


Quality policy		
	1QM01	File Location:
		Current Revision: 07
		Document Owner:
	1QM01.07	Document Level: 1

Quality policy

Revision History

Revision	Date	Revision Description	Originator
00	26 September 2003	New Document	Noeleen Johnson
01	16 March 2005	Inclusion of standards adopted by European association for QA in HE and editing update	Diarmuid O'Callaghan
02	18 March 2005	Update to Section 4.1 HR	Noeleen Johnson
03	11 March 2008	Links to QA / Strategic Plan	Michael Keane
04	1 August 2008	Title change of Director to President	QA Officer
05	9 February 2010	Update of links to new ITB website	QA Officer
06	3 April 2014	Revised document	QA Officer
07	11 May 2017	Revised document	QA Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe the quality management system of the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB) and provide a roadmap of quality assurance policies and procedures.

Quality Policy

ITB is committed to excellence and quality in the development and delivery of its programmes, service provision and research activities. It is the policy of the Institute to:

- Facilitate a high-quality learning experience for a diverse range of learners that will support lifelong learning and provide skills expected of graduates.
- Value, support and recognise excellence in teaching by academic staff.
- Facilitate learning by providing the academic support infrastructure and environment conducive to the provision of the highest standards in teaching and learning.
- Encourage application of a diversity of teaching practices and methodologies to meet the needs of a wide range of students with a variety of abilities and competencies.
- Value and encourage research activities.

Our commitment to excellence and quality involves continuous improvement which can only be achieved by setting goals and standards for academic and administrative support activities, evaluating practice against these standards and improving practice based on the results of this evaluation. The concept of quality applies to all the activities and human and physical resources that combine to underpin the academic programmes of the Institute. It is through the quality assurance process that the Institute can guarantee to itself and stakeholders that the teaching, learning and other services consistently reach a standard of excellence. The concept of quality relies on involvement by stakeholders in helping to determine standards, excellence, value for money, fitness for purpose and meeting stakeholders' needs.

The quality assurance policies and procedures of the Institute are guided by the following:

- European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
- All relevant QQI Standards and Guidelines
- National Framework of Qualifications Standards
- Policies and Procedures approved by the Institute's Academic Council

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- All other relevant regulatory and professional requirements

ITB is committed to maintaining standards for academic quality assurance in the Institute that are consistent with European best practice. To this effect, the Institute has adopted the European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance¹ as published by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

Specifically the relevant standards are:

- 1) Policy for Quality Assurance
- 2) Design and Approval of Programmes
- 3) Student-centred Learning, Teach and Assessment
- 4) Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification
- 5) Teaching Staff
- 6) Learning Resources and Student Support
- 7) Information Management
- 8) Public Information
- 9) On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
- 10) Cyclical External Quality Assurance

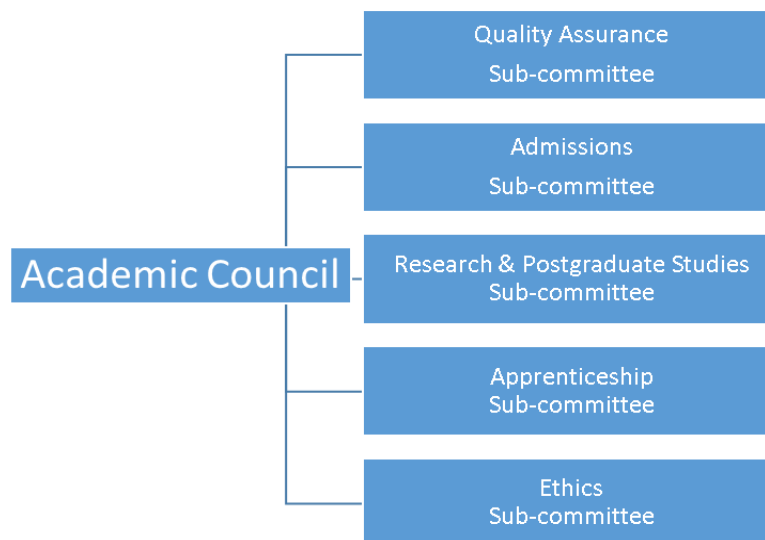
¹ Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). (2015). Brussels, Belgium.

1. Policy for quality assurance

The Institute is committed to having policies and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of our programmes and awards. The Institute is committed explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance and enhancement in our work.

Responsibility for Quality Assurance

Academic excellence is a fundamental value enshrined in the activities of the Institute. All staff are responsible for quality assurance and their own components. It is Institute policy to charge responsibility of quality assurance to staff. Specific responsibility for academic quality assurance lies with Academic Council² through relevant sub committees diagrammatically represented below:



Quality Assurance of financial and legislative issues is the responsibility of Governing Body and is monitored through the internal audit subcommittee of Governing Body. Commitment to the quality assurance of services provided by the Institute is identified in policy document 2MP31³.

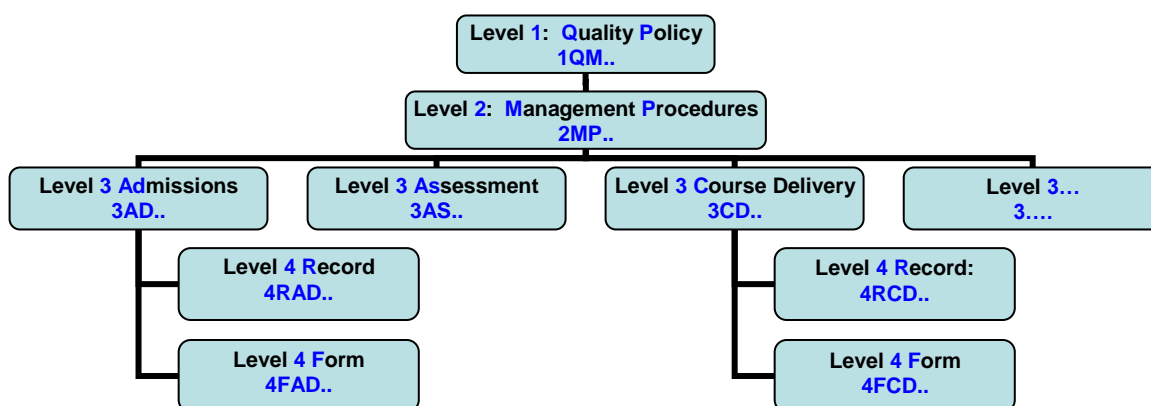
² 3GB13 Academic Council and Academic Council subcommittee terms of reference and standing orders

³ 2MP31 Institute Review Policy

Structure and operation of the Institute's quality document management system (DMS)

The function and use of the DMS is to store and organise files, and provide version-controlled access relating to Institute policies and procedures to staff of the Institute.

The quality assurance documentation system of the Institute is structured across four levels.



Level 1 includes the Institute quality manual. This document includes reference to the Institute mission, vision, values and key publications. There is currently one document at this level numbered 1QM01

Level 2 includes a range of management procedures. These are considered mission critical and address issues that apply across the Institute. They must be signed off by the full top management team of the Institute. Documents are numbered in a series starting with 2MP followed by a sequence number.

Level 3 includes a range of operational procedures. These apply to activities of specific sections of the Institute and are signed off by the relevant section Head, Academic Council and / or Governing Body, where relevant. Documents are categorised into sub-sections starting with alphabetic codes as listed below followed by a sequence number.

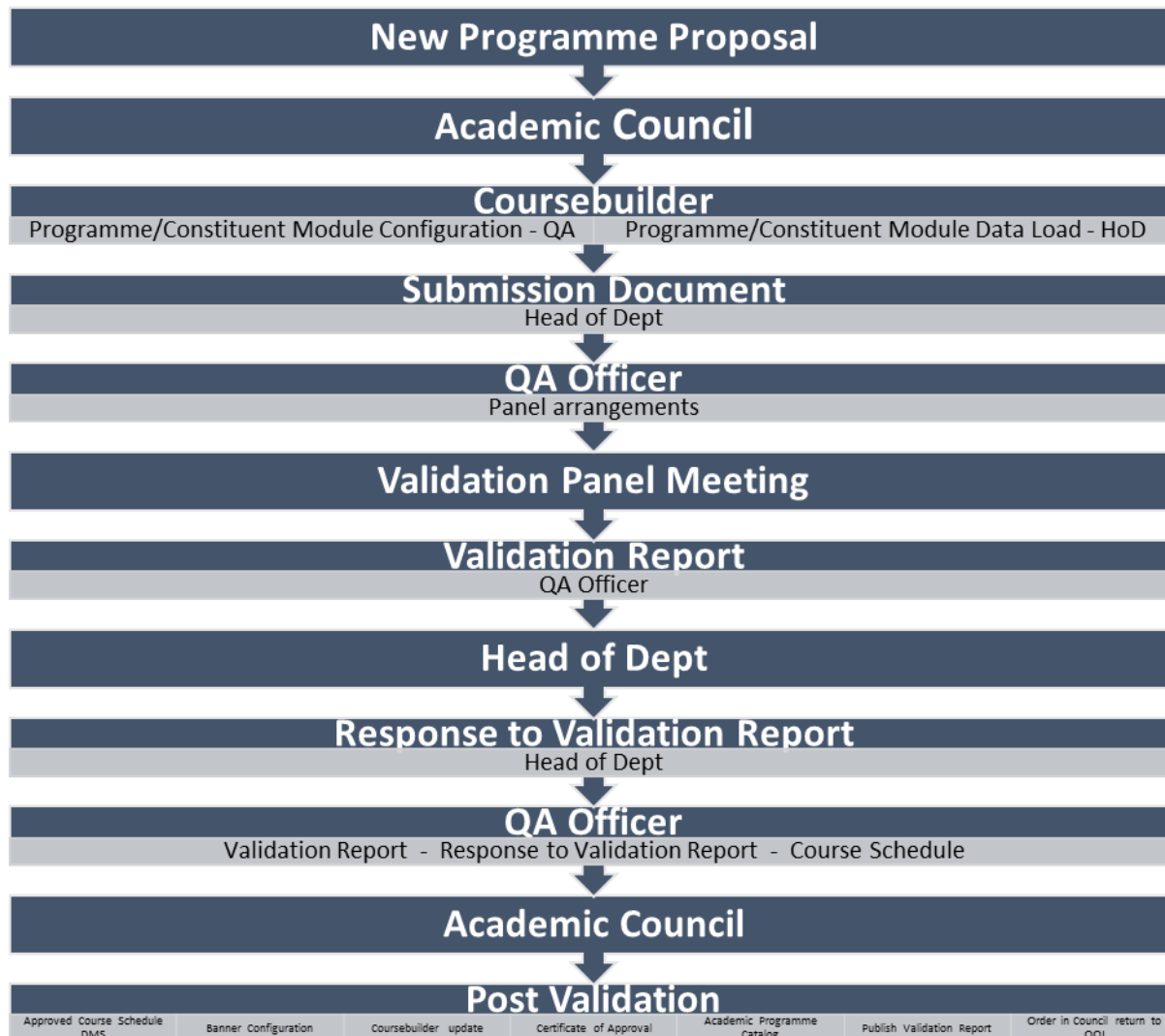
AD	Admissions	RD	Research & Development
AC	Accreditation	SS	Student Services
AS	Assessment	LB	Library
CD	Course delivery	IT	Information Technology
GB	Governing Body & Academic Council	HS	Health and Safety
FI	Finance	GA	General Administration
HR	Human Resources	EM	Estate Management

Level 4 documents include a range of forms, records and minutes. These are signed off by the relevant line manager. Documents are categorised into a range of sub-sections starting with F (for form) R (for record) or M (for minute) followed by an alphabetic codes as listed above, followed by a sequence number.

A policy document template is provided for staff on the DMS under code 3GA06.

2. Design and Approval of Programmes

Visual overview of the programme design and approval process is provided:



Policy documents relating to the design and validation of new academic programmes available on the DMS:

- 4FMP01 New Course Proposal Outline Form
- 4RMP02 New programme proposal and module design guidelines
- 2MP01 Design and validation of new academic programmes
- 3AC05 Policy and procedure for the proposal, development and validation of minor, supplemental and special purpose awards
- 2MP17 Roles and responsibilities of external experts on validation and review panels

Certificates of approval

All validated programmes have a certificate of approval. Each certificate lists the following programme information:

- Award and programme title
- Programme codes
- NFQ level and ECTS credits
- Award class and format
- Academic council report date
- Certificate expiry date
- Approved exit award(s)

Certificates are signed by both the President and the Registrar and are retained by the Quality Assurance Officer. The current listing of validated programmes is published on the DMS within '4RCD11 Academic programme catalogue'.

Approved course schedules

All validated programmes have an approved course schedule listing the following information:

Programme information:

- Award and programme title
- Programme codes
- NFQ level and ECTS credits
- Award class and format
- Minimum entry requirements
- Special regulations
- Programme schedule of delivery

Constituent module information:

- Module title and code
- Status – mandatory/elective
- NFQ level and ECTS credits
- Indicative student workload (contact/self-directed learning)
- Assessment breakdown (continuous assessment/end of semester exam)

Approved course schedules are published on the DMS and coded 4RCD02 followed by the programme code i.e '4RCD02 BN001' and maintained by the Quality Assurance Officer.

3. Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Institute is committed to continuing to develop a learner-centred approach to quality enhancement for all students by:

- Creating a rich learning environment through an innovative, flexible and multi-disciplinary curriculum model for all students.
- Creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all learners assisted by developing and adopting the principles of universal design in teaching and learning.
- Expanding our innovative use of technology to further enhance the teaching and learning environment.
- Further developing peer-mentoring and first year experience initiatives.
- Integrating learner analytics, National student survey output and quality assurance reviews into academic quality assurance systems for teaching and learning.
- Professional development and excellence in teaching is recognised and reinforced by engaging with learning teaching and technology centres.
- Participation in and evaluation of U-Multirank as an effective means of benchmarking with other higher education institutions internationally, and creating a context for self-evaluation.
- Continuing to engage with the HEA strategic dialogue process.
- Participating in USI, QQI, HEA and the National Forum for the enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education.

See strategic plan: <http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/strategicplan.html>

Assessment

Institute policy and procedure relating to student assessment is documented within policy document '3AS06 Academic programme assessment policy and procedure' available both on the DMS and within the quality assurance section of the website

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

The Registrar has overall responsibility for the conduct of examinations and is tasked with ensuring effective implementation of procedures approved by the Academic Council of the Institute regarding conduct of examinations.

External examiners

External examining is a specific learner assessment quality assurance mechanism employed by the Institute. The principal duty of external examiners is to ensure that the Institute is compliant with National and International standards and the NFQ in its assessment of learners, thus ensuring public confidence in the academic qualifications of the Institute. Policy document '3AS09 External examiners and reporting arrangements' records Institute policy and procedures with regard to the nomination, appointment, duties and responsibilities of external examiners. External examiners for the current academic year are listed within 4RAS10 on the DMS.

Examination Script Inspection and Result, Recheck, and Appeals Procedures

It is the policy of the Institute to consider all requests in relation to examination matters in accordance with the principles of natural and constitutional justice. It is the policy of the Institute to provide arrangements in relation to examination script viewing, examination mark rechecking, reviewing, and appeals concerning examination matters which ensure that they are dealt with fairly, transparently and in a timely way and which may involve, as necessary, wholly independent persons of appropriate knowledge and experience in the process. The Examination Script Inspection and Result, Recheck, and Appeals Procedure can be found in policy document 3AS10 on the DMS and within the quality assurance section of the website:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

Learner involvement in quality assurance

The Institute recognises the impact and importance of quality assurance procedures on the learner and therefore seeks to involve learners in quality assurance activities.

Learner involvement includes:

➤ Student evaluations of course delivery

4FCD06

QA 1: Institutes of Technology Survey of Students by
Lecturer

(on the DMS)

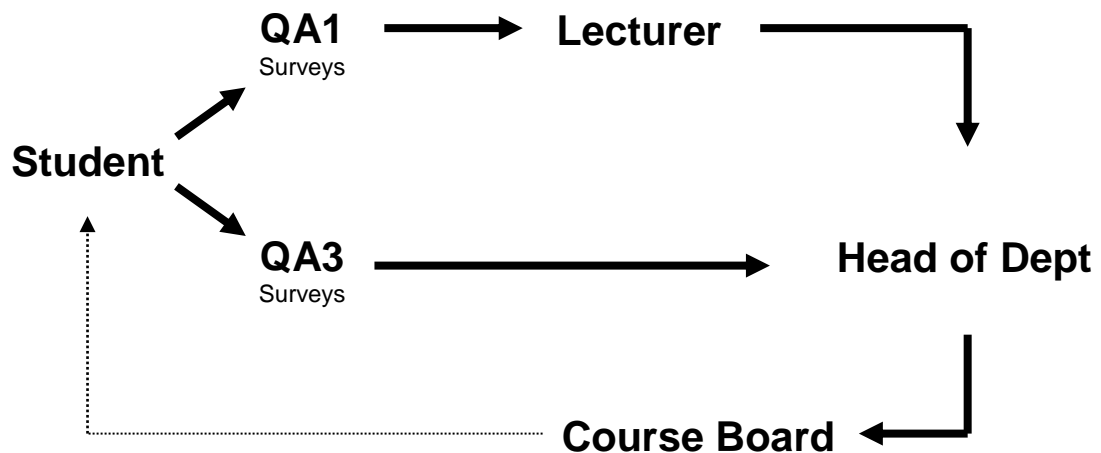
This survey gives students the opportunity to provide a rating to a range of issues relating to the presentation of a subject or subject component.

➤ **Student surveys conducted at the programme level**

4FCD08 QA 3: Survey of Students by Department (on the DMS)

This survey gives students the opportunity to provide an overall evaluation of their programme as an entirety rather than a narrow focus on any particular element on their programme.

Visual overview of learner involvement



➤ **Student representation on course boards**

3CD05 Academic programme boards - policy and procedures
(on the DMS)

One student per year of course on each course board

➤ **Student representation on committees and service review panels**

ITB endeavours to enshrine the value of student participation in quality assurance activities not only at programme level but also at departmental,

school and institutional level by encouraging student participation on committees and service review panels including:

- Governing Body
- Academic Council
- Institute Review

➤ **ISSE** - Irish Survey of Student Engagement

The Institute actively engages in the promotion of and student participation in the Irish Survey of Student Engagement the objectives of which are to:

- Increase transparency in relation to the student experience within IT Blanchardstown
- Enable direct student input on levels of engagement and satisfaction
- Identify good practice(s) that enhance the quality of the student experience
- Assist the Institute in identifying any issues and challenges affecting the student experience
- Serve as a guide for continual enhancement of the Institute's teaching and learning and student engagement
- Document the experiences of the student population, thus enabling year on year comparisons of key performance indicators
- Provide insight into student opinion on important issues of higher education policy and practice
- Facilitate comparison with other higher education systems internationally

<http://studentsurvey.ie/>

4. Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

Admission

Institute policy on student admission (3AD08) is available on both the DMS and within the Quality Assurance policy section on the website:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

Admission policies are the responsibility of Governing Body through recommendations from the Academic Council, as determined in section 10 (3) (d) of the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992.

Progression

Student progression is a key performance indicator (KPI 2) with year on year statistics reported on per year of study, per programme, per department and per NFQ level and is published annually on the DMS.

The Institute is committed to the ladder system providing progression opportunities for students from NFQ level 6 to level 7, level 8 through to Masters.

Recognition

Institute policy and procedure on the accreditation of prior experiential learning can be found in policy document 3AD07 while Institute policy on the granting of exemptions from modules based on prior certified or experiential learning, allowing academic credit to be gained for same can be found in policy document 3AD06, both available on the DMS and within the Quality Assurance policy section on the website:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

5. Teaching Staff

The Institute assures the quality of its staff by, in the first instance, employing suitably qualified personnel and, thereafter, through implementation of its policy on staff training and development (2MP04) and other relevant quality assurance initiatives.

It is Institute policy to:

- Prioritise the ongoing professional and personal development of staff through optimal use of available budgets.
- Provide for the professional and personal development of staff through the Institute Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).
- Ensure that recommendations for training and development emanating from the PMDS process as agreed by the appropriate line manager and the relevant staff member meet Institute strategic priorities and support individual developmental needs.
- Support training and development activities of staff that will enhance the delivery of Institute services or further the Institute's strategic plan.
- Maintain a structured training and development needs analysis, drawing on data from the PMDS and the Institute's quality assurance processes.
- Provide financial support for training and development in line with norms in equivalent academic institutes.
- Celebrate staff development and achievement through reporting of activities in the Institute annual report and reports to Governing Body.

6. Learning Resources and Student Support

The Student Services office provides a range of financial, academic and personal supports for students attending the Institute. Information on these services is available at:

<https://www.itb.ie/CampusStudentLife/studentservices.html>

7. Information Management

The Institute undertakes to ensure that its information systems are appropriately structured and administered to collect, analyse and use information for the effective management of its programmes of study and other activities.

The student information management system currently employed by the Institute is Ellucian Banner.

Course board reports are generated on an annual basis detailing the number of applications, registrations, deferrals and withdrawals while also providing statistics on module examination performance, student progression and feedback from external examiners. This information is used to support decision making in relation to programme management.

8. Public Information

The Institute undertakes to provide detailed, up-to-date, impartial and objective information on its programmes and awards to the public.

Programme information is available to the public and can be accessed through the ITB website www.itb.ie or at <http://courses.itb.ie>

The current prospectus is available at the prospectus available at:

<http://www.itb.ie/StudyatITB/index.html>

Key performance indicators (KPI's)

Key performance indicators provide management with performance information to enable them or the Institutes stakeholders to understand the performance level of the organisation. KPI's link to the strategic objectives of the organisation and therefore help monitor the execution of the business strategy.

KPI 1	Student numbers	4RGB10 (available on the DMS)
KPI 2	Student progression rates	4RGB12 (available on the DMS)

Published policies

For an overview of quality assurance policies and procedures of the Institute click on the following link:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

Published reports

To review quality assurance reports completed to date click on the following link:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssuranceReports/qar.asp>

Strategic plan

To review the current strategic plan click on the following link:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/strategicplan.html>

Annual report

To review the most recent annual report click on the following link:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/annualreport.html>

9. On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes

Programme evaluation

It is Institute policy to review and evaluate academic programmes every 5 years. This review process is primarily designed to evaluate programme quality and flexibility in response to changing needs. For a detailed description of this process see 'Section B: Monitoring and evaluation of academic programmes' within policy document 2MP31 Institute Review Policy on the DMS.

The Institute undertakes to ensure that learning resources and support mechanisms are readily accessible to students. Policy document '3CD05 Academic programme boards policy and procedures' records Institute policy and procedure as it applies to the operation of academic programme and course boards and support structures in all academic departments.

Course board reports are generated on an annual basis detailing the number of applications, registrations, deferrals and withdrawals while also providing statistics on module examination performance, student progression and feedback from external examiners.

Evaluation of facilities and services

It is Institute policy to evaluate facilities and services involved in the delivery of academic programmes every 5 years, with the output of that review available in advance of completion of a self-evaluation report as part of Institute review. For a detailed description of this process see 'Section C: Evaluation of facilities and services involved in delivery of academic programmes' within policy document 2MP31 on the DMS.

Effectiveness of Institute academic quality assurance policies and procedures

It is Institute policy to review the effectiveness of Institute academic quality assurance policies and procedures every 5 years, with the output of that review available in advance of completion of a self-evaluation report as part of Institute review. For a detailed description of this process see 'Section D: Review of effectiveness of the Institute quality assurance procedures' within policy document 2MP31 on the DMS.

10. Cyclical External Quality Assurance

Institutional Review

Institutional review is required under agreed protocols with Qualifications and Quality Ireland (QQI), formerly HETAC, to comply with ongoing requirements regarding delegation of authority to confer awards. It is Institute policy to conduct a major review of key Institute academic activities at least every five years. For a detailed description of this process see policy document '2MP31 Institute review' on the DMS.

Updates

Updates to this policy document are reviewed through the Quality Assurance sub-committee of Academic Council.

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