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**Policy  
Institutional Review**

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**Version 1  
Approved by Academic Council on 18 June 2018**

## Document Location

Registrar's Office

## Revision History

<b>Date of this revision:</b> April 2018	<b>Date of next review:</b> 2021/22
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Version Number/ Revision Number	Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
1.0	April 2018	Extracted from CoP No. 2	N/A

## Consultation History

Version Number/ Revision Number	Consultation Date	Names of Parties in Consultation	Summary of Changes
1.0		CoP No 2 Workgroup	

## Approval

This document requires the following approvals:

Name	Title	Date
	Academic Council	18 June 2018
	Governing Body	28 June 2018

## **1.0 CONTEXT**

The Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) will carry out an Institutional Review of GMIT on a cyclical basis. The terms of reference for institutional reviews will normally incorporate prescribed statutory review functions, particularly those provided for in Section 34 (review of the effectiveness of agreed quality assurance procedures) and Section 54 (review of delegation of authority) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. The process and procedures will be guided by the ‘Handbook for the Cyclical Review of Institutes of Technology’ (2017).

Institutional Review is an element of the broader quality framework for Institutes of Technology. It is interdependent on and integrated with a wider range of QQI engagements: Quality Assurance Guidelines, GMIT’s Quality Assurance Procedures; Annual Institutional Quality Reports (AIQR); and Dialogue Meetings; Delegation of Authority and Sectoral Protocols.

## **2.0 PURPOSES OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW**

Institutional Review is a key and critical element of Quality Assurance. Institutional Review evaluates the effectiveness of institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and enhancing the quality of education, training, research and related services the institution provides. The Institutional Review measures institution accountability for compliance with European standards for quality assurance, regard to the expectations set out in the QQI quality assurance guidelines or their equivalent and adherence to other relevant QQI policies and procedures as established in the lifecycle of engagement between the institution and QQI. Institutional Review explores institution enhancement of quality in relation to impacts on teaching, learning and research, institutional achievements and innovations in quality assurance, alignment to the institution’s mission and strategy and the quality-related performance of the institution relative to quality indicators and benchmarks identified by the institution.

The following are four key purposes for individual institutional reviews:

### **Purpose 1**

To encourage a QA culture and the enhancement of the student learning environment and experience across and within the institution – achieved and measured through:

- emphasising the student and the student learning experience in the review
- providing a source of evidence of areas for enhancement and areas for revision of policy and change and basing follow-up upon them
- exploring innovative and effective practices and procedures
- exploring quality as well as quality assurance within the institution

### **Purpose 2**

To provide feedback to institutions about institution-wide quality and the impact of mission, strategy, governance and management on quality and the overall effectiveness of their quality assurance – achieved and measured through:

- emphasising the governance of quality and quality assurance at the level of the institution
- pitching the review at a comprehensive institution-wide level

- evaluating compliance with legislation, policy and standards
- evaluating how the institution has identified and measured itself against its own benchmarks and metrics to support quality assurance governance and procedures
- emphasising the enhancement of quality assurance procedures

### **Purpose 3**

To contribute to public confidence in the quality of institutions by promoting transparency and public awareness – achieved and measured through:

- adhering to purposes, criteria and outcomes that are clear and transparent
- publishing the reports and outcomes of reviews in accessible locations and formats for different audiences
- evaluating, as part of the review, institutional reporting on quality and quality assurance, to ensure that it is transparent and accessible

### **Purpose 4**

To facilitate quality enhancement by using evidence-based, objective methods and advice – achieved and measured through:

- using the expertise of international, national and student peer reviewers who are independent of the institution
- ensuring that findings are based on stated evidence
- facilitating institutions to identify measurement, comparison and analytic techniques, based on quantitative data relevant to their own mission and context, to support quality assurance
- promoting the identification and dissemination of examples of good practice and innovation

### **System-Level Purpose**

An additional specific purpose for cyclical review is to support systems-level enhancement of the quality of higher education – achieved and measured through:

- publication of periodic synoptic reports
- ensuring that there is sufficient consistency in approach between similar institutions to allow for comparability and shared learning
- publishing institutional quality profiles.

### **3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Roles and responsibilities during the Institute Review will align with ‘Handbook for the Cyclical Review of Institutes of Technology’ (2017). The Institute will appoint an Institutional Coordinator at the outset, who will be the main liaison point between the Institution, QQI and the Review Team, throughout the Institutional Review process.

An Institutional Self-Evaluation team chaired by a senior manager will be established, and will include students (undergraduate and postgraduate representatives) and staff involved in teaching, administration, and quality assurance and enhancement. The self-evaluation process will be as inclusive and participative as possible.

### **4.0 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PROCESS**

The review will consist of five elements:

- Stage 1: The publication of Terms of Reference
- Stage 2: An Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)
- Stage 3: An external assessment and site visit by a team of reviewers
- Stage 4: The publication of a review report including findings and recommendations and
- Stage 5: A follow-up procedure to review actions taken

#### **STAGE 1 Terms of Reference**

QQI will complete an institutional information profile, and confirm Terms of Reference for the Institutional Review with GMIT and HEA. The published Terms of Reference will document the objectives of the review. The Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and the Review Report must analyse whether an institution has achieved these and the extent to which they have been achieved.

#### **Review Objectives**

##### **Objective 1**

To review the effectiveness and implementation of the QA procedures of the institution through consideration of the procedures set out, primarily, in the AIQR. Where necessary, the information provided by the AIQR is supplemented by additional information provided through documentation requests and interviews. The scope of this includes reporting procedures, governance and publication. This also incorporates an analysis of the ways in which the institution uses measurement, comparisons and analytic techniques, based on quantitative data, to support quality assurance governance and procedures. Progress on the development of quality assurance since the last review of the institution will be evaluated. Consideration will also be given to the effectiveness of the AIQR and Institutional Self Evaluation Reports (ISER) by the institution.

The scope of this objective also extends to the overarching approach of the institution to assuring itself of the quality of its research degree programmes and research activities.

This objective also encompasses the effectiveness of the procedures established by the institution for the assurance of the quality of alliances, partnerships and overseas provision, including the TU clusters, mergers, transnational provision, joint awarding, joint provision and regional fora.

## **Objective 2**

To review the procedures established by the institution for the governance and management of its functions that comprise its role as an awarding body. The Team will focus on evidence of a governance system to oversee the education and training, research and related activity of the institution and evidence of a culture that supports quality within the institution. Considerations will centre upon the effectiveness of decision making across and within the institution.

## **Objective 3**

To review the enhancement of quality by the institution through governance, policy, and procedures.

To review the congruency of quality assurance procedures and enhancements with the institution's own mission and goals or targets for quality.

To identify innovative and effective practices for quality enhancement.

## **Objective 4**

To review the effectiveness and implementation of procedures for access, transfer and progression.

## **Objective 5**

Following the introduction of a statutory international education quality assurance scheme, to determine compliance with the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners.

## **Key questions to be addressed across all objectives by the review**

- How have quality assurance procedures and reviews been implemented within the institution?
- How effective are the internal quality assurance procedures and reviews of the institution?
- Are the quality assurance procedures in keeping with European Standards and Guidelines?
- Are the quality assurance procedures in keeping with QQI policy and guidelines, or their equivalent?
- Who takes responsibility for quality and quality assurance across the institution?
- How transparent, accessible and comprehensive is reporting on quality assurance and quality?
- How is quality promoted and enhanced?
- Are there effective innovations in quality enhancement and assurance?
- Is the student experience in keeping with the institution's own stated mission and strategy?
- Are achievements in quality and quality assurance in keeping with the institution's own stated mission and strategy?
- How do achievements in quality and quality assurance measure up against the institution's own goals or targets for quality?

## **STAGE 2 Self-Evaluation**

Self-evaluation is a self-reflective and critical evaluation completed by the members of an institution's community. It is the way in which the institution outlines how effectively it assures and enhances the quality of its teaching, learning, research and service activities.

The Report produced by the Institution following the self-evaluation process, called the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (the ISER), is the core document used by the Review

Team. It provides them with the documented evidence, or references to evidence, to support claims that the institution is meeting the objectives and criteria set out in the ToR.

### Two Overarching Intended Outcomes of Self-Evaluation

**Firstly**, the self-evaluation process will provide an institution with an opportunity to demonstrate and analyse how it evaluates the effectiveness of:

- its policies and procedures for quality assurance and quality enhancement;
- the ways the governing authority is facilitated in and is discharging its responsibilities for quality assurance. Is there clarity and transparency about process, the distribution of responsibilities, and the criteria for decisions?
- The procedures in place for reporting, governance and publication;
- the methods employed to ensure internal quality management processes are in keeping with national, European and international best practice;
- The overarching procedures of the institution for assuring itself of the quality of its taught programmes, research degree programmes and programmes of research;
- the use of outcomes of internal and external quality assurance and enhancement processes to identify strengths and weaknesses and enhancement targets in its teaching, learning, research and service areas, informing decision-making, and enabling a culture of quality within the institution. In particular, are they clear and transparent to all stakeholders? Is there appropriate critical mass in the provision of programmes?
- the use of relevant information and data to support evidence-based decisions about quality;
- the accuracy, completeness and reliability of published information in relation to the outcomes of internal reviews aimed at enhancing the quality of education and related services;
- Progress on the development of quality assurance since the last review of the institution;
- The use of the AIQR and ISER procedures within the institution;
- The procedures established by the institution for the assurance of the quality of collaborations, partnerships and overseas provision, including the procedures for the approval and review of joint awarding arrangements, joint provision and other collaborative arrangements such as clusters and mergers;
- The enhancement of quality by the institution through governance, policy, and procedures.
- The congruency of quality assurance procedures and enhancements with the institution's own mission and goals or targets for quality;
- Innovative and effective practices for quality enhancement; and
- Procedures for access, transfer and progression.

**And, secondly** whether its tools, its quality assurance policies and procedures are effective in answering these questions.

### STAGE 3 External Review

QQI will appoint a Review Team to conduct the institutional review. These teams are composed of peer reviewers who are students and senior institutional leaders from comparable institutions as well as external representatives, and will have appropriate gender representation. The institution will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed composition of their Review Team to ensure there are no conflicts of interest, and QQI will ensure an appropriate and entirely independent team of reviewers is selected for the institution. QQI has final approval over the composition of each Review Team.

In preparation for the Planning and Main Review Visits, each team member is requested to conduct their own independent desk analysis of the ISER and supporting materials, including AIQRs and the institutional profile and data supplied by the HEA.

A one-day on-site Planning Visit will normally be conducted by the Chairperson and the Coordinating Reviewer approximately 7 weeks before the Main Review Visit. Review Team members will have been invited to provide comments on the ISER and additional documentation required to the Chairperson and Coordinating Reviewer in advance of the Planning Visit. A QQI staff member will also attend the Planning Visit to ensure the process is conducted in accordance with published criteria.

The Main Review Visit will be used by the Team to seek evidence to determine the effectiveness of the processes employed by the Institution for assuring quality management in keeping with their own mission and strategy and in accordance with national and European requirements. The Team will receive and consider evidence on the ways in which the Institution has performed in respect of the objectives and criteria set out in the Terms of Reference.

#### **STAGE 4 Report**

The report sets out the finding of the Review Team. The content for the written report will be prepared and agreed by the whole Team at the end of the review process. The Institution will be given a formal opportunity within the post-review timeline to check the factual accuracy of the review report. The Institution is also invited to provide a formal response to the review report (ideally no longer than 2 pages in length) that will be published as an appendix to the main Review Report.

QQI and the Institution will publish the Review Report, the Institution's response (optional) and the follow-up report of the Institution.

#### **STAGE 5 Follow-up**

One year after the Main Review Visit the Institute will be asked to produce a follow-up report (incorporating the institutional action plan), for submission to QQI. Within the report, the Institution should provide a commentary on how the review findings and recommendations have been discussed and disseminated throughout the Institution's committee structure and academic units, and comment on how effectively the Institution is addressing the review outcomes. The report should identify the range of strategic and logistical developments and decisions that have occurred within the Institution since the review reports' publication.