

University of Galway

2025

Annual Quality Report
University of Galway
Reporting Period 2023-2024

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM
Reporting Period 2023-2024

PREFACE

Note: QQI's provider portal, QHub, is currently under development and will be completed in November 2020. AQR 2021 will be submitted via QHub.

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

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

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

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

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Guidelines on Completing the Report

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

Submission Process and Timeline

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

Completing the AQR

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

Report Structure

Part A: Internal QA System

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

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

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

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

Case Studies

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

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

Legislation

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

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

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

Other QQI Policy Documents

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

Other National/International References

- [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2015\)](#)
- [IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision](#)
- [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#)
- [Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019](#)
- [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](#)

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			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review				
5.0 - Staff Recruitment, Development and Support	2.4	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment	2.5	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - Learner Resources and Supports	2.7	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - Information and Data Management	2.8	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 - Public Information and Communication	2.9	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 - Programme Delivery and Development	2.10	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
9.0 - Details of Arrangements with Third Parties				
2.0 - Programme Development and Delivery	2.11	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - Monitoring and Periodic Review			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - QA of Research Activities and Programmes	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for University of Galway for the reporting period **1 September 2023 - 31 August 2024**.

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

The AQR has been approved by University Management Team and is submitted by **Sinéad O'Connor, Director of Quality**.

University of Galway has been inspiring minds since 1845 as a research-led university. It is one of the oldest and largest universities in Ireland. Beginning with just 68 students, our campus community now numbers over 22,000 students and staff, and our 110,000 alumni are located in over 100 countries across the world. From humble beginnings, today we are counted among the Top 300 universities in the world according to QS rankings.

University of Galway is an international university with global ambition, but with deep roots in our region and nationally. Our location on the very edge of Europe gives us a unique perspective. Our university is at the heart of a distinct and vibrant region, renowned for its unique culture, creative industries, medical technologies, marine ecology and economy, and our innovation. We work in partnership with business, industry and government to provide the graduates, skills, knowledge and innovation that drive entrepreneurialism, employment and growth in our region.

The University contributes greatly to the diversity and dynamism of Galway, the most international city in Ireland. With almost 4,000 international students and 480 international staff from over 110 countries, we are rightly proud of the contribution and vibrancy they add to our campus and wider communities. Through our teaching and research, we attract and develop talent from around the world to address global challenges. Our international impact is strengthened by our alumni network, along with our partnerships and collaborations with leading international universities and organisations around the world. The global impact of our research is evident in the number of our international research collaborations, and the fact that we are home to five of the most highly cited researchers in the world.

We are a comprehensive research-led university with a breadth and depth of teaching and research across the sciences, social sciences and humanities, delivered through four Colleges, 18 Schools, six Research Institutes and a range of research centres and clusters. Our regional footprint is the largest in Ireland spanning the Atlantic seaboard.

The AQR is the responsibility of the Quality Office at University of Galway and is completed by the Director of Quality with input from academic and professional service units across the institution. The draft report is reviewed and approved by the University Management Team and subsequently presented to Academic Council.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Under the Irish Universities Act 1997, governance arrangements for University of Galway follow a bicameral model, with Governing Authority (Údarás na hOllscoile) exercising overall governance responsibility and Academic Council (AC) having a particular responsibility for the governance of academic affairs. The Academic Council is the chief academic authority and, subject to review by Údarás na hOllscoile, controls the academic affairs of the University, including the curriculum, instruction and education provided by the University. Consequently, AC plays a critical role in setting the academic direction of the University, and its remit includes the development and approval of academic programmes and academic policy. Academic Council meets five times annually.

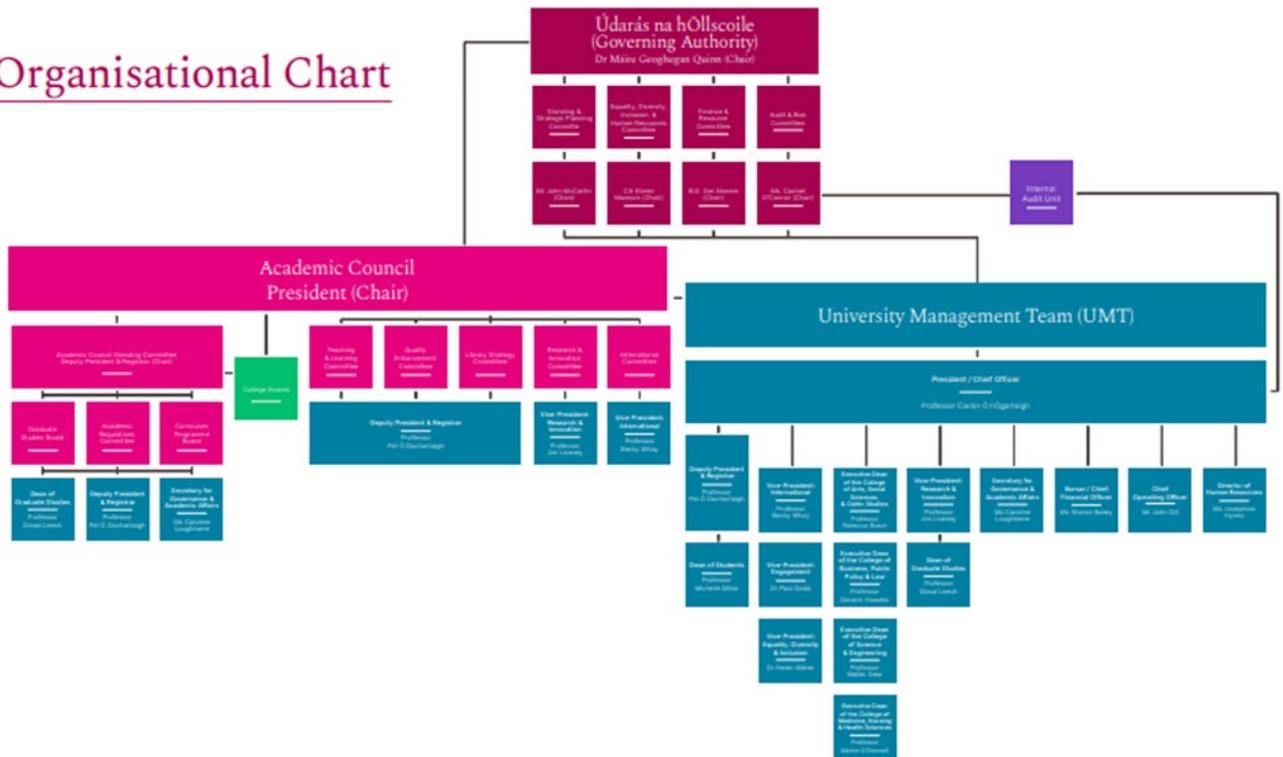
The University Management Team (UMT) is responsible for the effective day-to-day management of the University, executing the decisions of Údarás through all academic Colleges, Schools and Centres, and major Professional Service Units.

Údarás has an external chair and a broad range of members drawn from different constituencies, inside and outside the university community and has full responsibility for the oversight of quality and quality assurance (QA). It regularly receives quality reports through Academic Council and the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC). Údarás meets five times annually.

The University's governance structure enforces separation of responsibilities between developers and approvers and their terms of references are known through long-established practice and where appropriate, documented and published.

The University's Organisational Chart can be viewed [here](#).

Organisational Chart



Quality and Quality Assurance is overseen by Údarás na hOllscoile through its principal committees – Academic Council, Standing and Strategic Planning Committee and the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC). Quality and Quality Assurance is a regular item on the agenda of these committees and a fixed item on the agenda of Academic Council. The execution of various quality assurance policies is principally overseen by QEC, chaired by the Deputy President and Registrar. QEC meets at least three times during the academic year to discuss and approve all quality related Policies and Procedures. Membership is made up of representatives of both academic and professional service communities, including the Director of Quality. The Director of Quality is responsible for assuring quality enhancement across all of the University’s units where Quality, Strategy and Performance form a ‘tripartite’ approach to the enhancement of quality and performance. The Director of Quality provides support for the development of Policies and Procedures and is also responsible for engaging with all units and external agencies in the development and improvement of a culture of quality assurance at the University.

Continuous improvement to the quality of all activities across University of Galway is the responsibility of every member of staff through their own individual efforts and through organisational committees and units. Staff are guided in this endeavour through three key external standards:

- [Core Statutory Quality Assurance \(QA\) Guidelines](#)
- [Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies](#)
- [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#)

In addition, staff activities are guided by a number of additional [external guidelines](#) published by [Quality and Qualification Ireland](#) (QQI) and other bodies.

Improving quality is also guided by the University’s strategy [Strategy 2020-2025](#). This plan, launched in January 2020, is built on a foundation of core values that define the University’s purpose and priorities. Through the value of excellence the strategy will deliver an excellent student-centred, research-led teaching and learning experience. The Director of Strategy Implementation works with the President and University

Management Team to implement, monitor and review targets/actions of the strategic plan, via the operational planning processes across all Colleges, Schools and Units.

QA is implemented through a comprehensive annual [Operational Planning](#) process linked to Strategic Planning. An update to [QA007 Operational Plans Academic Units](#) was approved by Academic Council in October 2020. The School Operational Planning process now includes ongoing reporting on IRRP Research Review Action Plans and major actions from School Quality Reviews.

University of Galway has a comprehensive documented approach to Quality Assurance (QA) illustrated initially through its [Policies and Procedures Repository](#) and an archive of meeting minutes and records accessible via the [Quality Office website](#). University of Galway implements external standards and guidelines through a comprehensive QA system focussed on internal [Policies and Procedures](#) and including specific Policies and Procedures around internal monitoring and [Quality Reviews](#) (QRs).

Decisions around the development and continuous improvement to all internal [Policies and Procedures](#) including those related to internal monitoring and [Quality Review \(QR\)](#) are taken at a number of major committees and meetings. These are led by the [Governing Authority \(Údarás\)](#) and its principle sub-committees that include [Academic Council](#) and the [University Management Team \(UMT\)](#). Decisions around development and changes to Policies and Procedures related to academic activities are taken mainly by Academic Council.

Decisions around Policies and Procedures related to internal monitoring and [Quality Review \(QR\)](#) are taken by the [Quality Enhancement Committee \(QEC\)](#) which reports to Údarás through [Academic Council \(AC\)](#). The [Quality Office](#) is responsible for executing Policies and Procedures related to internal monitoring and QR and for supporting all units in the development of internal Policies and Procedures.

Both Údarás and the Academic Council have a number of other key subcommittees that discuss quality improvement on various aspects of the University's processes and typically meet immediately prior to the meetings noted above and more frequently, as required. These sub-committees are:

- Colleges and School Boards
- Graduate Studies Board
- Research Committee
- Standing and Strategic Planning Committee
- Academic Council – Standing
- Finance and Resources Committee
- Risk Management Committee
- Library Committee
- International Committee

The University has adopted a policy for documenting all policies and procedures. All major policies, procedures, regulations and guidelines are made available by various units across the University and guide the behaviour of University staff and students when implementing key University processes. Policies and Procedures are typically documents but may also be manuals, webpages and forms. Policies and Procedures should reflect best practice in the higher education sector and should be written using simple and accessible language for end users. All University Policies and Procedures must be periodically reviewed, and if necessary revised, at least once every seven years.

All University Policies and Procedures must be coded and indexed in the University's P&P Repository available in the Quality Office website. Additional policies and procedures related to this heading and available from the [Policies and Procedures Repository](#) include:

-
- QA001 Quality Assurance
- QA002 Policies and Procedures
- P&P Repository
- Quality Office Website

An extensive number of internal [statutes](#) and [organisational structures](#) also define the role, duties and responsibilities of key organisational units and committees and the responsibilities of key individual staff.

University of Galway manages the competing needs of external regulations, internal strategic objectives and [risk management](#) through the enhancement of a responsive culture characterised by a willingness of staff to engage with stakeholders including learners in a way that responds to their needs for continuous improvement to quality.

The post of Dean of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Studies Office are tasked with enhancing postgraduate research in the University. The Graduate Studies Board considers all research degree programmes, and changes to the University Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes and makes recommendations to the Standing Committee of Academic Council. The Board is chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

A key mechanism in the implementation and evaluation of quality research is the Institutional Review of Research Performance (IRRP). The overall aim of [IRRP2024](#) is to enhance research performance at University of Galway and to comply with the *Irish Universities Act* for a peer review of research quality.

The Research Committee reports to Academic Council and is tasked with advising on the implementation of the University's [Research Strategy](#) as embodied in the University's Strategic Plan.

The Research Office has responsibility for the development and promotion of the University's research effort. It works closely with academic and research staff to secure national and international funding, and to further the impact of research and innovation. The Research Office is part of the Office of the Vice-President for Research and works closely with the Innovation Office, Graduate Studies, the Researcher Development Centre and other professional services supporting University of Galway's research community.

Representation of learners and external stakeholders

University of Galway's policy is to engage widely with all of its stakeholders. Stakeholders include learners, Schools, other Colleges and Universities, research funding agencies, general public, industry, national and local government and many more.

Students are the primary stakeholders and regarded by University of Galway as competent, active and constructive partners as opposed to consumers. Students are regularly invited to engage in programme design, governance and corporate image while also engaging with their own learning.

Learners are represented on all major committees dealing with quality and quality assurance and liaise directly with the University through relevant committees and through the Dean of Students. There are three student union members on Údarás na hOllscoile.

Key stakeholders in the context of quality assurance include:

- [Irish Universities Association](#)
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland ([QQI](#))
- Higher Education Authority ([HEA](#))
- Irish Higher Education Quality Network ([IHEQN](#))
- [European Universities Association](#)
- [West North-West Connect](#)
- Research Funding Bodies ([SFI](#), [HRB](#), etc.)

University of Galway staff also meet regularly with counterparts from other Universities through the [Irish Universities Association \(IUA\) Quality Committee](#) to discuss Policies and Procedures across the sector and also with various external stakeholders, in particular, the [Higher Education Authority \(HEA\)](#), [IUA](#) and [Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(QQI\)](#). These meetings inform University of Galway's key decision-making processes.

External panellists, examiners and authenticators: There are explicit criteria laid down in a number of Policies and Procedures for the recruitment and engagement of external independent panellists, examiners and authenticators. The following Policies and Procedures lay down explicit criteria for the retention of panellists, examiners and authenticators:

- QA003 Review of Schools
- QA004 Institutional Review of Research Performance
- QA005 Role of External Examiners – Taught Programmes
- QA006 Review of Taught Programmes
- QA013 Review of Services

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

University of Galway provides a [list of linked providers](#) under the heading 'collaborative providers' on its public website and relies on two national guidelines (IHEQN and QQI) to define and implement Policies and Procedures in this area for all Schools and Colleges.

- [Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision \(IHEQN\)](#)
- [Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards \(QQI\)](#)

One internal policy defines the cyclical review process for Linked Providers and draws on legislation: [QA009 Review of Linked Providers](#).

Collaborative Provision: University of Galway Policies and Procedures, in particular [QA246 Collaborative Partnerships for Taught Awards](#), cover all such arrangements including sub-contracting of provision. This is done through Memorandums of Agreement/Understanding and also internal Policies and Procedures for the review of such agreements.

University of Galway provides a [list of collaborative providers](#) on its public website and relies on two national guidelines (QQI and IHEQN) to define and implement Policies and Procedures in this area for all Schools and Colleges:

- [Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards \(QQI\)](#)
- [Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision \(IHEQN\)](#)

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

University of Galway's teaching mission is delivered through [taught programmes](#) at [undergraduate](#), [postgraduate](#) and [professional, part-time and evening](#) levels. The University of Galway [Academic Strategy](#) provides the overarching framework for the design and operation of courses and modules. Responsibility for programme design lies with the Colleges and reviewing and revising programme offerings is a key aspect of quality assurance and enhancement. Successful innovation also requires the availability of accurate and timely information and data, basing major decisions on evidence and on a compelling case which is cognizant of the external context, the developments in academic fields, in other institutions, and the identification of future needs. The design of new programmes and the revision of existing offerings can be facilitated via the support of expertise in the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) providing scope for innovation in pedagogy, assessment and the effective use of technologies and media.

Programme Development: Generally, prior to bringing forward a detailed proposal to the relevant School Committee(s), a proposer should seek approval in principle from the School Executive to ensure the proposed programme is aligned to school priorities. Following approval by the School Committees, budgets are developed in consultation with College Finance and Business Managers and internal stakeholders are consulted in the drafting of the proposed programme. The proposal is then considered by the School Executive prior to submission to the College Committee for consideration.

New programme proposals/proposals for major programme changes must be approved at the College-level before being submitted to the University Curriculum & Programme Board for review in line with [QA050 Curriculum Design and Management Policy](#). The role of the University Curriculum & Programme Board is to provide a level of oversight of the totality of the University's suite of undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes. The University Curriculum & Programme Board reviews all programme proposals to assess programme design, academic quality, evidence of market demand, and coherence with the University's overall programme portfolio. The Board, on behalf of Academic Council Standing Committee, reviews all proposals in detail before making recommendations to Academic Council Standing Committee on each proposal. The University Curriculum Programme Board meets three times per year, ahead of meetings of Academic Standing Committee.

When a programme is approved by Academic Council Standing the decision will be documented in the meeting minutes which are then submitted for final approval by Academic Council. Academic Council is the chief academic authority and, subject to review by Údarás na hOllscoile (Governing Authority), controls the academic affairs of the University including the curriculum, instruction and education provided by the University.

Policies and Procedures related to programme development and delivery are largely implemented through committee work as well as a number of online systems (e.g. [AKARI](#)) and other forms available from University of Galway's [Syllabus Team](#). Detailed [programme outlines](#) are available to the public through the main University website.

All programmes undergo annual review through [Programme Boards](#) and the [External Examination](#) process and periodic review through the [Quality Review](#) process. [New and major changes](#) to programmes are available on the Quality Office website.

A sample of additional policies and procedures related to this heading and available from the [Policies and Procedures Repository](#) include:

- General Calendar
- Bologna & NFQ Standards and Guidelines
- Course Fee Establishment
- Module Bonding
- New & Changed Modules
- New & Changed Programmes
- General and Academic Calendars

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

Students can access University of Galway programmes of learning through a variety of means administered by the [Admissions Offices](#). These include: Leaving Certificate; A Levels, EU & EFTA, Non-EU, International, and Medicine. Access is also provided to Irish, UK and EU/EEA Transfers, Advanced Entry, FETAC, International/Non-EU and Mature Students. All admissions are overseen and approved by senior academic staff mainly through School committees and later approved by University management.

Extensive use is made of the [National Academic Recognition Information Centre](#) (NARIC) for assessing applicants coming from outside the Irish education system.

Student access and progression is dealt with through the following key offices that implement a variety of related Policies and Procedures:

- [Academic Records, Conferring, & Registration](#)
- [Access Office](#)
- [Undergraduate Admissions Office](#)
- [International Office](#)
- [Postgraduate Admissions Office](#)

Policies are in place for

- a. new entrant students wishing to transfer to another First Year Undergraduate programme [QA252 New Entrants to First Year Fulltime Undergraduate Degree Programmes](#)
- b. and for students who have already completed first or subsequent years of an Undergraduate programme wishing to transfer to First Year of another Undergraduate programme [QA251 Existing University of Galway Students to First Year Undergraduate Degree Programmes](#)

Widening participation: The University's [Access Centre](#) aims to create a supportive learning environment where students who have experienced socio-economic disadvantage, students with disabilities and mature students are enabled to access and succeed in third level education. This involves a wide range of educational approaches and specialist services targeted at large numbers of students who are classified by the Higher Education Authority as 'non-traditional.'

The Access Centre helps individuals realise their educational potential irrespective of their educational background, age or personal health circumstances. It provides support for students participating on [access programmes](#), students with [disabilities](#) and [mature students](#).

In September 2019 University of Galway became a designated [University of Sanctuary](#), a movement aimed at promoting the inclusion of International Protection Applicants, refugees and Irish Travellers within the community. The Steering Committee for the movement has embedded the ethos of the Places of Sanctuary across campus with the aspiration of creating an inclusive, inviting and welcoming campus for all people. The overall aim of the University of Galway campaign is to break down the barriers for individuals regardless of their societal positioning, and offer a 'Welcome to University of Galway'.

The University of Sanctuary Campaign is led by the ethos of the Places of Sanctuary Movement: Learn, Embed, and Share. The University of Sanctuary initiative at University of Galway aims to increase public awareness of International Protection, migration and Traveller-specific topics across campus, in an effort to address the low levels of participation of underrepresented groups in third-level education. International Protection Applicants, refugees, vulnerable migrants and Irish Travellers are too frequently excluded from participation in education due to inequitable societal barriers. University of Galway aims to make its university community a much more inclusive and equitable space for all.

[Recognition of Prior Learning](#) (RPL) is a process that allows students to gain admission to a programme of study or to gain exemptions/credit from some parts of a programme, based on demonstrated learning that a student may have achieved through another programme of study, or through work or other learning experiences. RPL recognizes that knowledge and skills can be acquired from a range of learning experiences, including formal, non-formal and informal and may reduce the time and cost of study involved in completing a programme of study. Resources are available for students at the RPL website and the [Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) Policy](#).

RPL in Higher Education Project: University of Galway is one of 14 partner institutions in the **National Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Higher Education Project** and in December 2021 appointed its institutional Project Lead officer. This is a five-year project, funded by the Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3 (Innovation and Agility) and co-sponsored by the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) and the Irish Universities Association (IUA). The project's aims are:

- i. to continue to **embed, streamline and promote RPL;**
- ii. to work with employers to **increase access and progression opportunities** in areas of skills needs and;
- iii. to **enhance the sector's capacity** to do RPL, through the development of practical tools, resource and CPD programmes.

The RPL in HE project builds on earlier University of Galway RPL practice and achievements and seeks to extend what has already been accomplished within the University. It is designed to drive RPL systematically and strategically across Irish HE in a way that has not been achieved to date. Creating the conditions for a shift in mindset regarding RPL in HE is key to unlocking and embedding a culture of lifelong learning.

A sample of additional external standards and guidelines and internal processes and Policies and Procedures related to this heading from the [Policies and Procedures Repository](#) include:

- QQI Policy on Access Transfer and Progression
- QQI Policy and Criteria for Facilitating the Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications
- FAIR Report: Focus on Automatic Institutional Recognition
- CAO Leaving Certificate Grading Scale and Revised Common Points Scale
- Agreed CAO entry requirements criteria for EU/EFTA Applicants, CAO Handbook
- NUI Matriculation requirements
- Information on MSAP – Mature Student Application Process
- HEAR Scheme - offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are resident in the Republic of Ireland.
- DARE Scheme- Scheme that offers places for those who have a disability, have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education.

- HPAT– Medicine Entry Admissions Test
- Diploma Supplement – European Standard transcript
- [QA248 Holders of QQI Qualification](#) – Policy for the selection of QQI applicants to degree programmes
- [QA254 Occasional Students](#) – Policy for students who wish to study specific modules for a semester
- [QA228 Undergraduate Marks and Standards](#) – Governs undergraduate student progression
- [QA236 Postgraduate Marks and Standards](#) - Governs postgraduate student progression
- [QA222 Recognition of Prior Learning](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- Scholarships & Fellowships
- Student Attendance
- Guidelines for Work Placement

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

The design, operation and evaluation of courses is guided by the University's [Academic Strategy](#). It reflects strategic priorities, national and international best practice. It applies to all University of Galway undergraduate, postgraduate (and other) programmes.

All programmes undergo a comprehensive and rigorous design and approval process. Schools and Colleges prepare [programme and module templates](#) that include programme objectives, [learning outcomes](#), progression rules, and student workloads (ECTS) and that are compliant with the [National Framework for Qualifications](#).

Supports are available through the [Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning](#) (CELT) for developing learning outcomes and aligning assessment. These include:

- [Learning Outcomes Quickguide](#)
- [Programme Outcomes Quickguide](#)

[Advice](#) is provided on designing the awards within the National Framework of Qualifications and outlines the implications on the implementation of the framework.

Assessment at University of Galway is governed by [QA277 Assessment Policy](#). [Programme Boards](#) also have oversight and responsibility for a number of key aspects of the assessment process and should ensure that all necessary requirements outlined in the policy are in place and facilitated as appropriate within the management structures/processes of their College and School.

Guidance and resources on aspects of assessment are available through the CELT website. A [Rubrics Guide](#) provides advice on how to use rubrics to clarify expectations for students performance and as learning aids prior to assessment.

Many academics at the University of Galway use self and peer-assessment, as an effective learning method for students. The [Self and Peer Assessment Guide](#) provides an overview on how Self and Peer assessment can be beneficial for both the student and lecturer.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Students are engaged in programmes using a variety of Policies and Procedures and supported by the [Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching \(CELT\)](#).

These Policies and Procedures describe how staff engage with the following:

- [Bologna Process](#)
- [Learning Outcomes](#)
- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Attendance Requirements](#)
- [Feedback Policy](#)
- [Teaching Evaluation](#)

Different [modes of delivery](#) are encouraged and supported and using a variety of pedagogical methods that include [Canvas](#). University of Galway also provides support for a comprehensive suite of [teaching technologies](#) that includes:

- [Canvas](#)
- [Clickers - TurningPoint Cloud \(TP7\)](#)
- [Kaltura - MediaSpace](#)
- [Qwickly Attendance](#)
- [Turnitin](#)
- [Video Conferencing](#)
- [Video Basics](#)
- [Mini-studio](#)

When a student registers for a module on the Student Record System, they are given access to the corresponding course on the VLE within 24 hours.

Colleges and Schools across the University have developed an extensive suite of teaching and research focussed laboratories. These laboratories extend to local industry, arts events and the local environment including archaeological sites and weather stations. Details are available within [School websites](#).

Programme assessment is dealt with through a variety of Policies and Procedures and in particular University of Galway's [Marks and Standards](#), [QA277 Assessment Policy](#) and supported by the [Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching \(CELT\)](#). The [Examinations Office](#) provide a number of Policies and Procedures related to examinations, re-checks and special circumstances. Local policies and procedures for assessment exist at the College/School or Programme level.

Policies and Procedures describe how staff engage with the following:

- [Bologna Process](#)
- [Assessment](#)
- [Attendance Requirements](#)

Teachers are made aware of a variety of [assessment methods](#) and receive support from CELT through a range of [professional development courses](#) and personal advice. This guidance includes marking criteria, formative assessment and assessment rubrics.

University of Galway offers all students the possibility to inform examiners of [mitigating circumstances](#) during the assessment process and to [appeal](#) results of the assessment process.

All programmes have marks and standards set up against them. These marks and standards ensure the same process and rules apply to all students within their programme.

External Examiners: Quality assurance and enhancement of academic standards is provided to the assessment process through annual international peer review using external examiners. The process for nominating and approving External Examiners is outlined in [QA278 Nomination and Approval of External Examiners - Taught Programmes](#). External Examiners play a vital role in assuring and enhancing academic standards of modules, programmes and awards. This role is clearly outlined in [QA005 Role of External Examiners – Taught Programmes](#).

Although primarily involved in the review of assessment grades and standards, External Examiners also provide an important consultative and advisory function in the development of modules and programmes and the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment practices.

External Examiners review samples of exam scripts to ensure marking is in line with their expectations. All programmes go before Examination Boards, chaired by the Dean of College with representatives from the College in attendance also.

The Examination Board determines the progression of students. Students who have a concern about their results can apply to recheck or appeal their examination results.

The Dean of Students has particular responsibility for ensuring that the university structures, environment and support services underpin the educational and personal development of students. The Dean plays a lead role in the implementation of the University of Galway Strategy with particular focus on the objectives and initiatives which support the success of students in their education.

Academic Integrity: The importance of the learning culture has been captured in the University's [Academic Strategy](#) where it is set out as a key priority. The key aspects of this culture are broken down into 1) Learning 2) Curriculum and 3) Assessment. Academic Integrity is fundamental to all areas of scholarship, teaching and learning. The Strategy advocates a range of assessment instruments should be used without over reliance on a single approach (such as traditional unseen written examination papers).

University of Galway advocates a combination of education, good assessment design, and standard procedure to address issues of academic integrity. Academic staff who undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education take part in a workshop on Academic Integrity, which aims at considering academic integrity within the context of good practice in assessment design. Actions are included in the Academic Strategy to specifically address revision of policies and processes around academic integrity, plagiarism, and examinations.

Efforts to deal with the issues of academic integrity are supported through the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) and the University's Academic Integrity Officer.

A sample of additional Policies and Procedures related to this heading from the [Policies and Procedures Repository](#) include:

- QA228 Undergraduate Marks and Standards
- QA236 Postgraduate Marks and Standards
- QA235 Procedure for the Discussion, Checking and Appeal of Examination Results
- QA005 External Examiners – Taught Programmes Policy
- QA230 Procedures for dealing with breaches of Examination Regulations
- QA248 Holders of QQI Qualification – Policy for the selection of QQI applicants to the University's degree programmes

- QA254 Occasional Students – Policy for students who wish to study specific modules for a semester or two

Other related external policies and procedures include:

- QQI Policy and Criteria for Facilitating the Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications
- CAO Leaving Certificate Grading Scale and Revised Common Points Scale
- Agreed CAO entry requirements criteria for EU/EFTA Applicants, CAO Handbook
- NUI Matriculation requirements; Information on MSAP – Mature Student Application Process
- HEAR Scheme - offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are resident in the Republic of Ireland
- DARE Scheme- Scheme that offers places for those who have a disability, have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education.
- HPAT– Medicine Entry Admissions Test
- Diploma Supplement – European Standard transcript
- The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning - Principles of Assessment OF/FOR/AS Learning

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

Student resources and support are delivered primarily through the offices of [Student Services](#), the [Library](#), [Academic Skills Hub](#) and the [Student Registry Helpdesk](#).

Student Services: Student Services provides high quality and comprehensive non-academic support and wellbeing services for students. Student Services offers support around:

- [Access Centre](#)
- [Accommodation](#)
- [Career Development Centre](#)
- [Student Counselling](#)
- [Student Health Unit](#)
- [Clubs and Societies](#)

The services provided are supported by Policies and Procedures including:

- Students' Union Services
- Pastoral Care
- Learner Representation
- The Language Laboratory
- Placement Services
- Student Fees & Grants
- Career Development
- Accommodation Services
- Community Knowledge Initiative (CKI)

Library: The Library provides collections, training in information use and a range of spaces in its building to enable different modes of learning and research. An annual budget for information resources is allocated to provide access to books, journals, archives and other collections across all disciplines.

Library staff provide support, help and training to enable students to get to grips with the literature of their subject and the Library's resources, supporting students with their studies, research, or teaching. As well as being available for one-to-one enquiries, consultations, and [virtual workshops](#), support staff provide training sessions throughout the semester aimed at helping students identify and use the information resources they need. The training programme is also aimed at equipping students with the lifelong skills of information seeking, evaluation and use. The Library and IT Service Desk provides first level advice and support to students and staff on both Library and IT services. The Library implements a comprehensive list of policies and procedures to deliver its services and support students and staff including;

- [QA237 Open Access to Research Outputs](#)
- [QA509 Research Data Management Policy](#)
- [QA802 Collections Strategy](#)
- [QA803 James Hardiman Library Customer Charter 803a Cairt Chustaiméara Leabharlann Shéamais Uí Argadáin](#)
- [QA804 Donations Policy](#)
- [QA805 E-Resources Usage Policy](#)
- [QA807 Exhibiting at the Hardiman Research Building](#)
- [QA807a Hardiman Research Building Exhibition Proposal Form](#)
- [QA815 Long Term Print Journal Archive Policy](#)
- [QA816 Borrowing and Fines Policy](#)
- [QA817 Library Laptop Loan Scheme](#)
- [QA818 Library Open Press Takedown Policy](#)
- [QA819 Archival Collections Acquisition Policy](#)
- [QA820 Self Service Charging Lockers Policy](#)
- [QA821 Digital Preservation Policy](#)
- [QA822 Accessing the Library](#)

The Library has developed a comprehensive strategy, [Library Strategy – Preserving the Past, Enabling the Future](#), the five themes of which are:

- Being Digital: maximise opportunities afforded by online collections, technology enriched spaces, and emerging technologies.
- Opening Scholarship: make University research outputs, educational resources and heritage collections globally and openly available.
- Inspiring Learning: inspire learning by transforming the Library building to promote community and engagement.
- Driving Research: drive research through expert staff, digital infrastructures and collections in print and online.
- Sustaining Excellence: ensure a supportive culture for staff and users, promoting diversity and operating sustainably.

Academic Skills Hub: The [Academic Skills Hub](#) aims to support all University of Galway students to develop the key skills required for academic success. Students are made aware of resources to support their learning through an [online hub](#) which also signposts specific training sessions throughout the academic year. These are in addition to programme specific supports. The adequacy of resources are determined annually by analysing the response of students to questions related to the Supportive Environment in the [studentsurvey.ie](#).

First year students are informed at Orientation, through general and College-specific sessions, of the learner supports available to them. They are provided with a Student Guide which outlines these supports and each

first year student is enrolled on Canvas. The development of the Academic Skills Hub brings all the resources together in one place and ensures that different learner support/resource units benefit from networking.

Supports include:

- IT and Digital skills available online
- [Academic Writing Centre](#) - the Academic Writing Centre which offers one-to-one tutorials on writing skills to over 500 students annually
- [Support for Undergraduate Maths Students](#) (SUMS) – a free drop-in centre for undergraduate students where tutors provide support for any area of Mathematics and Statistics
- [Computer DISC \(Drop-In Support Centre\)](#) supports students from all Schools and Colleges with self-directed learning in computing programming and computer related topics and in addition to supports provided by the [Information Solutions and Services](#).
- [Céim](#) - Céim supports first year students to transition successfully to University of Galway, make friends and create connections within their subject area, develop a sense of belonging, gain a greater understanding of coursework and ultimately proceed to second year.

Student Registry Helpdesk: The Student Registry Helpdesk offers supports that interface between students and administration services including access, transfer and progression, admissions and examinations.

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

University of Galway places a strong emphasis on quality impactful research and the quality of training provided to researchers. Relevant national and international standards and guidelines are reflected in our Policies and Procedures and post-graduate research programmes.

The objective of the **Graduate Studies Office** is to enhance postgraduate research in the University. The **Graduate Studies Board** considers all research degree programmes, and changes to the University Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes and makes recommendations to the Standing Committee of Academic Council. The Board is chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The [Research Office](#), [Graduate Studies](#) and [Innovation Office](#) teams provide a variety of Policies and Procedures for all aspects of University of Galway's research activities. These Policies and Procedures include codes of practice for [research degree programmes](#), [Research Integrity](#), [Intellectual Property Policy](#), governance and open access.

The Research Integrity Policy is aligned to the revised European Code for Research Integrity. As well as revised changes to the relevant national policy, it outlines the procedure for dealing with allegations of research misconduct, and for the first time, in a University of Galway Policy, defines the role of the Research Integrity Officer in dealing with such allegations.

The National Forum on Research Integrity (of which University of Galway is a member) agreed to publish annually a consolidated report about investigations of research misconduct undertaken within the research performing organisations (RPOs) in the preceding calendar year. The Forum agreed that each RPO would report annually in confidence to the National Forum Secretariat with the following information:

- The number of research misconduct investigations concluded in the calendar year;
- The number of said research misconduct investigations where the allegations were upheld;
- An overview of the types of misconduct (based on the OECD definitions included in the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland).

Integrity training continues to be supported by the RDC using the Epigeum (Oxford University Press) online course materials – this training is mandatory for researchers working on most of the nationally funded projects.

A key mechanism in the implementation and evaluation of quality research is the Institutional Review of Research Performance (IRRP). The overall aim of IRRP2016 was to enhance research performance at University of Galway and to comply with the *Irish Universities Act* for a peer review of research quality. Planning for IRRP 2024 is well advanced.

Research activity takes place within Schools and Colleges of the University and through Research Institutes/Centres. Every Researcher (academic, contract researcher, PhD student) is aligned to a School. Research Institutes or Centres have a primary affiliation with a College or School and are not stand-alone entities. Therefore, in all instances, a reporting relationship exists between a Research Institute or Centre and a College or School, and the reporting line is Principal Investigator (PI), Head of School, Dean of College and President.

The Researcher Development Centre (RDC) is supported by the Offices of the VP for Research and Innovation and the Dean of Graduate Studies, for the specific purpose of providing support and continuing professional development opportunities for researchers at University of Galway.

The RDC mission is to create and foster a culture of continuing professional development (CPD) for researchers; to enable researchers to identify and achieve a range of skills suited to their personal career

pathway; to signpost opportunities for researchers both within and beyond academia and to measure the impact of such training/CPD.

The RDC fully supports the EU MISSION 'to facilitate the development of R1 and R2 researchers to become fully aware of their possible career trajectories and the existing range of career development opportunities open to them, thereby enabling them to make training and occupational choices and to take personal responsibility for the management of their own career.

The RDC aims to ensure that all researchers have a Personal Development Plan, mentoring support, training and professional development opportunities, career support and advice. The RDC has developed a specific [website](#) for researchers, a [Researcher Handbook](#) to help guide staff and a [training portal](#) for researchers to register, attend and keep their training records online for personal access.

The Research Committee reports to Academic Council and is tasked with advising on the implementation of the University's Research Strategy as embodied in the University's Strategic Plan. A key objective of Research Committee is to keep under review, policies on research matters and address short comings and anomalies so as to facilitate quality research activities within the University. Each College is represented on the Committee by a Vice-Dean for Research and each Research Institute is represented by its Director. Each College has in place its own Research Committee, chaired by its Vice-Dean for Research. The [Policy on the Governance and Management of Designated Research Institutes](#) provides a framework for the governance and management of University of Galway's five designated Research Institutes and details the role and composition of an Institute Advisory Board, an Institute-University Board, and an Institute Executive Management Team.

The [Research Ethics Committee](#) is responsible for safeguarding the health, welfare, and rights of human subjects and researchers in research studies, and to afford dignity to the handling and treatment of biological materials, taking into account the scientific procedures and concerns of the local community. The [Animal Care Research Ethics Committee](#) is responsible for facilitating compliance with relevant legislation, ensuring that University of Galway operates to best international standards in any research or teaching involving live animals. Both of these committees are administered through the Research Office.

The Research Office is responsible for verifying eligibility for funder programmes at the pre-proposal stage and endorsing applications for submission to external funders. The [Office of the Vice President of Research and Innovation](#) is also responsible for reviewing and accepting contracts and initiating the set-up of research accounts. To ensure that all research projects are fully costed, University of Galway has in place a requirement that all budget requests in excess of €50K must be reviewed and approved by the Research Accounts Office prior to submission to the funder.

For the most part, the external funder has an important role in the oversight of research activity and through the PI, the University, is contractually bound for the effective and compliant management of the research grant. In meeting the contractual commitments and technical and financial reporting requirements, the PI is supported by the Research Office, the Research Accounts Office, the Technology Transfer Office (TTO), the Procurement Office, Human Resources and other units. Controls in place to ensure project delivery and the overall quality of the research include project oversight or steering groups with funder representatives, Governance Committees, and rigorous financial audits.

The Technology Transfer Office is responsible for the management of the University's Intellectual Property (IP) and for all negotiations, evaluation, marketing, licensing, assignment and disposal of this IP. The TTO is also responsible, together with the Secretary of the University for assessing cases under the *Conflict of Interest and Conflicts of Commitments* Policy. In 2017, University of Galway contributed to the HEA-commissioned review of Intellectual Property Management and Conflicts of Interest.

A sample of additional Policies and Procedures related to this heading from the [Policies and Procedures Repository](#):

- Code of Good Practice in Research
- Code of Policy and Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct
- QA506 Governance and Management of Research Institutes
- Financial Policy and Procedures Manual Contract Research
- QA512 Research Ethics Committee
- QA500 Animal Care Research Ethics Committee
- QA413 Conflict of Interests and Conflict of Committees
- QA507 Intellectual Property Policy
- Budget sign off
- QA245 University Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes
- QQI Statutory QA Guidelines for Research Degree programmes
- National Framework for Doctoral Education
- National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland
- Inspiring Partnerships – the National IP (Intellectual Property) Protocol Data Management Policy

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

[Human Resources](#) (HR) and the [Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching](#) (CELT) have developed a comprehensive range of Policies and Procedures for all aspects of teaching and research throughout the employment lifecycle of teaching staff. HR has developed many Policies and Procedures that [support staff during employment](#) to [staff development](#) and on to [end of employment](#). In addition, CELT offer staff a number of Policies and Procedures that support [learning, teaching and assessment](#). An [Academic Practice Framework](#) has been developed within which modules and qualifications provided by CELT are situated. This offers a range of modules which can either be taken on a 'standalone' basis or combined to build up a series of professional, postgraduate qualifications.

The National Forum's [National Professional Development Framework for all Staff who Teaching in Higher Education in Ireland](#) is being adopted for continuous professional development for staff, through CELT.

The [President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching](#) recognise outstanding efforts of teaching staff to ensure University of Galway students receive the highest quality learning experience. The scheme was reviewed in 2018 and awards are made at both College and University levels.

The [Graduate Studies Office](#) offers staff training on [research supervision](#) and the Researcher Development Centre continues to provide support for the training and career development needs of University of Galway's Research Communities.

University of Galway operates a comprehensive communication network mainly through committees that involve comprehensive reports that are circulated to all staff. The University also has an internal staff newsletter and many opportunities for staff to engage in discussions surrounding teaching and learning through conferences, seminars and training workshops.

A sample of the many additional Policies and Procedures related to this heading from the [Policies and Procedures Repository](#):

- Equality and Diversity
- Further Education Policy
- Sabbatical Leave

- Carer's Leave
- Temporary Absences
- Transition to University Teacher (Grade II)
- Triennial Travel Grant (Academic Staff)
- Unpaid Leave of Absence for Academic Staff

Staff Development

All Staff members have access to support and opportunities for development based on a voluntary approach to the identification of their continuing professional training and development needs.

An internal system of support for newly recruited and newly-qualified staff, or staff with minimal experience in operation in terms of Induction, Probation and Professional/personal development also exists. An annual staff training programme is available to all staff alongside funding supports including the [Further Education Scheme Policy](#) (FEP) to support all staff to engage in further education programmes, supporting both their professional and personal development, funded by the University.

Staff Recruitment

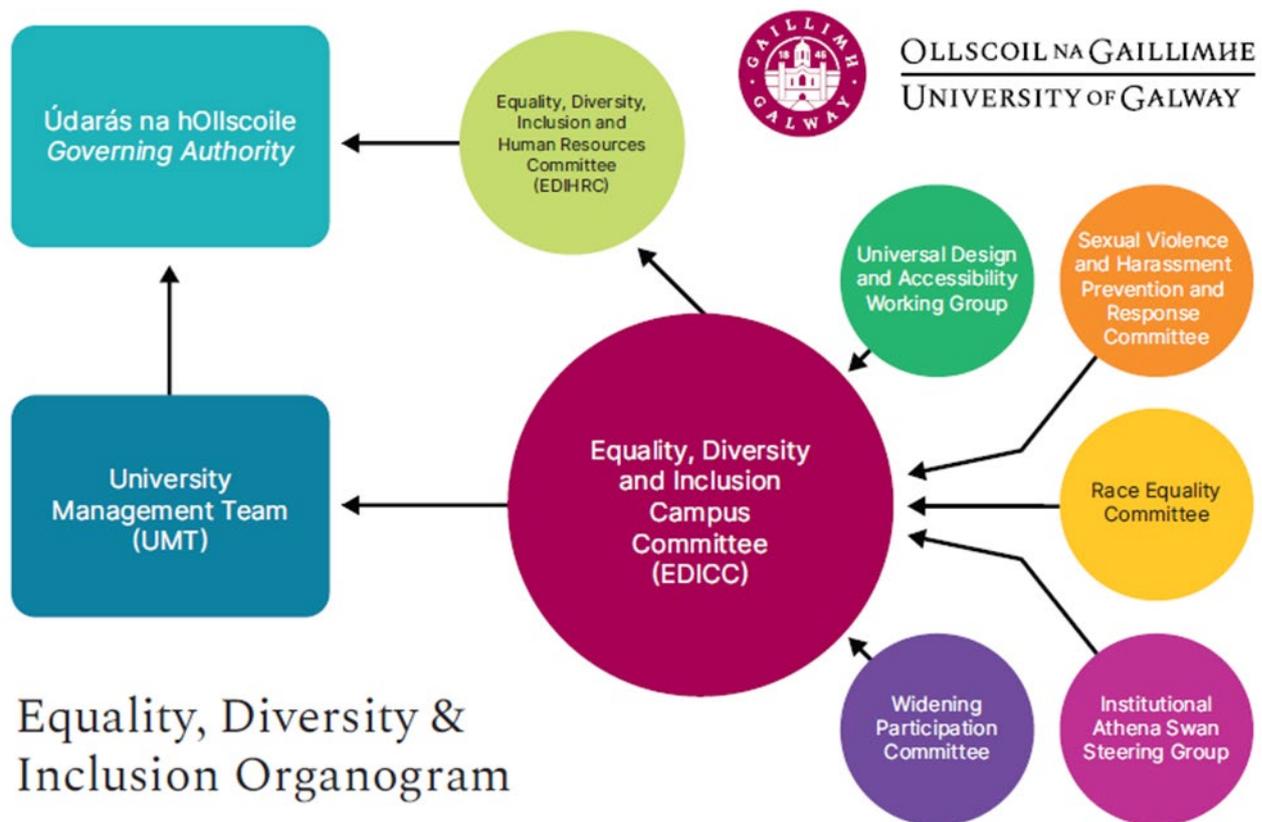
Policies and Procedures for recruitment address:

1. Roles, responsibilities and codes of conduct
2. Academic/professional/technical standards for all staff
3. Pedagogical standards for teaching staff
4. Benchmarking staff profiles (at programme level) with those of similar providers
5. Recruitment, selection, probation and tenure
6. Collection and use of regular and timely learner and other relevant feedback
7. Pedagogical training and certification of teaching staff
8. Performance management
9. Probation for new staff
10. Induction for new staff

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

In accordance with the recommendations of the University of Galway Gender Equality Task Force 2016, the University has put in place a cohesive governance structure to guarantee clear and consistent leadership, responsibility, accountability, and oversight of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

The structures put in place allow for information to flow from local School or Unit level through the appropriate committee and into the Governing Authority. There are two Institutional EDI Committees - [The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Campus Committee](#) was established in 2016, and following from that, the [Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Resources Committee](#) of Údarás na hOllscoile (Governing Authority) was established in May 2017. The remit of the EDI Committee has since been expanded to include HR matters - accordingly, the title of the committee is changed to EDIHRC. Both of these committees work toward progressing the equality agenda in all areas at University of Galway. You can find out more about their work, membership, and remit by reviewing the information available on this website.



The [structures at College, School, and Unit level](#) continue to progress, with development of local EDI committees and the introduction of College Vice-Deans for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The EDI governance structure is supported by extensive training and development opportunities in the following areas:

- [Race Equality](#)
- [EDI in Higher Education](#)
- [Unconscious bias training](#)
- [Women's Leadership Development Programme](#)
- [Work/life balance](#)
- [Equal Opportunity](#)
- [Inclusion Training Programmes](#)

An extensive suite of [policies and procedures](#) has also been developed including:

- [QA152 Equal Opportunities](#)
- [QA153 Equality Impact Assessment Guidelines \(Equality Impact Assessment Form\)](#)
- [QA155 Staff Guide to Disability in the Workplace](#)
- [QA181 Gender Identity and Gender Expression](#)
- [QA414 Protected Disclosure](#)
- [QA182 Universal Design and Accessibility Policy](#)

Equal Opportunity Grants are available to support the implementation of the [EDI Strategy](#):

- [QA154 Athena Swan Mid-Career Lecturer Research Capacity Building Grant 2022 \(QA154 - Appendix 1 - APPLICATION FORM\)](#)
- [QA151 Research Grant for Returning Academic Carers](#)
- [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Project Fund](#)

Widening Participation Committee: Established in 2020, University of Galway's Widening Participation (WP) Committee is a sub-Committee of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Campus Committee (EDICC). This committee works specifically towards progressing the WP agenda in all areas of the University. The governance structure for this committee is as follows

One of the initial tasks of the WP Committee was to establish an agreed upon definition of WP for the institution, which would capture three key elements:

1. WP is about creating a more inclusive environment for students who would be traditionally regarded as underrepresented in Higher Education
2. WP involves a set of policies and activities developed to improve
3. These WP activities and policies take place across the full student lifecycle: Pre-entry, transition, post-entry, and employment.

Accordingly, WP may be defined as follows:

“Widening participation refers to a set of policies and activities which aim to create a more inclusive environment for students who would traditionally be regarded as underrepresented in higher education. These activities cover the full duration of the student lifecycle: pre-entry, transition, post-entry, and employability.

Purpose of Widening Participation Committee: The Widening Participation (WP) Committee will promote, advise, and monitor the University's strategic plans on widening access and participation for the identified learner cohorts.

The University has committed to the above flagship actions by 2025. The Access Centre (AC) and the Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development (CALPD) will contribute to these goals, however further progress is dependent on the leadership provided by a strategically focused WP committee to embed the goals of widening access and participation into all aspects of the University's work.

The University of Galway WP Committee will identify issues and propose actions pertaining to the University's policies and practices vis-a-vis under-represented student cohorts from pre-entry to successful completion, for e.g.

- school leavers from socio-economically dis-advantaged backgrounds
- students with disabilities
- Mature Students
- Travellers
- adults beginning their higher education
- those studying on a flexible, part-time basis
- people who wish to continue learning and pursue intellectual enrichment and fulfilment.

The WP Committee will report at least once per year to the University Management Team (UMT) and EDI Committees and input into the HEA compact and National Access planning processes.

Staff Communication

Effective two-way internal communications is vital to the promotion of a culture of quality throughout any organisation, particularly one as large and diverse as the University of Galway. The University is committed to internal self-monitoring and ensuring that staff are kept informed of issues, changes and enhancements to our work practices.

The University's Internal Communications Officer works with colleagues across campus to provide a cycle of internal communications aimed at staff. These channels are used to raise awareness of changing work practices and policies, and to celebrate success and achievement across the wide range of University activities. They include:

1. An Dialann: weekly staff news and events ezine
2. Ollscéala: quarterly staff magazine
3. Campus screen network
4. Presidential All-Staff Addresses
5. Staff Calendar system

6.0 Information and Data Management

University of Galway operates a number of learner information systems supported by comprehensive information systems services and supports. The [Quercus](#) student record system is the provider and consumer of data to and from a number of other University information systems, including, [Canvas](#), Campus Account Self Service (CASS), [Akari](#), OAS, Email (Microsoft Active Directory), Discoverer and Microsoft Dynamics CRM.

Quercus provides integrated data and data archives for:

1. Student Records
2. Registration Records
3. Exam Records
4. Graduation Records

DANte, a Business Intelligence/Data Analytics solution, was developed using the Microsoft PowerBI reporting tool to support strategic decision making for University staff. DANte offers a single University of Galway facility for both tabular and attractive visual reporting based on a range of data sources including student and staff records (Quercus & CoreHR), financial data (Agresso) and some data from other systems including Canvas and Wi-Fi records. Some reports integrate data from a range of sources. Other information systems provided and supported by University of Galway are available through the Information Systems [service catalogue](#).

Research Metrics are centrally managed through the [Institutional Research Information System \(IRIS\)](#) that supports the quality enhancement of activities such as research funding, publications, PhD performance and teaching workloads. The [impact of QA activities](#) is measured by a specific set of KPIs that are also used in the development of self-assessment reports used during quality review.

Quality Review data is provided by the [Quality Office](#) who publish results of all quality reviews and action plans. The Quality Office Intranet manages data related to Reviewers and External Examiners and reports related to the University's External Examination Process.

Financial Data on areas such as student fees, capital investments, budgeting and financial planning is provided by the [Bursars Office](#) and informs decisions by Schools around programme development and enhancement. The Bursars Office also provides data on research funding.

Library resources includes [ARAN](#) a digital collection of open access scholarly publications. Authors of peer reviewed articles and peer-reviewed conference papers resulting from research carried out at University of Galway must deposit a copy in the ARAN repository. ARAN enables easy discovery of University of Galway publications through global search engines such as Google and complements [IRIS](#) by linking from author profiles to the full text of University publications.

Information Solutions and Services

The Information Solutions and Services unit provides IT services to the entire University. IT change projects are delivered using key elements of the PRINCE 2 methodology.

Development: ISS has established a governance process based around the University IT Strategy and its programmes. High level governance is provided by the Information Technology Planning and Priorities Committee (chaired by the Chief Operating Officer). This is underpinned by a series of programme boards and associated project boards. ISS operates a Change Review Board to manage the initiation of all projects and 'small changes'. Where a project/change results in a release of software or configuration change the change must be approved at the ISS Release Management Board before being put into production. Evidence of appropriate user testing and signoff is required by the Board.

Operations: ISS has developed a defined Service Catalogue. Public facing services have a customer facing service definition published on the [ISS website](#). For each service a Service Delivery Plan has been developed. Incidents and service requests are tracked against the individual services. All logged tickets are assigned to technicians for resolution. Service targets have been established for fulfilment of Service Requests against a number of services. Escalation procedures are defined. Security incidents are notified to the IT Security Committee and all critical incidents are managed through the Critical Incident process. The ISS Service Group meets monthly, chaired by the Assistant Director for Operations, to review service targets and review major incidents. Below is a sample list of a large number of policies, procedures, processes and IT systems:

- QA404 Password Policy
- QA405 Partnering Policy
- QA406 Remote Access Policy
- QA407 IT Asset Protection Policy
- QA408 Logical Access Policy

QA Record Maintenance and Retention

Most records related to the quality review process are made publicly available through the Quality Office website. Records available to the public include policies and procedures, review schedules, review reports and actions plans, review team names and affiliations and quality enhancements. Evidence is provided by publicly accessing records through the Quality Office website. Non-public records are available through the Quality Office intranet.

Data Protection

University of Galway holds a large amount of personal data to perform its various functions and takes its obligations to protect personal data very seriously. The University has developed a Data Protection Policy, A Data Breach Procedure and a Record Retention Policy. Staff are supported through Data Protection training both online and in person. The University Data Protection website provides a suite of resources and guides to assist staff and students in their daily affairs.

Freedom of Information

The University is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (the “FOI Act”) which provides a legal right of access to records held by the University. The FOI Act also sets out rules and procedures to be followed by public bodies when a request is received.

University of Galway operates a [Freedom of Information Office](#) for servicing information requests from students, staff and the public. Responsibility to comply with FOI requests received is delegated to the Head of School or Head of Unit (or nominee), to act as local decision makers with overall responsibility for the initial decision on FOI requests from their School or Unit, i.e. to decide whether to release all the records, partially release the records or deny access. Advice is provided by the University Freedom of Information team. Timelines involved in processing an FOI request are reflective of the time obligations imposed by the *FOI Act* which provides that requests, save for limited circumstances, must be responded to within four weeks.

The University is acutely aware of its duties in relation to Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. The Office of the Chief Operating Officer oversees compliance in these areas. Freedom of Information and Data Protection requirements are overseen by the Chief Operating Officer, the Data Protection Officer, the University Solicitor and an Administrative Assistant.

A sample of policies in place regarding [Data Protection](#) include the following:

1. QA400 Data Protection
2. QA401 Data Handling
3. QA402 Data Classification
4. QA412 Student Data Usage
5. Data Breach Procedure
6. QA442 Record Retention Policy
7. GDPR Training provided to key units and to Unit/Department Heads and Administrative Officers.

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are provided by the [Institutional Research Office \(IRO\)](#) and are used extensively throughout University of Galway and during quality reviews. These indicators, developed from [Strategy 2020 – 2025](#), include data on student population profiles, student progression, student completion rates, international and non-traditional student participation, and career paths, as well as a wide range of research performance data. Indicators are also informed by University and Subject Area ranking schemes, in particular those developed by [THE](#) and [QS](#) University ranking agencies.

The [Institutional Research Office](#) prepares a number of management information reports to senior management, Colleges and Schools to fulfil the principles relating to data to inform self-monitoring, planning

and help feed into the internal quality assurance system. For example, regular reports prepared and disseminated by the Office of Planning & Institutional Research include:

1. Annual Key Performance Indicator reports for the overall University, each College and each School, with historic data including data on research performance, student body composition, International students, non-traditional students and retention rates for the annual operational planning process to help inform the Annual Operational Planning process.
2. Market Analysis reports detailing CAO applicants, their demographic and national trends and demand at key points during the year
3. Annual StudentSurvey.ie report – analysis and dissemination of the annual studentsurvey.ie, for the University, each College and programme each year. Includes national benchmarking data.
4. HEA institutional profile each year, detailing a number of staff and student metrics including forecast profiles to help inform University’s progress of HEA Compact targets.
5. Annual international QS Subject Ranking analysis including Scival benchmarking and research metrics
6. Provision of bibliometric research data from SciVal and the KPIs for the Institutional Review of Research Performance process, internal promotion and external hiring processes.
7. Annual analysis of PHD cohort, completion rates and times for Graduate Studies
8. Biannual PGRstudentsurvey and action plans

Student Satisfaction and Feedback data are developed from results of the national [studentsurvey.ie](#) and University of Galway’s student feedback policy ([QA221 Feedback on Modules and Programmes](#)) where all staff receive and act on student feedback. Studentsurvey.ie participation and [results analysis](#) is carried out by the Planning and Institutional Research Office. Other survey data collected include surveys of Graduates, First Year Students, International Students, Graduate Employment and Facilities.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

- University of Galway has a policy of providing a wide variety of Teaching, Research and QA related information to the public. This is done mainly through the comprehensive [public website](#) including websites of all its Schools, Colleges and Student Services. Other mechanisms include information booklets and press releases from the [Press and Information Office](#).
 - Publicly accessible information includes results of all [Quality Reviews](#) and access to publicly available [Policies and Procedures](#). Academic staff also use the Library’s publicly accessible [ARAN repository](#) for research publications. Other information is available under [Freedom of Information](#).
 - A sample of other information sources are outlined below for illustration with links provided.
 - [Programmes and Modules](#)
 - [Research](#)
 - [Library Collections](#)

Cois Coiribe

The first of its kind in Ireland, *Cois Coiribe* is University of Galway’s online publishing platform for views and opinions from our top academics and university community. We offer a window to the world of ground-breaking research, cutting-edge innovation and expert insight.

The Content Unit collaborates with all Colleges, the Research Office and Research Institutes and Centres to develop a dynamic programme of content which showcases the impact and scale of their research.

This aim aligns with the objective outlined on page 35 of the *University of Galway Strategy 2020-2025*: “We will develop a compelling content programme to showcase the outcomes and impact of our research and innovation, nationally and internationally.”

Aims

- Drive quality engagement with exciting, multimedia content.
- Offer content and design that mirrors academic excellence.
- Extend reach, plugging into other media platforms such as *The Conversation*.
- Respond to a gap in the Irish market for expert views and opinions from a reputable university.
- To elevate our position in rankings and increase student numbers.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

University of Galway has a number of key policies related to self-evaluation and monitoring and that include the topics [Quality Review \(QR\)](#), [Operational Planning](#), [External Examinations](#) and [Student Feedback](#). Specific [Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures](#) related to this heading are listed below and available from the Quality Office:

1. QA001 Quality Assurance
2. QA002 Policies and Procedures
3. QA003 Review of Schools
4. QA004 Review of Research Performance
5. QA005 The Role of External Examiners (Taught)
6. QA007 Operational Plans
7. QA008 Programme Boards
8. QA009 Review of Linked Providers
9. QA012 Review of Research Institutes
10. QA013 Review of Services

The QR process is comprehensive and involves key steps around self-assessment, benchmarking, independent peer review, stakeholder interviews and surveys, recommendations for quality enhancement and action planning.

The independent peer review process begins with the selection of expert panelists, examiners and authenticators from similar organisations outside Ireland who are prepared to declare their ability to maintain confidentiality, that they have no deep or long-standing relationships with the unit being assessed and that they have received gender bias training. All panelists, examiners and authenticators receive payment for their services in return for providing value to the University in terms of a thorough and comprehensive review of quality and statements of recommended changes that will enhance quality.

QA001 Quality Assurance and QA002 Policies and Procedures guide the development of all Policies and Procedures in use across University of Galway. The majority of Policies and Procedures follow the P&P template that aids policy writers in the design of Policies and Procedures that improve communication, encourage revision and lower risk. Most Policies and Procedures are made available to the public in a variety of formats through the University's website.

Programme Review

All Taught Programmes (e.g. BSc, MSc) must be reviewed in compliance with [QA006 Review of Taught Programmes](#). Programmes must also be monitored by Programme Boards and External Examiners annually in compliance with [QA005 External Examiners \(Taught\)](#). Taught Programmes may be reviewed at least once every seven years in compliance with [QA006 Review of Taught Programmes](#). Some Taught Programmes may be reviewed by professional, regulatory or statutory bodies (PRSBs) and in compliance with [QA244 Accredited Programmes](#) and are deemed to have met compliance with QA006 above. All new and major changes to Taught Programmes are approved by the Academic Council Standing Committee.

Monitoring Student Feedback

Student feedback is vital to maintaining the quality of our teaching. Students are surveyed across all modules, and this feedback is collated and shared with academic colleagues at a College, School and Discipline level. All modules and programmes are required to conduct student feedback either mid or end of term. The policy [QA221: Feedback on Modules and Programmes](#) requires all academic staff to gather student feedback, create and implement action plans and communicate changes to students typically in the following year. The process is independently monitored by the Head of School or nominee (e.g. Head of Discipline) and annual compliance reports can be requested by the Deputy President and Registrar. The University is a strong supporter of the [studentsurvey.ie](#) and consistently performs well against other Irish Universities in our participation rates. The University produces reports on the studentsurvey.ie indices at a College and programme level, which are presented to Academic Council and filtered down to staff through their College.

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	38
Awarding bodies	0
QA bodies	0

1. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BE (Energy Systems Engineering)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/11/2027

2. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BE (Biomedical Engineering) ME (Biomedical Engineering)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/11/2027

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BE (Civil Engineering) BE (Electrical & Electronic Engineering) BE (Electronic & Computer Engineering) BE (Mechanical) ME in Civil Engineering ME (Mechanical)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2027

4. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	ME in Electrical & Electronic Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/11/2027

5. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland

Programme titles and links to publications	ME in Electronic & Computer Engineering ME in Energy Systems Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/11/2027

6. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	ME in Mechanical Engineering
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2027

7. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Hons in Computer Science & Information Technology
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	31/08/2028

8. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Honours Bachelor of Nursing Science (Mental Health) Honours Bachelor of Midwifery Science Honours Bachelor of Nursing Science (General)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/06/2021
Date of next review	01/06/2026

9. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Diploma in Midwifery
Date of accreditation or last review	25/06/2019
Date of next review	25/06/2024

10. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Nursing (Nurse/Midwife Prescribing)
Date of accreditation or last review	15/03/2021
Date of next review	15/03/2026

11. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI

Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Health Sciences Nursing (Education) Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing (Education)
Date of accreditation or last review	12/10/2021
Date of next review	01/02/2026

12. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing/Midwifery (Advanced Practice with Prescribing)* Master of Health Sciences (Advanced Practice Nursing/Midwifery with Prescribing) (Consortium with UCC, UCD, UL and Trinity College)
Date of accreditation or last review	15/03/2021
Date of next review	15/03/2026

13. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Masters in Health Sciences (Acute Medicine) Masters in Health Sciences (Emergency Care) Master/Postgraduate Diploma of Health Sciences (Intensive Care) Master/Postgraduate Diploma of Health Sciences (Perioperative) Master/Postgraduate Diploma of Health Sciences (Gerontology) Masters in Health Sciences (Children's Palliative & Complex Care) Master/Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences (Wound Healing & Tissue Repair) Masters/Postgraduate Diploma of Health Sciences (Diabetes) Masters/Postgraduate Diploma of Health Sciences (Obesity)
Date of accreditation or last review	02/06/2021
Date of next review	02/06/2026

14. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Master/Postgraduate Diploma of Health Sciences (Oncology & Haematology)
Date of accreditation or last review	29/05/2021
Date of next review	29/03/2026

15. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	NMBI
Programme titles and links to publications	Master/Postgraduate Diploma of Health Sciences (Public Health Nursing)
Date of accreditation or last review	24/03/2021
Date of next review	24/03/2026

16. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Royal Society of Chemistry
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Biopharmaceutical Chemistry (Level 8) BSc Chemistry (Level 8) BSc Medicinal Chemistry (Level 8)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/09/2029

17. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Teaching Council
Programme titles and links to publications	Undergraduate (UG) Bachelor of Arts (Mathematics & Education) Bachelor of Arts Education (Computer Science & Mathematical Studies)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2027

18. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Teaching Council
Programme titles and links to publications	Graduate/Postgraduate (PG) Professional Master of Education Máistir Gairmiúil san Oideachas
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2027

19. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Psychology
Date of accreditation or last review	01/09/2019
Date of next review	01/09/2024

20. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland

Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Applied Behaviour Analysis
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

21. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	HDip Psychology (full and conversion)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2019
Date of next review	01/01/2024

22. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc/PG Dip in Health Psychology
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

23. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Psychological Society of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Doctor of Clinical Psychology/for Applied Clinicians
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

24. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Speech and Language Therapy
Date of accreditation or last review	01/07/2020
Date of next review	01/07/2025

25. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Irish Association of Speech & Language Therapists of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Speech and Language Therapy
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2017
Date of next review	01/01/2025

26. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland (AOTI)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Occupational Therapy
Date of accreditation or last review	01/09/2020

Date of next review	01/09/2027
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27. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Occupational Therapy
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

28. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	International Union of Health Promotion & Education
Programme titles and links to publications	MA in Health Promotion
Date of accreditation or last review	01/04/2020
Date of next review	01/04/2025

29. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	International Union of Health Promotion & Education
Programme titles and links to publications	Post Graduate Diploma in Health Promotion
Date of accreditation or last review	01/04/2020
Date of next review	01/04/2025

30. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	College of Podiatry UK
Programme titles and links to publications	B.Sc. (Hons.) Podiatric Medicine
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	31/08/2024

31. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Strategy, Innovation and People Management
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2025

32. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Human Resource Management
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2025

33. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Association of MBAs (AMBA)
Programme titles and links to publications	Executive MBA
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2027

34. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Medical Council
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Medicine (MB) of Surgery (BCh) and of Obstetrics (BAO)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2023
Date of next review	31/08/2028

35. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Parlaimint na hEorpa / European Parliament - DG LINC & DG SCIC
Programme titles and links to publications	MA (Ateangaireacht Chomhdhála / Conference Interpreting)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2025

36. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Accountants Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Accounting
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2025

37. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Accountants Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	B Commerce, B Comm (Accounting) & B Comm (Global Experience), B Comm (Gaeilge), B Comm (International with French), B Comm (International with German), B Comm (International with Spanish)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2025

38. Type of arrangement	PRSB
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Name of body:	The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	B Commerce, B Comm (Accounting) & B Comm (Global Experience), B Comm (Gaeilge), B Comm (International with French), B Comm (International with German), B Comm (International with Spanish)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2025

39. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)
Programme titles and links to publications	B Commerce, B Comm (Accounting) & B Comm (Global Experience), B Comm (Gaeilge), B Comm (International with French), B Comm (International with German), B Comm (International with Spanish)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2025

40. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Irish Taxation Institute
Programme titles and links to publications	B Commerce, B Comm (Accounting) & B Comm (Global Experience), B Comm (Gaeilge), B Comm (International with French), B Comm (International with German), B Comm (International with Spanish)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2025

41. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Certified Public Accountants (CPA)
Programme titles and links to publications	B Commerce, B Comm (Accounting) & B Comm (Global Experience), B Comm (Gaeilge), B Comm (International with French), B Comm (International with German), B Comm (International with Spanish)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2025

42. Type of arrangement	PRSB
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Name of body:	Certified Public Accountants (CPA)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc International Accounting & Analytics
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2025

43. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc International Accounting & Analytics
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2025

44. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Accountants Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Corporate Finance
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2025

45. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Corporate Finance
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2025

46. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	EPAS
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Business Information Systems)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2027

47. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	AACSB
Programme titles and links to publications	School of Business and Economics
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

48. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association for Health Promotion Ireland (AHPI)
Programme titles and links to publications	Specialist Certificate in Health Promotion (Youth Health)

Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	01/01/2025

49. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association for Health Promotion Ireland (AHPI)
Programme titles and links to publications	PgCert (Health Promotion [Cardiovascular Health and Diabetes Prevention])
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	01/01/2025

50. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association for Health Promotion Ireland (AHPI)
Programme titles and links to publications	PgCert (Health Promotion [Workplace Wellness])
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	01/01/2025

51. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association for Health Promotion Ireland (AHPI)
Programme titles and links to publications	PgCert (Health Promotion [Mental Health Promotion])
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	01/01/2025

52. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The UK Institute & Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Financial Mathematics & Economics
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2020
Date of next review	31/08/2024

53. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Department of Education & Skills
Programme titles and links to publications	PG Diploma Special Educational Needs
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2023
Date of next review	01/01/2025

54. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	DES. Centre for School Leadership
Programme titles and links to publications	Professional Diploma in School Leadership Dioploma Gairmiúil i gCeannaireacht Scoile (Joint degree with UL, UCD & University of Galway)

Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2025

55. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Department of Children & Youth Affairs
Programme titles and links to publications	BA Hons. (Early Childhood Education & Professional Practice)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2028

56. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	MA (Social Work)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2017
Date of next review	01/01/2027

57. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Honorable Society of King's Inns
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Laws (LLB)
Date of accreditation or last review	30/06/2023
Date of next review	01/07/2031

58. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	BA Social Care
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

59. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Institution of Occupational Safety & Health UK
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Environmental Health & Safety)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/03/2022
Date of next review	01/03/2027

60. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Institute of Physics
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Physics

Date of accreditation or last review	27/03/2023
Date of next review	30/06/2025

61. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Institute of Physics
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Science GY301 (*Physics and Climate Physics & *Physics and Applied Physics)
Date of accreditation or last review	27/03/2015
Date of next review	30/06/2025

62. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	British Occupational Hygiene Society
Programme titles and links to publications	HDip Occupational & Environmental Health & Safety
Date of accreditation or last review	01/09/2016
Date of next review	01/09/2024

63. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Irish Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland (Category 2)
Programme titles and links to publications	HDip Occupational & Environmental Health & Safety
Date of accreditation or last review	01/03/2022
Date of next review	01/03/2027

64. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Institution of Occupational Safety & Health UK
Programme titles and links to publications	HDip Occupational & Environmental Health & Safety
Date of accreditation or last review	01/03/2022
Date of next review	01/03/2027

65. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	British Occupational Hygiene Society
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Occupational & Environmental Health & Safety
Date of accreditation or last review	01/09/2016
Date of next review	01/09/2024

66. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Irish Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland (Category 2)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Occupational & Environmental Health & Safety
Date of accreditation or last review	01/03/2022

Date of next review	01/03/2027
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67. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CAMPEP (US)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Medical Physics
Date of accreditation or last review	31/03/2021
Date of next review	01/04/2025

68. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	CORU
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) Podiatric Medicine
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	31/12/2027

69. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Association for Health Promotion Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Specialist Certificate in Health Promotion [Youth Mental Health]
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2025

70. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Society for Human Resource Management
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Human Resource Management
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	31/12/2026

71. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Global Association of Risk Professionals
Programme titles and links to publications	MEconSc International Finance
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2025

72. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	REPS Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc/Dip/Certificate Exercise Physiology and its application in Therapy
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022

Date of next review	31/08/2025
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73. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists of Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	B.Sc. (Hons.) Podiatric Medicine
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	31/08/2024

74. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	Master of Accounting
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2023
Date of next review	01/01/2025

75. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland SCCI
Programme titles and links to publications	MA (Planning & Development)
Date of accreditation or last review	01/01/2022
Date of next review	01/01/2027

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Definitions:

QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012 defines collaborative provision as a process that occurs where two or more providers are involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'joint award' as a single award made jointly by two or more awarding bodies

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines 'linked provider' as a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.

Type of arrangement	Total Number
Joint research degrees	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	8
Collaborative programmes	7
Franchise programmes	1
Linked providers (DABs only)	1

1. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	University of Galway and IT Sligo
Programme titles and links to publications	Level 8 Certificate in Regulatory affairs & Operations
Date of last review	01/01/2018
Date of next review	01/01/2027

2. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	University of Galway and IT Sligo
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc in Medical Technology Regulatory Affairs & Quality
Date of last review	01/01/2015
Date of next review	31/12/2024

3. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	University of Galway and IT Sligo
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Diploma in Medical Technologies Regulatory Affairs & Quality
Date of last review	01/01/2018
Date of next review	01/01/2025

4. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
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Name of body (/bodies):	University of Galway and IT Sligo
Programme titles and links to publications	Level 8 Cert in medical Technologies Regulatory Affairs & Quality
Date of last review	01/01/2018
Date of next review	01/01/2025

5. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	Burgundy School of Business, Dijon, France
Programme titles and links to publications	BComm
Date of last review	01/07/2022
Date of next review	01/07/2027

6. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	Pforzheim University of Applied Sciences
Programme titles and links to publications	BComm
Date of last review	31/12/2018
Date of next review	30/06/2029

7. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	ICN- Artem, Nancy, France
Programme titles and links to publications	BComm
Date of last review	30/11/2019
Date of next review	30/11/2024

8. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	UCD
Programme titles and links to publications	Masters Children's Palliative and Complex Care
Date of last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2026

9. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	RTÉ and University of Galway
Programme titles and links to publications	MA (Cleachtas Gairmiúil sna Meáin)
Date of last review	01/09/2018
Date of next review	01/09/2025

10. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Academy of Play and Child Psychotherapy

Programme titles and links to publications	PG Cert and PG Diploma in Practice-based Play Therapy
Date of last review	01/01/2018
Date of next review	31/12/2024

11. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	National Youth Council of Ireland and University of Galway
Programme titles and links to publications	Specialist Certificate in Health Promotion (Youth Health)
Date of last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2024

12. Collaborative provision	Linked provider
Name of body (/bodies):	Burren College of Art
Programme titles and links to publications	https://www.burrencollege.ie/programme/
Date of last review	01/01/2024
Date of next review	01/01/2031

13. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	UL, DCU
Programme titles and links to publications	Professional Diploma Mathematics Teaching (English) directed from University of Galway (located in UL)
Date of last review	01/10/2019
Date of next review	01/01/2026

14. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	UL, UCD
Programme titles and links to publications	PG Dipl School Leadership PDSL / (Diplóma) Gairmiúil I gCeannaireacht Scoile DGCS
Date of last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	01/01/2025

15. Collaborative provision	Franchise programme
Name of body (/bodies):	Seychelles Tourism Academy
Programme titles and links to publications	BBS in International Hotel Management
Date of last review	01/08/2019
Date of next review	01/08/2030

16. Collaborative provision	Collaborative programme
Name of body (/bodies):	National Youth Council of Ireland & Jigsaw

Programme titles and links to publications	Postgraduate Certificate in Health Promotion (Youth Mental Health)
Date of last review	01/01/2021
Date of next review	30/06/2024

17. Collaborative provision	Joint/double/multiple award
Name of body (/bodies):	Catholeike Universiteit Leuven Belgium
Programme titles and links to publications	B Comm
Date of last review	01/01/2023
Date of next review	31/01/2028

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Definition:

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

Articulation agreements - Total number	0
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**Annual Quality Report
(University of Galway)
PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT
Reporting Period 2023-2024**

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT

Guidelines on Completing Part B

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

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

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

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact² of QA activities within the totality of the institution's QA system.

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

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

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

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

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

Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

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

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

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

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

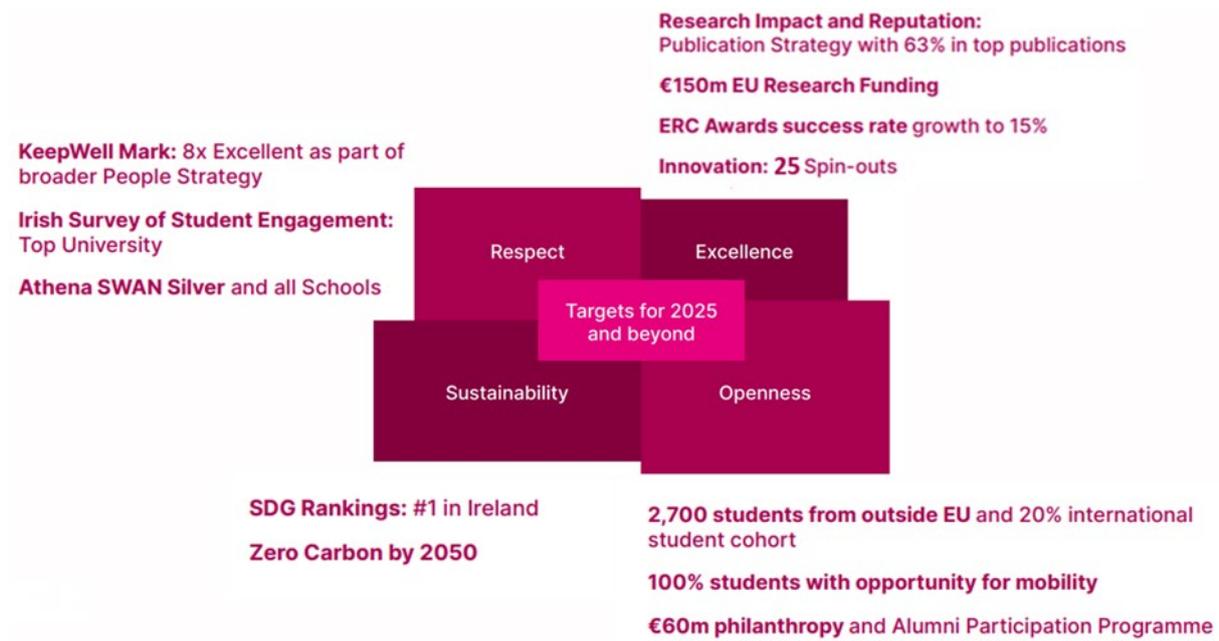
1.1 Strategic QA Updates

Over time, we have been monitoring implementation of the strategic objectives in our current strategy for 2020-2025 called ‘Shared Vision, Shaped by Values’ in two ways:

- Balanced Scorecard: 12 KPIs with targets across the breadth of university activities grouped by each of our four values
- Milestone developments in achieving or advancing our Flagship Actions as reported regularly to our governors

It is important to acknowledge that the University was significantly impacted by two disruptive events shortly after the launch of the current strategy, namely the Covid-19 pandemic and a cyberattack in October 2021. Below is an update on the current status of our balanced scorecard targets and recent developments.

Balanced Scorecard



Employee Wellbeing: KeepWell Mark

Target: 8 Excellent	Current status: 3 Commitment, 5 Achievement, 0 Excellent
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This award, externally validated by IBEC, assesses organisations on eight pillars of workplace wellbeing. Having undergone two audits through this framework, we have been awarded 3 at the level of Commitment, 5 at the level of Achievement and 0 at the level of Excellence to date. We are working to the action plan provided by IBEC as part of this process and will resubmit in 2025. This remains an ambitious target, given that no organisation has achieved 8 Excellence awards to date. In 2024, the University was recognised among the Top 100 Companies in IBEC’s Leading in Wellbeing report.

Student Engagement: StudentSurvey.ie

Target:	Current status: (2023)
Top University for overall education experience	5 th
Top University for Supportive Environment index	4 th

This national, sector-wide, benchmarked and externally validated survey, is a vehicle for student feedback across a range of engagement topics. The University set a target to be the Top University in Ireland (of the 7 traditional universities) in two areas: overall education experience; and the Supportive Environment index. In 2020, the University was fifth in the sector in both measures. Following a fall in both measures during the Covid-19 years, the University put in place a number of initiatives to improve our position in 2023 to fifth and fourth position respectively. The survey co-sponsors (HEA, IUA, THEA & USI) chose to pause the StudentSurvey.ie in 2023, pending review of its effectiveness, with a view to resuming it in 2026. In the interim, the University has designed and implemented its own Student Voice Survey, with a subset of questions consistent with the StudentSurvey.ie. However, the results are not benchmarkable with peers or with our own performance in previous years.

Gender Equality: Athena Swan Awards

Target:	Current status:
Institution-level Silver Award	Institution-level Bronze Award
All Schools with an Award	12/18 Schools with Awards

Athena Swan is a framework and accreditation scheme established and managed by the UK Equality Challenge Unit that recognises and celebrates good practices in higher education and research institutions towards the advancement of gender equality in terms of representation, progression and success. The University set the target of achieving a Silver Award at Institution Level, and an Award (of any colour) for all Schools at School Level. In February 2025, the University has achieved and renewed a Bronze Award at Institution Level and achieved 12 Awards at School Level (including two Silver Awards). The University will submit a Silver Award application and School Award applications for all remaining Schools in Q2 2025.

Sustainability: *Times Higher Education* Impact Ranking

Target: Top University in Ireland	Current status: Top University in Ireland
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The University submits to the *Times Higher Education* Impact ranking each year, which assesses universities against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to provide comparisons across three broad areas: research, outreach and stewardship. In 2020, the University set the target of being ranked first in Ireland, which we achieved in 2021 and have retained each year thereafter.

Carbon neutrality

Target: Zero Carbon by 2050	Current status: 38.8 KtCO²e
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The continuing reduction of our carbon dioxide emissions is an ongoing priority for the University and we have established a Carbon Action Roadmap to guide us in this effort. In 2019, we established our first baseline measure of total carbon dioxide emissions of 35.1 KtCO²e. This includes Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, which

means that it is a full measure of emissions from our own university activities, travel by staff and students to and from campus and on university business, and the carbon dioxide emitted by suppliers on our behalf. It is intended to estimate and report this figure annually. We have made significant progress in reducing our energy use by over 50% since 2017. However, our capital development programme has seen increases in carbon dioxide emissions in some years, notably a rise to 53 KtCO²e in 2021 driven largely by the the construction of 674 new student beds on campus. In 2025, the figure was 38.8 KtCO²e. Continuing reductions in energy use, advancing green travel and the implementation of carbon budgeting across the University will support reduction over time.

Research Impact and Reputation: Publications in top journals

Target: 63% of publications in top 25% of journals	Current status: 54.8%*
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Regardless of discipline, we know that research published in the top quartile of publications correlates with higher impact in terms of citations and reputation. That is why we have set a target to improve the share of our publications in the Top 25% of journals to 63% by 2025, as benchmarked internationally. While we did make some progress from a baseline of 53.6% in 2020, rising to a high of 59.4% the following year, the 2024 measure stands at a disappointing 54.8%. Driving improvement in this measure will remain a priority in the coming years.

*This figure is subject to considerable fluctuation depending on the date of extraction.

European Research Funding Success

Target: €150m (2021-2027)	Current cumulative total: €83.6m
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The current European funding cycle (including the Horizon Europe Framework Programme), which runs for the seven-year period 2021-27, is coming to the end of its fourth year. The value of European projects awarded to University of Galway researchers to date is €83.6m - of which €67m (101 awards) is under Horizon Europe.

ERC Awards success

Target: 15% success rate for ERC Award applications	Current average: 9.8%
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European Research Council awards stand out as being particularly prestigious, due to their competitive nature and value. As such, we are tracking ERC Awards as a macro-level metric for research reputation at an international level. Achieving an ERC Award requires investing considerable effort in evidencing applicant quality and impact to meet the high bar required of consideration, shortlisting and award. For that reason, we have established a target of 15% successful applications from the University by 2025. Supported by the Research Office, this requires considerable effort to build the pipeline for future applicants, setting targets

at College level, and actively recruiting ERC-primed researchers from outside the University into key areas of focus. The success rate is quite volatile year on year, with a high of 12% in 2022 and a low of 4.5% in 2021.

ERC applications, awards and success rate for University of Galway to date during Horizon Europe (2021-27)

Programme	Applications	Awards	Success Rate
ERC Starting	36	4	11.1%
ERC Consolidator	20	3	15%
ERC Advanced	15	0	0%
TOTAL	71	7	9.8%

Innovation: Spin-outs

Target: 25 spin-outs (5 per year)	Current status: 21 spin-outs
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The number of spin-out companies from university research and programmes is reported annually by KTI Knowledge Transfer Ireland, and can be benchmarked nationally. Data shows significant growth in spin-outs generated by the University in recent years, representing the tangible impact and benefit of our research and work to the local economy. Since 2020, we have incubated 21 spin-out companies, which, although short of our 25 target, represents considerable success in this area for the University.

International student recruitment

Target: 2,700 fee-paying students per annum from outside EU 20% of students with domicile outside Ireland	Current status: 1,752 17.2%
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The target of recruiting 2,700 fee-paying students from outside the EU and achieving 20% of our student cohort with domicile outside Ireland by 2025 were set before the Covid-19 pandemic and 2021 cyberattack, which were hugely disruptive to these efforts. Supported by our investment in the Global Galway initiative, we have grown our fee-paying non-EU students from 1,434 (2019-20) to 1,752 (2023-24). Over that time, our overall international student cohort has remained static at approximately 17.2%. These efforts continue to be a priority as we build a business case for the Global Galway 2 programme to support the new strategic plan.

Internationalisation: Student mobility

Target: 100% students with an opportunity for international mobility experience	Current status: 93%
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This target was set in 2020 in the context of physical international mobility, e.g. year/semester abroad. As part of the Global Galway initiative, and responding to opportunities afforded by virtual mobility accelerated by Covid-19, we are redefining mobility as any cross-border or inter-institutional academic, cultural and experiential exchange and collaboration, be it physical or virtual, in consultation at a sectoral level. This

requires a change in how we measure and capture data, which we haven't yet perfected. However, over the lifetime of the strategic plan, we have grown the measure to 93%. We continue to innovate our student mobility opportunities, notably through our ENLIGHT EU university alliance.

Some milestones in strategy implementation AY2023/24

Respect

- Sept 2023: University of Galway awarded special €1.3m fund for consent research and education
- Nov 2023: New accessibility features added to University web pages to assist visitors with visual or language challenges
- Nov 2023: University of Galway launches Race Equality Framework and Action Plan
- Dec 2023: University of Galway wins Technological or Digital Innovation of the Year at THE Awards 2023 for the AI-enabled Student Cara bot
- May 2024: University Respect Charter approved by University Management Team

Openness

- Sept 2023: UMT approves Irish Language Recruitment Policy
- Oct 2023: University of Galway and Medtronic announce €5 million signature innovation partnership to advance healthcare technology
- Oct 2023: University signs a partnership agreement with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to enhance opportunities for research and learning in the Burren
- Nov 2023: Ideaslab formally launched on campus
- Nov 2023: The AV & Classroom Technologies Team in CELT completed a major project to upgrade and install new equipment in over 80 teaching venues with €750,000 funding from the HEA Devolved Capital Grant
- Dec 2023: Minister Harris formally opens Dunlin Village, which provides an additional 674 student beds on campus
- Feb 2024: University secures €814,000 to improve access and learning for people with intellectual disability
- Feb 2024: University of Galway and Galway International Arts Festival partnership agreement
- Feb 2024: University of Galway and Deloitte Ireland announce new strategic partnership
- March 2024: Imirce archive project makes thousands of emigrant letters available online via interactive digital archive
- April 2024: An Teanglann – our landmark interpreting suite and training facility – officially opens
- May 2024: MOU signed with Údarás na Gaeltachta to collaborate on a wide range of community development, language and sustainability initiatives
- May 2024: Minister Higgins announces €7m funding for BioInnovate Ireland at University of Galway
- June 2024: New International Office building opens on Newcastle Road

Sustainability

- Sept 2023: University hosts first SDG Week with a programme of 25 events for and by students, staff and partners
- Sept 2023: University launches new SDG Trail on campus to raise awareness of the SDGs and the actions our university community is taking to progress them
- Nov 2023: University of Galway wins the Energy in Buildings at the SEAI Awards 2023 for the Áras de Brún Pathfinder project

- Nov 2023: University of Galway is officially granted UNFCCC Observer status and sends delegation to COP28 in Dubai
- Feb/April 2024: Two lecturers in Sustainability & Education for Sustainable Development appointed to CELT to help embed sustainability across our curricula
- April 2024: The University secured the top prize for Excellence in Sustainability at the Education Awards
- June 2024: UN Food & Agriculture Organisation partners with University of Galway on climate-smart food systems

Excellence

- Sept 2023: University migrates to Canvas as the single institutional Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
- Sept 2023: Two ERC Starting Grants awarded to Dr Eoin McEvoy, an Assistant Professor in Biomedical Engineering and Dr James Gahan, who takes up an Associate Professorship in chromosome biology in 2024
- Sept 2023: University launches the new Centre for Creative Technologies, with a showcase of tech-enable creativity in sound and film
- Oct 2023: National Breast Cancer Research Institute and University of Galway announce new €2m research partnership
- Oct 2023: Minister Naughton launches new Masters in Evidence-Based Future Healthcare at University of Galway
- Nov 2023: European Research Council awards Professor Ines Thiele €2m grant for pioneering AVATAR project developing computational model for healthcare
- February 2024: Works commence on the site of the new Library and Learning Commons
- April 2024: 3 subjects rank among the Top 100 in the World according to QS: English language and literature; Performing Arts; and Nursing

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.										
1	<p style="text-align: center;">IRRP</p>	<p>IRRP2024 is a peer-review process where reviewers of high international regard will rate the quality of research of a School. The purpose of the rating will be to compare the school’s research quality with international best practice, in accordance with the principles of the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment. Reviewers will also be asked for comment on the performance of the School, given various staffing and resource profiles, constraints and other environment data taking into particular consideration the impact of Covid-19. Prior to assessment, all Schools will produce (1) research outputs (2) a School research environment report, (3) impact case studies. Quality ratings will be allocated by reviewers based on these three aspects of research performance. QA004 IRRP2024 outlines the policy and procedure proposed by the IRRP Steering Group and approved by Academic Council.</p> <p>The following panel chairs have been appointed to oversee the three-year process:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="857 1279 1505 1767"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white;">IRRP2024 Overall Chairs</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="background-color: #fce4ec;">College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies</td> <td style="background-color: #fce4ec;">Prof Tobias Kelly, Edinburgh</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #fce4ec;">College of Business, Public Policy and Law</td> <td style="background-color: #fce4ec;">Prof Joanne Conaghan, Bristol</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #fce4ec;">College of Science and Engineering</td> <td style="background-color: #fce4ec;">Prof David Price, UCL</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #fce4ec;">College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences</td> <td style="background-color: #fce4ec;">Prof Jo Rycroft-Malone, Lancaster</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Year 1: Submissions were completed by Year 1 schools on the 21st June 2024. A total of 652 research outputs have been received from the schools and 22 case studies.</p>	IRRP2024 Overall Chairs		College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	Prof Tobias Kelly, Edinburgh	College of Business, Public Policy and Law	Prof Joanne Conaghan, Bristol	College of Science and Engineering	Prof David Price, UCL	College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	Prof Jo Rycroft-Malone, Lancaster
IRRP2024 Overall Chairs												
College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	Prof Tobias Kelly, Edinburgh											
College of Business, Public Policy and Law	Prof Joanne Conaghan, Bristol											
College of Science and Engineering	Prof David Price, UCL											
College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	Prof Jo Rycroft-Malone, Lancaster											

		<p>Each research output will be assessed by two readers and each impact case study and research environment report will be assessed by the panel chair and overall chair. Assessments will be carried by over 70 readers between October and February/March with a view to finalising review reports before the end of the 2024/25 academic year.</p> <p>Year 2 schools are at the early stages of the process with a submission date of June 20th 2025.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Strategy</p>	<p>The strategy development process began in November 2023 with the establishment of an internal Strategy Development Group to design and oversee the consultation process. During the months of May and June 2024, the University held four weeks of consultation sessions with open forums focused on 17 cross-cutting areas of activity within the university, including research, teaching and learning, sustainability, student success, EDI, access, internationalisation, governance, finance, etc. Key messages from these forums were summarised by function leads to inform subsequent stages in the strategy development.</p> <p>At this time, we conducted a Reputation Audit with hundreds of inputs from internal and external stakeholders, and engaged directly with peers, funders, industry and alumni on the priorities for the next strategic plan.</p> <p>In October 2024, Údarás na hOllscoile endorsed the three strategic priorities agreed by the University Management Team, under the headings: Distinctive Research Impact; Education for the Future; and Effective Organisation that Empowers our People. This was socialised with the University community through an All-Staff Meeting in October and a student forum in November. In November and December, the Colleges embarked on a process to define our research pillars – four areas of distinctive research impact – and these</p>

		<p>were subsequently endorsed by Academic Council. At this time, a set of eight Priority Initiatives to support implementation of the strategic plan were agreed by the University Management Team and endorsed by the Standing, Strategic Planning and Governance Committee of Údarás na hOllscoile. We also held a Galway 100 forum with students to get their feedback on the draft strategic priorities.</p> <p>In January, we began to conclude the strategy development process with a close-out workshop with the University Management Team, followed by a meeting of the Standing, Strategic Planning and Governance Committee. We will submit a final full draft to Údarás na hOllscoile in February before sending for ministerial approval in late February 2025, with a view to a launch in April 2025.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Digital transformation</p>	<p>Work has continued on the Student Digital Pathways (SDP) programme with several of the systems now live including Digitary for self-service digital transcripts, InPlace for student placement and deployment of the University Skills Passport (USP). This latter programme enables the capture of student extra-curricular activities and production of a digital passport or CV in parallel with their academic credentials.</p> <p>The following outlines key achievements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Programme Enterprise Architecture (high-level solution design document) milestone has been signed off and achieved – Q3 2024 • Design workshops and development of the Banner system has advanced on a number of capabilities; Curriculum Management, Enrolment and Registration, Student Administration (finance and non-finance), Scholarship and Bursary, Integrations, Data Migration, student support and wellbeing, workflows, reports and Ellucian Experience

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitary/Parchment went live 12 August 2024. To date, a total of 6,500 transcripts have been uploaded and made available to students and graduates, 3,000 of the uploaded documents have been accessed. • InPlace student placement and outbound mobility system - Go live Q1 2024 for study abroad and Q2 for Nursing and Health Sciences • Scientia Exam Scheduler – Parallel run for exams scheduler to be completed for semester 1 exams for Academic Year (AY) 2024/25 with a view to full go live for semester 2 exams AY 2024/25. • Significant progress on the implementation of a Rooms Booking facility in collaboration with Buildings utilising the Scientia software platform (due for completion Dec 2024). • Designing Futures – bespoke system developed to deliver a University Skills Passport (USP) to students and graduates for extra and co-curricular activities. Soft launch September 2024, planned go live Q1 2025
<p>4</p>	<p>Reputation audit</p>	<p>Project process:</p> <p>The project process consists of four stages with seven components, designed to uncover general perceptions of the University’s academic, research, and impact reputation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Desk-Based Data Analysis: An analysis of data from the THE’s World Rankings, Reputation Rankings, and Subject Rankings. 2. Brand Snapshot and Competitor Analysis: A presentation detailing how peer institutions perform in various branding elements, including a Digital Brand Diagnostic comparing the University’s content and traffic analytics against its competitors. 3. Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies: This includes the ‘Triple Test Survey’ and in-depth stakeholder interviews. <p>Future actions arising</p> <p>The findings of the Reputation Audit are already being used to inform the strategic direction of the University,</p>

		<p>including the development of the next Strategic Plan in the context of articulating the University's identity and its strategic priorities for the next five years (Distinctive Research Impact, Education for the Future and an Effective Organisation that Empowers Our People). The outcomes of the Reputation Audit will be embedded in the following strategic keystone initiatives that the University is committed to delivering over the next five years - the establishment of an Organisational Transformation Office, Technology Enablement Programme, Communicating Distinctiveness Project (including Website development) and a Research Process Improvement Project.</p>
5		

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Údaras na hOllscoile	25 th October 2023 18 th December 2023 21 st February 2024 27 th March 2024 01 st May 2024 26 th June 2024 04 th July 2024 04 th September 2024
Academic Council	12 th October 2023 7 th December 2023 7 th February 2024 8 th April 2024 27 th June 2024
Quality Enhancement Committee	8 th November 2023 4 th March 2024 29 th May 2024
University Curriculum and Programme Board	22 nd November 2023 17 th January 2024 13 th March 2024 22 nd May 2024

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

Appointments

Interim President: Following President Ó hÓgartaigh's announcement of his intention to step down from office in September 2024, Údarás na hOllscoile appointed Deputy President & Registrar, Professor Peter McHugh, as Interim President from September 7th for a period of 1 year, pending the appointment of the next President by way of a public competition in line with the requirements of the Universities Act.

Having joined the University in 1991, Peter brings a depth of knowledge and a wealth of experience to the position of Interim President. An Established Professor of Biomedical Engineering, he has previously served as Dean of the College of Engineering and Informatics, Head of the School of Engineering and Informatics, and Head of the School of Engineering, and most recently as Deputy President and Registrar.

Professor McHugh is an internationally recognised research leader in biomedical engineering and a pioneer in the development of biomedical engineering in Ireland and internationally. He is a member of the Royal Irish Academy where he served as Secretary for Policy and International Relations and is the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships. Peter provides great stability and continuity to the University at this time of transition and he and the University Management Team will have the full support of the Governing Authority as they lead the University into the next academic year.

Interim Deputy President and Registrar: Professor Becky Whay was appointed Interim Deputy President and Registrar following Prof Peter McHugh's appointment as Interim President. Professor Whay has a very distinguished academic record as a researcher and educator. She brings a wealth of experience to this role along with a deep commitment to University of Galway's mission and values, having served as VP International since 2019. During this time, Becky has demonstrated exceptional leadership in developing Global Galway and continuing our International Strategy, while also securing the second phase of our European University Network - ENLIGHT. She has been instrumental in the Rebrand Steering Group, our response to the war in Ukraine, the review of our Israel-Palestine links, and the university-wide accommodation task force.

Director of Sustainability: Dr Richard Manton was appointed to the role of inaugural Director of Sustainability, charged with establishing a Sustainability Office and leading the implementation of our ambitious sustainability strategy. Dr. Manton was previously the Registrar at Engineers Ireland and a Non-Executive Director at Bus Éireann. Between 2006 and 2017, he studied and worked at the University of Galway, spending time in the School of Engineering, School of Political Science & Sociology and the School of Geography, Archaeology & Irish Studies. He is a Chartered Engineer with a degree in civil engineering, a Master's in financial management, a PhD in sustainable transportation and a professional diploma in digital transformation management. He serves as a member of the Royal Irish Academy Engineering & Computer Sciences Committee, CIÉ Sustainability Advisory Committee and the Engineers Ireland West Region.

University of Galway Librarian: Monica Crump was appointed University Librarian at a pivotal time when the landmark Library and Learning Commons development is underway, a space at the heart of the campus which will offer a new, high-tech space for students, for research and for staff, with a focus on enabling learning that is more collaborative, more technology-enhanced and more creative, as well as providing access to books, information and support for our students’ learning journey. Ms. Crump has worked in the University of Galway’s Library since 2002 in a variety of roles including Head of Collections, Head of Information Access and Learning Services and most recently Deputy University Librarian, Monica has a wealth of experience in this field. She is also an elected member of Údarás na hOllscoile since 2021, has been a member of the Finance Resource Committee, and is currently a member of the Standing and Strategic Planning Committee.



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Research Institutes

Data Science Institute	Institute for Clinical Trials
 <p>Computer Science, Web Science & Artificial Intelligence Institute Director: Professor Edward Curry</p>	 <p>Clinical Research Institute Director: Professor Fidelma Dunne</p>
Ryan Institute	Institute for Lifecourse & Society
 <p>Sustainability, Marine, Environment & Energy Institute Director: Professor Frances Fahy</p>	 <p>Youth & Family, Health Economics, Ageing, Disability Law, Policy Development, Community Engagement Institute Director: Professor Caroline McGregor</p>
Institute for Health Discovery & Innovation	Institute for Creativity
 <p>Biomedical Engineering, Health Innovation & Translational Medicine Interim Institute Director: Professor Ted Vaughan</p>	 <p>Creative Arts, Technologies & Industries; Creativity in Policy & Education Institute Director: Professor Florian Schneider</p>

Following a review of the governance and funding model of research institutes in the University in 2022, as well as the ongoing review of research strategy within the Colleges, two research institutes – the Whitaker Institute (College of Business, Public Policy and Law) and the Moore Institute (College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Celtic Studies) – were wound down, and three new Research Institutes were established – the Institute for Clinical Trials (College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences), the Institute for Health Discovery and Innovation (College of Science and Engineering), and the Institute for Creativity (College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Celtic Studies).

The current research institutes, their areas of research focus, and their Directors are listed below.

Director of [the Ryan Institute](#): Professor Frances Fahy was appointed Director of the Ryan Institute. She is Personal Professor in Geography at University of Galway, where she leads several international research teams on sustainable consumption and energy citizenship research. Frances is a leading environmental geographer and she has published more than 100 publications including four books (*Methods of Sustainability Research in the Social Sciences* published by Sage, 2013, *Challenging Consumption* Routledge, 2014, *Energy Demand Challenges in Europe* Palgrave 2019 and *Energy Citizenship across Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan forthcoming in 2024). Professor Fahy has coordinated > 20 funded research projects and obtained competitive large research funding (totalling over €36 million) including funding from Horizon Europe, H2020, JPI-Climate, Interreg, Marine Institute, NESC and the EPA.

Frances has supervised 10 PhD students to completion, 11 Postdoctoral Research Fellows, and numerous Masters students. Many of her graduates now hold key roles in policy and academia. In 2017 Frances established and was the Programme Director for the BSc in Social Sciences at University of Galway and she has taught numerous modules at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels including *Environmental Planning*, *Communicating Science and Research*, *Marine Spatial Planning* and *Introduction to Sustainability*.

Director, Institute for Creativity: Professor Florian Schneider is Professor for art theory and documentary practices at Trondheim Academy of Fine Art at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and takes up the role of Director of the newly created Institute for Creativity.

Professor Florian Schneider has been teaching and conducting research at NTNU for over 11 years. Florian has 20+ years of experience in higher education teaching and academic leadership, and has been involved in multiple projects to rethink the impact and value of documentary practices across creative sectors and artistic disciplines.

Florian is President of the Society for Artistic Research (SAR), an international network that promotes and disseminates artistic research practices and results across disciplines and contexts. Since March 2024, he has been the lead project coordinator of PACESETTERS, a Horizon Europe-funded research initiative that explores how the arts and culture can not only adapt to the climate crisis, but also drive the transition towards sustainable and regenerative economies. Florian is passionate about fostering a (self-) critical understanding of innovation in the cultural and creative sectors, and empowering artists and cultural actors to contribute to just transitions.

The Institute for Creativity at University of Galway is a space – physical, virtual, imaginative, and intellectual – that orchestrates experimentation and cross-fertilisation, within and beyond academic disciplines, and within and beyond the university. The Institute for Creativity supports and enhances the excellent research that is already underway in the university, while also enabling the development of new projects that cut across disciplines, and which build upon our partnerships with local, national, and international groups, agencies, and organisations. It draws on our university's history while redefining our understanding of what the university of the future can and should do.

Director, Institute for Lifecourse and Society (ILAS): Professor Caroline McGregor, Senior Research Fellow at UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre and Director of Social Work at University of Galway has been appointed as Director of the Institute for Lifecourse and Society (ILAS).

Professor Caroline McGregor has been Personal Professor at the University of Galway since 2012. Prior to this, known then as Dr. Caroline Skehill, she worked at Queen's University as a Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Social Work (1999-2012). Caroline achieved her professional social work qualification in 1992 at Trinity College Dublin (BSS, Hons) and completed her PhD in Trinity in 1999. Caroline teaches within the Discipline of Applied Social Science and has extensive experience of developing and leading professional social work education programmes.

Awarded BASW Kay McDougall British Journal of Social Work Prize in 2019, Caroline has produced over 100 publications in the fields of critical social work theory, child welfare, child protection, family support and history of the present methodologies over the past 27 years. This includes two single authored, three co-authored and two co-edited books, 14 research/policy reports and over 50 peer-reviewed papers.

Caroline has led a number of commissioned and externally funded projects with colleagues at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre focusing on themes of state care past and present; child protection and family support; and youth civic and political engagement. Caroline has also worked as a SFI investigator within CÚRAM Irish Medical Device Research Centre on projects including impact orientation of principal investigators and science advocacy. Caroline has extensive experience of academic-professional partnerships and has a particular interest in leading and advancing practice based and community engaged research in her role as Institute Director.

The Institute for Lifecourse and Society (ILAS) is a specially designated multidisciplinary research institute in applied social sciences. The mission of the Institute is to contribute scientific and practical awareness of human capacity and potential across the life course, thereby impacting positively on knowledge, attitudes, policy and practice, internationally.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
School of Biological and Chemical Sciences	June 2024	Report not yet available. Review will be complete in April 2025.
School of Business and Economics	June 2024	Report not yet available. Review will be complete in April 2025.
School of English and the Creative Arts	June 2024	Report not yet available. Review will be complete in April 2025.
School of Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies	June 2024	Report not yet available. Review will be complete in April 2025.
School of Health Sciences	June 2024	Report not yet available. Review will be complete in April 2025.
School of History and Philosophy	June 2024	Report not yet available. Review will be complete in April 2025.
Registry	Feb 2024	Registry Review Report
Burren College of Art	Feb 2024	BCA Review Report

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels³ involved in IQA

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

Guide

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

Please use whole numbers rather than percentages.

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes	8	6	1	1			
<i>of those:</i>							
On-site processes	2		1	1			
Desk reviews		6					
Virtual processes							
Average panel size for each process type*		16**	4	4			

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

** University of Galway: Panel size for IRRP includes expert readers for specific subject areas/disciplines leading to large numbers of reviewers for each school.

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

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

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Governance and Management of Quality

Policies and Procedures Repository: The current processes in relation to Policies and Procedures have been in place for approximately twelve years. In that time the University has gone through unprecedented growth and change. The governance and management structures have radically changed with the introduction of devolved management of colleges and the introduction of a new budgeting model. A fit for purpose policy management framework has become increasingly important in this new devolved world to ensure that there is a shape and a consistency to how the University operates.

During 2022/23, the Quality Office began work on drafting a new, fit for purposes policy management framework. Consultation has taken place with key stakeholders including members of UMT and work will resume on this project on completion of IRRP.

The Policies and Procedures below are a sample that were either initiated or further revised during 2023/2024:

- QA030 Business Continuity Policy
- QA049 Positive Action
- QA091 Recheck of Examination Results.
- QA193 Safe Driving for Work and University Sanctioned Operations
- QA214 Paid Family Leave for Doctoral Students
- QA235 Appeal of Examination Results.
- QA314 Provision of non-audit services by the external auditor
- QA316 Gift Vouchers
- QA397 Server Hosting

Schools Quality Assurance Checklist (SQAC): With a view to strengthening the University’s QA System the Quality Enhancement Committee approved the Annual School Quality Assurance Checklist for completion by Heads of School at the end of each Academic Year. The SQAC includes 20 questions relating to key quality assurance processes including Quality Reviews of Teaching and Learning and Research Reviews, Curriculum Design, Programme Boards, External Examiners and Student Feedback. Schools were also asked to include the following reports:

- Taught Programmes List including
 - o Programme Review information for all taught programmes relevant to QA006
 - o Accredited programmes, accreditation period, accrediting body
 - o Collaborative programmes as defined in QA246
- QA221 Feedback on Modules and Programmes:
 - o Summary document outlining the School’s feedback processes and procedures
 - o Annual report/summary document including the following information:
 - § Module Code
 - § Feedback Method
 - § Timing
 - § Participation Rate

- § Issues Identified
- § Actions Resulting
- § Feedback to Students

Checklists were circulated at the end of AY2023/24 and will be report to QEC in March 2025.

External Examiners: External Examiner reports have been received for over 219 programmes/modules during 2023/24 in accordance with [QA005 Role of External Examiners: Taught Programmes](#). The main areas highlighted by External Examiners in their recommendations are summarized under the following headings:

- Feedback
- Marking practices/Spread of marks
- Assessment load on students
- Resourcing
- High teaching workload for a research-led institution
- Academic Integrity
- Artificial Intelligence

Programmes of Education and Training

The University Curriculum and Programme Board met on four occasions in **2023/24** and recommended the following major changes to programmes for approval by Academic Council Standing (ACS):

New Programmes Approved	College	ACS approval date
LLM Transitional Justice, Human Rights and Conflict	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	05/06/2024
LLM Gender and HR	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	05/06/2024
LLM Law and Digital Innovation	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	05/06/2024
LLM in Criminology, Criminal Justice & Human Rights	Business, Public Policy and Law	01/12/2023
MSc FinTech Economics & Financial Technology	Business, Public Policy and Law	01/12/2023
MSc Entrepreneurship and Venture Management	Business, Public Policy and Law	05/06/2024
MSc Podiatric Medicine (Pre-registration)	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	26/03/2024

Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) Degree	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	05/06/2024
PG Certificate in Modern Methods of Construction	Science and Engineering	26/03/2024
MSc Construct Innovate (FT/PT)	Science and Engineering	26/03/2024
MSc Intelligent Robotics	Science and Engineering	26/03/2024
MSc Medical Electronics and Digital Health	Science and Engineering	26/03/2024
MSc Wind Energy Engineering	Science and Engineering	26/03/2024

Major Programme Changes	College	ACS approval date
MA Futures Planning and Innovation	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	28/09/2023
BA (Gaeilge agus Léann an Aistriúcháin)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	01/12/2023
MSc (Consumer Psychology)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	01/12/2023
BA (Global Experience)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	26/03/2024
BA (International) / BA (Idirnáisiúnta le Gaeilge)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	26/03/2024
International Development	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	26/03/2024
Higher Diploma in Psychology	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	05/06/2024
MA (Language with Business)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	05/06/2024
MA (Medieval and Antiquities)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	05/06/2024
MA (Nua Ghaeilge)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	05/06/2024

MA (Philosophy)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	05/06/2024
MA (Translational Studies)	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	05/06/2024
Registered Behaviour Technician Preparation Course	Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	05/06/2024
Bachelor of Civil Law and Taxation	Business, Public Policy and Law	28/09/2023
Bachelor of Business Studies (International Hotel Management)	Business, Public Policy and Law	01/12/2023
Bachelor of Law and Taxation	Business, Public Policy and Law	01/12/2023
MSc (Ageing and Public Policy)	Business, Public Policy and Law	01/12/2023
Bachelor of Civil Law	Business, Public Policy and Law	26/03/2024
Bachelor of Commerce	Business, Public Policy and Law	26/03/2024
Higher Diploma in Business Information Systems	Business, Public Policy and Law	26/03/2024
MSc Cybersecurity Risk Management (PT)	Business, Public Policy and Law	26/03/2024
MSc in Digital Marketing	Business, Public Policy and Law	26/03/2024
MSc in Marketing Management	Business, Public Policy and Law	26/03/2024
MSc Marketing Practice	Business, Public Policy and Law	26/03/2024
Postgraduate Diploma in Digital Transformation	Business, Public Policy and Law	26/03/2024
BComm International with Spanish	Business, Public Policy and Law	05/06/2024
Master of Science (Cellular Manufacturing and Therapy) (Part-Time)	Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	01/12/2023
BSc Environmental Health and Safety (GY313)	Science and Engineering	01/12/2023
BSc Physics (GY320)	Science and Engineering	01/12/2023
BE (Biomedical Engineering)	Science and Engineering	26/03/2024
BSc Biomedical Science, BSc (Undenominated) Physiology pathway	Science and Engineering	26/03/2024
BSc Financial Mathematics & Economics	Science and Engineering	26/03/2024
BSc Genetics & Genomics	Science and Engineering	26/03/2024
Engineering L8 Programmes	Science and Engineering	26/03/2024
H Dip Applied Mathematics	Science and Engineering	26/03/2024

H Dip Mathematics	Science and Engineering	26/03/2024
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Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

Human Resources: In 2023 the Human Resources Office engaged PWC to undertake a review of the HR Office and function. The review made 12 key recommendations

	Key Recommendations
1	Introduce Regular HR Team collaboration & engagement Initiatives
2	Develop a consistent internal HR communication approach
3	Prioritise recruitment backlog
4	Delegation of decision-making authority
5	Refresh of HR policy library
6	Introduce bitesize learning and development initiatives
7	Recruitment process
8	Culture and overall staff experience
9	Define the HR function operating model
10	Finalise and circulate the People Strategy
11	Access and define HR organisation structure
12	Full automation of manual processes

Recruitment: Work is ongoing with the Recruitment team to address these recommendations through working groups involving the whole HR Team. The recruitment team has been reconfigured with Academic, Professional Services and Research now having clear teams dealing with the recruitment requirements for their area. Recruitment backlogs are being addressed and each team has a manager.

A communication and culture working group developed a communications charter including a HR calendar which allows HR staff to see various deadlines for the team etc. This group also ensure organise social events and drive the development of a HR motto “Together we achieve excellence”.

The Learning and development group have introduced bitesize learning events as well as a complete review of the website. In addition, a procurement to widen the learning and development offering to staff to support development and the roll out of the Performance Management Development policy and procedures is underway.

A **review of the 52 policies under the HR office** is ongoing with all policies reviewed and work is ongoing to address any changes and engage with stakeholders through a UMT HR Policy working group.

To address the delegation of decision making in addition to the HR Structure and operating model, the Quality review which was undertaken in 2019 also recommended a review of the HR Structure benchmarking with the Irish University sector and also looking at emerging trends. The new HR Structure will support a one team approach for the HR Office. It will continue the ongoing work on the culture within the HR Office and strive to improve collegiality, and ensure the HR Office is a strategic partner to support the University now and into the future. In addition, the proposed HR Structure will be agile to support the growing and changing needs of the University. The new structure will see three Assistant Directors of Human Resources, which will be an additional two Assistant Directors reporting to the Director of Human Resources. These three senior level positions will lead the three pillars of the HR function but will also work as a cohesive leadership team along with the Director of Human Resources driving the HR and People agenda for the University. The three pillars will be **HR Operations, Employee Engagement, and Development and Strategy**. The operating model will be based on the HR Business Partner model (already in place in parts of the University) which will see the three pillars supporting the HR Office and the Colleges and Professional Service units with both operational and strategic HR advice and support.



What will change in the new structure?

The change will see the addition of

- two Assistant Directors of HR
- an additional HR Business Partner
- A senior manager (AO Level) for policy development as well as key projects
- An additional Grade 4 for HRIS that will support the transformation agenda
- A Head of Change and organisation development (temporary project post)
- Conversion of six temporary and agency Administrative Assistant grade 3 positions, as well as two additional Administrative Assistants Grade 3 positions to support the increase in the ongoing monitoring of research contract renewals, and an additional resource to support the Employee Relations office
- The permanent funding of the Head of Staff Coaching

The three pillars will have very clear areas of responsibility; however, they will work cohesively and as a team to drive the HR Function, but also to support the University business in a more streamlined manner. The Assistant Directors will be accountable and responsible for each of their areas but also accountable to the success of the HR function, which will require collaboration and teamwork amongst their teams. They will ensure the smooth delivery of the responsibilities in their areas.

Each area will have very clear KPI's that will include some of the following:

- Employee Turnover Rate: Measures the percentage of employees who leave the organization over a specific period. High turnover rates can indicate issues with employee satisfaction, engagement, or retention strategies.
- Staff Development: return on investment, spend per staff member.
- Wellbeing engagement and intervention.
- Time to fill: Measures the average time taken to fill a vacant position from the time the vacancy is approved to the time an offer is accepted by a candidate. A longer time-to-fill can signify inefficiencies in recruitment processes.
- Cost per hire: Calculates the average cost incurred to hire a new employee. This includes expenses related to recruitment advertising, agency fees, and staff time spent on hiring activities.
- Absenteeism Rate: Measures the percentage of scheduled work hours that employees miss due to unscheduled absences. High absenteeism rates can impact productivity and morale.
- Employee Satisfaction/Engagement: Assesses employees' overall satisfaction and level of engagement with their work and the organization. This can be measured through surveys, feedback sessions, or other methods.
- Grievance Resolution time: Measures the average time taken to resolve employee grievances or complaints. A shorter resolution time can indicate effective conflict resolution processes.
- Gender Diversity metrics for each recruitment campaign

The Technology and Automation sub-group is looking at key items both short and long term. Included here is the automations of HR forms and work is well underway on moving recruitment forms online to improve the process and bring more transparency for the hiring manager.

In addition, the introduction of a learning management system that will integrate with Core HR is also being progressed. This is key to supporting staff development and reporting on staff uptake on training and

development. One of the larger projects is the clean-up of the Core Hierarchy on the Core HR system. This will allow for greater reporting and ensure that we have clear structures and line managers for staff identified, as well as a process in place to keep it updated into the future.

HR Excellence in Research Award: In 2024 University of Galway successfully renewed the HR Excellence in Research Award for the next three years. This prestigious award, granted by the European Commission, holds significant value at the University and is firmly embedded within.

The European Charter and Code for Researchers aims to foster a productive relationship between researchers and their employers, enhancing the generation, transfer and shared use of knowledge, as well as promoting the professional development of researchers from the early stages of their careers. In 2017, the Code of Conduct for Researchers was further strengthened with the introduction of the Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R) Policy, which all applicants for the award must demonstrate implementation of. At University of Galway, we follow the OTM-R principles in our recruitment process and have developed a set of competencies to ensure a systematic, objective approach to candidate selection. Our OTM-R Policy was updated in October 2023 and can be accessed [here](#).

The University first received the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2013 and has consistently renewed and maintained it since. With the recent renewal in 2024, our current action plan will guide us through to 2027. Our 2024-2027 Strategy and Action Plan is designed to support the entire research community, from postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers to research fellows and senior research fellows. Click [here](#) to read more.

A working group was established to develop and implement the Strategy and Action Plan. This group consists of experts and representatives from various units across the university including the Office of the Vice President of Research & Innovation, the Researcher Development Centre, the Office of the Vice President of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Human Resources, Graduate Studies, President's Office (Strategy & Risk), Planning & Institutional Research, Quality Office, Research Accounts Office, Financial Accounts Office, Library, Marketing & Communications Office, International Office, Researchers, International Staff Network, College representatives. Collaboration across these diverse teams and units is key to the success of this. The Steering Group, our Research Committee, meets on a regular basis throughout the year.

As part of the HR Excellence in Research Award Strategy and Action Plan we have already made great progress in terms of our committed actions:

- HR now hosts monthly information sessions for Principal Investigators (PI's) who manage researchers. These sessions provide PI's with guidance on their responsibilities in supporting the researcher lifecycle and inform them of the support available from HR.
- A review of mandatory training for researchers has been conducted to increase awareness and ensure compliance.
- HR Induction processes have been reviewed and additional relevant information pages on our website have been created and communicated to all staff.
- Recruitment processes have been streamlined for efficiency and continuous improvement. Research recruitment process online has been transitioned to online, complimented by several information sessions for our research community.
- Training offerings for interview panel training for all staff have been expended.
- Options for accredited teaching courses for researchers have been reviewed, leading to an increase in placements for the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education. All available teaching courses were communicated to the research community.

The establishment of the Researcher Staff Network in 2024 was enthusiastically received and will further enhance our communication and collaboration with our research community on a regular basis.

Academic Promotion Scheme: Rounds 8 and 9 of the Academic Promotion Scheme have now been completed with a total of 41 applicants (18 female, 23 male). Female candidates have had a 39% success rate across all categories with male applicants having a 65% success rate across all categories.

Applicants and Success Rates - Rounds 8 and 9 (Academic Year 2023 - 24):

	Female Candidates			Male Candidates			Total Candidates		
	Applied	Success	Success %	Applied	Success	Success%	Applied	Success	Success%
Promotion Track									
Professor in Totals	9	4	44%	7	3	43%	16	7	44%
SL/AP Totals	9	3	33%	16	12	75%	25	15	60%
Grand Total	18	7	39%	23	15	65%	41	22	54%

Learning and Development

Centralised Induction: A centralised induction training event is held for new staff members to the University. The programme provides new staff with the opportunity to hear about the University's structure, governance, and strategy. It aims to be an informative and engaging event for new staff with the opportunity to meet new colleagues and ask questions of existing staff. It is a one day, online event which is held approximately every six weeks to accommodate all new employees. In 2024, a total of 7 courses were held (mixture of in person and online), attended by 251 employees:

Induction	2024 total
Attendees	251

Female	151
Male	99
Evaluations	75

In addition, two Coffee Mornings for new and returning employees to the University were held and a number of surveys and focus groups were carried out with new employees in 2024 to gather feedback on the current induction and orientation process.

Further Education Policy (FEP): This is a funding programme which staff can apply to for financial support when undertaking a part-time programme of study. A total of 82 applications (56 female (71%), 23 male (19%)) were received in 2023/24 in the following staff categories:

Staff Categories	
Academic	19
Support	40
Researcher	12
Technical	7
Library	1
Total	79

Staff applied for support across a range of programme types including:

Total Programme Categories	
Total number of PhDs	23
Masters	24
Bachelors	4
PG cert/diploma	21
Other	7
Total	79

Workshops: A total of 242 (2022: 212) professional development workshops were run by HR in 2024 including:

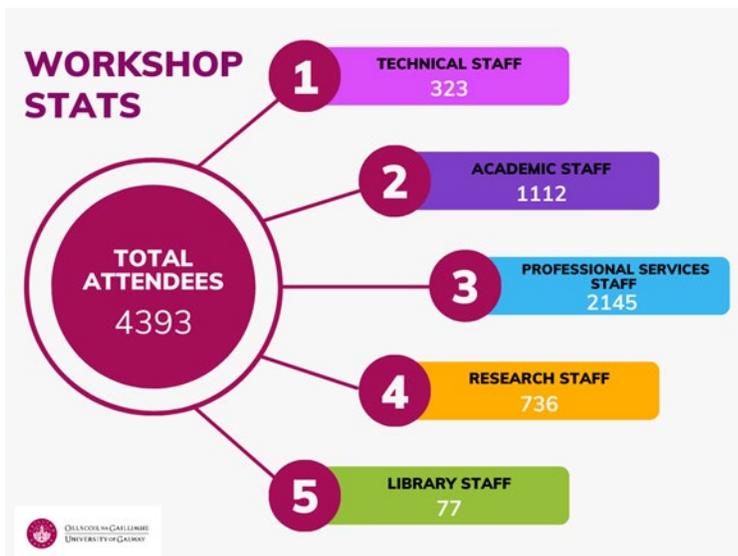
New workshops include:

- Leadership Development Programme (aimed at Head of School/Unit level)

- Mojo Matters
- Conflict Management/Resolution
- MS Power BI
- New Bitesize Learning Sessions: Introduction to CRM, Introduction to Akari
- Customer Service & Complaint Handling
- Successful Business Writing & Email Etiquette
- Social Media
- Supporting the Researcher Lifecycle

Workshop attendance was spread across a variety of staff categories as follows:

Staff Category	No. of Attendees	%
Administration	1,955	45%
Visitor	83	2%
Buildings Services	40	1%
Agency	67	2%
Library	77	2%
Academic	1,112	25%
Technical	323	7%
Researcher	736	17%
	4,393	



HR Learning and Development Highlights

New Leadership Development Programme

- o A new leadership development programme commenced in March 2024. This programme aims to support middle to senior level staff e.g. Heads of School, Heads of Unit, Senior Managers (grade 5 upwards), and Principle Investigators, to effectively lead their people, schools, departments and projects. This programme is a joint collaboration between HR L&D and OVPEDI. This programme joins our current leadership offerings to staff which also includes the Introduction to Leadership & Management Programme (2023).
85 staff completed a Leadership Programme in 2024.

Bitesize Learning Sessions

Short workshops (60 mins) which allow internal staff to share their expertise and knowledge with colleagues on a range of topics including:

- Creating Accessible Documents
- Introduction to CRM
- Introduction to PowerAutomate
- IT Shortcuts and Tools
- AKARI training
- An Ghaeilge san Ollscoil.

These workshops are designed and facilitated by university staff *for* university staff.

Mentoring:

A number of workshops were held throughout the year, and we continue to create Mentoring Champions within a number of colleges and units.

- o New Mentees 2024: **46**
- o New Mentors 2024: **16**

DCM Learning/On-Demand Learning:

- o **680** staff members attended DCM webinars in 2024 (increase of 480 from 2023)
- o DCM Learning hub: [University of Galway Learning Hub](#), [University of Galway Learning Hub Brochure](#)
- o DCM training time has quadrupled since 2023. See graphic below:



New Starter Coffee Morning:

New starter coffee mornings were held in February and October 2024. The events were a huge success with over 160 attendees & representatives at both dates. The Interim president Peter McHugh spoke at the October event. (Photos of the events are within the appendices)

ENLIGHT Academic Leadership Programme

In September 2024, L&D commenced a collaboration with ENLIGHT to create an Academic Leadership Programme for staff across the ENLIGHT network.

This programme focuses on university leadership and the development of academic talent and high-quality performance. It investigates the need for transparency and accountability in today's European universities, change management and preparation for the future. Embedded in a European Universities alliance consisting of ten universities, this programme offers a learning environment benefitting from combined academic expertise, international perspectives on higher education and diverse approaches to leadership in a peer-learning context. The programme will commence in September 2025 with 30 participants from across the 10 ENLIGHT institutions. Galway will host one of the 4 sessions in March 2026.

Head of Schools Development Forum

To coincide with our new Leadership Development Programme, EDI and L&D organised a Head of School Training Needs forum in December 2024. All current HOS's were invited to attend, and the forum was facilitated by Anna Cunningham (Head of Coaching).

Learning & Development Roadshows

The Learning & Development unit continued to work on promoting development opportunities to our staff. L&D attended a number of College/School/Unit meetings throughout the year including School of Psychology, College of Arts and the Bursars unit.

Collaborate Programme (An Inter-Institutional Peer Mentoring Programme)

A collaboration with 8 other institutions across the island of Ireland. 5-week programme supporting a particular cohort of staff. This was the third run of this particular programme and it catered for staff at Grade 4/5 level. Each session has a different theme with a guest speaker specialising in that area. Participants are divided into groups to discuss issues/concerns and share knowledge.

Induction Focus Groups

A number of focus groups and surveys were carried out in Autumn 2024 among new staff to the University within the last 12 months. All participants were asked a set of questions to capture their feedback on the centralised induction process. As a result of this feedback a number of amendments will be made to the induction process for 2025.

LIFT

In 2021 LIFT Ireland and University of Galway announced a unique partnership aimed at improving leadership skills among students and staff. LIFT Ireland is an initiative to raise the level of leadership nationwide, working with organisations and individuals in a variety of settings to develop key leadership attributes. LIFT's partnership with University of Galway is the organisation's first formal partnership with a third-level institution. It will see more than 200 staff and students trained as LIFT facilitators. These facilitators will then go on to deliver the LIFT leadership programme to a further 1,500 staff and students at the University. LIFT's leadership programme is delivered through regular roundtable sessions, led by a volunteer facilitator. Each session focuses on one of eight key leadership values, such as honesty, competence, accountability, empathy, respect and positive attitude. The programme supports participants to develop these leadership attributes and set personal goals on an ongoing basis.

LIFT is an 8-12 week programme, about 30-40 minutes a week where participants engage in a small roundtable group either online or blended and complete the values below:

1. Listening
2. Honesty and Integrity
3. Respect
4. Positive Attitude
5. Competence
6. Dedication and Determination
7. Accountability

8. Empathy and Understanding
9. Resilience
10. Innovation

Numbers 2023-2024



- Participants: **191**
- Facilitators: **44 (was 50 but dropouts)**
- **54** roundtables in total since **June 2023-July 2024**
 - 50 completed
 - 2 active
 - 1 group as Gaeilge completed / 1 ongoing
- Academic Participants **44**
- Academic Facilitators **5**
- Need to **promote** and organise more facilitator training

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): In the Spring of 2024, the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) established two full-time lectureships in ESD, funded under the Strategic Alignment of Teaching & Learning Enhancement (SATLE) scheme of Ireland's National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and learning. Working with academic and professional support colleagues, the lectureships aim to ensure that the SDGs, sustainability, the climate emergency, and related environmental issues are addressed across all of our degree programmes, undergraduate and postgraduate, and that our staff (academic and professional support) are provided with professional development in these topics as well as in aspects of appropriate (and innovative) pedagogical approaches. As part of this work a **new module and micro-credential Sustainability in the Curriculum** has been developed.

To embed the SDGs and key sustainability competencies in the curriculum the ESD team has outlined a programme of work:

- Map degree programmes to the SDGs and key sustainability competencies to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- Identify SDGs most relevant to the discipline and uncover how key sustainability competencies manifest in related professions.
- Develop a plan for enhancing connections to the SDGs and ensuring the development of students' sustainability competencies throughout their programmes of study.
- Foster the competencies needed by academic and professional staff to develop and implement ESD through professional development opportunities.

The ESD team initiated this programme of work in September 2024, collaborating with the Sustainability Office to pilot an SDG mapping tool, developed by [ACT](#). The tool is being used to map all degree programmes (N=64)

to the SDGs. The completed SDG maps will then be used to initiate conversations on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) with the various degree programmes. This will involve a set of qualitative interviews with each programme leader (N=64) to gain greater insight into how the SDGs and key sustainability competencies link to discipline and professional competencies and accreditation and graduate attributes. Information gathered from the interviews will inform the development of a plan of action for embedding the SDGs and key competencies into the programme of study. The ESD team is providing academic and professional staff who support student learning with professional development that promotes appropriate and innovative pedagogical approaches, such as CEL6109.

In September 2024, the ESD team introduced CEL6109 Embedding Sustainability in the Curriculum, an in-person module offered to those in the CELT Postgraduate Diploma in Academic Practise. The module was also offered as a micro credential to any staff member interested in Sustainability and in particular, embedding sustainability competencies into degree programmes or modules. There were 16 participants in the CEL6109 Embedding Sustainability in the Curriculum module (capacity was 17). Five participants were on the Diploma pathway and the remaining 11 participants took the course as an individual module or a micro credential. Participants are spread equally across the Colleges. In addition to the two ESD lecturers, seven staff members from across the university were involved in CEL6109, demonstrating the transdisciplinary nature of the module.

This module unpacks the SDGs, key sustainability competencies, and various topics related to sustainability and education for sustainable development. Importantly, it provides a space for participants to embed sustainability into their own teaching and learning practice. Topics explored include campus sustainability efforts and resources (e.g., the biodiversity trail); Green Labs as a model for sustainable educational practice; understanding and teaching about climate science; decolonizing the curriculum; strategies for supporting students with anxiety about the climate crisis. Participants of this module apply their learning to their own subject area during the final two workshop-style sessions that focus on pedagogical approaches for designing curriculum that embeds sustainability.

In addition to these efforts, the ESD team is running workshops and seminars to support ESD efforts across campus. In September, the team piloted a postgraduate embedding sustainability workshop with the School of Business for their Management and Sustainability MA programme. This involved working with each module leader in this PG programme to map the SDGs and sustainability competencies to their module learning outcomes, assessment and class activities. The workshop was 1.5 hours in duration. Also in September, they led an ESD workshop for degree programme leaders as part of SDG week. Finally, in November the team collaborated with the DEI office and delivered a seminar focused on embedding ESD competencies into curriculum.

A community of practice for ESD is emerging in Ireland and the ESD team is striving to share, disseminate and work with national as well as international partners in the form of seminars, contribution to courses, talks, workshops and conferences. The ESD team collaborated with a national network for ESD, led by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning. In particular, they designed and delivered two sessions in a national online collaborative Open Course on Embedding Sustainability in the Curriculum, which was available to all HE institutions in Ireland in Autumn 2024. Finally, in December, the team presented their ESD work Presentation at the national SDG Champions event in Dublin.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): RPL plays a key role in advancing the University of Galway's ambitions to offer accessible, agile, and flexible lifelong learning pathways. It is also recognised as a valuable mechanism for enriching the diversity of the learner community by expanding opportunities for access, transfer, and progression into and through academic programmes.

The Human Capital Initiative Pillar 3 - **Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education** Project has supported University of Galway to make significant progress in its aspirations to embedded consistent and coherent RPL practice across its Colleges and Schools.

Impact

Key milestones achieved over the course of the Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education project included the approval of a new Recognition of Prior Learning **policy** which reaffirmed the University of Galway's commitment to RPL. The new policy is aligned to the Pilot Framework for RPL in Higher Education and supports the implementation of the aligned Pilot Technical Definition of RPL in Higher Education.

The University has also created a new RPL **website** which provides advice and guidance to RPL learners and other important stakeholders. In 2024 additional resources for learners were developed which included new learner application **guidelines** and learner information **videos**. Significant resources for staff have also been developed including new assets being added to the RPL **SharePoint** Toolkit site and RPL **Assessment** Guidelines. An RPL Consultation System is proving to be very popular with both students and staff.

Raising awareness of RPL was an important objective for the University of Galway throughout the 2024. Collaboration with the University's Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development has resulted in an increased awareness of RPL by adult and mature learners evident by the increased applications for entry and module exemptions seen across part-time undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study this past year. A series of enterprise visits in 2024 has also successfully increased awareness of RPL among both employees and employers. The addition of RPL as a new header to all course webpages highlights the commitment the university has to ensuring that prospective students have access to information about the potential of RPL for widening access and participation.

The introduction of Banner as the new Student Record System will enable the University to implement the RPL Banner patch developed by the national project. Aligned with this the University is developing automated workflows for RPL learner applications that will integrate with Banner and streamline RPL processing and validation. This initiative will also enable accurate data capture and data analysis which will support a systems-based approach to RPL implementation and reporting.

The University of Galway is committed to implementing best practice in relation to the application of RPL across its constituent Colleges and Schools. Its achievements to date are evidence of a long term commitment to ensuring that all learners have fair, transparent and equitable access to higher education learning pathways.

Teanglann Interpreting Suites: University of Galway has officially launched its new state-of-the-art conference interpreting suites and teaching facility An Teanglann, marking its position as the lead institution in Ireland for educating interpreters and translators. All three suites can be connected to allow for larger meetings, with greater language coverage, and also allow for remote simultaneous (RSI) training. The suites are designed to facilitate immersive learning experiences, further advancing interpreter education and hybrid teaching, which involves University trainers, who are all practising professionals, and interpreters working in international partner institutions such as the European Commission, European Parliament, European Court of Justice and the United Nations, which enriches the learning experience and ensures relevance to real-world scenarios.

The facility is being used by those studying on the MA in Conference Interpreting, which currently takes 15 students a year. Students on the Masters programme this year come from Ireland, Canada, Spain, Colombia, Italy and France, with a spread of languages native to each country, as well as German and English. The programme has capacity to cater for other languages, depending on demand

The Interpreting Suites use new technologies to achieve the SDGs by facilitating seamless bilateral international collaboration without increasing carbon footprints. Leveraging advanced telecommunication tools and interpreting technologies, these suites enable real-time interactions between students and professional interpreters of EU institutions and the UN, collaborating in real-time with Brussels, Luxembourg, Strasbourg, Vienna, and New York, among others. The suites are equipped with high-definition video conferencing systems, sophisticated interpreting software, and voice activated camera tracking, allowing participants and students to engage as if they were physically together. This technology enhances the learning experience for students by providing authentic interpreting practice and significantly reduces the need for international travel. These suites allow for on-campus collaboration thereby cutting down on carbon emissions aligning with SDG 13, Climate Action, by minimizing the environmental impact associated with travel. The Suites support SDG 4 by providing equitable access to global learning opportunities and fostering international cooperation. Through these innovative solutions, the Teanglann Interpreting Suites exemplify how technology can be harnessed to create a sustainable and interconnected educational framework, promoting environmental responsibility and high-quality education on a global scale.

Improving access and learning for people with intellectual disability: University of Galway has secured funding to improve access to higher education and learning for people with an intellectual disability. The funding will be used to put in place a new programme for students with an intellectual disability called Cumas - a Foundational

Certificate in Learning and Community. The aim of the programme is to provide students with a third level learning experience which will develop their knowledge, social engagement, and employment prospects. University of Galway students on Cumas will take part in social activities and academic classes with students without intellectual disabilities as well as participating in classes with other students with intellectual disabilities. The programme will provide students with work experience through placement opportunities. While the primary aims of the programme caters to the students and their needs, it is also envisioned that the University of Galway community and the wider community will benefit by developing a greater understanding and appreciation of the potential of people with intellectual disabilities. The funding is being provided to progress the National Access Plan which highlights the need to improve and increase representation in higher education for students with a disability, including students with autism and those with an intellectual disability.

Widening Access (WP): The WP Committee is a sub-committee of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Campus Committee (EDICC), now in its fourth year of existence and it includes members from the University's four Colleges, professional services staff, Students' Union, Student Services and external stakeholders. The [Widening Participation Report 2023/24](#) continues to provide evidence of the important strides made by the University to increase the equality of educational opportunity for students from underrepresented groups in higher education. Highlights include:

- From 2019/20 to 2023/24, some 595 students progressed to the University through the Further Education and Training entry route (more than double the figures on the previous five years)
- From 2010 to 2023, the University saw a 29% increase in students entering through Widening Participation routes - eg Mature student options; Further Education and Training; School Leavers Access programme; HEAR - Higher Education Access Route admissions scheme for Leaving Certificate students under 23 whose economic or social background are underrepresented in higher education; and DARE - Disability Access Route to Education admissions scheme for school-leavers under 23 whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education.
- Some 739 students registered to study through the University Access Centre in 2023 - the highest level recorded.
- A 163% increase in students registering with the Access Centre Disability Support Service, which is available to students who need support or reasonable accommodations due to the impact of a disability, ongoing physical or mental health condition, or a specific learning difficulty.

The academic year 2023/2024 was a significant milestone in our endeavours to transform access to higher education for students from underrepresented groups. In May 2024, the University's Access Centre celebrated 25 years of the successful delivery of Access Programmes. Access programmes have continually developed over the 25 years in order to meet the changing needs of underrepresented students. A noteworthy recent

development is the Access Centre's partnership with Grant Thornton to develop a professional mentoring module for students studying business subjects. In 2023/24, this initiative developed further when Medtronic also partnered with the Access Centre to provide professional mentoring to students studying science subjects on the programme.

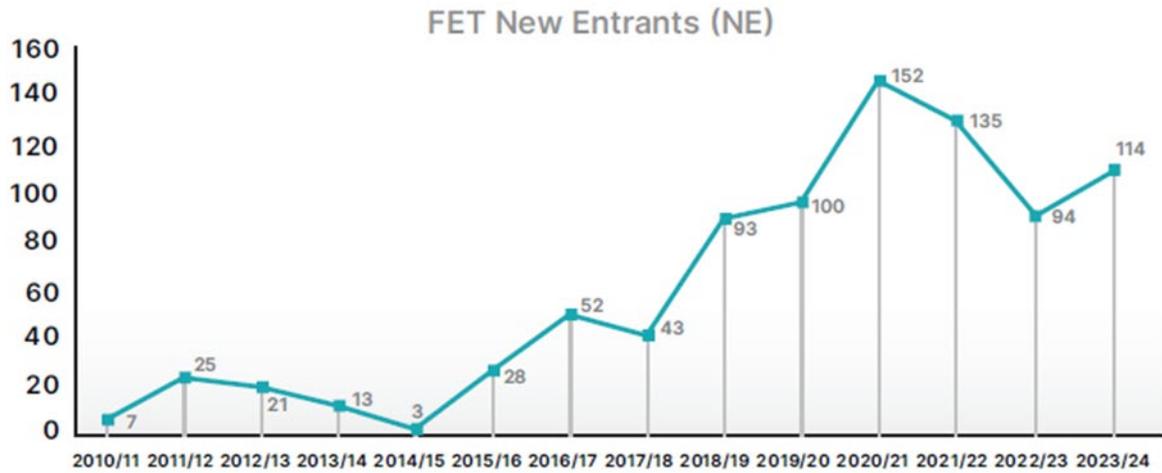
WP Data: Using data from the Student Record System (SRS) the total number of students entering through WP entry routes from 2010 to 2023 is outlined below. During this time, University of Galway has seen a total 29% increase in students entering through these routes.

Table 1. Number of undergraduate New Entrants (NE) from 2010/11 to 2023/24

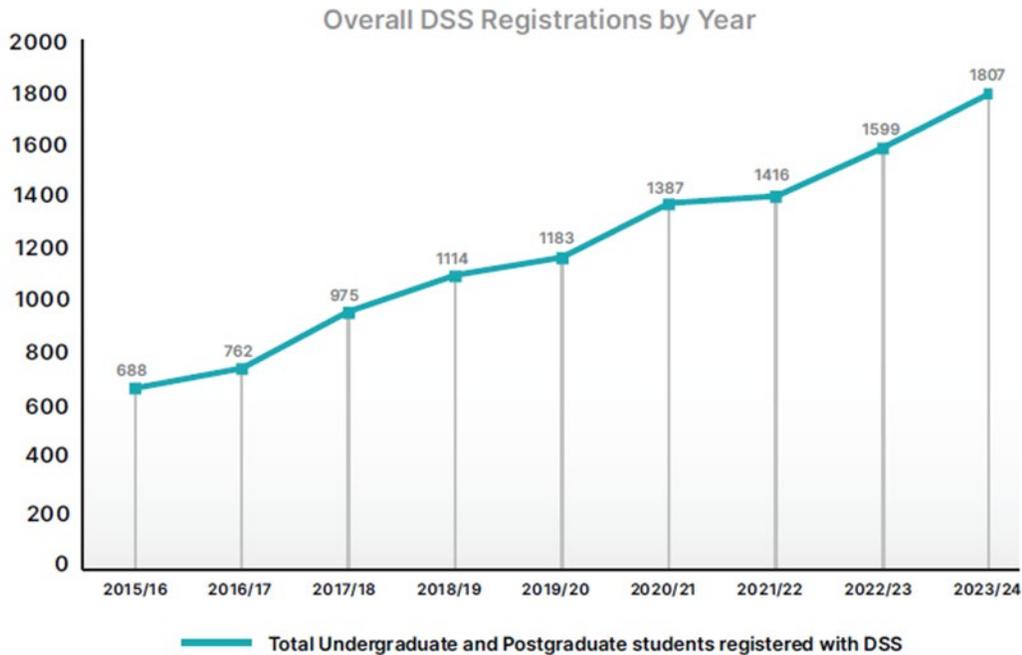
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
HEAR Merit	104	140	187	183	198	193	199	181	166	149	162	113	90	95
HEAR Supported	50	50	48	68	69	82	77	56	68	77	68	77	63	67
DARE Merit	21	16	60	40	70	60	85	96	106	94	118	168	179	218
DARE Supported	17	14	20	38	42	35	37	35	59	67	70	79	102	134
Foundation	50	52	49	37	50	31	40	22	11	11	21	16	7	8
FET	7	25	21	14	6	39	62	46	92	99	153	134	94	114
Mature	220	157	127	87	89	75	57	77	66	73	79	86	71	63
Mature Access	69	55	67	52	41	44	42	35	26	23	29	34	19	16
School Leavers Access	58	43	52	49	52	35	56	38	39	36	38	27	19	24
Total	571	552	631	598	617	594	655	586	633	629	738	734	644	739

The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) are two national schemes developed by HEI's to increase the number of students entering HE who have a disability (DARE) or who come from socio-economically disadvantaged groups (HEAR) in society. Both the HEAR and DARE schemes offer reduced points places to students on full-time undergraduate programmes and provide additional University supports to students.

In line with Goal 4 of the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2023, University of Galway has developed its pathways from Further Education to Higher Education. Figure 4 charts the significant increase of students entering through this entry pathway.



Students with a disability are entitled, under law, to reasonable accommodations. In order to avail of these accommodations, students are invited to register with the Disability Support Service (DSS) in the Access Centre. The total number of students registering with a disability from 2015/16 to 2023/24 is outlined below. Overall, since the academic years 2015/16 and 2023/24, there has been a 163% increase in students registering for disability support.



Widening Participation Activities:

Uni4U is a University of Galway Access Centre initiative specifically targeted at students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds attending DEIS primary schools and primary schools linked to the Access Centre in Galway City.

Uni4U sees students and their teachers visit campus each week for seven weeks to engage in workshops with various University departments and schools. In 23/24 Uni4U worked with 5 different schools in the region and welcomed over 200 primary school students on campus each week over the programme period. Participants engaged in multiple workshops and activities delivered by our campus colleagues and other organisations, including:



Professional Education Module: Since 2018, students studying the business stream on the Diploma in Foundation Studies: Access Programme have completed the PEM module, in collaboration with Grant Thornton. In 2023, we were delighted to announce the expansion of the programme and welcome Medtronic onboard as a partner. This has given students studying the science and engineering stream of the programme the opportunity to be matched with Mentors from Medtronic.

This experiential based model of learning matches professional Mentors from Grant Thornton and Medtronic with Mentees from the Access programme in a module of structured interactive learning. As a result of taking part in the programme, students:

- Gain exposure to a professional working environment.
- Develop an insight into career progression.
- Hone a skillset for career readiness.
- Cultivate a working/ supportive relationship with their assigned Mentors.
- Develop an understanding and insight into the core requisites of a professional working environment.

As part of PEM in the last year, 13 students received invaluable professional mentoring support from Medtronic, while 6 students spent time with their assigned Mentors at Grant Thornton.



Mincéirs Mis'd in Education: Traveller Ethnicity Week ran from Monday February 27th until Friday March 1st - marking the anniversary of the Government formally recognising Irish Travellers as a distinct ethnic group and celebrating their culture and heritage including music, craft traditions and language.

The University hosted a range of panel discussions, workshops and cultural exhibitions throughout the week, with a variety of opportunities for staff, students and the public to learn more about Irish Traveller culture, overcoming adversity in education and the experiences of Leaving Certificate students as members of the Irish Traveller community.

Mary Warde Moriarty (Doctor of Laws (LLD)), a traveller, human rights activist, who recently received an honorary degree from University of Galway officially opened this year's series of events, which included:



- Traveller Living Exhibition - The exhibition showcased the rich cultural heritage of Irish Traveller life in the 1950s. A fully restored barrel-top wagon and a traditional tent were among the many features.

- Traveller Education and Anti-racism - Dr Hannagh McGinley, a member of the Irish Traveller community, talked about her journey through education and working life.
- Galway Traveller Movement showcased a document titled Going for our dreams in a racist society, telling the stories of five Leaving Certificate students and their school experiences as members of the Irish Traveller Community.

Universal Design and Widening Participation: The PATH 4, Phase 1 Universal Design Project, reported on in the Widening Participation Annual Report 2022/23 was completed in AY 2023/24. The Access Centre worked in partnership with the Buildings and Estates Office and Information Systems and Solutions to address accessibility barriers in the built and digital environments. It also worked with national partners across the tertiary education sector to produce the ALTITUDE National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education.

See below for a snapshot of activities and initiatives conducted under PATH 4, Phase 1 and beyond.

Universal Design of the Built Environment

The Buildings and Estates Office secured €1.7m in funding for accessibility improvements identified through PATH 4, Phase 1. A monthly Physical Accessibility Forum was established to enable the participation of disabled students in the prioritisation of accessibility works, by engaging senior University leaders, including the Dean of Students and Directors of Buildings and Estates and Student Services, with representatives from the Students' Union and the Neurodivergent Society.

- Step-free access provided to all large lecture theatres and power-assisted doors enroute.
- Upgrade of emergency evacuation facilities across campus and training provided.
- 70 power-assisted doors installed across campus and improved access to lifts.
- Signage and signposting of accessible routes and lifts.
- Footpath levelling and reconfiguration across campus.

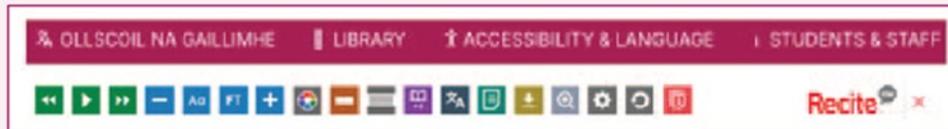
Aspects of this work were presented at the [AHEAD Conference 2024](#) and the [European Access Network \(EAN\) Conference 2025](#), and an article was published in the [AHEAD Journal](#) on the [Crowd4Access/University of Galway Citizen Science footpath accessibility mapping project](#).

Universal Design of the Digital Environment and Communications

- Web Accessibility audit and response
- University's web accessibility rating improved from initial score of 34% at beginning of NDA weekly auditing exercise to a peak of 95% in July 2023
- Improvement maintained over time – [Silktide Index](#) rating of 94% accessibility and 1st place ranking in Irish Higher Education, August 2024
- Training and development
 - 'Creating Accessible Documents' workshops - 95 now staff trained – and this work was presented at the [Digital Accessibility Conference 2023](#).
 - Bespoke sessions on request.
 - Multiple briefings, workshops and audits with the Marketing and Communications Office.
 - A collaborative project to produce accessible Mathematics exam papers with the School of Mathematics, Statistics and Applied Mathematics.

An online [Accessibility Hub](#) was developed to collate information and guidance on digital, physical and sensory accessibility.

The [ReciteMe](#) language and accessibility toolbar was launched, giving the user the option to adjust their experience on university websites, regardless of their browser.

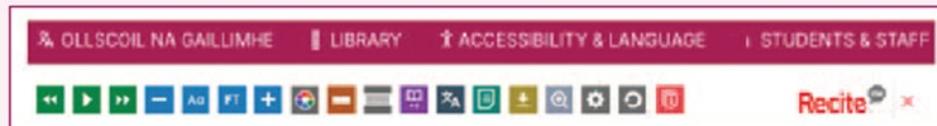


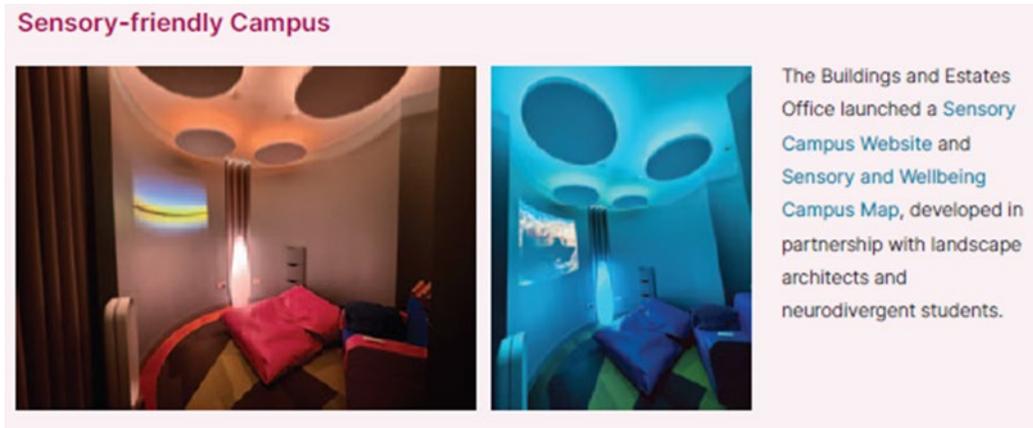
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Supports and resources for learners

Student Services: The following are new initiatives or enhancements **introduced in AY 23/24** by Student Services to support learners

Undergraduate Transition:

Tús Maith | Good Start is a new initiative offering a year-long first year welcome and settling-in programme for undergraduate students coordinated by the Student Engagement Team within Student Services. This includes the new [Tús Maith Online Hub](#) on Sharepoint, which is our one-stop shop for first year information and the graphic below illustrates the various other elements in the programme.



Tús Maith Good Start

Tús Maith|Good Start, is a year long welcome programme for first year undergraduate students.
There are a number of key resources and events that are available to students.

 <p>starter pack e-module</p> <div style="background-color: #00a09a; color: white; padding: 5px; font-size: small;"> A self-paced, interactive pre-arrival e-module that provides essential information to help students prepare for university life. </div>	 <p>web welcome online orientation</p> <div style="background-color: #00a09a; color: white; padding: 5px; font-size: small;"> An online orientation programme will be offered prior to the on-campus welcome, to provide students with an introduction to their academic programme. </div>	 <p>campus welcome campus orientation</p> <div style="background-color: #00a09a; color: white; padding: 5px; font-size: small;"> A two-day campus welcome packed with events, including programme introductions, a campus navigation challenge, and social and sports activities. </div>
 <p>start strong semester one</p> <div style="background-color: #00a09a; color: white; padding: 5px; font-size: small;"> A programme of weekly events and resources designed to support first year students transition to higher education. Includes drop-in sessions, workshops & lots more. </div>	 <p>refresh & refocus semester two</p> <div style="background-color: #00a09a; color: white; padding: 5px; font-size: small;"> A programme of weekly events and resources designed to support first year students during their second semester. Includes drop-in sessions, workshops & lots more. </div>	 <p>freshers point first year hub</p> <div style="background-color: #00a09a; color: white; padding: 5px; font-size: small;"> A peer connect space for students to foster social support among peers and cultivate a sense of belonging to the University community. </div>

[Academic Skills Hub](#) – updated and enhanced

Reach out campaigns to First year students – using AI via the Student Services Chatbot, Cara, we completed two reach out campaigns to all first year undergraduates, one in each semester to check in and point to resources based on student needs using our [Support Wheel](#). Any students who self-identified as being in crisis were given the option to connect with a staff member.

[Exams 101](#) – continue to refine and enhance this programme of supports for each exam cycle adding new podcasts and resources including the [Well Zone Podcast](#) series in 23/24.

Reach out campaigns for exam repeats – all students who are scheduled to repeat exams are contacted by the College Student Support Officer to highlight exam supports available and options for one-to-one appointments.

Retention and Progression Pilot Project

Ensuring a student progresses and succeeds is a central objective of higher education and early identification of students at risk of non-progression is a critical factor in achieving this objective. In partnership with academic units, Student Services completed a successful pilot program synthesising data from a number of sources to identify students at risk of withdrawing followed by a proactive reach out and one to one targeted interventions. This pilot will form the basis of the development of a predictive model of student risk as a key priority in 24/25.

Social Worker

In January 2024 Student Services appointed a Social Worker. The social worker is responsible for supporting students to access a full complement of academic, social and emotional supports to promote student success. As well as providing support to individual students within their university and wider social context, the social worker plays a lead role in developing, supporting and/or implementing relevant policies relating to student wellbeing and mental health. This role has significant responsibility in relation to case management, advocacy, facilitation, and mediation.

Mental Health Action Plan

We developed a Mental Health Action Plan of Priorities for Implementing the National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework, which we hope will serve as a template for other institutional action plans. The comprehensive plan will guide the enhancement and development of supports and resources for all students to enhance student mental health and wellbeing.

Universal Design

The Access Centre worked in partnership with the Buildings and Estates Office and Information Systems and Solutions to address accessibility barriers in the built and digital environments. It also worked with national partners across the tertiary education sector to produce the ALTITUDE National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education.

Developments and enhancements included:

- **Universal Design of the Built Environment**

The Buildings and Estates Office secured €1.7m in funding for accessibility improvements identified through PATH 4, Phase 1. A monthly Physical Accessibility Forum was established to enable the participation of disabled students in the prioritisation of accessibility works, by engaging senior University leaders, including the Dean of Students and Directors of Buildings and Estates and Student Services, with representatives from the Students' Union and the Neurodivergent Society. Works included:

- Step-free access provided to all large lecture theatres and power-assisted doors enroute.
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- **Universal Design of the Digital Environment and Communications**

- Web Accessibility audit and response
- University's web accessibility rating improved from initial score of 34% at beginning of NDA weekly auditing exercise to a peak of 95% in July 2023
- Improvement maintained over time – Silktide Index rating of 94% accessibility and 1st place ranking in Ireland

Care Experienced Support

In August 2023, the role of Educational Support Worker for Care-Experienced Students (ESWCE) was introduced in the Access Centre to address the unique challenges faced by care-experienced students in accessing higher education.

In the academic year 2023/24, 54 care-experienced students at the University of Galway were supported by this new role. Key barriers they face in higher education include accommodation, finances, support, belonging, and skill-building. To address these challenges, the following programme of support was implemented:

- Accommodation: 10 on-campus accommodation rooms were reserved for incoming care-experienced students.
- Finances: 26 students in Aftercare received a €1,000 bursary funded by Bank of Ireland and the University of Galway’s Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion office, additionally 45 care-experienced students received aid through the Financial Aid Fund.
- Support: A dedicated contact point for care-experienced students was established for advocacy, check-ins, and liaison with academic staff, Aftercare workers, and community organisations. Students were also linked to campus services and specialised support, such as social work and mental health services.
- Belonging: Initiatives such as Care Day celebrations, a peer support WhatsApp group, and staff training delivered by Kinship Care Ireland and EPIC helped create a sense of community.
- Skill-Building: Budgeting and financial counselling, career development support, and tailored services from success coaches were offered

Cara: Virtual Assistant for Students

With 50% of questions to Cara being asked outside of 9-5 office hours, Cara’s improving artificial intelligence responses are growing in popularity.



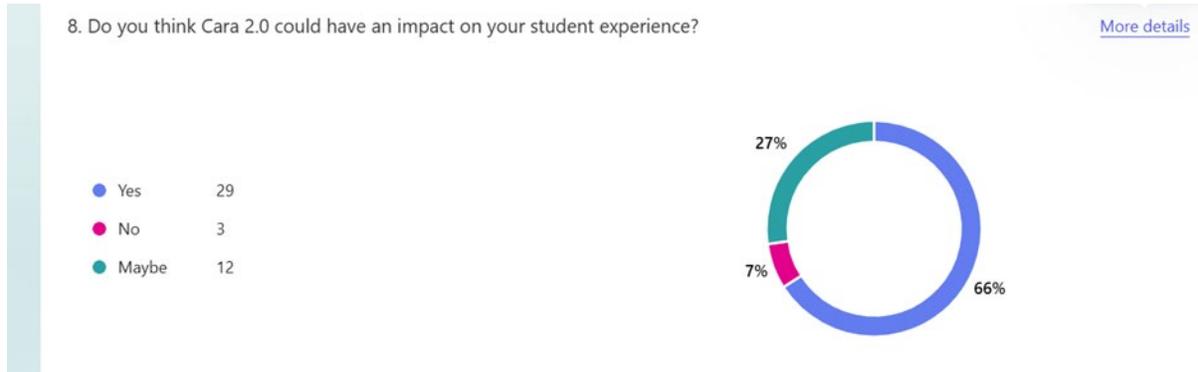
33% volume growth

Usage has grown steadily over the last year to 20,000 questions. New focal points within the University such as Academic Integrity initiatives have been addressed.

The recently established Web Governance group is overseeing the broader scope of requirements for a single University of Galway student chatbot. Cara is one of the solution options currently under consideration.

Students confirm usefulness

A survey of the Galway 100 students indicated up to 93% of students see Cara as useful in their student experience.



Sensitive Flow

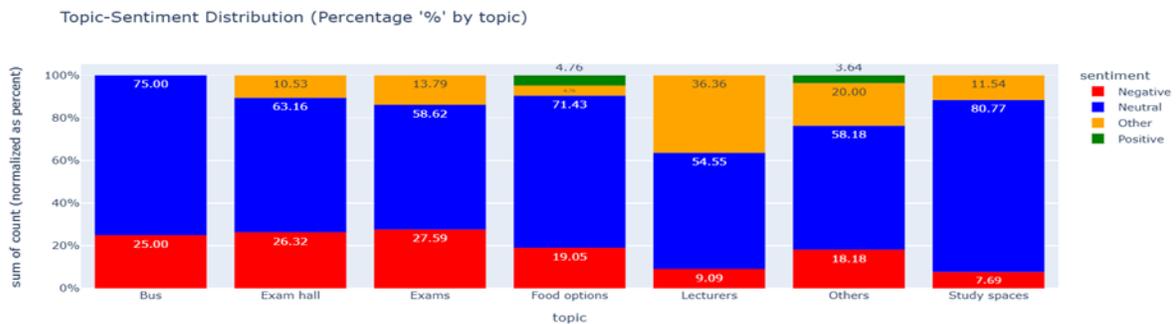
Cara directs students to the University of Galway Support Wheel on input of a trigger word such as ‘Assault’ or ‘Coercive behaviour’ or ‘Suicide’. The list of trigger words has further evolved over the last 12 months.

Reachouts

Adding to the fundamental of ‘Ask Cara’ the chatbot is also used to ‘Reach-out’ to cohorts of students e.g. August exam participants – offering support signposts to students and insights to staff on the student selections. We reached out to over 2,000 students. Of the 55% opening the email, Cara was enabled to monitor the assistance investigated by Students; Academic supports 1%, Personal 0.4% and Financial supports 0.3%. A further 0.6% of students contacted staff in Student Services as a consequence.

Tell Cara

The chatbot has also been used for sentiment analysis – enabling students to confidentially highlight the likes and dislikes of their personal student experiences.



Generative AI

In the last year, the functional capabilities of Cara have progressed to reflect the improvements in AI technology. The subsequent responses are more ‘conversational’ and natural, combining information from multiple sources to inform each individual response – all still constrained to University of Galway information sources.

The advanced technology has also delivered upgrades in multilingual capabilities. Answers are already available as Gaeilge.

Developments for the future

For students willing to forego their current level of anonymity, we envision more personalised responses and prompts in the future adaptations of Cara. Students who ‘sign-in’ to a ‘Cara Confidential’ that may integrate with Student Digital Pathways will be able to ascertain their library bookings, fee status and personal timetable.

Library: In preparation for the design of the new Library and Learning Commons, every service in the Library has undertaken a full service review. These reviews looked at current service delivery and staffing, benchmarked the service against similar services in other Universities, and specified an ideal service model for the future including staffing and spaces. These reviews fed into the definition of requirements for the new Library and Learning Commons design, and has also informed staffing decisions and recruitment.

The Library Strategy 2020-2025 recognised that 25% of library staff would reach normal retirement age during the period of that strategy. This has taken place with a 32% staff turnover during the last four years. Service Reviews mentioned above ensured that a strategic approach was taken to any vacancies arising and this has resulted in a reconfiguration of staffing and new roles in many areas.

Career Development Centre: The Career Development Centre provides students at University of Galway with ongoing quality career guidance and an information service focused on facilitating and empowering students to manage their own career development and make effective career transitions.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE 2023-2024

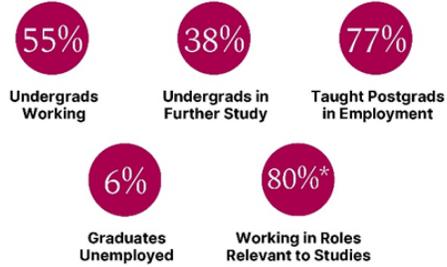
A YEAR IN NUMBERS

GUIDANCE & CURRICULUM



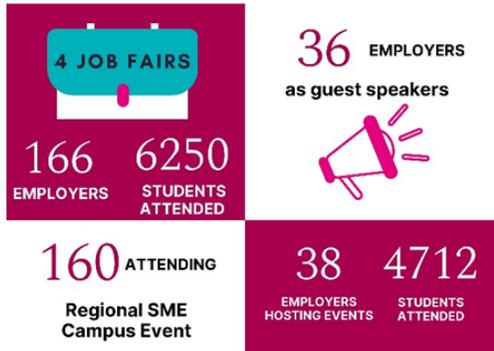
GRADUATE OUTCOMES SURVEY

University of Galway Graduates*



* 5559 graduates surveyed, 52% responded.

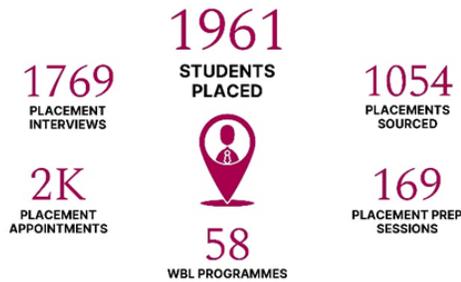
EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT



DIGITAL RESOURCE TOOL KIT



WORK-BASED LEARNING



PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT



CÉIM supports first year students to transition successfully to University of Galway, make friends and create connections within their subject area, develop a sense of belonging, gain a greater understanding of coursework and ultimately proceed to second year.

CÉIM

SHARED LEARNING

2023/2024

Semester 1



Supporting the 1st year experience

CÉIM has continued to work this semester to support 1st year students' transition to University of Galway, while encouraging independent learning, health and wellbeing, academic success, progression and transversal skills development. Student engagement and average weekly attendance increased in CÉIM. However, challenges with accommodation and the cost of living are continuing to have a negative impact on students' ability to participate in University life and CÉIM.

With AI in the spotlight, there has been increased focus in CÉIM sessions this semester on small group work, questioning, critical thinking, academic integrity, and using AI constructively where applicable.

The CÉIM staff team has grown this year and this has enabled the team to offer more targeted coaching to individual groups of CÉIM leaders, which has proven very beneficial. The Director of the CÉIM Programme was recently invited to become an Associate of the European Centre for Supplemental Instruction-Peer Assisted Learning Sessions.

CÉIM was piloted in Shannon College, Biotechnology, and Genetics and Genomics this semester. In 2024/25, the programme will be rolled out to Computer Science and Information Technology, Biomedical Science and Social Sciences.



2,445

multiple 1st year students offered CÉIM*



34

CÉIM groups



61%

College of Science & Engineering students offered CÉIM this semester



120

CÉIM leaders



97%

leader retention

*Many Arts students are offered CÉIM in multiple subjects

Key goals for 2023/24 CÉIM sessions



Experience

Leaders share their experience of studying the course



Groups

Students work in small groups/pairs right from the start



Higher Order Learning

Higher order learning included in the majority of session activities



Questions

Relevant open questions asked by leaders, 1st years encouraged to do the same

Multi-Sensory Room launched to make campus more inclusive: Recognising that Universities can be a crowded and noisy environment, which can impact learning and work, especially for neurodiverse students, University of Galway has opened a new Multi-Sensory Room. The aim of the Multi-Sensory Room is to provide a safe space where users can relax and stimulate their senses in a controlled manner. The Multi-Sensory Room was designed in consultation with students and specialist staff and is equipped with interactive and integrated lighting, visual, vibroacoustic and sound effects that create an immersive and customisable sensory experience for students. The Multi-Sensory Room is designed to be a safe space for students to self-regulate by adjusting their sensory environment. Users will be able to choose from a range of calming or stimulating, integrated lighting, sound and

vibroacoustic arrangements, to suit their sensory needs, and unwind on comfortable furniture. Soft furnishings and sensory stress-relieving items complete the experience. The opening of the multi-sensory room forms part of University of Galway's suite of indoor and outdoor initiatives designed to provide sensory friendly spaces enabling students to feel regulated and supporting their engagement in college life.

Information and Data Management (including analysis and impact of information gathered via the national Student Survey)

Applications and Data:

- Joint proposal between ISS and the Institutional Research Office to establish a Data Governance Committee with an initial goal of designing a Data Governance Framework and development of a University level data strategy.
- Upgrades to the Quercus student records system were completed during FY 23/24 ensuring the system remains within a supplier supported version and hosted in a secure infrastructure platform.
- Ongoing support for the Agresso financial management system and CoreHR system including procurement and in the case of Agresso local hosting environment.
- Review of business continuity requirements and establishment of an enhanced framework for disaster recovery for core applications and data commenced and continuing through 2024.

Strategic analysis of data warehouse, integration and business analytics infrastructure and platforms undertaken. This will be a key strategic initiative through 2024/2025 to ensure the resilience of key data stores and optimum availability of data to inform decision making and enhance the student experience.

Student Survey: University of Galway has carried out online Student Experience surveys open to all students annually since academic year 2016 – 17, as part of a joint initiative by Student Services, the Students' Union, and the School of Psychology. Data collection typically takes place in the second semester. The model for inclusion of survey topics has been derived from a socioecological analysis of the student experience, including theories on student engagement and persistence, leading to the inclusion of factors related to:

- pre-entry attributes (including demographic variables)
- goals and commitments relevant to the university experience
- institutional experience (which includes perceptions of the academic environment, extracurricular engagement, and peer interactions)
- integration with the university experience (for instance, belonging and identification), and
- outcomes (such as operational measures of student success)

In addition, the survey model has included measures of mental health distress, alcohol and drug use, living conditions, and knowledge of, and access to, student support services. Survey content has been responsive to

emerging issues that have arisen in the student experience since 2016, particularly in response to the accommodation crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic, and access to social spaces on campus.

In 2023 – 24, a decision was taken to ‘pause’ StudentSurvey.ie (a national student survey, previously known as the Irish Survey of Student Engagement or ISSE). Subsequently the 2024 Student Voice Survey was renamed and redesigned, in partnership with units previously involved in the deployment, promotion and analysis of the national survey, to partially address the resulting data gap. Two questions from StudentSurvey.ie, designed to capture students’ evaluation of their overall experience at University of Galway, were included in the 2024 survey. A number of additional changes were made to the survey content, and the number of questions was significantly reduced.

The Student Voice Survey, open to all students, ran from Monday 26 February to Monday 25 March 2024. A promotions team met weekly from 20 February to 21 March to review response rates and promotional activities. The team included the Dean of Students, Dean of Graduate Studies, College Vice-Deans for Teaching and Learning, Dr Pádraig MacNeela, Student Services staff, Students’ Union Officers, Marketing and Communications staff, the University’s Director of Strategy Implementation, and a representative from the Office of the Secretary for Governance and Academic Affairs.

The survey was promoted using a wide range of methods, including:

- All staff and all student emails
- Email to all staff included a slide in English and Irish for lecturers to share at the beginning of lectures, if possible allowing time for students to start the survey
- A team of student ambassadors (including SU officers, class reps, and members of the Galway 100) promoted the survey at ‘pop-up’ stands in busy spots around campus. Large and small prizes were offered as incentives to complete.
- A further incentive to take the survey was the donation by the Dean of Students’ Office of €1 to the Student Hardship Fund for each survey completed.
- Large posters with a QR code linking to the survey were displayed around campus and at the pop-up stands, with smaller posters displayed on poster kiosks, public noticeboards, and bathrooms around campus.
- A series of ‘You Said, We Did’ assets were created and shared as part of the social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram – see sample post [here](#)
- Videos were created by the SU and Marketing and Communications as part of the social media campaign available [here](#) and [here](#)
- The SU did some lecture shout-outs

- Dean of Students travelled to Shannon College to promote the survey to students there, bringing 'lucky dip' prizes to incentivise participation.
- The survey was also promoted on digital screens across campus and on campus PCs at login, as well as via the weekly Student Enquiry Centre e-zine and the SU weekly email, the University's 'current students' and Students' Union webpages, An Dialann (staff weekly e-zine), and staff and student calendars.
- An SMS message was sent to almost 8,500 student phone numbers via the University of Galway app on the Friday before the survey closed

The overall response rate was relatively low, at 14% - 2,866 responses with a 91 – 100% completion.

Public Information and Communication

COIS COIRIBE: University of Galway's [Shared Vision, Shaped by Values Strategy 2020–25](#) seeks to highlight why we are a university for the public good, for our time, and how we are a globally distinctive and research-driven institution. This necessitates content output and dissemination across multiple formats, reflecting the quality of research, analysis, and thinking within our University's community, aligned with best international practice. With four Colleges and 19 Schools, the University produces a wide range of content daily. Ensuring a consistent standard across all strategic, external communications presents a challenge. *Cois Coiribe* (CC) Digital Magazine and Platform aims to provide accessible, dynamic storytelling around the University's holistic societal impact, inclusive of ground-breaking research, innovation, and alumni global successes that is undiluted in the deluge of otherwise oversaturated channels. CC also provides a platform to profile our university community in "[A Day in the Life..](#)" series and uploaded stories created outside of the Content Unit, leveraging external expertise to enhance scalability and reach.

Guided by university-wide consultation and benchmarking analysis, Cois Coiribe serves as the University of Galway's centralised in-house digital publishing platform. It is a key engagement resource, designed to showcase and promote the university's research, successes, and strengths.

Cois Coiribe in Numbers

Across the Academic Year 2023/24, *Cois Coiribe* produced and published **two** distinct editions of its proprietary alumni magazine. This included the [Winter Edition – SDG Champion](#) and the [Summer Edition – Global Impact](#). Each edition leveraged social channel and media exposure, with 38 articles amplified to the magazine's target readership. Collectively, the campaigns achieved a **Click-Through Rate (CTR) of 0.83%**, averaged across both META and LinkedIn, with a total of **6.3 million impressions** and **41,016 clicks** throughout the duration.

Articles were campaigned across various news and media outlets, including the Irish Times, the Irish Independent, the Guardian, the Irish Examiner, Breaking News, and Echo Live. Native articles benefitted an **audience of 2,275,000 per week**, engaging undergrad, postgrad, business decision-makers, and stakeholders with a **0.19% CTR (above the industry average)**. An extended reach into the **UK with the Higher Education Newsletter from The Guardian** resulted in an **open rate of 63% (benchmark at 22%)**.

Key sectors across both campaigns included **Government and Policy, Healthcare, Operations, Education, and Engineering**. Top users during both campaigns came from Ireland, the UK, the USA, Germany, Netherlands, and France. Collectively, **40K Users** visited the *Cois Coiribe* website throughout the campaigns, with a **2.5% increase in New Users**.

<p>Imagine a sustainable city stretching from Galway to Dublin delivered 219,557 impressions; 1,945 clicks (CTR of 0.89%)</p>	<p>Towards a sustainable future delivered 252,148 impressions and a CTR of 0.52%</p>	<p>The Guardian's Higher Education E-Newsletter has a database of 14,457</p>
<p>The Future Legacy of (Irish) Theatre received 111,047 impressions, CTR 0.49%</p>	<p>Mary Robinson produced strong results with 103,284 impressions, CTR 0.64%</p>	<p>Digital Display MPU across websites to promote the articles achieved +547,702 impressions above target – an added value of €3,850</p>

ANNEX

SEP 2023 – SEP 2024

 **103,856** pageviews, **90,300** unique pageviews  **+208.3%**

 **355** total searches on your website, **280** unique keywords  **+53.7%**

 **832** downloads, **672** unique downloads  **+1,469.8%**

 **1,945** outlinks, **1,734** unique outlinks  **+104.5%**

 **75,669** visits  **+259.8%**

Page titles

PAGE TITLE	PAGEVIEWS	UNIQUE PAGEVIEWS
Cois Coiribe Home - Cois Coiribe	23,696	18,736
Cois Coiribe New Media Technology Threatens Democracy – but the Humanities Can Provide a Counterbalance ...	4,268	3,831
Cois Coiribe Imagine a Futuristic, Sustainable City between Galway and Dublin - Cois Coiribe	3,948	3,592
Cois Coiribe Mary Robinson: Trailblazer for Global Justice and Human Rights - Cois Coiribe	3,862	3,440
Cois Coiribe Distracted Driving: A Deadly Risk on the Road - Cois Coiribe	2,408	2,242
Cois Coiribe Cois Coiribe Global Impact 2024 - Cois Coiribe	2,589	2,171
Cois Coiribe The Real-World Effects of Cyberbullying - Cois Coiribe	2,573	2,117
Cois Coiribe SDG Champion Edition 2023/24 - Cois Coiribe	2,093	1,771

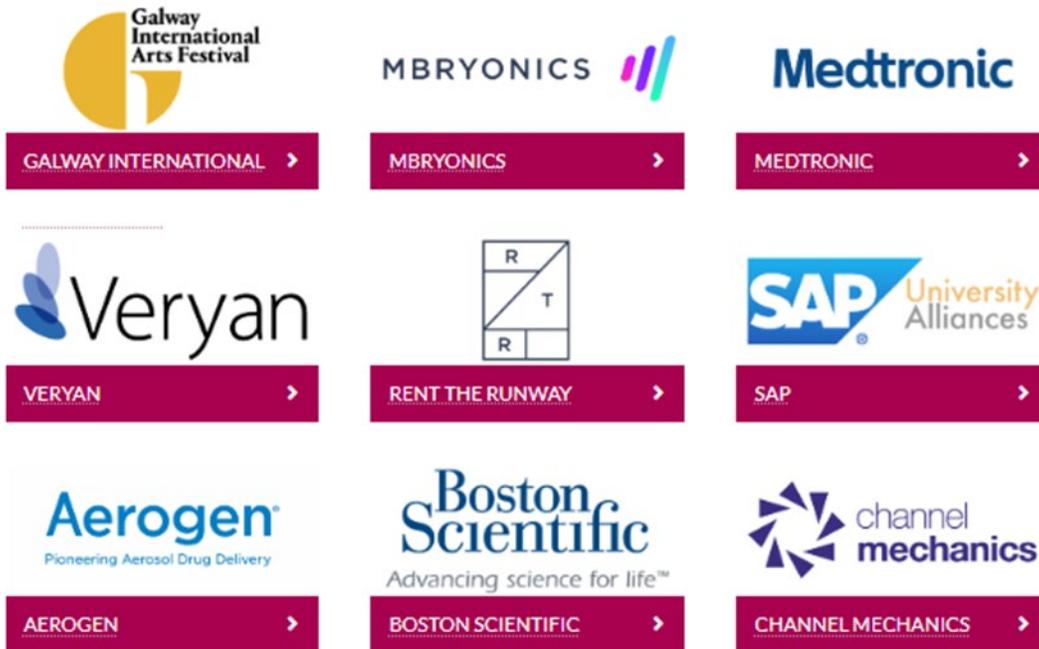
Other Parties Involved in Education and Training

IdeasLab started as a team of just two during the challenging period of COVID-19. Guided by a mission to foster innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial thinking, **IdeasLab** launched its first initiative, the Enterprise Challenge, in October 2020 with Boston Scientific. This was followed by an internship programme in early 2021, and, by 2022, Start100, our incubator programme, began transforming student ideas into startups, contributing to job creation and entrepreneurial growth. In 2023, it expanded further by introducing CreateHER, a female-focused pre-incubator, and the Stanford Innovation Fellows programme, strengthening connections in global

innovation. Today, IdeasLab with a team of six, stands as a vibrant, inclusive hub for innovation and creativity, connecting students across disciplines and supporting entrepreneurial and problem-solving skills development.

Each year Ideaslab work in partnership with MNC, SME and Start Up companies across Ireland to solve problems they are facing within their organisation. We co-create programmes and workshops with our partners to respond to their specific needs. Our partnership areas include:

- Enterprise Challenge
- Empathy Lab Simulations
- Skills Workshops and Programmes



Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review

QA003 and QA013 outline the University's policies and processes in relation to the quality review of schools and professional services. A key part of the review process is the site visit carried out by an externally led review team on campus over three days. The visit includes meetings with all key stakeholders in the school or unit including head of unit, self-assessment team, staff, students and external stakeholders. Following on from the challenges presented by the pandemic and the need to move to online reviews the University has now returned fully to in person reviews.

A detailed schedule of quality reviews was implemented for 2023/24 including the University's Institutional Review of Research Performance 2024. Follow ups have also been conducted with units reviewed in 2022/23 to ensure that recommendations from the Quality Review Report have been actioned.

The University's Institutional Research Office provides significant support and insight into studentsurvey.ie results, rankings and research metrics.

Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes

IRRP 2024: IRRP2024 is a peer-review process where reviewers of high international regard will rate the quality of research of a School. The purpose of the rating will be to compare the school's research quality with international best practice, in accordance with the principles of the [Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment](#). Reviewers will also be asked for comment on the performance of the School, given various staffing and resource profiles, constraints and other environment data taking into particular consideration the impact of Covid-19. Prior to assessment, all Schools will produce (1) research outputs (2) a School research environment report, (3) impact case studies. Quality ratings will be allocated by reviewers based on these three aspects of research performance. [QA004 IRRP2024](#) outlines the policy and procedure proposed by the IRRP Steering Group and approved by Academic Council.

The following panel chairs have been appointed to oversee the three-year process:

IRRP2024 Overall Chairs	
College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies	Prof Tobias Kelly, Edinburgh
College of Business, Public Policy and Law	Prof Joanne Conaghan, Bristol
College of Science and Engineering	Prof David Price, UCL
College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	Prof Jo Rycroft-Malone, Lancaster

Year 1: Submissions were completed by Year 1 schools on the 21st June 2024. A total of 652 research outputs have been received from the schools and 22 case studies.

School:	Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies	School of Biological and Chemical Sciences	School of Business & Economics	School of English, Media and Creative Arts	School of Health Sciences	School of History & Philosophy	Total
FTE Number of Permanent and Fixed Term Lecturing Staff contracted to do research	27	53	65	32	24	17	218
Number of Outputs:	80	158	194	96	73	51	652
Number of Impact Case Studies:	3	5	7	3	2	2	22

Each research output will be assessed by two readers and each impact case study and research environment report will be assessed by the panel chair and overall chair. Assessments will be carried by over 70 readers between October and February/March with a view to finalising review reports before the end of the 2024/25 academic year.

Year 2 schools are at the early stages of the process with a submission date of June 20th 2025.

RIMS: ISS recognise the importance of IT support for the Research Community as a leading priority for the University. We have a dedicated IT research advisory resource to liaise directly with the Research Office, Research Institutes and colleges.

- During 2023/2024 ISS supported the Research Office on the implementation of Phase 1 of the Research Information Management System (RIMS) in deploying the newly procured Elsevier PURE system.

- Participation on the University Research Process Improvement programme and technical delivery support for prioritised tactical delivery workstreams.

The Research Information Management System (RIMS) consists of two core elements:

i) Research Information System - that captures and presents (to internal and external audiences) the totality of our research activities, outputs/impacts and collaborations. It provides a comprehensive platform that allows us to efficiently manage and display our research activities, while providing insights and valuable reporting. It consolidates data on individual and organisational (including College, School and research unit level) research profiles, publications, awards, and more into a single, user-friendly portal.

ii) Research Grant Management system to manage research grants through the procedures of the university from identifying and presenting funding opportunities; to a workflow that records funding proposals and facilitates a system of internal review and approval (financial and technical) for submission; to post award project kick-off (contract repository), execution and closure.

Key to both of these elements is a sophisticated, comprehensive and customisable reporting function.

The 1st element of the system (the profiles/portal) will be launched at end of March, with work on the 2nd element to start then and a planned implementation within 12 months.

Graduate Studies Board: The Graduate Studies Board carried out an Annual Review of Postgraduate Research Programmes with each college for AY 2023/24. Intake numbers have grown but a focus is required on completion rates.

	ASSCS				BPPL				SE				MNHS				Total	Total	Total	Total
	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Year 1	65	54	66	74	18	19	21	36	130	154	146	144	56	54	52	68	269	281	285	322
Year 2	50	59	50	58	27	18	18	18	124	90	123	123	33	54	50	48	234	221	241	247
Year 3	59	51	58	49	13	24	14	13	91	112	78	107	35	24	48	48	198	211	198	217
Year 4	52	38	34	36	9	14	20	18	83	85	104	71	21	30	23	41	165	167	181	166
Year 5	6	10	4	4	4	2	2	0	3	4	2	4	2	4	1	1	15	20	9	9
Year 6	6	4	10	3	2	2	1	1	0	2	3	1	4	2	2	0	12	10	16	5
Total	238	216	222	224	73	79	76	86	431	447	456	450	151	168	176	206	893	910	930	966

A report from the Board to AC Standing noted challenges with a four-year target for completion, the importance of project management by PhDs and by supervisors and the crucial role of the Graduate Research Committee around early intervention to ensure research progress is on track with an emphasis placed on supervisors rather than students to manage completion rates.

Of those who started in that year, how many completed within 8 years?			
AcYear_PhDstart	Completed after 8yrs	Completed within 8yrs	Total
2014/15	57	158	215
2015/16	52	183	235
2016/17	65	149	214

↓

Completion rate			
AcYear_PhDstart	Completed after 8yrs	Completed within 8yrs	Total
2014/15	27%	73%	100%
2015/16	22%	78%	100%
2016/17	30%	70%	100%

↓

Average PhD length of those who completed within 8 years						
AcYear_PhDstart	CASSCS	CBPPL	CMNHS	COSE	Intercollege	Total
2014/15	4.71	5.70	4.61	5.12	6.69	4.99
2015/16	4.60	5.25	4.76	4.64		4.69
2016/17	4.32	5.38	4.68	4.86		4.75

Early interventions have already been put in place to help with this including mid-programme mini-vivas. Other interventions to be considered include rewarding those who complete on time and charging a full fee from year five of PhD, rather than a reduced write-up fee.

ENLIGHT: ENLIGHT Joint Education Initiatives - University of Galway have hosted several joint modules with ENLIGHT students travelling to Galway for Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPS). ENLIGHT partners have also facilitated our students to attend modules in partner universities. Work is ongoing to facilitate joint programmes with ENLIGHT partners in a variety of study areas. Joint programmes are a strategic priority of the alliances as we look towards the blueprint for a joint European Degree. The identification and removal of national barriers will be key to this process. University of Galway academics have successfully applied to be part of 13 education projects in recent ENLIGHT calls which will see further education projects coming on stream in the current academic year. The ENLIGHT alliance met for a General Assembly in Bern in November 2024 to agree the education strategy for 2025-2027 and work is ongoing on finalising these outputs. A key feature of this new strategy will involve prioritising elements of virtual mobility to increase the wider participation of students and staff across the alliance.

ENLIGHT University System

ENLIGHT partners universities are currently working on drafting AISBL legal statutes to enable the alliance to operate as a single entity rather than ten partner universities. Once this has been established this will form the

basis for an alliance cooperation agreement that will enable the sustainability of the alliance into the future beyond the current funded period.

ENLIGHT RISE (Research and Innovation)

ENLIGHT RISE, 'Research and Innovation agenda with and for Society' funded from the Horizon 2020 'Science with and for Society'(SwafS) call for European Universities closed out in August 2024. The final physical meeting took place at University of Bordeaux in early October 2024 and the review meeting with the European Commission was held virtually in November 2024.

Project outputs are available via the [ENLIGHT R&I Observatory](#) and via [Zenodo](#). These deliverables feature the following topics: Research & Innovation Synergies, Digital research infrastructures, Research assessment & Early Career Researchers, Innovation, Open Science, Public Engagement & Co-Creation of Research, and Research Impact. University of Galway had active input into all work packages and deliverables, particularly staff from the Research & Innovation Office.

To support the goal of connecting the R&I ENLIGHT community, the offices of the Vice President International and Vice President Research & Innovation funded the creation of 6 Galway lead ENLIGHT Research Networks. The EMMELO network, led by Dr Ekaterina Yahyaoui, CBPPL, was successfully funded by the EU's Horizon Europe programme to the tune of €2.6m.

ENLIGHT Teaching and Learning Conference

The fourth ENLIGHT Teaching and Learning Conference took place at the University of Tartu from 7 to 9 October 2024 under the theme of Innovation and Creativity in Higher Education. The T&L Conference annually convenes teachers, program administrators, educational developers, students and other stakeholders to share their experiences and ideas on how it is possible to connect the ENLIGHT educational goals and concepts with teaching and learning practice. University of Galway's 20+ delegation contributed via oral presentations, poster presentation sessions, interactive and/or co-creative workshops and roundtables. Additionally, Galway was awarded second place for the annual T&L Award for the ENLIGHT blended intensive module, Equity and Sustainable Transitions Summer School.

The 2025 iteration will take place at the Uppsala University on 8-10 October 2025. The provisional theme is Playfulness for the Future of Higher Education.

Third-mission activities, societal and community engagement

University of Galway and county libraries encouraging young people to engage with STEM: The University of Galway based STEM programme ReeLIFE SCIENCE has presented six libraries around Ireland with audiovisual equipment to help young people in schools and youth groups take part in an innovative science video competition. ReeLIFE SCIENCE challenges young science enthusiasts and filmmakers across the island of Ireland, north and south, to produce fun, 3-minute science videos to educate and entertain the public. The videos can communicate any aspect of STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), including topics like: Climate Action, How Things Work, Emerging Technology and Marvels of Medicine. With a prize fund of more than €5000, the best videos from primary schools, secondary schools and youth organisations will be screened for the public at the Galway Science and Technology Festival at University of Galway later in the year. ReeLIFE SCIENCE is supported by Science Foundation Ireland's Discover Programme, University of Galway's College of Science and Engineering, the CÚRAM SFI Research Centre for Medical Devices, and the Cell EXPLORERS science outreach programme.

Outdoor gym: University of Galway has opened two new on-campus gyms, located at College Green and across from the Arts Millennium Building, as part of the wider Sports for All initiative that aim to provide fitness facilities to students, staff and visitors to our campus. The outdoor gyms align with the university's Sustainability Strategy by providing an opportunity for physical activity on campus. The gyms offer access to a range of exercise equipment including exercise bikes, leg press, chest press and shoulder press, pull down rowing machine, cross trainers, walkers, stepper, hand bikes and shoulder wheel station, and seating areas and water fountains. One quarter of the equipment has also been designed to accommodate the needs of individuals with a physical disability.

Launch of new mental health art exhibition: An exhibition focused on mental health, Mindscapes, took place at the University of Galway between July 12th and August 2nd. The Mindscapes initiative is the first project from the Scientific Arts Lab at the University of Galway. Mindscapes featured artwork centred on the topic of mental health and mental health expression from 10 artists. Artists collaborated with 14 academic researchers from the Universities of Galway, Oxford, Edinburgh, Birmingham, and London. Artists selected a mental health topic ranging from wellbeing and bipolar disorder to sleep and emotions, and then collaborated with academics to create informed art pieces on their topic of choice.

University of Galway Parkrun: The University of Galway Parkrun launched in December 2023. This is a free, fun, weekly, 5km community event. It is organised by volunteers for the benefit of everyone. The inaugural run saw over 200 participants take to the starting line. The Parkrun follows along the scenic route of the river Corrib on the ground of the University of Galway campus. The Parkrun is a fantastic initiative promoting physical, social, and mental health and well-being.

Regional Business Summit: The annual Regional Business Summit for the West of Ireland was hosted by University of Galway for the second year in a row, with a focus on addressing business challenges in the region. The event was organised by J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics, in collaboration with Galway Chamber, itag - the technology community in the western region, and Data 2 Sustain. The Summit provided research-informed insights and practical advice on how businesses can be more innovative and how to respond to current and future challenges. This year's summit focused on digitalisation at speed and responsible technology; scaling a business with lessons from indigenous companies and multinationals; and sustainable finance. The sustainable finance panel addressed the challenges of integrating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations into financial systems and directing investments towards more sustainable economic activities. The panel brought together multiple perspectives - banking, business, and academia - to address the critical drivers, implications, and importance of accessing finance based on sustainable practices.

The Greater Galway Charter for Sustainable Urbanism: University of Galway and Atlantic Technological University (Galway) have come together with the Mayor of the City of Galway and the Galway Chamber to announce and sign the Greater Galway Charter for Sustainable Urbanism – a manifesto for long-term strategic thinking and planning for the region. The Greater Galway Charter is intended as a living, working document which helps to stimulate cross community conversations about the kind of city and places signatories want for Galway by 2070, and the steps to begin today to deliver that 50-year vision. The Greater Galway Charter is underpinned by four anchoring Principles that guide what Galway should aspire to be as a City and a Place, namely: Sustainable; Inclusive; Responsive and Proud. Everyone interested in the future direction of development of Galway, and anyone who shares the passion for the city of the future, can sign up to signal support for the Charter and be part of the conversation.

Internationalisation: Following the launch of the Global Galway project in 2020, the University continued its drive to embed internationalisation across 2023/24 in the following ways:

1. Establishment of a Global Partnerships Team

The Global Partnerships Team was established in July 2024. It consolidates roles previously spread across recruitment, mobility and operations & finance, to provide a central support for external stakeholder engagement. Immediate priorities include the development of institutional partnerships, building links with overseas sponsors, providing administrative management for scholarship programmes (internal and external) and hosting incoming visits.

2. Joint Planning with Academic Units

Global Galway initiated an annual joint planning process with each School within the University. Taking place over the summer, Global Galway provides market insights and data to underpin conversations with each discipline, identifies opportunities and challenges and suggests ways forward. This process ensures that we are aligned in our approach to internationalisation over the coming academic year.

3. Further Integration with Professional Services

In a similar vein to the joint planning with academic units, Global Galway also prioritised closer working with other professional services over 2023/24. This has included the establishment of working groups with Admissions and Marketing colleagues; the expansion of International Committee members to include Student Services and Graduate School representatives and joint initiatives with Global Employability and the Quality Office. Global Galway representatives have also joined the Graduate Studies Board, the Curriculum & Programme Board, Decolonising the Curriculum Working Group; the Accommodation Task Group and Race Equality Framework Group. This ensures the international student voice is heard across all fora.

4. Expansion of the English Language Centre

As a demonstration of our commitment to supporting International Students, in 2023/24 our English Language Centre (ELC) expanded from one permanent member of staff to three. The ELC also saw a 46% increase in uptake of pre-sessional students from the previous year and supported over 200 international students through in-sessional programmes.

5. Operational Improvement

The University continued to focus on operational improvements to support the applicant and student journey over 2023/24. Specifically for international students, a university-wide project to streamline student comms has simplified pre-arrival messages. This ensured that students receive important communications at the point at which they are needed, in a clear and accessible format. The development of our Student Ambassador platform matches prospective students with current ones and makes sure that information remains relevant to needs. These initiatives, alongside extended pre-departure briefings, increased visa and late arrival support and dedicated conversion activities, meant that – in 2023/24 - the University welcomed 1,206 international students across 67 nationalities.

Integration of UN sustainable development goals (SDG)

University of Galway had the designation of National SDG Champion in 2023/24, appointed by the Government of Ireland and used the opportunity to champion the UN Sustainable Development Goals through an SDG Week of engagement activities, developing an SDG Trail on campus, appointing dedicated SDG focused student leaders and through many other initiatives that you will find detailed in this report.

A dedicated Sustainability Office was also established for the University. The role of the Sustainability Office is to empower the University's diverse communities of staff, students, and partners to co-create tomorrow's sustainable campus and deliver the SDGs. Reporting to the Deputy President & Registrar, the Sustainability Office comprises a Director of Sustainability, Community and University Sustainability Officer, Sustainability Accountant, Sustainability Administrator and works closely with two Lecturers in Education for Sustainable Development.

University of Galway Sustainability Highlights AY 23-24



Launch of new Sustainability Office



Hosting of inaugural SDG Week
Celebrating the UN SDGs across
campus 18-23 September 2023



2 new full-time lecturers in Education
for Sustainable Development appointed

NO. 1

47th in the world in Times Higher Education Societal
Impact Ranking 2024 making us the **most sustainable**
university in Ireland by this measure



Designated national SDG Champion 23/24
First University in Ireland to hold this honour

*Sustainable Living
in action*

51% energy efficiency achieved since baseline year

Launch of new SDG Walking Trail

New network of outdoor drinking fountains

Elimination of single-use cups

The University has set a target that sustainability will be embedded in all degree programmes. As degree programmes are built from their constituent modules, to gain a snapshot of progress to date, the extent to which sustainability is covered in modules was first assessed. A keyword scanning method was used to identify whether a module potentially covered sustainability (the method and its limitations are detailed online). A sample of approximately one-third of University modules with learning outcomes was extracted from Akari, the curriculum management system.

Following the keyword scan, three members of the sustainability team reviewed the flagged modules and agreed a final list of 'sustainability modules'. 226 of the modules were classified as 'sustainability modules'. Further data collection and analysis is currently underway to provide a performance indicator for the full set of modules and degree programmes offered by the University. This will be complemented by new visualisation tools for sustainability in the curriculum.

Research on Sustainability: This indicator uses SciVal (Scopus) data to assess the quality and impact of University of Galway's research towards 16 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In 2022, 1,143 of the University's 2,532 research publications related to the SDGs, i.e. 45% increasing from 34% in 2018. University of Galway has a particularly strong publication record related to SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) with 45% of the University's SDG-related publications aligning with this SDG.

The University's top output by number of publications for the past 5 years is SDG 3 (Good Health & Wellbeing), SDG7 (Affordable & Clean Energy), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure) and SDG 6 (Clean Water & Sanitation).

Launch of new programme in Sustainability Leadership: University of Galway has launched a new Master programme in sustainability leadership. The programme aims to cultivate future leaders equipped to drive sustainability initiatives across various sectors. The programme includes mandatory modules directly aligned to SDG 12, for example, Responsible Management and Leadership; Consumption and the Consumerist Society; and Sustainable Innovation and covers key topics including sustainable business practises, environmental governance and strategic sustainability management. Students gain hand on experience through internships, consultancy projects and fieldwork. Additionally, the programme includes an immersive international study visit and this global experience can helps students understand diverse sustainability challenges. The new master's programme expands the University of Galway's suite of sustainability-focused postgraduate courses. The new Sustainability Leadership course provides students with training in the leadership skills needed to address the challenges and opportunities that contemporary businesses face in the areas of environmental sustainability and corporate leadership.

Full details of all activities and achievements related to embedding SDGs are highlighted in the University's comprehensive [Sustainability Report](#).

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

The initiatives and actions described below, undertaken during AY2023/24, shared the broad aim of enhancing the detection of academic misconduct, raising awareness, and improving the robustness of assessments against academic misconduct. Throughout the year, Academic Integrity Office staff worked with various internal and external partners, including the Disability Support Service (DSS), National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN), and the University of Limerick, to enhance academic integrity policy and practices. Key stakeholders for the Academic Integrity Office included students, academic staff, professional services staff, and external partners such as researchers and other universities. The initiatives led to the development of new resources, increased awareness of academic integrity issues through presentations and training sessions, and the establishment of new data collection methods.

Overview of Initiatives

Assessment Design Improvements:

- **Developed Sample Statements on Generative AI Use:** Created and shared sample statements for assignment and syllabus documents to guide the use of Generative AI. Impetus was to raise awareness and improve the robustness of assessments against academic misconduct. Statements were disseminated via the Academic Integrity Advisor (AIA) network, College Vice-Deans for T&L, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) SharePoint, and the university Teaching & Learning Forum Teams Group (7/2/24).

Awareness Campaigns:

- **Presentations and Meetings:** Academic Integrity Office staff delivered presentations on academic integrity to various academic units, including the School of Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies (26/2/24), and the Discipline of English (13/3/24). Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) also attended and presented at the CEL261 class on academic integrity (20/3/24) and the N-TUTORR Masterclass on Academic Integrity (21/3/24). Impetus was to develop partnerships and collaboration and raise awareness of academic integrity policy and procedures.
- **Student Videos:** Produced and uploaded six student videos on academic integrity to the University of Galway YouTube channel, with promotion on university website and social media platforms (April 2024). Impetus was to engage student body and raise awareness of academic integrity policy and procedures.

Staff Upskilling:

- **Training Sessions:** Organised and delivered three one-hour Courageous Conversations training sessions for AIAs, with 22 attendees. Sessions were conducted both online and in-person, with recordings and slides shared via email (7-13/3/24). Purpose was to upskill staff and raise awareness of correct procedures.
- **New Staff Resources:** Developed and published resources on Generative AI and Turnitin's Similarity Report, shared via the AIA network, CELT SharePoint, and the Teaching & Learning Forum Teams Group (29/2/24). Resources aimed at raising awareness of academic integrity policy and procedures, ensuring consistency of practice, and enhancing the detection of academic misconduct.

Student Support and Training:

- **Guidance Documents:** Published a guidance document on literacy software and academic integrity, in collaboration with the Disability Support Service (DSS), to support students using tools like Grammarly (21/8/24). Impetus was to clarify responsible and appropriate use of literacy software for staff and students.

Data Collection:

- **Surveys and Registers:** Launched a survey of AIAs to gather information on local practices and legacy misconduct records (Jan 2024). Developed and initiated an Interim Academic Misconduct Register (10/1/24). Its purpose is to centralise records of academic misconduct, as mandated by academic integrity policy.

Technological Investments:

- **Funding Award:** Secured funding (in collaboration with CELT) from the University of Galway Strategic Fund for the 2024/25 academic year to support academic integrity awareness and training for all students and staff (€56,841) (28/6/24). Impetus was to develop and launch new resources and training materials on academic integrity for staff and students.

National and International Engagement:

- **Collaborations and Meetings:** AIO participated in the Appointment Committee for an Educational Developer - Academic Integrity post at the University of Limerick (4/3/24). AIO met with researchers from the University of Graz to discuss academic integrity developments (8/8/24). Academic Integrity Office staff attended NAIN Plenary Meetings throughout the academic year, engaging with key stakeholders and developing cross-institutional partnerships.

Additional Considerations**Information Dissemination:**

- **Dissemination:** Information about academic integrity was shared through various channels, including the AIA network, College Vice-Deans for T&L, CELT SharePoint, Teaching & Learning Forum Teams Group, and university website and social media platforms.

Actions Based on Regulatory Updates:

- **Regulatory Updates:** Actions included updating policies, developing new resources, and providing training sessions: these actions are in response to the broad landscape of academic integrity, which is also reflected in QQI regulatory updates.

Incorporation of External Resources:

- **External Resources:** Resources from NAIN play a key role in shaping any updates to policy or development of new resources. For example, the Lexicon is consulted to ensure consistent use of terms in any new resources or policy updates.

Student Support Resources:

- **Support for Learners:** Provided guidance documents, training sessions, and online resources for staff to enable them to help students understand their obligations and the consequences of academic misconduct. Dedicated resources for students are currently in preparation.

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators <i>Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation. If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).</i>
1	Athena Swan	<p>University of Galway will apply for a Silver Athena Swan award in April 2025. In preparation, a Self-Assessment Team (SAT) and working groups will be set up to work on the application.</p> <p>The SAT and its working groups will assess, based on analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, how University of Galway is progressing in terms of gender equality, and other equality concerns, and what the priority areas of focus should be for our institution going forward.</p> <p>Some of the central areas that are dealt with in the application include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Athena Swan and EDI work is encouraged and supported within the University • The career pipelines of academic, professional service, technical and research staff • Career development • The culture at University of Galway • Quantitative data analysis • Qualitative data analysis • Planned actions to tackle issues identified • Analysis and action planning in relation equality grounds other than gender

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting students
2	Strategy	<p>Údarás na hOllscoile will endorse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> three strategic priorities agreed by the University Management Team, under the headings: Distinctive Research Impact; Education for the Future; and Effective Organisation that Empowers our People. Research pillars – four areas of distinctive research impact Eight Priority Initiatives to support implementation of the strategic plan <p>The Strategy development process will be concluded with a close-out workshop with the University Management Team, followed by a meeting of the Standing, Strategic Planning and Governance Committee. We will submit a final full draft to Údarás na hOllscoile in February before sending for ministerial approval in late February 2025, with a view to a launch in April 2025.</p>
3	IRRP	<p>IRRP2024 is a research assessment exercise for eighteen schools of the University. It will be a peer review process where reviewers of high international regard will rate the quality of research of a School. The purpose of the rating will be to compare the school's research quality with international best practice, in accordance with the principles of the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment. The following 6 schools will be assessed in 2024/25:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> School of Nursing and Midwifery School of Education School of Computer Science School of Engineering School of Law School of Psychology
4	Library	<p>A project to develop a new Library and Learning Commons for the University of Galway is well underway. This new building, which is expected to open in 2027, will</p>

		<p>greatly enhance the quality of the student experience and will enable new, innovative methods of teaching, learning and assessment. The Library and Learning Commons will be an inspirational, welcoming, high-tech space of learning and creativity, embodying our campus as a community built around knowledge. A vibrant intellectual and social forum, the new Library will provide access to the latest learning technologies, a gateway to the world’s knowledge through its rich collections, and expert staff help. This dynamic environment will bring diverse people and disciplines together and enable interaction, discovery, innovation, and new partnerships. It will be a “go-to” place of exciting possibilities for students and staff, a space that is bright, attractive, appealing and makes learning truly enjoyable.</p> <p>The Library and Learning Commons will provide quality spaces for individual study as well as collaborative spaces that will enable group work, collaboration and meetings across disciplines. The Makerspace, Digital Scholarship Centre and Recording Studio will mean students and researchers can design, create, and make, enabling the development of innovation and creativity skills. These facilities will also enable new ways of assessing student learning, e.g. podcast and video creation or product prototyping. Access to print and online information resources will be provided in the Library and Learning Commons and students will be exposed to cultural and heritage resources and archives through an exhibition area. Expert staff will be available to support students with all aspects of their learning journey. A Learning Success Hub will provide one-to-one support and a training room will enable the delivery of workshops for the development of academic, digital and creative skills. The building</p>
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		will be accessible throughout and will include a low-sensory study space as well as an Assistive Technology Centre.
5	Reputation audit	The findings of the Reputation Audit conducted during 2023/24 are already being used to inform the strategic direction of the University, including the development of the next Strategic Plan in the context of articulating the University's identity and its strategic priorities for the next five years (Distinctive Research Impact, Education for the Future and an Effective Organisation that Empowers Our People). The outcomes of the Reputation Audit will be embedded in the following strategic keystone initiatives that the University is committed to delivering over the next five years - the establishment of an Organisational Transformation Office, Technology Enablement Programme, Communicating Distinctiveness Project (including Website development) and a Research Process Improvement Project.

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
IRRP2024 Research Review:		
School of Computer Science	June 2025 – April 2026	2017*
School of Education	June 2025 – April 2026	2017*
School of Engineering	June 2025 – April 2026	2017*
School of Law	June 2025 – April 2026	2017*
School of Nursing and Midwifery	June 2025 – April 2026	2017*
School of Psychology	June 2025 – April 2026	2017*
Quality Reviews:		
Information Systems and Solutions (ISS)	March 2025	2018
Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development	March 2025	2018
Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)	March 2025	2018

* Date of last research review

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Details of all upcoming reviews can be found [here](#).

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

CASE STUDY 1: Empathy Studio at the University of Galway: A Model for Innovation and Learning

Introduction

Background and Context:

- Empathy plays a foundational role in both education and societal development. In 2023, the University of Galway launched the Empathy Studio to embed empathy as a core component of student learning, community engagement, and innovation.
- The Studio is part of the University's broader strategy to support quality learning and leadership in innovation while advancing student engagement. The Empathy Studio's contributions have been recognised through awards including the UIIN Entrepreneurial University award 2023 the ACEEU Award in 2024 for Emerging Innovators in 2024.

Theoretical Framework of Empathy

- Empathy is defined as the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. Its significance is reflected in both cognitive empathy (understanding others' perspectives) and emotional empathy (sharing emotions). Both components are essential in education and leadership, fostering interpersonal connections and enhancing collaborative problem-solving (Davis, 1983; Batson, 2009).
- The World Economic Forum (WEF), in its 2020 Future of Jobs report, identified empathy as one of the key skills for the future workforce. As automation and artificial intelligence reshape industries, human-centric skills like empathy, creativity, and emotional intelligence will become increasingly important. This focus on empathy aligns with the Empathy Studio's mission to equip students with the emotional and relational skills needed to thrive in complex, diverse environments (WEF, 2020).

Vision and Purpose of the Empathy Studio

- **Mission:** To create immersive experiences that promote empathy through collaboration with diverse communities and real world challenges, advancing the skills required for future leaders.
- **Objectives:**
 - To integrate empathy into academic curricula and practical projects.
 - To develop tools like the Empathy Playbook, used by international partners to engage students in empathy-building activities.
 - To expand empathy-focused initiatives, such as the newly launched Empathy in Action module in 2024.

New Modules for the School of Medicine

In partnership with the School of Medicine, the Empathy Studio has developed two new modules that position empathy at the core of medical education. These modules aim to enhance healthcare professionals' development by focusing on empathetic patient care while fostering innovation. By integrating empathy with clinical education, these modules help future doctors approach medical challenges with a holistic understanding of patients' emotional and physical needs.

Empathy is used not only to shape the interpersonal skills of future doctors but also to drive innovative thinking in healthcare. These modules aim to encourage compassionate healthcare leadership, promoting empathetic communication and patient-centred care as essential components of medical innovation.

Evaluation Approach: Jefferson Scale and EntreComp

To measure the effectiveness of empathy-focused initiatives, the Empathy Studio employs a dual evaluation approach using the **Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE)** and the **EntreComp (Entrepreneurship Competence) framework**, capturing both clinical and entrepreneurial facets of empathy in student development.

1. Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE):

The JSE is a well-regarded tool in healthcare for measuring empathy, especially in patient-centred contexts. At the Empathy Studio, empathy levels are assessed at multiple stages—before and after participation in key programs—to quantify students' growth in cognitive and emotional empathy. Metrics such as perspective-taking, compassionate care, and emotional resonance are benchmarked to provide a nuanced picture of empathy development across various student demographics and disciplines. Tracking these metrics over time allows the Studio to identify patterns in empathy enhancement and adjust programming as needed to support sustained impact.

2. EntreComp Framework:

The EntreComp framework is employed to evaluate empathy's role in fostering entrepreneurial competencies, particularly focusing on teamwork, ethical responsibility, and value creation in social contexts. Specific metrics within EntreComp, such as the capacity to collaborate effectively, make ethical decisions, and apply empathy in problem-solving, provide additional insights into how empathy contributes to students' professional and social skillsets. By aligning with EntreComp's recognised standards, the Studio ensures its approach to empathy development supports broad, employable competencies.

3. Longitudinal Tracking:

The Empathy Studio plans to enhance its evaluation approach by implementing long-term tracking of former participants. This will provide insights into the sustained impact of empathy-building initiatives, enabling the Studio to refine programming based on alumni progress and feedback, particularly in careers where empathy is critical.

Through this robust evaluation framework, the Empathy Studio at the University of Galway not only supports empathy development but also continuously measures and validates its effectiveness, ensuring a holistic and lasting impact on students' skills and perspectives.

Governance and Structure

The Empathy Studio operates under the University's established **governance model**, ensuring alignment with strategic goals and adherence to the University's quality assurance standards.

Key governance bodies:

- All curricular-based modules are managed at the College level, adhering to QQI and the University's Marks and Standards policies and protocols. These modules are fully accredited and undergo evaluation by both internal and external examiners, maintaining rigorous academic standards.
- Additionally, our co-curricular programs are designed and measured using the EntreComp framework, adopting a curricular-based approach to their design and delivery. This approach ensures students receive a robust training experience with highly applied outcomes, equipping them with practical skills that enhance their educational journey and readiness for professional environments.

Key Initiatives and Projects

1. **Empathy Playbook:**
 - a. A unique tool designed to foster empathy by integrating real-world community challenges into learning experiences.
 - b. Piloted empathy-driven games developed in collaboration with partner organisations in the EU Project 'Mind the Future'
2. **Empathy in Action:**
 - a. A hands-on module where students collaborate with external stakeholders, developing empathy for diverse communities, particularly in healthcare and social entrepreneurship.
3. **Workshops and Collaborations:**
 - a. Projects like the Empathy and Diabetes workshop that aim to build empathy towards individuals living with chronic illnesses.
 - b. Partnerships with companies including Medtronic, Liberty IT, and Cisco to explore empathy in leadership and workplace diversity.

Impact and Outcomes

- **Student Engagement:**
 - Over 1,000 students engage annually with Empathy Studio initiatives, developing critical soft skills. We have seen measurable increases observed in students' empathy scores across various programs. These improvements, tracked through the Jefferson Scale of Empathy, underscore the Studio's effectiveness in fostering essential interpersonal skills and enhancing students' capacity for empathetic engagement.
 - Feedback from students and partner organisations reflects measurable improvements in empathy, collaboration, and leadership skills.
- **Community and Industry Collaborations:**
 - The Studio partners with regional and global organisations to promote inclusive innovation, contributing to the University's mission as a research-led institution with a societal focus.

Future Plans and Developments

- We are expanding the Studio's scope to deliver fully immersive empathy experiences that engage all five senses, allowing participants to achieve 100% sensory immersion. By stimulating sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell, we enable individuals to truly step into the lived experiences of others, fostering deeper understanding and connection
- Continued collaboration with global partners to advance empathy in education and industry settings.

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CASE STUDY 2: USP - UNIVERSITY SKILLS PASSPORT: ENHANCING HOLISTIC STUDENT DEVELOPMENT



[EXPLORE THE USP PLATFORM](#)

Theme:

Teaching & Learning, Student Wellbeing, Supports and resources for learners

Keywords:

Skills Development, Digital Credentialing, Student Engagement and Empowerment

**Introduction**

The USP is an innovative bespoke IT platform that promotes and integrates skill development in Higher Education. The primary output is a portable, verifiable digital credential that represents a student's skill development, encompassing both curricular and co/extracurricular achievements. The USP application also acts as a central hub where students can discover the many co/extracurricular opportunities available across the university.

Engage in student life, *Discover your passions...*

Dive in and explore the activities on offer...



View All Activities



Sports Clubs & Student Societies



Volunteering & Personal Development



Employability & Entrepreneurship

The USP platform tracks skills acquired through academic modules, clubs, societies, volunteering, personal development activities, and more, awarding real-time recognition through digital badges. Each digital badge clearly identifies what skills a student has developed and how these skills were acquired. As a student accumulates badges, these badges are collated centrally on the USP platform. Students can generate their own summary USP document at any time —whether to create a CV, to prepare for an interview, or to view an inventory of their skills and the activities they have completed. Finally, Each student will receive their degree parchment, academic transcript, and USP document upon graduation.



Context and Rationale

The USP initiative is part of a larger initiative called Designing Futures. In September 2020, the University of Galway Designing Futures programme received €7.4 million in funding through the Human Capital Initiative. This four-year flagship programme was tasked with driving transformational change in education for students, staff, and enterprise partners. Designed to empower, educate and support students to lead better lives and succeed in the complex world we live in, it aligns with key national strategies, including the National Skills Strategy and the Action Plan for Education.

In an era where students are increasingly connected through technology, human connection has suffered. This disconnect has led to challenges in developing essential life skills. Sometimes termed transversal skills or transferrable skills, these uniquely human skills are central to our ability to grow and flourish as individuals and in particular to function effectively in the work place.

Employers today are looking for graduates who are not only academically qualified but also well-rounded individuals with evidence of a strong skills profile. They value candidates who have developed key competencies such as communication, teamwork, adaptability, and leadership alongside their university degrees. To stand out in a competitive job market, students must demonstrate a balance of academic excellence and practical skills development.

Now more than ever, higher education must play a crucial role in supporting and fostering skill development. By embedding skill development within the third-level education experience, we can actively empower students to grow. This approach ensures they graduate with the competencies needed for both personal and professional success.

The USP has been developed in direct response to this need. The USP actively promotes engagement in university life, highlights opportunities for skills development and empowers students to identify and articulate their skills.

Implementation

The USP initiative was designed and implemented as follows:

1. 2022/23: [Skills Framework](#) Development: The Designing Futures [skills framework](#) served as the foundation for mapping and categorizing skills gained through curricular and co-curricular activities.

Designing Futures Framework for Student Development



2. 2022/23: A comprehensive cross-functional team of stakeholders was established. Design Thinking Methodology was utilized to progress through Stakeholder mapping and engagement, establishing a problem statement, brainstorming solutions and prototyping a solution. It was determined that the proposed solution is the first of its kind in Ireland and Europe and that a bespoke development was required. Rapid iterative prototyping, working with a UX designer proved very effective at this point.

3. 2023/24: Documentation of requirements and Procurement: The team formally documented requirements and completed the public procurement process selecting vendor partner AMOS to deliver the solution.

4. 2024/25: Development, Test and Delivery. The USP, a central integrated platform, was created to publish and track skills development opportunities.

5. February 2025: Launch, Marketing and Communications. The USP will be formally launched to the student and staff community of University of Galway.

Conclusion

The University Skills Passport is a transformative initiative that positions the University of Galway as a leader in digital credentialing and holistic student development. By formally recognizing skills achieved both inside

and outside the classroom, the USP not only enhances students' employability but also fosters a culture of lifelong learning and personal growth.

This powerful landmark initiative harnesses technology to support several current and emerging needs in Higher Education including:

- Providing a central platform to publish all extra/co-curricular activities so that students can holistically, in their own words **"Discover, Connect and Thrive..."** ultimately improving engagement, progression and retention.
- Supporting innovation in curriculum design and delivery, providing **a platform to highlight excellence** in delivery of competency based education in keeping with the globally recognized emerging skills agenda
- Empowering our students, **equipping them with the language and self-awareness** to identify the skills that they have developed both inside and outside of the classroom.

Moving forward, the initiative aims to expand its capabilities, further embedding skills recognition into the university experience and sharing best practices with the broader higher education community.

CASE STUDY 3: University of Galway Undergraduate Medical Programme

This case study outlines changes to the University of Galway Undergraduate Medical Programme. It includes the reasons for change, the changes in the curriculum model, the additional more student-centred teaching methodologies, changes in assessment. This is followed by an outline of our QI processes in the programme.

The rationale for the revised Curriculum

The revised five-year undergraduate curriculum is named **G31**. The programme title also changes from the Undergraduate Medical Programme to the Direct Entry Medical Programme aligning with the medical council nomenclature for basic medical education programmes (Direct Entry versus Graduate Entry).

The drivers for this G31 curricular change are both internal (adherence to our college philosophy that programmes are up to date in both content and delivery and grounded in clinical expertise and cutting-edge research, to best prepare students to meet the challenges of a changing healthcare environment) and external (the Irish Medical Council requirements and new standards and international benchmarking).

Looking at these in a little more detail -

1. Healthcare changes include.
 - a. Models of healthcare are changing to include a greater focus on chronic conditions and community care.
 - b. Medical technology is playing an increasingly significant role in transforming healthcare delivery, diagnostics, therapy, and surveillance.
 - c. The scholarship of healthcare delivery and evidence-based medicine have become essential components of doctors' practice.
2. Medical education changes include.
 - a. Learner centred programs have superseded traditional teacher centred curriculum designs.
 - b. Competency/outcome-based curricula are replacing traditional content or time-based programs.
 - c. Curricula are now called upon to comprise standardised outcomes yet allow individualised learning trajectories that support self-regulated learning and promote professional identity formation.
 - d. E-learning and simulation are becoming increasingly important supports for in-person and clinical education.
 - e. Longer clinical placements, with more active student engagement are being promoted as more effective than traditional short-term clerkships in terms of preparation for practice and professional identity formation.
3. Medical Council Accreditation standards are changing, and new standards have been introduced in Ireland in 2024. These include -
 - a. The curriculum content provided is in line with the mission and learning outcomes.
 - b. The curriculum must demonstrate a focus on preparation for clinical practice and the work of an intern rather than final medical examinations.

- b. There is a focus on ensuring patient safety.
- c. Full vertical and horizontal integration of curricula including significant early patient contact, learner mentorship and high-quality individualised feedback are core requirements.
- c. Clinical placement is characterised by observation of students' practice with feedback and by an increasing emphasis on learner participation in health care delivery.
- d. The clinical learning environment should be sufficiently resourced and staffed to ensure an effective environment for learning and a safe environment for learners and students.
- e. Educators and teachers must be supported and engage in continuing professional development to support their role in medical education and maintain or advance their career progression as educators.
- f. There is an increasing focus on learners' health, wellbeing, and support.

Design Principles

The G31 curriculum design is founded on principles derived from stakeholder consultation. These include the curriculum being:

1. Designed to facilitate an excellent student learning experience whilst focusing on meeting current and future patient needs.
2. Clinically contextualized throughout using a spiral curriculum design with full horizontal and vertical integration of curriculum content and themes and employing teaching methods which encourage active, participative learning (CBL) alongside traditional delivery methods.
3. Aligned with modern clinical practice to ensure that graduates are prepared to the highest standard possible for postgraduate practice. To achieve this, the curriculum should include extensive early patient contact, a comprehensive communication and clinical skills development programme from year one onwards, an emphasis on collaborative learning, (case-based learning) and longitudinal immersive clinical placements from year three onwards.
4. Constructed with a comprehensive assessment strategy that ensures competence on completion of each academic year, through summative assessment, combined with regular feedback to support learners along their trajectories towards graduation.
5. Using Portfolio to develop and enhance portfolio assessment across all five years of the programme to ensure students demonstrate a progression of their professional skills, values and behaviours and develop lifelong learning skills such as reflective practice.
6. Clearly accessible to both students and staff, including the G31 syllabus, management structure and operational plan.

The Proposed changes: What's Different About G31?

- The G31 curriculum model will be outcomes-based, from graduate outcomes to a set of year level outcomes for each year, mapped to modules and learning blocks. This is different from the current

traditional curriculum structure which has both graduate outcomes and module level outcomes within years but the linkage between both is less transparent.

- The G31 curriculum content will be vertically integrated (through themes) and horizontally integrated (through integrated learning blocks and Case-Based Learning). This is new to the programme. Redundant content will be removed; there will be less rote type content delivery; and there will be new content areas added (planetary (sustainable) health, digital health including data analytics, focus on teamwork and interprofessional learning, patients as partners, self-care and self-development).
- The G31 curriculum will use a spiral curriculum design. The design means that learning outcomes are visited and revisited in subsequent years at greater levels of complexity and practical relevance. This repeated 'stacking' of skills leads to competence.
- The G31 curriculum will have significant early patient contact/experiences. This builds on the student voice strand in the current programme.
- The G31 will have a major communication and clinical skills programme, research, and basic data analytics skills throughout all five years, including all students completing a research project. In the current programme engagement in a research project is optional, through the summer student research programme.
- The G31 curriculum aims to use a longitudinal integrated placement design for clinical placements in Years 3-5 of the programme, in which students not only observe practice but participate in it. This is a change from the traditional short sampling 2–4-week clinical placements and is designed to allow better clinical immersion and learning.
- The G31 curriculum will include a continuous portfolio component, with greater emphasis on "assessment as/for learning", in addition to the year level integrated summative tests of knowledge and skills. This is a significant change for the earlier years of the current programme.

Student-centred teaching methodologies:

The following teaching methodologies will be used in G31 delivery:

- Case- Based Learning
- Traditional knowledge-based teaching methodologies: Lectures, workshops, seminars/small group & team-based tutorials.
- Skills and Simulation based learning: There will also be clinical & procedural skills laboratory sessions, in addition to simulation, with a focus on Inter-professional Learning (IPE)
- Clinical placement learning
- Reflection & mentorship: Feedback & e-Portfolio capture, review, reflection & mentor meetings

What is different in the G31 Assessment Strategy?

- There is a defined system of assessment. This requires a move from separate, stand-alone module/discipline-based summative testing to integrated assessments across 3 modules in each year – knowledge, skills, & behaviours/professional competencies. Each year of the programme thus has 3

modules, namely Module 1-Knowledge of Health, Sickness & Practice, Module 2- Clinical skills for safe practice and Module 3- Professional Competencies.

- The G31 curriculum has a greater focus on assessment for learning and use of e-portfolio, with scheduled regular formative assessments, outcomes captured on e-portfolio, supported by scheduled mentor/e-portfolio advisor reviews, across all years of the programme.
- The G 31 curriculum will include assessment of professional identity formation – professional behaviours & practice.
- The G31 programme management structure will include creation of a programme board assessment subgroup, focusing on Academic Integrity and a standardized approach, across all years, for assessment delivery, feedback, standard setting, reporting and quality improvement.

University QA processes:

Any changes made to the programme are monitored and approved by Programme Board, The College Board of Studies (University Curriculum Committee) and University Academic Council. [QA050 Curriculum Design and Management](#) outlines the principles, policies and processes enabling the governance of all curricula change at University of Galway, including this Programme.

Process monitoring and enhancement occurs through audits of adherence to Programme specific University policies and procedures.

Medical Council Ireland's Quality Assurance process determines the programme's quality assurance processes. It comprises School/Programme compliance with standards, as evidenced through the accreditation process, and Undergraduate Medical Programme Annual Returns, comprising one qualitative and one quantitative report. The school complies with this curriculum monitoring of processes and outcomes through the Undergraduate Programme Board. The annual qualitative report provides progress report on actions arising from accreditation review, a report of significant changes to curriculum in preceding year, the approval processes for same and report on student supports and preparedness for practice enhancements in the programme. Quantitative data is submitted annually across 8 categories: Student demographics, Pass rates, Attrition rates, USMLE pass rates, Degree awards, Clinical placement information, Staffing, Inclusion/ Student Disability data.

Student Evaluation: Student evaluation in the programme is achieved through four main mechanisms:

- Programme Survey – Dundee Ready Education Environment Measure (DREEM).
- Clinical Rotation Survey – Manchester Clinical Placement Index (MCPI).
- Module Survey – University survey tools.
- Student representation and feedback at meetings within the Programme/School organization structure.

As well as developing the mechanism of feedback collection and collation, the programme team has focused on the completion of the feedback cycle, particularly on the dissemination of actions taken to students and staff. Students are also informed in cases of inaction where appropriate with reasons clearly stated.

Programme/Year Level Evaluation: Each year of the six-year programme is evaluated using the Dundee Ready Education Environment Measure (DREEM). The results from these surveys are collated by programme administrator and reviewed by the Programme Board. Each Year Head prepares a summary of the results, the major areas of concern and the action points taken to alleviate these concerns. These summaries are presented to the Programme Board, actioned and communicated to the students as soon as possible via Student-Faculty Forum, Year Head meeting with class representatives and summary posting on the year level Canvas site.

Clinical Rotation Evaluation: A modified version of the Manchester Clinical Placement Index (MCPI) is used in the evaluation of the student learning environment and experience within the clinical module and related clinical placements. This evaluation is carried out following each clinical rotation throughout the year. The results from these surveys are then collated and reviewed, actioned and communicated to students by the relevant Module Leads and Year Heads within each of the years.

Module Level Evaluation in Pre-clinical Years: Modules are evaluated using the Virtual Learning Environment Canvas-based questionnaires based on advice on best practice from CELT. Module-level feedback helps to inform minor adjustments in the delivery of modules. The response rate received varies between modules and the school is keenly aware that medical students are surveyed often and may be subject to survey fatigue. Attention is therefore given to the timing of administration of such electronic surveys.

Student representation and feedback at meetings in Programme/School organization structure: In addition to above mechanisms, student feedback is also dealt with as an item on many school committee agendas or directly in the student-faculty forum where student representatives from each year of the programme meet programme management. The agenda is co-created and co-led by student lead rep and programme director. Additionally each Year Head has regular meetings with student representatives to discuss issues arising as the year progresses.