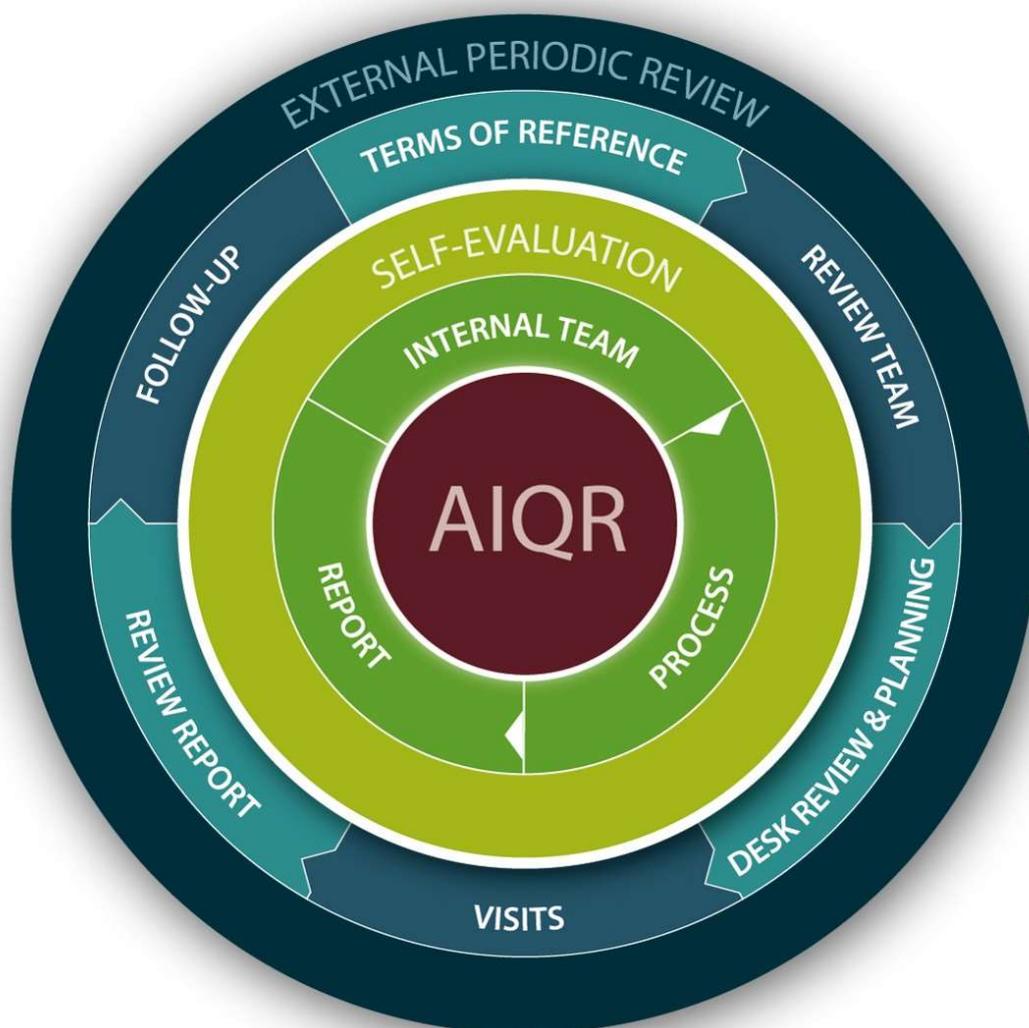


# Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology

## Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2020

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2018 – 31 August 2019



The Cyclical Review Process

## Part 1

# Overview of internal QA governance, policies and procedures

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## Overarching institution-level approach and policy for QA (ESG 1.1)

### 1. Overarching Institution Quality Policy

A brief synopsis of the overarching institution quality policy which sets out the links between QA policy and procedures and the strategy and strategic management of the institution.

The last two decades have witnessed some significant milestones in the institutional autonomy of GMIT, its validation by external agencies, and by implication its standing within Ireland's higher education sector. In 2004 GMIT was granted delegated authority from HETAC to make awards up to level 8 honours bachelor and level 9 taught masters degrees. In 2005 additional delegated authority was confirmed for research degrees including the awards of Ph.D. in Aquatic Science and Mechanical Engineering. Future anticipated change is the granting of delegated authority to the Institutes of Technology to make their own awards as Designated Awarding Bodies.

GMIT has a robust quality assurance framework (QAF) with a suite of Codes of Practice and Academic Polices approved by Academic Council and Governing Body. These codes and policies in addition to national requirements also embed the 2015 European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance. As a supporter of the European Higher Education Area, GMIT is committed to the implementation of the Bologna process and the Institute operates the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) where all modules are either 5 credits or multiples thereof. Additionally, all programmes were redesigned in 2004 to be aligned with the learning outcomes-based approach. Students automatically receive the European Diploma Supplement after graduation and the Institute actively engages in European projects in relation to quality and benchmarking as they arise. Each component of the Quality Assurance Framework is accessible online and updated at least once during the 3-year lifetime of the Academic Council. GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework is implemented uniformly across all campuses. Students are an integral part of this process and are represented on Institute committees, Academic Council and Governing Body. In addition, Institute graduates are members of programmatic review panels.

GMIT remains committed to ensuring that its quality assurance system remains fit for purpose, recognising that its awards are underpinned by this. Additionally, through the development of new quality assurance policies and procedures, GMIT continues to be both proactive and responsive to sectoral protocols emanating from QQI. Recent examples of these include:

- Sectoral protocols for the delegation of authority by QQI to the Institutes of Technology to make joint awards were approved in November 2014. Before IoTs are in a position to exercise this authority, they must have internal Collaborative Transnational Policies approved through their Academic Councils. GMIT has such a Transnational Collaborative Policy,

including Joint Awards, approved through Academic Council and has written to QQI to confirm that such a policy is in place.

- A second sectoral protocol was approved in November 2015 for the awarding of Research Masters degrees at NFQ level 9 under delegated authority from QQI to the Institutes of Technology.

Whilst these milestones in the development of the Institutes QAF are significant in terms of the increased autonomy that they confer upon the Institute, the interrelatedness of this QAF with decision making and strategic planning across the Institute requires more consideration.

### **Strategy**

GMIT's Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023 underpins the Institute's ambition to become a Technological University (TU) with our CUA partners IT Sligo and Letterkenny Institute of Technology. The CUA has already agreed a vision and mission for the new TU that aligns very closely with the vision and mission encapsulated in this plan. It is appropriate as we move along this new trajectory that visions and missions converge. The creation of a TU for the Northern and Western region will have a transformative impact on the population served by this new entity in producing employment-ready graduates competent in the skills in demand by business, enterprise, the professions, the community, local interests and other stakeholders.

This strategic Plan adopts a different approach to previous plans by placing the emphasis predominantly on the student experience and lifecycle. The students enter GMIT as an individual and is shaped both personally and professionally through engagement with the GMIT community. As the student transitions to the workplace or further education the impact of the GMIT experience becomes evident through the added value they bring to their new community. Hence, the three strategic pillars of individual, community and impact permeate the structure of the plan. The three strategic pillars are subdivided into Institute Goals and thirteen Strategic Enablers are identified to support the Institute Goals. Each strategic enabler has a number of actions identified and it is envisaged these will change annually to reflect the dynamic and flexible nature of the higher education landscape. The plan is available at <https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/communications/docs/gmit-strategic-plan-2019-2023-print-a4-v2-2.pdf>

### **Internationalisation**

As the fourth largest IOT in Ireland, GMIT sees itself continuing to increase the provision of STEM focussed programmes at Levels 6/7 (Higher Certificate / Ordinary Degree) and Level 8 (Honours Degree), with advanced entry, exit and transfer opportunities to facilitate student choice and meeting the technology driven skills needs of Ireland. There will also be increased provision of minor and special purpose awards under programmes such as Springboard to support workforce up-skilling and re-skilling in line with Ireland's National Skills Strategy to 2025 and enhanced flexible/online learning opportunities. GMIT will also provide Level 9 structured Masters programmes in a flexible manner to meet the needs of our existing workforce.

The Programmatic Review undertaken in 2013/14 at GMIT was a discipline based review across the Institute to ensure coherence in programme provision. GMIT will continue to enhance the quality of its teaching and learning activities and student support services.

The Centre for Educational Development focuses on pedagogical innovation and the promotion of good practice in teaching and learning, as well as supporting staff development. The Virtual Learning Environment will continue to be developed across all campuses. In addition, the Institute has provided additional resources to support the growing success of its "First5Weeks" induction programme.

Going forward GMIT will focus its research provision at Levels 9 (Masters) and 10 (Doctorate) in specific disciplines where the Institute has the requisite capacity and will work collaboratively with partner HEIs to enhance the quality and relevance of research outputs. GMIT through its iHubs and designated research centres will continue to support the development of existing as well as new and innovative enterprises.

GMIT is committed to working collaboratively with partner institutions to enhance the regional provision of programmes, research and innovation, enterprise development and shared services. GMIT currently has formal MOUs with the National University of Ireland Galway (NUI Galway), with IT Sligo and Letterkenny IT (LYIT) (the "Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA)"), and with the National Marine Institute based in Galway and with regional Education & Training Boards.

## **2. Quality assurance decision-making fora**

A brief description of institution-level quality assurance decision-making fora

All academic matters are dealt with by the Institute's Academic Council subject to the approval of Governing Body.

As currently constituted the membership of the Academic Council comprises forty-seven members, twenty-four of whom are elected by the Institute's academic community, with the President as Chairperson. For the purpose of undertaking its workload the Council has eight dedicated sub-committees:

- Academic Standards Committee
- Programme Amendments Committee
- Research Committee
- Collaborations Committee
- Access and Transfer Committee
- Retention Committee
- Disciplinary Committee
- Examinations Appeals Board

Academically GMIT is structured on a school and department basis. The schools in general have a specific disciplinary focus, for example Engineering, Science, Furniture and Business. Some Schools/Centres have a multi-disciplinary focus such as the Mayo Campus and the College of Tourism and Arts.

GMIT is proud to be recognised as a student centred organisation where the student voice is heard – all Programme Boards, which are advisory to the Academic Council, have student representation; the Students' Union is represented on the Academic Council and Governing Body, and training is provided annually to the class representatives on the Quality Assurance Framework. The Institute also provides a range of access supports and resources for students experiencing difficulties with mathematics and academic writing.

## Confirmation of QA Policy and Procedures

### **1. Programme Design and Approval (ESG 1.2)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policy and procedures for the design and approval of new programmes.

As part of its QAF the Institute has a Code of Practice on Validation and Monitoring, available at the following link:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/2-1-validation-monitoring-2019-2020.pdf>

New programmes and related awards are normally proposed within the overall context of an Academic Plan for a College/Centre/Campus/School (hereafter referred to as the 'Academic Unit').

There are two separate but interrelated elements involved in the approval of new programme proposals. Validation is primarily concerned with the academic quality of a proposal and is the responsibility of the Academic Council. However, new programmes may have resource and strategic implications for the Institute. As such, the authorisation to proceed with development, and subsequently to offer the programme following a successful validation, is the responsibility of the Executive Board.

The process is consistent with the generic quality assurance model promoted by the ESG.

## **2. Programme Delivery and Assessment (ESG 1.3)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance policies and procedures for the ongoing delivery and assessment of programmes.

As part of its QAF the Institute has a Code of Practice on Student Assessment: Marks & Standards, available at the following link:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/student-assessment-marks-and-standards.pdf>

The Code of Practice is divided into: Section 1, which deals with the regulatory context of assessment and the general guiding principles; Section 2, which deals with roles and responsibilities; Section 3, which deals with procedures and regulations, and Section 4, which contains appendices.

GMIT will monitor each programme on an ongoing basis to ensure:

- that the programme intended learning outcomes are being attained by students;
- the continuing appropriateness of the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes;
- that programmes remain current and valid in light of developing knowledge in the discipline and practice in application;
- that issues arising in relation to the academic quality of programme design, delivery and assessment are identified and addressed on a timely basis.

The responsibility for managing and ensuring the quality of academic processes in accordance with Institute policy lies with the Heads of Academic Units and with Programme Boards. Individual members of staff are required to co-operate with the quality management procedures within the academic structures.

The Institute will review and evaluate the effectiveness of programme monitoring processes on a regular and systematic basis.

**3. Research Quality (ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)**

Links and/or text relating to any specific quality assurance procedures for the design, approval, delivery, assessment and monitoring of research programmes, if they exist.

As part of its QAF the Institute has a Code of Practice on Research, available at the following link:  
<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/research.pdf>

This Code of Practice specifies the Institute's policy and procedures for the admission, registration, transfer of registration, and assessment of students who embark on programmes leading to the award of degrees by research and thesis or published work. It follows good practice for the organisation of quality assurance for research degrees in Ireland.

It outlines and specifies the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the postgraduate research process, viz. the student, Supervisors, Examiners, College/Schools, the Research Office, the Vice-President for Research and Innovation, and the Vice-Presidents' for Academic Affairs & Registrar's Office.

#### **4. Student Lifecycle (ESG 1.4)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures that are encompassed by the student lifecycle.

Attracting, retaining and supporting students are key objectives of GMIT's Quality Assurance system. The Institute's policy on Access, Transfer and Progression is available at the following link:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/4.1-access-transfer-and-progression-2018-19.pdf>

GMIT has been successful in broadening access to its programmes through implementation of its access strategy. A workgroup within the Institute is working on developing a new access strategy and it is anticipated that this will be approved by the Institute during the 2017/2018 academic year. Significant growth in participation at GMIT from mature students, students with disabilities and students from target SEGs is testament to the success of its access strategy.

GMIT also seeks to support student access through its policy on the Administration of the Student Assistance Fund and the Student Support Fund (available on the Student Portal) and through its policy on the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Examinations and Assessments, available at:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/policy-reasonable-accommodations-examinations-and-assessments-2019.pdf>

The institute actively encourages applications to the Institute on the basis of recognised prior learning and its policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning is available at the following link:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/4-2-cop-6-recognition-prior-learning.pdf>

In collaboration with its partners in the Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA), GMIT has developed an on-line tool to facilitate prospective students wishing to apply on the basis of recognised prior learning. The tool is accessible at the following link: <http://www.myexperience.ie/>.

The retention and progression of students is a priority for GMIT. GMIT has approved a policy for student retention along with an associated implementation plan, available at the following link:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/4-2-cop-6-recognition-prior-learning.pdf>

A Student Engagement & Retention Officer, with responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the student retention strategy, has been appointed. Initiatives include an extended induction programme - First5Weeks, Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS), the Learning and Innovation Skills module and a new Transitions module aimed at easing the transition for students new to third level education.

GMIT produces a retention report annually which allows for the monitoring and analysis of student progression and retention across all programmes and stages. In an effort to support students and improve retention, GMIT is developing new supports for students on an ongoing basis. Examples of recent initiatives in this regard are the establishment of the Maths Learning Centre and the Academic Writing Centre supported through the GMIT library.

Quality assurance procedures in relation to certification and the conferring of awards are outlined in the Code of Practice on Student Assessment: Marks and Standards available at the following link: <https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/student-assessment-marks-and-standards.pdf>

All GMIT graduates receive the European Diploma Supplement, part of the Europass framework transparency tools after graduation. <https://www.gmit.ie/general/european-diploma-supplement>

### **5. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the competence of teaching staff, including staff recruitment and staff development.

GMIT recruits teaching staff in line with the selection procedures included in the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 and GMIT's procedure for the Review of Recruitment and Selection Decisions.

GMIT is committed to supporting the continuous professional development of all of its staff with a view to providing the best possible learning environments for its students. The Institute actively encourages staff to be research active and supports staff engaged in Level 9 and 10 research programmes both financially and through its Scheme for Thesis Write up at PhD Level.

The Centre for Educational Development (CED) was established at GMIT in March 2012 and is aligned to the Teaching and Learning pillar of the Institute's strategic plan. Since its establishment the CED has successfully achieved a wide range of objectives for the enhancement of teaching and learning at GMIT.

GMIT also supports staff engaged in pedagogical upskilling and each year provides a range of teaching and learning development modules originating from the Learning Innovation Network (LIN) programme. More recently, GMIT have designed a flexible blended learning MA in Teaching and Learning.

In addition to supporting staff in their engagement with accredited teaching development modules, GMIT has developed two new online learning courses for staff that incorporate Digital Skills Badges. The programmes are designed for independent learning and flexible engagement. On completion of the online courses, staff can choose to progress further to the MA in Teaching & Learning. The GMIT online learning programmes for staff launched officially in September 2016.

GMIT also supports staff in attending conferences and provides a schedule of professional development workshops as part of its Staff Development Week each year. GMIT's policy on Continuous Professional Development is available at:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/policy-continuous-professional-development.pdf>

## 6. Teaching and Learning (ESG 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring the quality of teaching and learning.

As part of its QAF the Institute has a Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy, available at the following link:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/gmitltastrategicobjectives20192023lowres-2.pdf>

At GMIT learning and teaching is a core activity of the institute. Through its academic programmes and approach to learning, teaching and assessment, the Institute will ensure that all graduates have a comprehensive understanding of relevant disciplines, professional knowledge and skills appropriate to their awards.

The need for a formal strategy for Learning, Teaching and Assessment arises from a number of challenges and opportunities for the Institution, which include:

- 1) The commitment to providing a high-quality learning experience for all students.
- 2) The importance of developing high quality graduates with robust transfer and adaptable skills.
- 3) The transformation of Irish society, its economy and its cultural and social diversity.
- 4) The internationalisation of education and the impact of globalisation.

The Institute's vision for the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy is to maintain and further develop quality and engaging environments for all students and staff. This strategy constitutes for the Institute a framework for learning, teaching and assessment. It applies to undergraduate, postgraduate and other programmes which are officially recognised by the Institute. The strategy is aligned to the Institute's Strategic Plan "Your Place - Your Future" 2010-2015 and 2013-2016.

Other Institute policies relevant to learning, teaching and assessment include:

- Student Assessment: Marks and Standards,
- Professional Practice Policy,
- External Examining Policy and Procedures,
- Policy on Plagiarism,
- Policy on the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Examinations and Assessments.

All the above are available at: <http://www.gmit.ie/general/quality-assurance-framework>

## 7. Resources and Support (ESG 1.5)

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring funding and resources for learning, teaching and research. Also, links and or text relating to the quality assurance procedures for learning resources and student support.

GMIT provides a range of support services for students which are detailed on the Institute website at: <http://www.gmit.ie/student-services>

Along with these general supports for students, the Access and Disability Service provides a range of supports and services to students with disabilities, mature students and students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. These supports and services are designed to ensure students have equality of access, participation and outcome. Underpinning the work of the Access and Disability Service is the recognition that certain categories of students experience barriers, and all services and supports provided are designed to address these barriers through the assessment of individual student needs, and the provision of appropriate academic, technological and financial support.

The organisation and delivery of support services for students is documented in the Access and Disability Service Procedures and Reference Manual (Version 5: Updated September 2015). This sets out the aims and objectives of the service, the target group of students, and procedures for the approval and delivery of supports and services. This document is distributed to all staff delivering supports and is shared on the internal staff drive. The document also includes as reference the 'HEA Guidelines for the Fund for Students with Disabilities' and includes the Procedures for the Recruitment and Employment of Support Workers.

Two policies relevant to this area are:

- Policy on the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Examinations and Assessments <https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/policy-reasonable-accommodations-examinations-and-assessments-2019.pdf>
- Policy for the administration of the Student Assistance Fund and the Student Support Fund, <http://www.gmit.ie/general/financial-supports> available on the staff and student portals.

In the period 2014/2015 the Access and Disability Service was audited on two occasions by the HEA and The Structural Funds Unit, Department of Education and Skills. On both occasions the procedures as adopted by the Access and Disability Service were reviewed and found to be models of best practice.

In addition, GMIT have a number of learning support centres, student leadership programmes, online learning resources, a first-year academic development module and a welcome programme. Details of these supports can be found at the following links:

- The PASS and Student Leadership Programme <https://www.gmit.ie/general/about-peer-assisted-study-sessions>
- Learning and Innovation Skills (LIS) Module for all first-year students.
- Academic Success: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life – a suite of online learning resources and supports available on the Learning Resource Centre on GMIT virtual learning environment.

- The First 5 Weeks programme: <http://www.gmit.ie/general/first5weeks>
- The GMIT Libraries over five campuses <http://www.gmit.ie/gmit-libraries>
- GMIT Library Information Skills Course <https://library.gmit.ie/support/information-skills/>
- The Maths Centre <https://library.gmit.ie/support/math-learning-centre/>
- The Academic Writing Centre - <https://library.gmit.ie/support/academic-writing-centre/>
- The Step Forward – Class Rep Training Programme <https://www.gmit.ie/about/teaching-and-learning-project/step-forward-class-rep-leadership-programme>
- The My Experience Programme – providing guidance and opportunities to access higher education programmes by RPL and an online ePortfolio assessment tool\_ [www.myexperience.ie](http://www.myexperience.ie)
- The Student Success Toolbox – [www.studentsuccess.ie](http://www.studentsuccess.ie)

GMIT is very active and engaged with a range of national networks advocating for best practice in teaching and learning, and the development of educational resources that benefit both staff and students. National networks where GMIT is represented in teaching and learning development include:

- The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. GMIT has been successful in securing funding annually to develop student and staff learning resources\_ [www.teachingandlearning.ie](http://www.teachingandlearning.ie)
- Education Developers Network in Ireland (EDIN) [www.edin.ie](http://www.edin.ie)
- Student Led Learning (SLL) [www.lin.ie/sll](http://www.lin.ie/sll)
- Learning Innovation Network (LIN) [www.lin.ie](http://www.lin.ie)

### **8. Information Management (ESG 1.7)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for collecting, analysing and using relevant information about programmes and other activities.

As part of Code of Practice No. 2, each Programme Board is required to complete an annual report. The Head of School compiles all these reports into a School report, which is presented to Academic Council for consideration and review.

The policy and procedures are detailed in Section 6 of Code of Practice No. 2 and Appendix 8 provides further detail. COP No 2 is available at the following link:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/2-1-validation-monitoring-2019-2020.pdf> Section 6 also details policies covering Student Feedback and the Annual Retention report.

Student engagement and satisfaction is measured, annually, through the Irish Student Survey of Engagement (ISSE). GMIT has been active in increasing response rates each year. A summary report of the feedback received is prepared and circulated to staff and students while a more detailed analysis is provided to the Executive and to each academic unit. A number of new initiatives have been implemented at GMIT as a result of student feedback.

External Examiner feedback is considered at all appropriate levels in the Institute in line with GMIT Policy and Procedures on External Examining (available at:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/9-external-examining-may-2010ac-7-may-10-3.4.pdf>

A quantitative report of external examiner feedback is also considered by Academic Council annually.

In the development of its compact with the HEA, GMIT has identified a number of KPIs and has recently completed an exercise using independent external consultants whereby KPIs have been precisely defined and the validity of the source data assured.

A student profile, along with a variety of reports based on data contained in the HEA SRS, is developed each year. Management information relating to the student population, from a variety of sources, is prepared and analysed to provide the basis for management decision making. GMIT also engages in an academic planning exercise each year and a rolling academic plan is maintained.

The First Destinations Survey provides information on graduate careers and initial employment post-graduation. The First Destinations Report is considered by management and Academic Council each year.

GMIT also participates in U-Multirank and, through this mechanism, benchmarks itself against other European Institutions

### **9. Self-evaluation and Monitoring (ESG 1.9)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for self-evaluation and internal monitoring.

GMIT engages in periodic review of academic units

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/strategic-review-academic-units.pdf>

followed by review of programmes <https://www.gmit.ie/general/quality-assurance-framework> once every five years. Both take the form of a Self Evaluation Review including consultation with stakeholders, followed by a meeting with an External Expert Peer Review Panel. This is also the format used for the periodic review of support services and facilities:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/functional-review-policy.pdf>

Programme Boards are responsible for the monitoring of the design, delivery, academic standards, students' performance and academic development of programmes and awards.

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/2-1-validation-monitoring-2019-2020.pdf> Programme Boards report annually to the Head of Academic Unit and through him/her to Academic Council.

In addition to module and programme review forms outlined in Code of Practice No. 2 Validation and Monitoring: <https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/2-1-validation-monitoring-2019-2020.pdf> the student experience is also evaluated through the administration of [studentsurvey.ie](http://studentsurvey.ie) (formerly ISSE) <http://studentsurvey.ie/> and the annual graduate first destination survey.

**10. Stakeholder Engagement (ESG 1.1)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance.

All stages of the validation process for new programmes requires stakeholder engagement. Beginning with initial approval and progressing to internal and external validation requires evidence of (i) the rationale and need for the programme, (ii) employment opportunities and potential demand for graduates. This requires conducting research with the relevant industry sector aligned to the new programme.

At the external validation stage the external validation panel always contains an experienced practitioner with necessary knowledge and expertise from the industry/services/professional sector, as appropriate.

The policy and procedures for this area is documented in Section 2 of CoP No. 2, available at the following link:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/2-1-validation-monitoring-2019-2020.pdf>

**11. Engagement with Other Bodies (ESG 1.1)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for engagement with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other quality assurance and awarding bodies (details of specific engagements should be provided in the online section of the form).

GMIT has QA procedures in place for the collaborative provision of taught programmes, including transnational collaborative provision. As a consequence the Institute was successful in obtaining Delegated Authority from QQI for Collaborative Provision including Transnational Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards. The underpinning QA policy is available at the following link:  
<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/collaborations-provision-incl-transnational-collaborative-provisions-2019.pdf>

While GMIT engages extensively with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other quality assurance and awarding bodies, it does not currently have institution-wide quality assurance procedures for such engagement. A policy will be developed to address this more comprehensively.

**12. Provision and Use of Public Information (ESG 1.8)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the provision of clear, accurate, up-to date and accessible public information.

The Institute publishes both a printed and on-line version of its prospectus which gives details of the programmes on offer in the Institute along with admission requirements, selection criteria and qualifications awarded, etc. The on-line prospectus is available at:

<https://www.gmit.ie/general/online-prospectus>

The Code of Student Conduct outlines the general rights of students and what they can expect and what is expected of them in relation to Learning, Teaching and Assessment. This includes, for example, the provision of full information on programmes, an outline of module content, adequate notice of, and feedback following, assessments etc. Most of this information is provided to the student in a Programme Handbook, details of which are included in Code of Practice No. 2. The Code of Student Conduct is available at:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/code-student-conduct-2019-2020.pdf>

At GMIT, the Academic Module Manager is a central repository of all approved programme documents and module descriptors. It is planned to make module descriptors accessible via the public website in the future.

GMIT fulfils its obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003 and its Sceim Ghaeilges available at:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/about/docs/gmit-sceimteanga2019-effective-010719.pdf>

**13. Linked Providers (for Designated Awarding Bodies) (ESG 1.1)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for assuring engagement with linked providers including the procedures for approval, monitoring, review, withdrawal of approval and appeal for linked providers.



**14. DA Procedures for use of QQI Award Standards (IoTs only)**

Links and/or text relating to the specific procedures for the approval of programmes in keeping with Core Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Education and Training Programmes by QQI, the Sectoral Protocols for the Awarding of Research Master Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under Delegated Authority (DA) from QQI and the Sectoral Protocols for the Delegation of Authority by QQI to the Institutes of Technology to make Joint Awards, May 2014.

The whole of the Institute's Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) is designed to support the Institute's authority delegated to it by QQI to make awards for approved programmes. Policies, Procedures and Codes of Practice underpinning DA are available at the following link:

<https://www.gmit.ie/general/quality-assurance-framework>

The Institute has developed QA policies and procedures in compliance with the Sectoral Protocols for the Delegation of Authority by QQI to the IoTs to make Joint Awards, available at the following link:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/collaborations-provision-incl-transational-collaborative-provisions-2019.pdf>

In addition, the Institute has developed NFQ Level 9 Research Discipline Area Validation Policy and Procedures in compliance with the Sectoral Protocols for the awarding of Research Masters Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under Delegated Authority from QQI, available at the following link:

The NFQ Level 9 Research Discipline Area Validation Policy and Procedures are available at:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/level-9-research-discipline-area-validation-policy-and-procedures-july-13.pdf>

**15. Collaborative Provision (ESG 1.1)**

Links and/or text relating to the institution-wide quality assurance procedures for engagement with third parties for the provision of programmes.

GMIT has QA procedures in place for the collaborative provision of taught programmes, including transnational collaborative provision. As a consequence the Institute was successful in obtaining Delegated Authority from QQI for Collaborative Provision including Transnational Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards. The underpinning QA policy is available at the following link:  
<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/collaborations-provision-incl-transnational-collaborative-provisions-2019.pdf>

**16. Additional Notes**

Any additional notes can be entered here.

**17. Internal Review Schedule**

The internal reviews schedule or cycle at the level of unit of review within the institution. The units of review can be: module; programme; department/school; service delivery unit; faculty. The cycle will usually run over a 5-7 year period and all units should be encompassed over the full period of the cycle.

Year	2019/20
Areas/Units	Academic Unit Reviews
Number	6
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2019-20
Areas/Units	Functional Reviews
Number	10
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2019/20
Areas/Units	Stage 2 of Programmatic Review: All Programmes

Number	
Link(s) to Publications	
Year	2020/21
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	2021/22
Areas/Units	Institute Review
Number	1
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

Year	
Areas/Units	
Number	
Link(s) to Publications	

## 18. Engagement with Third Parties

Details of engagement with third parties, including:

1. Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies
2. Collaborative Provision
3. Articulation Agreements

### 1. Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of Arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	11
Awarding Bodies	1
QA Bodies	1

First Type of Arrangement:	PRSB
Name of Body:	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<a href="#">BB (Hons) in Accounting</a>
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	25-02-2015
Next Review Year	2020

Second Type of Arrangement:	PRSB
Name of Body:	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<a href="#">BSc (Hons) in General Nursing</a> <a href="#">BSc (Hons) in Psychiatric Nursing</a>
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	28-09-2010
Next Review Year	2021

Third Type of Arrangement:	PRSB
Name of Body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<a href="#">BEng in Mechanical Engineering</a>
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	02-03-2016
Next Review Year	2021

Fourth Type of Arrangement:	PRSB
Name of Body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<a href="#">BEng in Civil Engineering</a>
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	03-03-2016
Next Review Year	2021

Fifth Type of Arrangement:	PRSB
Name of Body:	<a href="#">Academy of Clinical Science &amp; Laboratory Medicine</a>
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<a href="#">BSc (Hons) in Medical Science</a>
Date of Accreditation or Last Review	15-06-2016
Next Review Year	2021

## 2. Collaborative Provision

First Collaborative Provision:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of Body (bodies):	Ghent University (BE), University of Pierre and Marie Curie (FR), University of Western Brittany (FR), University of the Algarve (PT), University of Oviedo (ES), Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (IE), University of the Basque Country (ES), Polytechnic University of Marche (IT), University of Bergen (NO)
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<a href="#">International Masters in Marine Biological Resources</a>
Date of Last Review	13-07-2016
Next Review Year	2019

Second Collaborative Provision:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of Body (bodies):	Ghent Uni, GMIT, Flanders Marine Institute, Bremen Uni, University of Algarve, University Pierre and Marie Cure, University of Bologna, Klaipeda University, Royal Dutch Institute for Sea Research Foundation, University of Gdansk, University of Algarve, University of Plymouth Reasmus Mundus Joint Doctoral Programme in Marine Ecosystem Health to Conservation (MARES)
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctoral Programme in Marine Ecosystem Health to Conservation (MARES)
Date of Last Review	
Next Review Year	2020

Third Collaborative Provision:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of Body (bodies):	NUI Galway
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<a href="#">Certificate in Science, Technology and Engineering (Foundation)</a>
Date of Last Review	18-06-2018
Next Review Year	2023

Fourth Collaborative Provision:	Joint/double/multiple awards
Name of Body (bodies):	NUI Galway
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<a href="#">Certificate in Business (Foundation)</a>
Date of Last Review	18-06-2018
Next Review Year	2023

### 3. Articulation Agreements

<b>Articulation Agreements - Total Number</b>	18
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First Articulation Agreement:	
Name of Body (bodies):	Galway Technical Institute
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<a href="#">Advanced Certificate in Software Development 6M0691</a>
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	21-08-2018
Review Year for Agreement	2023

Second Articulation Agreement:	
Name of Body (bodies):	Galway Community College
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<a href="#">Business Management 6M4985</a>
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	21-08-2018
Review Year for Agreement	2023

Third Articulation Agreement:	
Name of Body (bodies):	Coláiste an Chreagáin
Programme Tiles and Links to Publications	<a href="#">Business 6M4985</a>
Date of Agreement/Arrangement or Last Review	21-08-2018
Review Year for Agreement	2023

## Parts 2-6

### Institution-led QA – Annual Information

Parts 2-6 are completed annually with information pertaining to the reporting period (i.e. the preceding academic year only).

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#### Part 2: Institution-led QA – Annual

Part 2 provides information relating to institution-led quality assurance for the reporting period.

##### Section 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Developments

**1.1** The evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems in support of strategic objectives in the reporting period.

GMIT aims to improve the learning experience of students and meet the needs of its stakeholders through the continual enhancement of its quality assurance system. These changes are often incremental but have a significant cumulative effect. GMIT's quality framework comprises the approved interrelated policies of the Institute which give effect to quality assurance and enhancement. Every three years each policy contained within the framework is reviewed, with some reviewed on an annual basis. The policies updated within the reporting period are listed in section 1.2. All stakeholders have a role to play in quality. To this end, all staff are invited to partake in workgroups which review and develop quality policies and strategies, and the Registrar provides an annual briefing to all Schools on policy updates.

A number of academic policies, as outlined in section 1.2, were reviewed and updated in accordance with the Institute's Quality Improvement Plan. Reflecting the growing use of technology in education and the functionality that provides, in addition to moving towards more data driven decisions, the Institute approved a policy on Learning Analytics.

GMIT's Strategic Plan 2019-2023 was approved by the Governing Body in February and officially launched in April 2019. GMIT's commitment and ambition to become a TU permeates this strategic plan, with the mission and vision strongly aligned with the mission and vision of the proposed new TU. The plan places at its centre the student experience and student lifecycle. The student enters GMIT as an individual and is shaped both personally and professionally through engagement with the GMIT community. As the student transitions to the workplace or further education the impact of the GMIT experience is what he/she brings to their new community. The priority focus of the Strategic Plan for the initial period will concentrate on five of the thirteen strategic enablers, such as Digital Learning; Programmes with an applied focus; Employability and Professional Practice; Diversity,

Equality and Inclusion, Infrastructure and Facilities. Aligning with the Institute's newly approved Strategic plan, a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy was approved covering the same period, further details of which are included in Section 1.2.

Looking ahead to Academic Unit and Programmatic Reviews due to take place in 2019-20 visualisations of statistical data for use in those reviews were developed. These provided clear data on current positions and trends over the last five years for future decisions to be based on. In addition, clear templates and support materials were developed by the Registrar's Office for use by Programme Boards.

In line with the HEA's requirement, and in an effort to clearly convey GMIT's employment focus and supports to potential students and other stakeholders, the Institute developed an employability statement. The statement was developed through consultation and participation of a range of stakeholders representing students, staff and employers. The five employability elements underpinning the GMIT employability framework align strongly with a well-established model (Dacre-Pool, L. and Sewell, P. 2007) These are:

- Career Development Learning;
- Experience (Work and Life);
- Degree Subject Knowledge, Understanding & Skills;
- Generic Skills; and
- Emotional Intelligence (self- confidence, self-esteem)

The framework illustrates the employability elements that make up the broad student experience in GMIT. It displays examples of opportunities provided to students to develop their employability through their programme and other activities driven by the lecturers and by students themselves. GMIT's belief is that this broad approach is key to the development of transferrable skills which are effective in study, the workplace and life in general. The statement is available at <https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/student-services/docs/gmit-employability-model-statement-v7.pdf> The format is adaptable to discipline specific statements which are due to be developed in 2019-20.

Following the approval of the Taught Programme Research Ethics Committees policy in 2017-18, committees were established in each School, and a training day was organised for members. The committees now provide ethics approval for undergraduate and taught postgraduate research.

2018-19 was the final year of the current Academic Council. In advance of elections for the next Council, a survey of members was undertaken to establish perceptions of how the Council functioned during the last five years, and what changes should be considered for the future. A discussion on the points raised considered the following:

- i. The importance of managing meetings to reach conclusions/action points.
- ii. Manageable agendas to ensure effectiveness of meetings.
- iii. Concern that not everyone is fully aware of the QA Framework and the need to ensure a consistent quality culture.
- iv. Corrective action is an important element of a QA framework.
- v. We should revisit the student feedback forms to identify improvements.
- vii. Consider adopting a theme each year to be the focus of Academic Council.

GMIT joined the HEAR (alternative admissions scheme for school leavers who have experienced socio-economic disadvantage) and DARE (alternative admissions scheme for school leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education) in 2018-19 to further widen access. Staff in the Institute were very involved in promoting the scheme to potential applicants with the first cohort of entrants expected in September 2019.

The Institute's strategy has a strong focus on flexible programme delivery, and in line with this an increasingly large percentage of programme approvals relate to Special Purpose Awards and Minor Awards. In light of this and the fact that some of these programmes have a large number of ECTS attached and/or are at a high level on the NFQ, the Academic Council reviewed the validation process for such programmes. The primary change made related to the constitution of the validation panel allowing for more external input. The process for approving stand-alone modules was also strengthened.

## 1.2 Significant specific changes (if any) to QA within the institution.

There have been a number of personnel changes during the reporting period. New appointments were made to the following roles:

- Head of Department for the Creative Art and Media
- Head of Department of Accounting & Information Systems

The following new positions were created and filled:

- Vice President for the Mayo Campus.
- Assistant Registrar (Quality)
- Director of Graduate and Professional Development
- Instructional Designer

The new positions reflect the Institute's commitment to quality and the strategic direction towards more postgraduate, flexible and online delivery. The appointment of the Vice President for the Mayo Campus aligns with the HEA report on the sustainability of that campus.

The following policies were reviewed and amended:

- Student Assessment: Marks & Standards
- Code of Student Conduct
- Programmatic Review
- Institutional Review
- Collaborative Provision incl. Transnational Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards
- Professional Practice Policy
- Plagiarism
- Reasonable Accommodation
- Academic Council
- Timetabling

The Academic Council policy was reviewed to provide for more equal gender representation on the council in line with GMIT's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and following a review of gender representation on the previous four councils. It was decided that there would be an equal number of male and female academic staff members elected and that this would apply in the upcoming Academic Council elections.

Academic Council approved a new learning analytics policy and a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, as outlined below.

The Learning analytics policy defines appropriate use of student data for enhancing student success. It recognises that there are potential privacy issues arising from combining sources of student data and modelling that data. Therefore, this policy aims to ensure that data collection and modelling is in compliance with GDPR, is transparent, has clearly defined boundaries for data collection and analysis, and that it is clear to all parties that it is for the benefit of the student to improve the learning experience. The policy defines a set of guiding principles to inform the ethical use of learning analytics at the Institute, and is available at

[https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/learning-analytics-student-success-policy-2019\\_0.pdf](https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/learning-analytics-student-success-policy-2019_0.pdf)

Following widespread consultation with GMIT staff and students and external stakeholders, the Institute developed and approved a Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy. The strategy aligns with the new GMIT strategic plan (2019-2023) and the LTA strategic objectives connect with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning Strategic Priorities in Ireland and the EUA Effect Principles for the enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education institutes in Europe. The strategy and implementation plan is focused on creating a quality driven environment for student centred learning. It aligns with GMIT's strategic goals and includes more specific and detailed learning and teaching development objectives under six themes:

1. Staff expertise and development.
2. Developing programmes with an applied focus.
3. Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.
4. Developing the learning and teaching infrastructure and facilities.
5. Digital learning.
6. Professional practice and employability.

Student-centred learning, quality assurance (QA) and the development of the digital teaching and learning experience, are key elements of higher education in Europe today. There is also strong consensus on the need to further enhance accessibility and inclusion, and to provide a broader and more diversified educational experience. Enhancing the profile of teaching and innovative pedagogies, strengthening the link between education and research, promoting the use of digital technologies for teaching and learning, and communicating the overall importance of higher education for individuals and society. The strategy is available at:

<https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/general/docs/gmitltastrategicobjectives20192023lowres-2.pdf>

**1.3 The schedule of QA governance meetings.**

**Governing Body Meetings**

- September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Academic Council Meetings**

- November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019
- June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Programme Amendments Committee**

- December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- March 19, 2019
- June 17, 2019 (Virtual by email)

**Academic Standards Committee**

- January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Research Committee**

- September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018
- January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019

- March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019
- June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Collaborations Committee**

- January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**Retention Committee**

- December 10<sup>th</sup>

**Disciplinary Committee**

- December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**AC Standing Committee**

- September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Exams Appeals Board**

- September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018
- October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018
- July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

## Section 2: Reviews in the reporting period

### 2.1 Internal reviews that were completed in the reporting period.

#### **New Programme Validations:**

- MSc in Applied Marine Research
- MSc in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition
- MSc in Palliative and End of Life Care
- BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care
- BSc (Hons) in Furniture Design and Manufacture
- BSc in Furniture Design and Manufacture
- Higher Certificate in Furniture Design and Manufacture
- BSc (Hons) in Furniture Making and Architectural Woodworking
- BSc in Furniture Making and Architectural Woodworking
- Higher Certificate in Furniture Making and Architectural Woodworking
- BSc (Hons) in Furniture and Digital Manufacturing
- BSc in Furniture and Digital Manufacturing
- Higher Certificate in Furniture and Digital Manufacturing
- Certificate in Business Analysis
- Certificate in Business in Agricultural Entrepreneurship
- Certificate in Contemporary Sports Coaching Practice
- Certificate in Data Modelling, Analysis and Visualisation
- Certificate in Digital Media and Marketing
- Certificate in Data Protection
- Certificate in IT Project Management
- Certificate in Media Practice
- Certificate in Network Cybersecurity

#### **Differential Validations:**

- Higher Diploma in Building Information Modelling
- BEng in Energy Engineering
- BEng (Hons) in Energy Engineering
- BEng in Biomedical Engineering
- BEng (Hons) in Biomedical Engineering
- BEng in Manufacturing Engineering Design
- BEng in Mechanical Engineering
- BEng (Hons) in Mechanical Engineering
- BEng in Agricultural Engineering
- BA (Hons) in Geography and Outdoor Education
- BB (Hons) in Finance and Economics
- BEng in Manufacturing Engineering

The profile of programme validation panels is outlined below. Note that the percentage of internal staff involved in these panels is higher than normal given that a large proportion of panels were for Special Purpose Awards and Differential Validations.

**2.2 Profile of internal approval/evaluations and review completed in the reporting period.**

Number of new <b>Programme Validations/Programme Approvals</b> completed in the reporting year	34
Number of <b>Programme Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	0
Number of <b>Research Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	0
Number of <b>School/Department/Faculty Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	0
Number of <b>Service Unit Reviews</b> completed in the reporting year	1
Number of <b>Reviews of Arrangements with partner organisations</b> completed in the reporting year	0

**2.3 Profile of reviewers and chairs internal approval/evaluations and review for reviews completed in the reporting period.**

<b>Composition of Panels</b>	<b>%</b>
Internal	58
National	38
UK	2
EU	2
Student	0
Other	0

Chair Profile	%
Internal	70
Similar Institution	25
Different Institution	0
International	5

### Section 3: Other Implementation Factors

**3.1** A description of how data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience.

#### **Academic Planning Process**

GMIT has developed a robust academic planning process which allows us to predict and plan for future student enrolments. An academic planning template has been developed to accurately forecast student numbers based on historic student retention data. All relevant functions (including Academic Units, Buildings and Estates, HR, Computing Service, Academic Affairs and Student Services) are involved in the academic planning process to ensure a holistic approach to academic planning whereby staff recruitment, infrastructure development and procurement are linked to the academic plan in an effort to ensure that predicted student numbers can be accommodated and supported.

To assist in the academic planning process and in the development of realistic and viable academic plans, the Institute has developed a series of reports to assist those involved in the academic planning process. These include target student numbers, planned vs. actual intakes in prior years, retention rates by programme and stage, summary charts of various student cohorts, etc.

Predictive models aid in decision making and planning for first year intakes. A model for the prediction of first year intake has been developed based on historic analysis of application numbers and accepts over a number of years. This model has proved helpful in planning resource requirements in advance of CAO offers and accepts.

#### **GURU**

Following a review of examination processes, GURU, a secure system for the submission, transmission and review of examination material, was piloted last year. Feedback from the pilot was largely positive and the system was rolled out to all Schools during the reporting period, with relevant training resources supplied.

### **Registration Statistics**

GMIT has developed a template for weekly monitoring of student enrolments by Academic Units against the academic plan to ensure that we are meeting our student enrolment targets.

### **Student Statistics**

An interactive dashboard to display HEA SRS data relevant to decision makers has been developed. The dashboard allows managers to extract the required information easily and to view trends in student statistics over time.

### **Unit Costing**

A process for the reconciliation of timetabled teaching hours vs. contracted staff hours for each programme has been developed through the extraction of data from the Timetable System and reconciliation to staff contract hours as recorded on the HR system. This informs our Unit Costing. GMIT annually produces retention reports which are broken down by programme stage. A report showing trends overtime is also available. This data is used by programme boards in their annual Programme Board reports and by School/Campus executives in developing their retention strategies. To enhance the usability of these reports the Institute has identified targets for different programme stages and has developed a traffic light system to indicate how programme stages and Schools/Campuses are performing. Programme stages which are identified as performing less well are identified and discussed when School Executives meet with the Retention Committee.

### **Student Retention**

To complement the Institute's Annual Retention Reports a suite of module performance reports have been developed for use by Programme Boards. The purpose of these reports is to review the performance of cohorts of students in their assessment in each module in an exam sitting, and over time. These are not retention or progression reports, but rather focus on one of the factors which impacts on student retention and progression i.e. their success or otherwise in their module assessment. The module performance reports available are as follows:

- Module Performance by Examination Sitting
- Programme Specific Module Performance
- All Programmes Module Performance
- Result Category Crosstab
- Trends in Overall Module Performance

### **External Examiner**

Both quantitative and qualitative analysis of External Examiner reports was conducted and presented to Academic Council.

### **Student Engagement**

To make the feedback from ISSE surveys more accessible a data model was developed to visualise student feedback. The visualisation includes benchmarking of GMIT scores against the scores of all IOTs, both at index and individual question level. It also allows for the comparison of ISSE scores between academic units within GMIT, trends in scores over time and easy access to responses to free text questions. GMIT scored better than the IOT average in 7 of the 9 indices.

### **Graduate Outcomes Survey**

The 'Graduate Outcomes Survey' is a report produced annually by the Careers Service to provide an indication of the destination of Graduates of GMIT following graduation. The report includes analysis

of those employed and those seeking employment, in addition to levels of participation in further study and training. The survey gives information concerning the salaries, region of employment and migration patterns of graduates. It also provides feedback on the student experience at college and course level. This report is presented annually to Academic Council and published for Schools and programme boards to consider and make improvements as relevant. This year, the collection of this data was undertaken by the HEA which will allow for improved benchmarking.

A dashboard to display GMIT output from the survey has been developed. Data from the survey is decoded and displayed in a dashboard accessible by all staff via the Office of the Registrar SharePoint site.

**Module/Programme Database**

Version 3 of Module Manager, the module and programme database used by GMIT, was launched with enhanced features to assist in programme and module development. The new version allows for recording of new delivery modes, collecting information on exit awards, and allowing display of programme themes and assessment matrices. It provides for better reporting for Heads of Department in relation to delivery, and clearer programme documents for review panels.

**3.2 Factors that have impacted on quality and quality assurance in the reporting period.**

### Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA) 2018-2019 Academic Year

The CUA continues to make progress towards its ambition to obtain Technological University status for the three partner institutes of IT Sligo, GMIT and LYIT. Specific examples of this progress over the academic year 2018-19 include:

- An increase in the number of meetings of the three Executives where agreement was reached on the vision and mission for the new TU.
- A common approach to the development and validation of Structured Research Masters was agreed in line with the new TU Act (2018).
- The development of an Academic Governance Framework is progressing with plans to review and agree a common Marks & Standards policy.
- Work is progressing on the development of a common international strategy.
- The governance and management of the Alliance has been enhanced by:
  - The establishment of additional sub-groups under each of the four workgroups.
  - Enhanced Terms of Reference for the Workgroups and sub-groups with a renewed focus on developing the application for submission to the HEA.
  - The appointment of a external consultants to assist with bringing this project to successful completion.
- In the spirit of more inclusive engagement the first meeting of middle managers was convened. This included Heads of Departments and Heads of Function. The outcome of this meeting was the establishment of a new sub-group referred to as the Transitions sub-group who are tasked with delivering on the following core areas:
  - Location of TU HQ and staff based there;
  - Recruitment of new positions, internally/externally;
  - Balance/proportionality of new posts across the three partner organisations;
  - Respective roles of Faculty and College Boards (consideration and proposed amendment of Governance and Organisation paper, paragraphs. 21 – 23; 31 – 36 faculties; 24 – 25; 37 – 38 colleges); and
  - Budgetary processes for the new TU.
- The establishment of a union consultative forum dealing with IR issues was initiated. All four unions will have access to this forum with time allowances for members to engage and attend meetings.
- The Alliance participated and played an active role in the Technological University Research Network (TURN). Dr Michael Hannon chaired a sub-committee of TURN dealing with 'Multi-Campus Management and Systems Integration' the outcomes of which informed the final report.

- The structure for the submission document has been agreed together with a target submission date of 2020/2021.
- The CUA applied to the HEA's Innovation and Transformation Funding Call and was successful with the "Innovative Opportunities Transforming Education (iNOTE) Project"
  - The iNOTE project aligns with, and will form a direct response to, the key system objectives for the Higher Education System 2018 -2020. This will be achieved via the completion of five work packages focusing on:
    - (i) developing a quality assurance policy for flexible delivery;
    - (ii) building digital capabilities amongst CUA staff;
    - (iii) developing a range of digitally enhanced student supports for those undertaking programmes through flexible delivery;
    - (iv) developing and delivering work based programmes (WBP) utilising digital capabilities for flexible delivery and
    - (v) mainstreaming, disseminating and evaluating CUA digital capabilities for flexible delivery.
- In relation to the HEA's Strategy and Performance System, otherwise known as the Compact, the three partners agreed an additional CUA Common Objective focused on achieving the metrics for the application.

Other notable developments in 2018-2019:

**Strategic Plan:** The Institute developed a new strategic plan for the period 2019 – 2023. Following its approval by the Governing Body it was launched by the Minister for Higher Education and Science. It is available on the Institutes website ([click here](#)).

**Cluster Update:** 'Attract-Transition –Succeed' event under PATH (Programme for Access to Higher Education) 2 and 3.

- The West/North-West Cluster ran a day-long event, to i) formally launch ATS, ii) celebrate the work of partner HEI's with our schools and the wider community in the West/North-West Cluster. The symposium included an opportunity for the partners to share learning and experience at key stages of the project with delegates, to connect with others and to contribute to the development of PATH.

**Employability Statement:** The Institute developed and approved an Institute wide Employability Statement available from our website ([here](#)). This was a collaborative project engaging stakeholders from industry and business. The next step in the process is to develop discipline specific employability statements as part of Programmatic Review.

**Mayo Campus Sustainability Plan:**

The future development of Mayo Campus needs to build on established successes, generate a campus narrative, and core focus themes on which to establish sustained reputational excellence. The wider umbrella of wellbeing and sustainability perhaps best captures the overarching nature of ongoing Mayo Campus developments. It is important that in the generation of an operational Strategic Plan for Mayo Campus that it is evidence-based, with parallel development of integrated communication, promotion/marketing, and social media plans.

Mayo Campus seems well-placed to continue to grow regional and national excellence and reputation in nursing, healthcare, and social care, as it extends undergraduate and postgraduate provision and continues to expand multi-disciplinary offerings into highly topical growth areas that include eHealth, and outdoor behavioural healthcare, and the role of creative arts in healthcare. In addition to delivering the exciting new provision detailed in the Academic Plan, the Department should also continue to explore collaborative research opportunities that can only serve to further bolster professional kudos.

Towards the end of the academic year all but 5 of the 33 recommendations in the HEA Working Group report were implemented. Work has started on developing a strategic plan for the campus aligned to the Institute's strategic plan.

**3.3 A description of other implementation issues.**

## Part 3: Effectiveness and Impact

**Part 3 provides information relating to the effectiveness and impact of quality assurance policy and procedures for the reporting period.**

### 1. Effectiveness

Evidence of the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

All new programme proposals which reached external validation phase were successful in that process. The internal validation stage for major awards proves effective in both acting as a gate keeper and enhancing quality prior to progression to the next phase of the new programme approval process. The success of new programmes at external validation phase is due to the comprehensive review programmes receive by internal panels and the implementation of their recommendations in advance of submission to external panels. Three of the new programmes approved were at masters level, almost doubling the number of such programmes provided by the Institute and reflecting the increased emphasis on postgraduate level.

The response rate for studentsurvey.ie (formerly ISSE) in 2018/19 was 42%, up from 33.3% the previous year. GMIT outperformed Technological Higher Education Institutions indicators for Quantitative Reasoning, Student Faculty Interactions, Quality of Interactions and Supportive Environment. However, GMIT scored lower for Higher Order Learning, Reflective & Integrative Learning, Learning Strategies, Collaborative Learning and Effective Teaching Practices. ISSE outcomes are made available for each School to review and reflect on appropriate actions. GMIT has effectively visualised the survey results and made it available to management and Programme Boards for use in Academic Unit and Programme Reviews. Work remains to be done on how best to use the findings of the survey to instigate change.

Using the HEA's definition of progression (i.e. presence of on the 1<sup>st</sup> March in the year following entry) GMIT reports 79% progression of first years from 2017/18 into 2018/19. This maintains the increase of 3% which occurred last year. While the overall rate of progression has remained the same, it is notable that the rate for students on level 7 programmes has experienced a significant decline while the rate for level 8 students has increased marginally. The period also saw a substantial change with more new entrants choosing level 8 programmes and a corresponding decline in the numbers opting for level 7 programmes. Student retention is a complex and multi-faceted issue. The Retention sub-committee of Academic Council focussed on student communication and transition this year. Students were provided with information on the terminology used in college which may be unfamiliar with them, and of the academic regulations that pertain to them. First year lecturers were reminded of the importance of students being aware of the larger context of their programme of study, and the techniques that can be used to help students to see relationships between modules and the programme's aims and career opportunities. To promote early detection of students who may be doubting their course choice a resource was made available to programme boards for conducting interviews with first year students. GMIT's transfer policy also appears to be having a

positive impact on retention with nearly two thirds of students who transferred succeeding in the first stage of their programme.

Nearly 1,700 students were surveyed as part of the Graduate Outcomes Survey for the graduates of 2018, with a 70% response rate. Graduates were surveyed nine months after graduation to confirm their situation as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. The results showed that 81% were in employment, 8% in further study, 7% were seeking employment and 4% were involved in other activities. In total, 93% of GMIT graduates in 2018 were in employment or further study. This reinforces the quality of graduates we are producing and the effectiveness of our programmes and teaching.

An independent review of the Guru system, with a focus on the secure processing of examination material, was carried out by Internal Audit to give further confidence to the Institute that the security around the processing of assessment material is robust.

## 2. Impact

Evidence of the impact of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

The Institute invites feedback on academic policies and their effectiveness from all staff annually. Staff response to this process demonstrates the impact of GMIT policies in practice and the engagement of staff with them in their work.

This is the first year of the intake on the BEng in Engineering (Common Entry for a range of mechanical engineering programmes). The programme was introduced to aid student transition through allowing students to choose the mechanical engineering specialisation they wish to pursue at the end of their first year of study. It helps students make an informed choice by introducing students to all the offered specialisms within the first stage of their programme. This new entry route proved popular, with a third of students choosing the undenominated programme entry route rather than a specialised degree. Students will choose a specialist programme at the end of stage 1. The School Management will monitor the impact this has on the distribution of students between the mechanical engineering programmes and student retention.

GMIT participates in U-Multirank which is a multidimensional, user-driven approach to international ranking of higher education institutions. It compares the performances of higher education institutions – in short: universities – in the five dimensions of university activity: (1) teaching and learning, (2) research, (3) knowledge transfer, (4) international orientation and (5) regional engagement. While it is challenging to provide the necessary data for U-Multirank, due mainly to interpretation of data definitions across European states and survey fatigue among students, GMIT considers it worthwhile as a benchmarking initiative. GMIT was delighted to be ranked among the Global Top 25 performers in Top Cited Publications in U-Multirank 2019.

GMIT's students have had considerable success in competitions relating to their disciplinary studies. GMIT students won, inter alia, the following:

- Furniture Design category in the Irish Made Awards.
- places in the finals of the prestigious Chartered Institute of Architectural Technology (CIAT) Student Architectural Technology (AT) Awards.
- award for Best Original Story with their game, Atop the Sky at the 2019 Games Fleadh in Thurles.
- 1st Prize for presentation at the 25th Annual Conference of the Bioengineering Section of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland.
- national President's Prize of the Academy of Clinical Science and Laboratory Medicine, and then proceeded to represent Ireland in Europe and win top prize in Europe.
- Ireland Skills Cabinetmaking final held in the RDS in Dublin and represented Ireland at the WorldSkills finals in Kazan in Russia in August winning a Medallion of Excellence.
- Academy of Clinical Science & Laboratory Medicine President's Prize for research on antibiotic resistance.
- best student film award in Shot by the Sea first edition, among over 400 International and national entries.
- national 'Student of the Year' award at the Excellence Ireland awards.
- finalist in the DCU Style Fashion show in February 2019.
- Intel Women in Technology Award for Academic Excellence.
- third-level MIDAS Electronic Project Competition.
- one of 13 Visual Arts graduates nationally to be included in the RDS Visual Arts Award graduate exhibition in the RDS in October 2019.

### 3. Themes

Analysis of the key themes arising within the implementation of QA policies and procedures during the reporting period.

A review of programme validation reports shows a strong shift in programme development towards short industry focussed awards, online/blended delivery and postgraduate programmes, and away from major undergraduate awards based on full-time delivery. A review of the recommendations in these reports identifies a number of key themes namely learning outcomes (volume, level, wording), the management and supervision of projects and placements, the completion of module descriptors (comprehensiveness, resources) and in particular issues relating to online delivery.

Recommendations in relation to online/blended programmes focus on communication with potential students, the student experience, teaching resources, student engagement and socialisation, student support and the management of these programmes. Many of the issues relating to online/blended programmes are actively being addressed through the iNote Project, which is outlined in Section 4.

The facility to allow students in exceptional circumstances to 'Progress and Carry' was raised. There was concern over the consistency of the application of this rule across the Institute following review of the data and consideration of Academic Council. Following consideration by Academic Council it was decided to retain the facility, ensuring that it was appropriately applied with reasons recorded in the minutes of the Progression and Awards Board.

## Part 4: Quality Enhancement

**Part 4 provides information which goes beyond the description of standard quality assurance procedures. Quality enhancement includes the introduction of new procedures but also extends the concept of quality assurance to other initiatives, activities and events aimed at improving quality across the institution.**

### **4.1 Improvements and Enhancements for the Reporting Period**

Improvements or enhancements, impacting on quality or quality assurance, that took place in the reporting period.

#### **GDPR**

Work is ongoing in relation to compliance with GDPR through the implementation of the GDPR implementation plan. The Institute continued to build a culture of data protection by providing GDPR online training to all staff and populating the Data Protection SharePoint site with resources and guidance. To date, 500 staff have completed the training. Additional resources and tools have been developed including a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) template and updated data protection policies and procedures. Work is ongoing in relation to the identification of Data Processors in order to put Data Processor Contracts in place, and in identifying data sharing arrangements in order to put Data Sharing Agreements in place. The Institute facilitates the invoking of rights by data subjects and manages data breaches as per the legislation.

#### **Staff Development**

In addition to the funding of ongoing and new formal qualifications the Staff Development Office organises workshops covering a broad range of personal and professional development topics. 25 staff are being supported in the completion of level 10 qualifications and excluding the Institute's MA in Teaching and Learning 15 staff are pursuing level 9 qualifications. Each year the Staff Development Office organises a range of activities, which are primarily centred around what originally was titled 'Staff Development Week'. This year's events were primarily spread over an eight-week period to facilitate the attendance of as many staff as possible, and covered the thematic areas of wellbeing, technology, teaching and learning, professional skills and campus discovery. 35 workshops were delivered by a mix of internal and external facilitators. There was a total of 453 online registrations (a 41.6% increase on 2017-18) through the staff intranet Events Calendar with an additional three events (111 additional registrations) booked through another medium.

**CPDLearnonline.ie**, the online teaching and learning development platform for teachers in higher education records enrolments on courses at 300+ members to date. New course categories added in 2018-2019 include student engagement, teaching and learning development, international LTA courses, specialist discipline courses and planning for the new digital education programme iNOTE.

**TEL Network Lunchtime Seminars** is a lunchtime seminar series set up by the T&L Office as a networking initiative to bring staff together across five campuses virtually, talking TEL and sharing initiatives and ideas of innovative teaching and learning practice. The academic community showcase excellence in teaching practice.

**GMIT T&L Office and the School of Science** was awarded VIBE funding from the Dept. of Foreign Affairs and the Irish Embassy in Vietnam to deliver a teaching and learning development programme to Nong Lam University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam in January and May 2019. The project runs from 2019-2020 and involves the transfer of knowledge and skills on technology enhanced learning, student centred learning, curriculum design, online teaching skills and building a teaching portfolio. In addition, participants engage with an online course created on [www.cpdlearnonline.ie](http://www.cpdlearnonline.ie) (GMIT Teaching & Learning Office VLE).

The National Forum for the enhancement of Teaching and Learning awarded funding in January 2019 on **Building Information Modelling (BIM)**. This two-year project involves designing, developing and piloting a professional development capacity framework for staff, students and industry stakeholders involved in BIM-related practice.

The National Forum for the enhancement of Teaching and Learning awarded funding in January 2019 for **Developing All Learners through Analytics Initiative (DALTAI)**. This is a national project where GMIT School of Business and the Teaching and Learning Office collaborate with TU Dublin. It involves professional development in learning analytics, that will examine how to obtain actionable intelligence from learning data that supports student success initiatives.

#### **Further Education and School Linkages**

GMIT continues to meet annually with the local Educational and Training Boards to maintain dialogue. One of the outcomes of this was enhanced information for FET students on the GMIT website in relation to progression routes. Mapping of advanced entry routes is ongoing with all linkages published on the website.

GMIT and Limerick & Clare Education and Training Board signed a Memorandum of Understanding in June. The aim is to enhance access and provide new opportunities for higher and further education in the region.

A range of school linkages continue. One notable addition this year is the Software and Electronics Club which is being run by GMIT students in a local DEIS school. The library delivers information skills workshops to the Galway Community School and did so in Sept 2018.

#### **Programme Development**

In response to themes identified in programme validation reports a range of resources were developed to support programme teams in the development of new programmes and validation submission documents. These cover topics which arose frequently in validation reports such as learning outcomes and entry requirements. Resources available to staff include templates with detailed guidance for programme and module documents, a programme planning tool, and issues to be addressed when developing online programmes.

### Healthy Campus

GMIT is working towards a healthy campus in preparation for signing up to the Healthy Ireland Healthy Campus Framework and Charter, and in line with the GMIT's goal of encouraging all to pursue personal goals in relation to quality of life, health and wellbeing. The Healthy Campus Committee set out five priority areas to target initially namely:

- Making GMIT a 'Clean Air – No Smoking or Vaping Campus'. This was ratified in June 2019 for introduction in January 2020.
- The delivery of consent workshops to first year students. This was rolled out in conjunction with LIS classes in 2018-19.
- Positive health initiatives. This included setting up a workplace choir in February 2019 and planning for a student choir in September 2019.
- Introducing a traffic light system of nutrition value for the main dishes prepared in the canteen.
- Activities to reduce the level of alcohol and drug use by students.

### Library

The library appointed a new Assistant Librarian in the Letterfrack Campus. To ensure consistency of service and student experience the Letterfrack library reporting relationship has changed to report to the Institute librarian as do all the other campus libraries. Circulation statistics for the library in 2018-19 were 53,955, with footfall for Galway Campus (off peak) increasing by 50% (2017-18 = 40,900, 2018-19). 88 tours of the library were provided with 183 hours of training sessions provided.

School of Business established the Business Research Innovation Network Group (BRING)

School of Business is a founding member of Blockchain Ireland and is one of the academic leads in the project <https://blockchainireland.net/connect/>

### iNote

Work as commenced on iNOTE (Innovative Opportunities Transforming Education). In January 2019, GMIT along with CUA partners LyIT and IT Sligo were awarded a HEA Innovation in Teaching and Learning award to build digital capabilities in the region over the next 3 years. The iNote project provides opportunities to transform the higher education experience in the CUA institutes. The project includes five work packages:

**Work Package 1:** The development of quality assurance policies and procedures to enable digital learning (Project Lead Letterkenny IT, Dr Simon Stephens)

**Work Package 2:** The development of a digital teaching and learning training programme and online education courses for all staff to build digital capabilities and pedagogic expertise, in order to design, deliver and support flexible, distance and e-learning programmes. This work package will also include consultation and mentoring from an international partner (NY State University/SUNY) with a focus on replicating best online and flexible delivery practice. (Project Lead GMIT, Dr Carina Ginty)

**Work Package 3:** The development of an online learning student support services model. (Project Lead IT Sligo, Prof. Jacqueline McCormack)

**Work Package 4:** Design and development of three online learning programmes in Galway-Mayo, Sligo and Letterkenny.

**Work Package 5:** Evaluation and dissemination of all project outputs across the CUA.

### **Registrar's SharePoint**

The Office of the Registrar SharePoint site is regularly updated to provide all staff with access to timely student data, including:

- GMIT Student Profile
- Graduation stats
- Feedback from the Student Survey
- Student Retention
- Student Progression
- Student data trends
- Academic Plans

### **4.2 Quality Enhancement Highlights**

Analysis of quality enhancement activities that were initiated during the reporting period and which would be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination.

### **Supporting Programmatic Review**

In preparation for Programmatic Review, GMIT have produced a range of resources for use by Programme Boards. A comprehensive template with advice for its completion complements the Institute's Programmatic Review Policy. In addition, documents were provided to give advice to Programme Boards seeking feedback from students, graduates and industry. Guidance is available on updating modules and programmes, and the use of Module Manager (Curriculum Management Software) in creating and modifying module and programme descriptors.

To assist Programme Boards in accessing and analysing data relevant to their programmes, GMIT developed a visualisation of student data trends at programme level and made these available to all programme boards via SharePoint. Firstly, a database was built containing data from variety of sources, including CAO, HEA SRS, Institute Retention Reports, etc. We then developed a data model, using programming language R, to visualise data trends over the five-year period under review. A report was produced on each programme allowing Programme Boards to easily access the data to inform their review and to include in their self-evaluation reports. A similar approach was taken to visualising academic unit level data trends to support academic unit review.

### **Supporting External Examiners**

GMIT provides a workshop for new external examiners annually in relation to the work of external examiners and in particular the practice and procedure in GMIT. The workshop is normally well attended. New external examiners include academics from similar Institutions, academics from different types of institutions and industry practitioners and are drawn from Ireland and internationally, therefore having different levels of prior knowledge and experience. The workshop involves presentations and questions and answer sessions. Feedback from participants is positive.

The annual training workshop for new external examiners continues to be effective. However, for a variety of reasons not all new appointments are always able to attend. Therefore, the Institute has developed a new online resource to inform and support new and existing external examiners. This resource, which external examiners can work independently, covers the material provided in the workshop namely assessment, the role of the external examiner, the external examining process and the annual report. The resource is available at <https://www.cpdlearnonline.ie/>

GURU, a secure system for the submission, transmission and review of examination material, is used by GMIT. The system allows external examiners to easily access, manage and fulfil their external examiner duties, including submission of the annual report and receipt of response from the relevant Head of School.

### **PASS Student Leadership Development**

PASS are Peer Assisted Study Sessions and are designed to help first year students cope better with all these aspects of life at third level. It plays a key role in enhancing the experience of first year and easing the transition to third level. Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) offers:

- **Integration**  
PASS programmes help new students integrate socially and academically with other students in their classes, on their courses, and across the wider institution. It does this by providing opportunities for them to meet and work together in small groups under the guidance of a more experienced student.
- **Engagement**  
PASS programmes encourage students to become more actively involved in discussing the subject matter of their course.
- **Support**  
PASS programmes enhance the level of support and advice available throughout first year and improves students' experience of college life.
- **Empowerment**  
PASS programmes empower students to improve and develop PAL by providing them with opportunities to give their feedback via PASS Leaders and PASS Coordinators.
- **Leadership**  
PASS programmes provide an environment in which PASS Leaders can practice and develop a range of personal and professional skills.

PASS has been offered in GMIT for 10 years. Today we have 100 student leaders operating across 40 degree programmes, and to date have supported 14.000 first year students. See Figure 1.

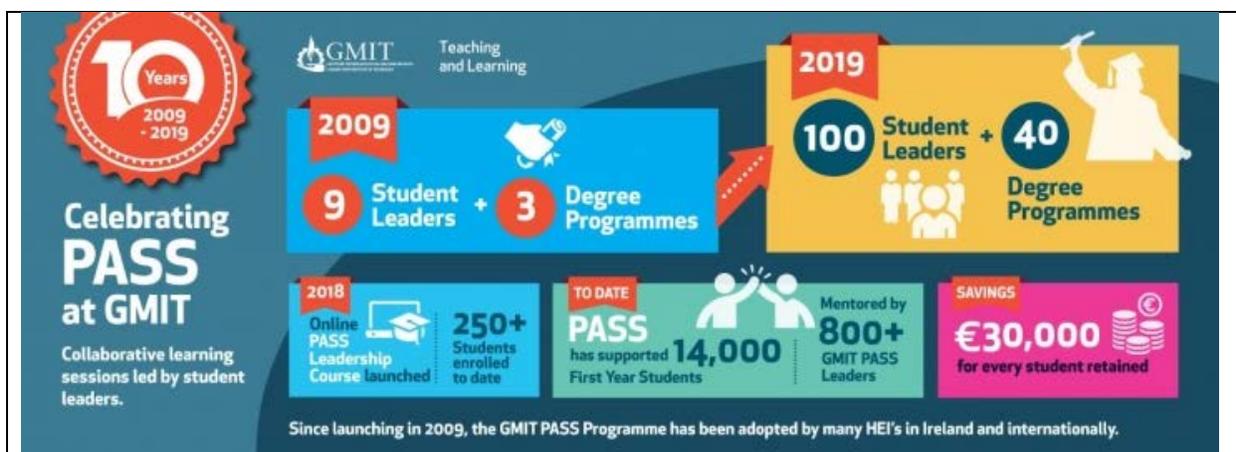


Figure 1 Overview of PASS at GMIT 2009-2019

PASS leaders undertake a comprehensive training programme. This was enhanced in June 2019, when a collection of new online training resources was created to support the student learning experience. These are available at [cpdlearnonline.ie](http://cpdlearnonline.ie). The resources introduce students to PASS, how to run PASS sessions, the 8 stages of PASS sessions and types of PASS activities. Leaders undertake the online programme and are awarded a digital badge, thereafter, progressing to the classroom based student leadership training.

**Building a Student Success Model at GMIT: *student centred learning opportunities, employability and the professional development of teaching.***

GMIT provide a range of student engagement and teaching development opportunities to support retention and to empower learners to be successful at third level and in their future careers. GMIT has faced a number of challenges including: *supporting students as they transition into higher education; retaining students on STEM programmes; developing the teaching community; an increasing demand for academic writing and maths support; research and academic integrity; and the need to support students as they transition out of higher education and into employment.* In response to these challenges, GMIT agreed strategic priorities and assigned resources to develop initiatives across various functions and academic departments.

The student engagement initiatives developed, focus on teaching enhancement and providing student-centred learning opportunities, to enable students to be successful in GMIT and in their future careers. All functions and academic departments have worked collaboratively to deliver a range of initiatives from pre-entry, first year level to final year.

The description on the range of student engagement initiatives is presented in Figure 2 and includes the following items:

**1. Get Ready Education** was designed in 2015 to address the needs of students making the transition from 2nd to 3rd level education. The MOOC is available to second level students in Ireland from transition year to leaving certificate. The MOOC combines online content with optional teacher led classroom activities, online forums and quizzes. Digital Badges are awarded to participants.

**2 & 7. Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)** first launched in 2009 and it is designed to help first year students cope better with all these aspects of life at third level. It plays a key role in enhancing the experience of first year and easing the transition to third level. PASS is timetabled in the first semester for one hour per week and is led by student PASS leaders who are trained and engage with the **Peer Learning Leadership** module (L7, 5 ECTS) and an online learning resource.

**3. The First 5 Weeks** is a five-week programme (set up in 2016) to help first-year students settle into college life and to make the transition to third-level education easier, whether they have come directly from secondary school or have been out of education for some time.

**4. Learning and Innovation Skills (LIS)** is an academic skills development module (first introduced in 2009 and updated in 2016) and it is available to all first-year students (2,000) annually. This is an active learning module that is contextualised for each discipline area and its aim is to ease the transition to third level and gain the skills to be successful on a course. This module is all about learning actively, developing creativity and being innovative.

**5. Thrive Volunteering Programme** is the GMIT President's Thrive Award for Volunteering and it was established in 2019 to celebrate civic engagement by students and staff in Galway, Mayo, Letterfrack and Mountbellew. Student volunteers who complete a required number of hours, will qualify for the award.

**6. Drop in Before you Drop out** is a stay on course initiative (established in 2017) and it operates as a career clinic service that helps students understand their exam results, recommends who to talk to and what to ask, undertakes personality testing (if required) to determine the best course fit and explains the career paths available to students when they graduate. The clinic also guides students on various course pathways available and if they are unsure about the course they are on, guidance is provided on switching and the implications of changing course direction.

**8 & 9. GMIT Step Forward – NStEP Student Engagement Programme** (first introduced in GMIT 2011 and revised in 2017) was inspired by the Scottish Universities student leadership initiative Sparqs (<http://www.sparqs.ac.uk>). This initiative now forms part of the National Student Engagement Programme. Student class representatives are trained on how to engage with the various forums, programme boards and committees in GMIT. The initiative aims to support student engagement in the quality of the learning experience.

**10. The Academic Writing Centre** (established in 2016) enable students to fulfil their potential in the academic writing tasks which are part of their course work. The Centre offers focused academic writing tuition to students of the Institute at all levels, in all years (including postgraduate), and across all disciplines. The tuition available takes the form of pre-bookable, thirty-minute, one-to-one sessions, directed by individual student need.

**11. The Maths Learning Centre (MCL)** was established in 2015 as a School of Engineering student success initiative. The centre operates a drop-in centre for students. The aim of the MLC is to encourage students to take responsibility for the development of their own maths capabilities. Students are encouraged to take their maths problems to the MLC for the tutors to work through with them.

**12. The Healthy Campus** is an initiative promoting health and wellbeing in GMIT. There are a range of activities open to students and staff from Marchathons to the Choir and lots more. The initiative launched in 2018 and it is having a really positive impact on students and staff.

**13. A Community Engagement** module and assessment opportunities are available to students from first year to final year. Community Engagement/Service Learning encourages students to explore societal issues, both inside and outside the classroom. Students learn by actively engaging with communities including non-profit organisations, charities, community associations or organisations with a focus on social responsibility.

**14 & 15. Entrepreneurship and developing Portfolios** forms part of several academic programmes in GMIT across five campuses. Students gain an opportunity to create a business idea, collaborate with industry and the GMIT Innovation Hub, develop a business plan and pitch for funding to bring their business idea to the next level, post their undergraduate degree. In addition, students in the School of Design gain an opportunity to build a Portfolio and showcase their design outputs at annual public exhibitions.

**16. The Next Step – Employability Toolkit** (the module was first introduced in 2015 and the online employability toolkit in 2019) aims to support students as they transition out of GMIT. Students develop both professionally and personally and are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to enable them to plan for and achieve their career goals. Students analyse an occupation and industry sector and devise a career strategy. They also undertake a skills audit, complete a personality assessment, prepare a CV, develop an elevator pitch, prepare for interviews and develop a LinkedIn profile.



Figure 2: Building a Student Success Model at GMIT

## Part 5: Objectives for the coming year

Part 5 provides information about plans for quality assurance in the institution for the academic year following the reporting period (in this instance 1 September 2019 – 31 August 2020).

### **5.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement System Plans**

Plans for quality assurance and quality enhancement relating to strategic objectives for the next reporting period.

The following are some of the activities planned for 2019-20:

- Increased focus on equality, diversity and inclusion. Appointment of EDI manger, Formation of self-assessment team and work towards Athena SWAN submission.
- Development and publishing of employability statements for all disciplines.
- Development and issuing of assessment guidelines for lecturers.
- Enhanced support for new and existing lecturers in relation to the start of the semester and advice for the first day of class.
- Piloting the Academic Writing Centre online to enhance service for online students.
- Work with Mountbellew Agricultural College in relation to QA and QE.
- Introduction of Sanctuary Scholarships for those in direct provision system.
- Enhanced supports for HEAR students.
- Mentoring programme for students registered with Access service.
- Training on plagiarism and contract cheating
- Opening of extension to IHub
- Development of work placement management resources. Work placement seminar. Building network of work placement coordinators and supervisors.
- Re-introduction of second chance maths examination for leaving certificate students.
- Ongoing work on developing panel of RPL assessors.
- Development of awards conferring policy
- Training for internal validation panel members.
- Development of attendance principles
- Development of QA around micro-credentials and digital badges.
- Information sessions on AC, and training of new AC.
- Student Success Policy as part of the CUA collaborative initiative
- Consent workshops
- HR Strategy
- Improving Transition – First Day of Class, Assessment Communication
- FET Open Evening
- iNote Project
- E-Wil project
- Sustainability Initiatives
- THRIVE volunteering programme
- To enhance student participation, it is planned to pilot student co-creation of the curriculum through the N-Step project.
- Review of Scholarships
- Sports Strategy and brand launch
- Common Marks and Standards for CUA
- Shadow Governing Body for CUA
- Common Student Charter for CUA
- CUA Research Symposium and Online Teaching Symposium
- President’s award for research excellence
- Further develop the visualisation and analysis of student feedback from the Student Survey (formerly ISSE) to include benchmarking of feedback of GMIT students by discipline. We will also develop a comparison of student feedback by first and final year cohorts.
- Implementation of the nomination of External Examiners via the Guru system.

- Participation of two GMIT staff members on the User Requirements group as part of the sectoral SRMS upgrade project.
- Implementation of version 3 of the Academic Module Manager including enhancement of the AQA2 PDF output from the system.
- GMIT International Strategy

## 5.2 Review Plans

A list of reviews within each category (module, programme, department/school, service delivery unit or faculty), as per the internal review cycle, planned for the next reporting period.

### Function Reviews

- Computing
- Buildings & Estates
- International Office
- Student Services
- Marketing & Communications
- Finance
- Academic Affairs
- HR
- Lifelong Learning
- Research Office

### Academic Unit Reviews

- School of Business
- School of Engineering
- School of Science & Computing
- School of Design & Creative Arts
- Galway International Hotel School
- Mayo Campus

### Programmatic Review

- SER Development - All Programmes

### Policy Reviews

- Research Ethics
- Level 9 Research Discipline Area Validation Policy & Procedures
- Student Assessment: Marks & Standards
- Student Retention Policy
- Nursing: Clinical Placement
- Nursing: Progression Policy
- External Examining
- Student Equality Policy
- Garda Vetting Policy
- Code of Student Conduct/Cód Iompraíochta na Neach Léinn

### New Policies

- Mental Health
- Fitness to Continue to Study
- Fitness to Practice
- Awards Policy

- Microcredentials

### **5.3 Other Plans**

A number of new appointments are planned for 2019-20:

- New President
- Human Capital Initiative Coordinator
- Access Transfer and Progression Coordinator
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

## Part 6: Periodic Review

Part 6 provides information that acts as a bridge between the AIQR and periodic external review.

### 6.1 The Institution and External Review

A description of the impacts of institutional review within the institution.

Delete this message and insert text here. The box will expand. This is a paragraph describing the impacts of institutional review within the institution. This may include reference to: an overall evaluation of the impact of actions taken to date in response to recommendations of preceding external review; a description of plans and preparations undertaken for the next external review.

### 6.2 Self-Reflection on Quality Assurance

A short evaluative and reflective summary of the overall impact of quality assurance in the reporting period or, over a more extensive period, in the review.

Delete this message and insert text here. The box will expand. This is a short evaluative and reflective summary of the overall impact of quality assurance in the reporting period or, over a more extensive period, in the review cycle. This may include highlighting good practice(s) and strengths in quality and quality assurance. It may also include information that the institution wishes to draw to the attention of QQI in relation to QA activities undertaken in this reporting period and/or priorities to be pursued in the next reporting period.

**6.3 Themes**

Developmental themes of importance to the institution which will be relevant to periodic review.

Delete this message and insert text here. The box will expand. This is a short paragraph outlining any developmental themes in quality and quality assurance which are of importance to the institution and relevant to periodic review. These may be linked to the strategic objectives of the institution.