organisations in Ireland for Total Number of Collaborations, Innovation Voucher and Consultancy Agreements with Industry.

Knowledge Transfer and Commercialisation Office

Knowledge transfer is an embedded and core activity of TUS, developed and supported under Knowledge Transfer Ireland's KT Boost Programme.

TUS is committed to growing its internal IP portfolio, producing spinouts, licences, and patents, and fostering a research, innovation, and entrepreneurial ecosystem. A pro-innovation culture is promoted across campuses, equipping researchers with the skills required to commercialise their work.

In the 2023 Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey (AKTS), TUS ranked second among all Research Performing Organisations in Ireland for Total Number of Collaborations, Innovation Voucher and Consultancy Agreements with Industry.

The KT Boost Programme's additional support, alongside new roles under TU RISE, is expected to further drive spinout formation and research commercialisation.

Centre and Programme Enhancements and Continuous Improvement

TUS is committed to the continuous improvement of its enterprise and innovation programmes, gathering feedback annually from programme participants and collaborating with partners and colleagues to make improvements. For example, Student Inc is evolving into a nationwide programme, with significant development work undertaken in this reporting period to engage key stakeholders and expand the programme's reach.

TUS Works, through the TU RISE initiative, will support TUS in engaging more deeply with the research community to drive innovation and entrepreneurship outcomes. This includes increased efforts in the commercialisation of research, the creation of spin-out companies, and overall support for researchers in transforming their work into viable commercial outputs.

In addition to programme development, TUS has made significant improvements to its infrastructure. For example, Questum Acceleration Centre has undergone several upgrades, including the installation of EV chargers and the application of energy-efficient coatings to its windows, aligning with TUS's commitment to sustainability and energy efficiency.

2.14 NTUTTOR Activities During the Reporting Period

Core streams of N-TUTORR included:

1. Student Empowerment (transforming the student experience through learner empowerment);
2. Staff Capabilities (transforming teaching, learning and assessment by developing academic, management and support staff); and,
3. Digital Ecosystems (enhancing digital infrastructure to deliver on student empowerment and staff capability in a sustainable manner).

Stream 1 – Student Empowerment

Overall aspects:

- Allocated a budget of €254,967.96 for initiatives
- 14 Student Champions hired to promote N-TUTORR activities and take part in events
- A total of 32 Fellowship projects funded across the institution
- 1344 unique student attendances at N-TUTORR events (students are counted only once and therefore may attended more than one event)
- N-TUTORR week ran from February 26th – March 1st with 19 events held across the institution, both online and in person

With a focus on empowering the student, Stream 1 sought to engage and empower students in a range of activities. To the forefront of this stream was the Student Champion programme, that recruited 14 students across the institute to participate in events and activities to support the N-TUTORR project. Examples of these activities include:

- Academic Integrity week (16th October 2023)
- Games Fleadh (15th May 2024)
- Promotion of the My Digital Backpack platform (ongoing)
- Wellbeing Conference in TUS Moylish (1/5/2024)
- N-TUTORR week (26th February – 1st March 2024)

The second strand to Stream 1 was the staff and student fellowship projects. Under this initiative, run in two batches, a total of 32 projects were funded at €5000 per project. These projects sought to view students as partners in their own learning, and covered a diverse range of themes as suggested by some of the titles presented below:

- Promoting academic integrity in the context of disruptive technologies
- Exploring the Student Voice: An Examination of the Participation & Experiences of Student Course Representatives in TUS
- Student Staff Partnership: Co-Designing LGBTQ+ Assets as Situated Practice
- Movement Matters: Promoting Inclusivity and Participation in Physical Activities
- Evaluating the use of Virtual Reality in Nurse Education using a collaborative approach
- The digitalisation of the Net Zero Carbon Classroom. An OER

On a sectoral level, the stream produced a number of reports which had significant contributions from TUS staff and students:

- Using Chatbots in Higher Education to Enhance the Student Experience
- Delivery Modalities of Access Courses in Higher Education in Ireland
- Blended Learning in Higher Education

- Open Education Practices in Higher Education
- Enabling Micro-credential Provision in the Technological University Sector

Stream 2 – Staff Capabilities

Overall aspects:

- Allocated a budget of €498,779
- Training needs survey conducted in October 2023 with an 18% response rate
- Training Needs Analysis developed in conjunction with Human Resources and development plan for all staff launched in January 2024
- 56% of all staff (1002) participated in N-TUTORR funded activities during the review period
- Sectoral Curriculum Framework published to assist programme development
- Sectoral Community of Practice for staff development established and met monthly
- 9 Masterclass training sessions held, each on one theme of N-TUTORR

Stream 2 was underpinned by the philosophy that to empower students, staff need to be empowered. Accordingly, a range of initiatives around staff development were at the core of the deliverables in Stream 2. The initial training needs survey was delivered to staff in October 2023. From this, and in collaboration with Human Resources, a comprehensive staff development plan was agreed. This plan was purposely designed to include both academic and non-academic staff and cover a wide range of areas where staff deemed necessary, including:

- Neurodiversity training for staff
- Disability Support ADHD seminar
- Microsoft Office (all levels)
- Climate Action Leadership
- Introduction to Race Equality
- Wellbeing at work conference
- EDI Conference
- Professional Diploma in Leadership
- Focus on student retention series

Overall, 56% of staff within TUS engaged with the N-TUTORR project at some point during the review period.

Stream 3 – Digital Ecosystem

Overall aspects:

- Allocated a budget of €2.1 million
- €551,327 allocated to a significant number of initiatives around academic integrity
- 10 pilot projects under Work Package 3.3 allocated a budget of €975,000
- 4 pilot projects under Work Package 3.2 allocated a budget of €78,423
- €148,000 allocated to the purchase of 2- 4- and 6-seater pods across the institute
- National Digital Leadership Network set up across the sector

Stream 3 was tasked with implementing both digital and physical infrastructure to build in resilience and enhance the learning environment. The focus of Work Package 3.1 was academic integrity, with a range of initiatives including:

- Addressing contract cheating through software and training
- Training for staff on Generative Artificial Intelligence
- Piloting e-proctoring
-

Work Package 3.2 centred around the digital campus, with a number of initiatives implemented to support this output, including:

- HyFlex (Hybrid/Flexible) learning space in Thurles
- Digital Assessment for vet nurses on placement
- Hybrid workspace for agile teams in software engineering
- Interactive Student information screens across campuses

Work Package 3.3 was tasked with improving flexibility and accessibility of learning resources. A significant number of initiatives commenced throughout the institute including:

- Asynchronous video and podcast production
- Hybrid exhibition, studio, teaching and conference space
- Design Thinking space
- Augmented online learning
- Digital Technology Teaching Innovation Laboratory
- Library Connect RFID project
- Improving the first-year student experience in science laboratories

Overall, Stream 3 is on target to meet its deliverables and have a lasting and sustainable impact on the learning environment with the organisation.

2.15 Third Mission Activities, Societal and Community Engagement

TUS is proud of its society and community engagement activities, and these have evolved across a broad sphere of Technological University activities. The theme of connectivity and engagement infuses all aspects of the TUS Strategic Plan, from our Purpose to our Values, Priorities, Objectives, Enablers and Indicators of Success. In line with the overall remit of TUS, continually deepening regional relationships is of particular importance, both to recognise and acknowledge achievements and to respond to regional needs, challenges and opportunities.

A snapshot of these activities is represented in samples of related news items for the reporting period from the TUS website. They illustrate the breadth and depth of TUS Societal and Community Engagement TUS Societal and Community Engagement - Illustrative Examples

Further examples available at: News & Events - TUS

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

Relevant objectives	Planned Actions
1. The review team recommends that TUS, notwithstanding the progress made on integration to date, develop a unified operational model across the university. This should align with university objectives and be strongly promoted.	1. Collate progress to date on developing a unified operational model, including Governance, Strategy, Senior Management Structure, Functions/Systems, Quality and Policies. 2. Identify any gaps from the resulting analysis in Action 1 (1). 3. Develop estimated targets to implement and achieve a unified operational model across any gaps identified in Action 1 (2). Identify associated KPI's and responsible parties.
2. The review team recommends that TUS develop a single unified QAE handbook, with input from students and staff, to provide an accessible contemporary framework that acts as a single point of reference for quality priorities and processes across the university, and demonstrates openness, transparency, accountability and integrity. This should include a clear definition of the criteria for revalidation of programmes to ensure that the process is efficient and provides the necessary flexibility for programme teams to maintain the relevance and currency of curricula on an ongoing basis, and a robust process for the development and monitoring of the assessment matrices.	1. Review and streamline the structure of the TUS Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook to enhance accessibility of the constituent QAE policies and procedures. 2. Develop a refreshed plan for the continued development of unified TUS Policies and Procedures and implement the plan accordingly. Identify associated KPI's and responsible parties. 3. In developing the TUS Policies on Programme Validation/Revalidation streamline documentation requirements and processes and ensure efficiency, flexibility and agility. Consider how bureaucratic requirements can be reduced appropriately, as part of the process. Incorporate processes for developing and monitoring assessment matrices. 4. In developing the TUS Policy on the Management of the Curriculum, include clear criteria for what constitutes minor and major changes to the curriculum and clear criteria for the requirements for revalidation and effective and efficient ongoing monitoring.

1. The review team recommends that TUS, that TUS clearly defines the role of representation of the Students' Union on the deliberative and decision-making bodies of the university, including the function of Academic Council and its relationship to the other instruments of governance and management.	1. Conduct a review on how the role of the Students' Union is defined on the deliberative and decision-making bodies of the university. Include student representation/ Students' Union appropriately in this review. 2. Arising from the review specified in Action 3 (1), ensure that the role of representation of the Student's Union is appropriately defined in the Terms of Reference for relevant bodies. 3. Provide dedicated information sessions to representatives of the Student Union/Students on their role participating on relevant Boards and decision-making bodies to support their effective participation.
4. The review team recommends that TUS further develop and establish effective structures for staff at all levels to give feedback and have their voice heard. This feedback should contribute to TUS decision-making mechanisms.	1. Document existing structures and fora to collate existing avenues as a communication tool. As part of this identify avenues of communication and input to decision making for academic and professional services staff. Describe the formal academic structures in addition to other committee structures and communication avenues. Utilise the review to inform staff about relevant communication fora and to identify gaps and potential enhancements. 2. Establish a process that will lead to the setting up of appropriate Management fora for Heads of Department and Heads of Function. 3. In developing the TUS Policy on the Management of the Curriculum, make explicit the role of Staff Representation in the Terms of Reference of Faculty, Department and Programme Boards as decision-making bodies.

	4. Conduct a biennial All Staff Survey. Utilise the survey outputs to inform decision making in relevant governance and management fora and committees.
5. The review team recommends that TUS give serious consideration to supporting the development of Heads of Departments' important role as middle managers who make a significant contribution to the effective functioning of the institution. The avenues of upward mobility are limited for them due to the flat organisational structure and a lack of fixed terms of office or clear role description.	1. Consult with Heads of Department via a bespoke post CINNTE Report Focus Group as part of a needs analysis on supports. Triangulate the outputs of the Focus Group with feedback provided by Heads of Department via the TUS Leadership Programme delivered by Advance HE. Further utilise the Staff Survey process to gain further perspectives and feedback from Heads of Department on supports required. 2. Arising from the consultation process as specified in Action 5 (1), consider how best to develop and deliver appropriate supports within viable parameters for all. 3. Establish a process that will lead to the setting up of appropriate Management fora for Heads of Department and Heads of Function, in line with Recommendation 4 (2). 4. Deliver a Bespoke Leadership Programme in partnership with Advance HE for TUS Management, including Heads of Department.
6. The review recommends that TUS prioritise overall workforce planning, development and wellbeing in an agile manner to ensure the sustainability of continued high-quality service and academic provision. While a quality culture has become embedded in the university, there is an opportunity to simplify administrative and operational structures as well as lighten bureaucratic requirements.	1. Implement the recommendations from the internal audit review conducted by Deloitte on Resource Planning and Allocation Process. 2. Finalise, approve and implement a Learning & Development Policy for all TUS Staff. Establish a TUS Staff Learning & Development Steering Committee. 3. Roll-out a Learning Management System for TUS Staff.

This will enhance the agility of the university, allowing it to respond to emerging opportunities.	4. Develop, approve and implement a Health and Wellbeing Framework and Policy in support of our commitment under the HEA Healthy Campus Charter.
7. The review team recommends that TUS reviews current practice for student communication and develop a coordinated strategy that addresses students' needs across all modes of programme delivery, and all stages of the student journey from application to completion of studies, to ensure timely access to pertinent academic and pastoral information.	1. Through the Student Communications Working Group, and/or subsequent forum, conduct a communication needs analysis that takes clear account of student communication needs, the discreet communication requirements, and suitable communication channels for different student demographics in the multi-campus context. 2. Taking account of the findings of the needs analysis as specified in Action 7 (1), develop a co-ordinated and holistic strategy that addresses the communication requirements of TUS Students and identifies key actions for implementation. 3. Implement the strategy and associated actions identified during Action 7 (1). Identify associated KPI's and responsible parties.
1. The review team recommends that TUS enhance the provision of student support services to ensure that all students have access to support that is consistent across the university, irrespective of level of study, stage of their learning journey, or campus.	1. Implement the strategic review of student support services recommendations to ensure high quality service provision for all students, while appropriately addressing the multi-campus context of TUS. As part of this, address the challenges of cohesion and consistency of service provision and equity of student experience across all campuses.

	2. Continue to build the growing provision of Societies and support the associated social activities and events to add greater value to the overall student experience in TUS. 3. Embed the provision of services on a cross-campus basis by the Careers and Employability Service. To further support consistency, develop a TUS Policy on Student Placement.
2. The review team recommends that TUS ensures that the Library is represented at high level strategic, operational and financial decision-making processes.	1. In implementing the finding of the Strategic Review for TUS Library Services, include Library representation on fora, as appropriate. 2. Arising from the consultation, implement appropriate initiatives to enable effective input by Library at appropriate fora.
3. The review team recommends that TUS continues to build strong partnerships with Education and Training Boards (ETBs), employers and other partners in the provision of a greater numbers of apprenticeships across existing and new disciplines to meet regional needs.	1. Strengthen ETB Partnerships by developing further pathways of progression from ETBs to TUS. 2. Expand the provision of the Access to Apprenticeship programme by delivery in collaboration with Longford Westmeath ETB at the TUS Midlands campus. 3. Build and maintain positive relationships with employers to facilitate smooth transitions for Access To Apprenticeship graduates. 4. Develop a range of New Apprenticeship programmes by further developing innovative Consortium-led partnerships.

4. The review team recommends that TUS strengthens progression pathways for students, particularly from a lifelong learning perspective.	1. Continue to embed and maximise access, transfer and progression pathways within the TUS programme portfolio including leveraging cross-campus and inter-faculty synergies. 2. Continue to design all programmes clearly identifying modes of delivery and progression pathways. 3. Continue to design and make all learners aware of progression pathways available to them on all current part-time flexible programmes, in particular all Full Time Equivalent Programmes. 4. Review and enhance information available on relevant flexible learning programme websites/pages regarding progression and transfer opportunities.
5. The review team recommends that a robust governance structure for research activity is established university wide by TUS to support research activity and engagement. A central database of information about TUS research should also be developed.	1. Establish and embed the Graduate School Faculty Board and the Faculty Research Committees (FRCs) to enable consistent governance across TUS for postgraduate research activity. 2. Develop policy and procedure to enable good research practice in line with the HEA Principles of Good Practice in Research within Irish Higher Education Institutions. 3. Roll-out the Research Information Management System, PURE, and implement the key deliverable of the project. 4. Deliver the TUS staff research time release programme. 5. Deliver on targets and objectives of the TUS TU RISE programme for research.

6. The review team recommends that TUS increases the supports available to TUS staff who are engaged on PhD research so as to reach the target of 65% within the allocated time.	1. Assign responsibility for the monitoring and oversight of the staff PhD metrics. 2. Design and implement a structure to promote and support staff participation in PhD programmes including a centralised register of staff who are undertaking PhDs. This register needs to be maintained and updated on an ongoing basis. Structure to involve HR, RDI, Graduate Research Office, and Finance functions. 3. Review on an ongoing basis the barriers and enablers to staff participation in PhD programmes and factors that affect their timely completion. Develop mitigation and support initiatives accordingly. 4. Roll-out a Procedure for Academic Staff Doctoral Bursary Awards (e.g. updated application form, combined with clear, annual application dates, more effective support and monitoring process to optimise on-time completion).
7. The review team recommends that, in fulfilment of its ambitions for research development, TUS should take steps to ensure that every PhD student is embedded in a research culture, all supervisors can demonstrate and maintain the currency of their expertise to supervise students and projects, a code of practice for research supervision is regularly communicated, monitored and reviewed in line with the *Framework for Doctoral Education.*	1. Develop a range of outreach activities related to the theme of belonging, inclusion and researcher identity as part of a 'life cycle' approach to graduate research education. 2. Develop TUS Effective Practice Guidelines for Research Supervisors to guide them in their research practice in their supervisory role as codified in the TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations 2023-2026. 3. Develop a dedicated series of workshops for Supervisors on Research Supervision and further develop the supervisor mentorship training programme to advance best practice.

	4. Develop and disseminate TUS Research Thesis Specifications Requirements to support students and supervisors during the critical phase of Thesis development.
8. The review team recommends that TUS uses insights from data analytics to inform any initiatives for reducing student dropout rates, taking account of the significant variation between male (23%) and female (14%) students.	1. Conduct a detailed analysis of TUS SRS files to explore the underlying trends in non-progression with respect to a range of parameters such as NFQ Level, ISCED Broad Areas, Programmes, CAO and Related Entry Requirements, taking account of differences in the gender profiles. 2. Utilise this analysis to contribute to the ongoing implementation of cross institutional initiatives, aligned with the TUS Student Success Strategy, to address appropriate targeted retention strategies and interventions.

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
Department of Applied Social Sciences	TBC	AY 2019/2020

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Unit	Date of Upcoming Review	Date of Last Review
Faculty of Business and Hospitality		
Department of Accounting and Business Computing	AY 2028/2029	AY 2023/2024
Department of Business and Management	AY 2028/2029	AY 2023/2024
Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Studies	AY 2027/2028	AY 2022/2023
Faculty of Engineering and Informatics		
Department of Polymer, Mechanical and Design	AY 2028/2029	AY 2023/2024
Department of Computer and Software Engineering	AY 2028/2029	AY 2023/2024
Department of Civil Engineering and Trades	AY 2028/2029	AY 2023/2024
Department (Midlands Media & Design), Limerick School of Art and Design, Athlone Campus	AY 2028/2029	AY 2023/2024
Faculty of Science and Health		
Department of Sport and Health Sciences	AY 2028/2029	AY 2023/2024
Department of Nursing and Healthcare	AY 2028/2029	AY 2023/2024
Department of Social Sciences	AY 2029/2030	AY 2024/2025
Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Biotechnology	AY 2028/2029	AY 2023/2024
Department of Bioveterinary and Microbial Sciences	AY 2028/2029	AY 2023/2024
Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning		
Department of Lifelong Learning	AY 2029/2030	AY 2024/2025

Faculty of Applied Sciences and Technology		
Department of Applied Science	AY 2027/2028	AY 2022/2023
Department of Information Technology	AY 2027/2028	AY 2022/2023
Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment		
Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering	AY 2027/2028	AY 2022/2023
Department of Mechanical and Automobile Engineering	AY 2027/2028	AY 2022/2023
Department of The Built Environment	AY 2027/2028	AY 2022/2023
Faculty of Business and Humanities		
Department of Sport, and Early Childhood Studies	AY 2026/2027	AY 2021/2022
Department of Business and Financial Services	AY 2026/2027	AY 2021/2022
Department of Marketing, Enterprise and Digital Communications	AY 2026/2027	AY 2021/2022
Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness	AY 2026/2027	AY 2021/2022
Limerick School of Art and Design		
Department of Fine Art and Education	AY 2027/2028	AY 2022/2023
Department of Design	AY 2027/2028	AY 2022/2023
Department of Digital Arts and Media	AY 2027/2028	AY 2022/2023
Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development		
Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development	AY 2028/2029	AY 2023/2024

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

CASE STUDY 1

Title: Auditing for Professional Body Requirements of the Clinical Learning
              Environment: Department of Nursing and Healthcare

Theme: Auditing for Professional Body Requirements

Keywords: Clinical Placements, Auditing, Clinical Learning Environment.

Clinical placements are a mandatory requirement of the Undergraduate Nursing Programme in TUS. As a quality measure and as required for accreditation by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland existing practice placement sites are subject to 5-year cyclical audits, or when significant clinical changes occur, to ensure their continued suitability as a quality learning environment for students. New practice placement sites are audited for suitability as quality learning environments that support the achievement of learning outcomes before students begin their placements and notification is included in the annual report submitted to the NMBI. Processes are in place for students to evaluate and provide feedback on the practice placements through the evaluation process and the student audit tool. This process is completed through a partnership approach between the Department of Nursing and Healthcare, Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands, Midwest (TUS), and its Associated Health Care Providers (AHCP's).

The audit process consists of 2 components:

1. Audit of the Clinical learning environment

The National Quality Clinical Learning Environment Audit Tool (2020) is used to audit clinical learning environments of placements that are 3 weeks or longer.

or

The "Abridged Clinical Learning Environment Audit Tool for short clinical placements (2-3 weeks) during Covid-19 pandemic"' may be used for placement sites that are used for less than 3 weeks placements.

2. Student audit tool

This student audit tool is based on the five standards from NMBI for the achievement of a Quality Clinical Learning Environment. The student audit tool provides evidence in relation to student supervision, support, exposure to learning opportunities and achievement of learning outcomes. It also assists in determining if the assessment of achievement of practice learning and competence development is undertaken in a fair, effective and transparent manner in accordance with the assessment strategy and NMBI Standards and Requirements (2016).

Steps of the Audit Process:

1. Clinical Learning Environments (CLE) that require educational audits to be completed are identified between the Clinical Skills Learning Coordinator at TUS and members of the Nursing Practice Development Teams and timeframes identified.

2. The appropriate National Audit Tool from Nursing and Midwifery Board Ireland (NMBI) is used by members of the Nursing Practice Development Teams in the clinical areas to undertake the audit of the clinical learning environment*.

3. The completed audit tool is sent to the Clinical Skills Learning Coordinator at the Department of Nursing and Healthcare, TUS.

4. The Clinical Skills Learning Coordinator at the Department of Nursing and Healthcare, TUS will undertake <u>at least</u> one in ten of the educational audits with the Nursing Practice Development Team <u>or more frequently</u> to support the audit process across all sites as necessary, in line with NMBI recommendations.

5. The Student Audit Tool** is completed by the Clinical Skills Learning Coordinator within the Department of Nursing and Healthcare, TUS to nursing students while on clinical practice placement in the clinical learning environment.

6. A timeframe of one week for the return of the completed form via MS Forms is provided.

7. The completed audit tools are reviewed by the Clinical Skills Learning Coordinator at the Department of Nursing and Healthcare TUS, and a collaborative discussion with the stakeholders regarding the results of the audit of the clinical learning environment takes place prior to compilation of the final report.

8. The audit report may include recommendations based on the findings of the audit.

9. The designated person from the from the Department of Nursing and Healthcare TUS, and the designated person from the AHCP will sign off the audit report.

10. A full site-specific report will be forwarded to the Nurse Practice Development Coordinator via a PDF document by the Clinical Skills Learning Coordinator at TUS.

11. Where a site is found not to have met some or all the standards outlined in the National Audit Tool from Nursing and Midwifery Board Ireland (NMBI), an action plan will be developed by the Clinical Nurse Manager/ Clinical Midwife Manager/ Assistant Director of Public Health Nursing in collaboration with the Practice Development Coordinator.

12. When action plans are needed time frames for the implementation of recommendations to achieve the standards are identified and the relevant Director of Nursing and Head of Department of Nursing and Healthcare TUS will sign off the report on completion of the action plan.

13. The EB's and AHCP's produce an annual report to NMBI which will include information on the 'quality of the practice placement and the arrangements/ structures that are in place to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme.

CASE STUDY 2

Title: TUS Website Consultation & Development

Theme: Website Development

Keywords: Public Information, Website, Consultation

One of the primary sources for TUS stakeholders to acquire public information is the TUS website, www.tus.ie. TUS publishes information about its activities that is relevant, easily accessible and accurate in line with the principles set out in ESG 1.8, *Provision of Public Information*. The website is a vital source of public information for the large and diverse audience. It plays an integral role in the life of those in the TUS community such as current and prospective students, staff, and a broad range of additional external stakeholders. It provides up-to-date information on activities, news and events in addition to information on TUS Faculties, academic Departments and a range of other internal and external services offered by TUS. All approved TUS policies and procedures along with any other governance related materials are also published through the website.

New TUS Website

On the 31st October 2023, TUS launched an updated and improved version of the www.tus.ie website. This long-term project resulted from the merging of websites from legacy institutions as well as replacing an interim website. Throughout the course of the project, key stakeholders were consulted through surveys, interviews and workshops to ensure that the new website could provide all that was required for the TUS online audience.

External Stakeholders

The new tus.ie website has benefitted external stakeholders such as prospective students, industry and other members of the public in the following ways:

- **Accessibility** – One overall website has now resulted in the provision of one focal point for online TUS related information which external stakeholders can access. This has eliminated any confusion surrounding which website online users need to access to find the information relevant to them. The new website also adheres to the latest WCAG website accessibility measures.
- **Usability** – In March 2023, the TUS website development team met with members of staff from all campuses and conducted UX (User Experience) Workshops. These workshops helped the website design agency to gather vital information regarding the typical online journeys of the various external visitors to the website. This information was taken into account when designing and implementing the information architecture, functionality and all-round usability of the website.
- **Findability** – Due to a modernised design, a cohesive structure and a well thought out information architecture, the new tus.ie website has given users a better chance of finding the information they need. The presence of a clear course search bar on the homepage ensures that prospective students can quickly research and review courses of interest to them. The clear menu structure and internal website search engine has also allowed other users quickly search and find the pages they need. A greater prioritisation of SEO best practices through internal awareness and a presence of SEO tools within the Content Management System (CMS) also ensure that all content uploaded to the new site is optimised for all major search engines.

- **Relevancy** - In order to keep information relevant and up to date, staff within TUS are encouraged to access their website pages and keep their information up to date. This is a core priority of the new tus.ie website and is mentioned within the internal stakeholders section below.

Internal Stakeholders

For the new tus.ie website to appropriately communicate key TUS information and messaging to students and the public it is vital that internal stakeholders (staff) are encouraged to play an active role in its ongoing maintenance and development.

- **CMS Access -** By using a popular and accessible CMS (Wordpress), the tus.ie website provides staff with a user friendly and easy to understand system. Training on how to use the CMS was provided to staff in the various offices and departments from the outset. Ongoing training and skills development is also provided to staff by the website team.
  The inclusion of a number of plugins within the CMS was also critical as they added greater functionality in the overall management of the site. Plugins such as *Publish Press, Search & Filter Pro, Media Library Folders Pro* and *Yoast SEO* allow the website team to manage a large volume of internal users of the CMS, but also allow staff the ability to develop their website pages to the optimum standard.
- **Content Monitoring and Workflows -** To properly manage the flow of changes to content on the site it was critical that a workflow was put in place. An approval process for any changes within the site means that all changes are filtered and reviewed through the website team before being published on the site. This process simply ensures that no errors are made with regards to content, but it also enables a level of consistency from a public facing user perspective.
- **Data Security -** Plugins within the website CMS provide strict rules with regards to what users can access or view what parts of the website CMS. This is critical for the forms section of the website especially and makes sure that only qualified staff can access and read data gathered through various forms on the website. From a website front-end perspective, a cookies policy is employed which allows website visitors to select what tracking cookies can follow them which they use the website. This ensures that both the internal and external processes of the website are compliant with EU GDPR regulations.
- **Annual Reviews -** Part of the role of the website team will be to ensure that internal staff are properly informed and aware of any issues regarding their website pages. Through the use of analytical reports, staff will be provided detailed information regarding the performance of their website pages as well as advice on what can be done to enhance or the user experience or performance of their pages. These annual reviews will be conducted with all departments and offices by the website team.

The benefits of the new tus.ie website from an external and internal stakeholder perspective are wide ranging providing relevant and accessible information on TUS services and activities.

CASE STUDY 3

Title: Regional University Network - European University (RUN-EU) Short Advanced Programme (SAP) on Sustainable and Inclusive Marketing Strategies

Theme: Sustainable and Inclusive Marketing Strategies

Keywords: Marketing, Short Programme, Student Engagement

Outline of the Initiative

TUS developed a Short Advanced Programme (SAP) in *Sustainable and Inclusive Marketing Strategies* to capitalise on TUS's membership of the Regional Universities Network-European University (RUN-EU) in keeping with its vision. RUN-EU aims to secure the sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental progress of its regions and stakeholders by providing students, researchers and academics with green, digital and inclusive skills that will help them increase the competitiveness of its regions and reduce existing regional development disparities in the EU.

The SAP was designed to provide the students with an awareness of ethical and sustainable approaches to designing and implementing marketing activities within the organisations they will work with and for and ultimately contribute to the triple bottom line of planet, people and profits.

A blended delivery approach encompassed interactive presentations and workshops from lecturers from the digital marketing team in TUS Athlone and our RUN-EU collaborators NHL Stenden in the Netherlands. It was the first SAP to be both developed and delivered in TUS. The unique live multi-disciplinary team assignment within the SAP involved the creation of 6 groups with a mix of students from each of the RUN-EU Universities. The assignment brief was to develop a sustainable and inclusive marketing strategy for a real-life not-for-profit organisation, Youth Work Ireland Midlands (YWI Midlands). The students created a digital marketing strategy for YWI Midlands which was presented to the organisation on the last day of the in-person week.

Development & Implementation

The SAP was developed over a 12-month period with colleagues from TUS and it included intensive collaboration and engagement with members of the teaching team from NHL Stenden's Creative Business team. One of the more innovative aspects of the SAP was the group assignment on a live organisation. The assignment brief was to develop a sustainable and inclusive marketing strategy for Youth Work Ireland Midlands (YWI Midlands), a not-for-profit organisation whose core focus is the social, personal and educational development of young people enabling them to take greater control over their lives by being given opportunities to make choices, take decisions and exercise responsibility. This organisation was chosen as it was agreed that the most valuable experience the students could get from our SAP was to have a live industry experience with a regional organisation that is held in high regard for its inclusivity.

Overview of the Benefits from the Outputs

The SAP framework within RUN-EU offered an incredible opportunity for staff and students to experience teaching and learning in a new area of business and marketing and also in an international

environment. The hesitancy of other TUS lecturers to get involved a RUN-EU SAP delivery was quickly overcome as soon as they were directly involved.   The benefits and reward of teaching a group of students from a mix of countries who are all high motivated to learn was clear to all who joined us on the SAP delivery. A further e benefit from the SAP is the relationship it has fostered with colleagues in NHL Stenden. We also hope to continue to develop further enhanced SAP programmes together.

How it Enhanced Overall Student Experience

The subject area of this SAP was particularly timely and relevant to what's going on in the world and it provided students with an insight and the skills to deal with issues that are going to play a big part in their life and career experience in the years to come. These students are already digital natives and connected to the digital world that is so ubiquitous. We helped to provide them with the tools to harness this technology and create strategies for the organisations that they go on to work for that are; responsible, that are cognisant of other people in their societies, that also helps and doesn't speed up the deterioration of the environment and that yet can still generate profits.

It was felt that the ultimate experience for the student was to be immersed in an intensive learning experience with like-minded students from different disciplines all working toward a common goal for a real-life organisation which will ultimately change the world for the better. Other benefits included:

- A funded week to another RUN-EU country with like-minded students.
- An opportunity to study with cross functional teams in another RUN-EU country.
- An opportunity to build a European network of peers and make great friends.
- A chance to study the very popular and current topics of both sustainability and digital marketing in an active learning environment.
- A chance to study aspects of sustainable digital marketing strategy, branding in a digital age, contemporary issues including inclusivity and the societal impact of marketing, the modern marketing mix, the contemporary consumer and emerging technologies and their ethical implications through case studies and active participation with a live organisation.
- The chance to learn how to be better people, mindful consumers and responsible leaders across Europe and the world in the future.