



Annual Quality Report (AQR)

Template

for Completion by

Mary Immaculate College

Reporting Period: 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025

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Completing the AQR

The University of Limerick's commitment to quality is articulated in its institutional quality statement (<http://www.ul.ie/quality/quality-ul>), which commits the university to a culture of continual quality improvement and to complying with national statutory quality requirements.

The purpose of this template is to facilitate Mary Immaculate College (MIC) – a linked provider of the University of Limerick (UL) – to complete an Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQR) in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 as amended.

Instructions for completion and submission:

Fill in the reporting period and complete the text boxes by overwriting the grey text. While there is no exact word limit, it is expected that each completed text box would fill approximately half a page to one and a half pages (guideline only). Hyperlinks to websites and documents can be inserted. Additional supporting material can be submitted along with the completed template.

Please include the MIC quality manual/quality framework document when submitting this AQR. The former should incorporate an overview description of quality governance as well as institutional-level quality policies and procedures. Please indicate in Section 1 below any changes that have been made (in the current reporting period) to the quality manual/framework document.

Please email this completed AIQR along with the MIC quality manual/quality framework document and any additional relevant documents to the UL Director of Quality, sinead.osullivan@ul.ie by 30 October annually.

Introduction and Overview

Please provide a brief overview of Mary Immaculate College and a link to the Quality Manual

Founded in 1898, Mary Immaculate College (MIC) is a distinctive and inclusive university-level, Catholic College of Education and the Liberal Arts that offers undergraduate programmes as well as a range of research-based and taught postgraduate programmes at certificate, diploma, master's and doctorate levels. Qualifications in the professional development and lifelong learning categories complement the course offerings so that MIC now has a range of programmes from Level 4 up to Level 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications. Total enrolments for the academic year 2024/25 are 4968.

In 1991, an academic linkage between MIC and the University of Limerick (UL) (MOU) was established. This linkage is governed by a [Memorandum of Agreement \(MoA\)](#). Based on the MoA, UL accredits MIC's Level 6 to 10 programmes.

MIC is a Linked Provider of UL as defined in the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#). UL is the Designated Awarding Body for all higher education programmes at MIC except where other arrangements are jointly agreed by UL and MIC. As a Linked Provider of UL, MIC is subject to review and external quality assurance by UL.

MIC is committed to ensuring the very highest standards of excellence in its teaching, learning, research and support activities. Quality assurance underpins a cohesive and consistent approach to delivering excellence in teaching, learning, research and services. The College community has a collective responsibility for quality assurance and quality enhancement, and this is enshrined in the [MIC Mission Statement](#).

MIC's [Quality Policy](#) commits the College to the highest standards of quality in its core mission of academic teaching, learning, research and support services through a process of quality assurance and quality enhancement.

MIC Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures as outlined in the [MIC Quality Manual](#) are underpinned by the:

- UL-MIC Linked Provider Framework
- UL-MIC Memorandum of Agreement
- QQI Core & Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines

Development and Approval of AQR

Briefly outline the process for development and approval of the AQR

This Annual Quality Report was developed by the MIC Quality Office in consultation with the relevant stakeholders from the college community including the Research and Graduate School (RGS), the Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Centre (LEAD), the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Interculturalism (EDII) Office, the Access & Disability Office, the Faculties and Student Life. This report was reviewed and approved by the [MIC Quality Committee](#), a sub-committee of An tÚdarás Rialaithe (Governing Authority), prior to submission to the University of Limerick.

Section 1: Quality Assurance and Enhancement Activity and Evolution at Institutional Level

Please describe institutional-level quality assurance or enhancement activity that occurred during the reporting period (e.g. an institutional-level quality-review-related activity). Please include reference to any amendments made to systematic, institutional-level quality assurance or quality enhancement mechanisms, activities, policies or governance arrangements during the period.

Appointments

During the 2024-25 academic year, a number of new positions were created which will support MIC's strategic objectives:

Vice-Dean, School of Education (Post-Primary), St Patrick's Campus, Thurles

Professor Jennifer Johnston was appointed Vice-Dean at MIC's St Patrick's Campus, Thurles in January 2025. Professor Johnston joined MIC from the University of Lincoln's School of Education and Communication where, she had spent the previous nine years significantly contributing to the strategic direction and development of teaching, learning, assessment practices, and the research profile of the school.

Head of Newly Created Department of Business and Accounting

Dr Rebecca Purcell was appointed Head of the newly created Department of Business and Accounting at MIC in January 2025. The department is the newest in MIC's Faculty of Arts and is a key contributor to programmes on both the Thurles and Limerick campuses.

Director of Strategic Operations, Faculty of Arts

Ms Rachel Godfrey was appointed Director of Strategic Operations in the Faculty of Arts in July 2025 and will manage the operational functions of the Faculty of Arts. The Director will work closely with the Dean, Department Heads, and faculty staff to identify and prioritize key strategic initiatives, develop and implement operational plans, and monitor progress against key performance indicators.

MIC Race Equality and Sanctuary Manager

Dr Lylian Fotabong was appointed as the inaugural MIC Race Equality and Sanctuary Manager in May 2025. The MIC Race Equality and Sanctuary Manager will lead on the development of a Race Equality Strategy and will support the University of Sanctuary programme of work.

Institutional Review Implementation Plan

Work on fulfilling the actions associated with the recommendations arising from the Institutional Review completed in April 2024 was ongoing during the Academic Year 2024-25. A copy of the progress report will accompany this report for discussion at the Annual Dialogue Meeting (Appendix 1).

TrustEd

Mary Immaculate College has been awarded the [TrustEd Ireland](#) mark.

Commendations from the panel included:

- Both current learners and applicants receive a high level of greatly valued support, assistance and access to the full range of information required to apply for and continue their studies at the College.
- Applications are considered by the International Office, Research and Graduate School Office and the Admissions Office against the NARIC Ireland and ECCTIS requirements and the College has sought to underpin this process by ensuring that these staff members are trained in ECCTIS.
- The positive institutional ethos to include learners in key quality processes as full participants.
- The high level of awareness of issues related to academic integrity with all key information included in the Student Handbook. There are some highly valued activities aimed at learners such as the organisation of an Academic Integrity Week and creation of the EDII Project Awards, which integrate and promote equality, diversity, inclusion, and interculturality.
- The range of English language supports offered to international learners to help them progress on their programme of study.

The MIC application was found to be compliant in 53 of 55 HE Code Principles. The two remaining principles and associated planned actions which will ensure full compliance within the timescale specified in the Panel Report. These are as follows:

Condition 1:

In respect of 5.1.2 (h) the Panel noted that the College had yet to commence its process for formally monitoring and reviewing agents and set a condition that the College must implement these processes within 12 weeks of TrustEd Ireland authorisation.

MIC Response

In respect of 5.1.2 (h), MIC has established processes for the recruitment, monitoring, and review of agents. Our current status is that we do not have an agent acting on behalf of MIC. We acknowledge the panel's condition, and we commit to implementing our processes for formally monitoring and reviewing agents when we engage the services of agents going forward.

Condition 2:

In respect of 5.2 (f), the Panel set a condition that the College progress its plans to ensure wider applicability of processes to learners from other countries of origin within one year of TrustEd Ireland authorisation.

MIC Response

In respect of 5.2(f), MIC confirmed in its IEM Application Statement that an Admissions Appeals Policy for all direct entry admissions applicants was being developed to ensure wider applicability of appeals processes and to achieve full compliance with 5.2(f). The Admissions Appeals Policy has been developed as per MIC's Protocol for Policy Development and is currently pending final approval from the Executive Team and subsequent adoption by An tÚdarás Rialaithe (MIC Governing Authority) and will be in place well in advance of the timeframe specified.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Interculturalism (EDII) Activities

Athena Swan

MIC's Faculty of Education has been awarded the Bronze Athena Swan award, recognising its wider commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion across the College Community. This is the third Bronze Athena Swan award that MIC has achieved.

Policy Development

The MIC [Domestic Violence Leave Policy](#) was approved in April 2025. The EDII Office in collaboration with the Human Resources Department launched MIC's Domestic Violence Awareness training in September 2025 to support the implementation of the policy.

Book Launch

Transforming Gender Equality and Inclusion within Higher Education in Ireland – Contemporary Perspectives was launched in September 2025. The project was funded under the HEA EDI Fund. The Director of EDII was the Principal Investigator and co-edited the book with colleagues from University of Limerick, University of Galway and Trinity College Dublin. The context and narrative focuses on systemic change for gender equality through policy, structures, leadership, new data measures, funding collaboration and collaborative activities. The book acknowledges past historical injustices and steps taken at multiple levels to redress gender imbalance and injustice in Irish higher education.

Access Activities

PATH 1 Symposium

MIC hosted the national conference *Create, Collaborate, Consolidate: mapping the innovative and collaborative projects funded under PATH 1 and consolidating learning on equity of access to the teaching profession*. This conference brought together 60+ PATH 1 practitioners, Access professionals and ITE academics from five clusters/ten HEIs.

Online webinars

MIC hosted on its VLE a series of online webinars '*Elevate Your Academic Journey*' to support students' learning, in Academic Skills, Well-being & Empowerment, Presentation Skills, Time Management & Organisation, Motivation & Procrastination.

MIC Ability Pathways (MAP) Project

The MIC Ability Pathways (MAP) Project aims to provide a pathway to meaningful community engagement for people with intellectual disability, in an inclusive third level environment which has an established history of educational excellence and community inclusion. The project provides education, training and meaningful employment opportunities for people with an intellectual disability who are committed to lifelong learning. The programme is now in its second year of delivery with 100% retention.

DEIS School Outreach

MIC's Access Office ran several outreach programmes to support students in DEIS schools. These included:

- Go Gaeilge LC Irish Oral classes for SED LC students from local schools

- 'Student Experience Days' for groups of senior cycle DEIS school students, comprising subject tasters, campus tour, alternative entry routes talk and lunch in the MIC canteen
- Student shadowing days for senior cycle students from local DEIS schools
- TED/Engage in Education Primary school campus visits

DEIS school and FE outreach exceeded targets.

Exploring the Experiences of ITE Students with Disabilities on Practice Placement

MIC is engaged in a collaborative research project with UL - Exploring the experiences of ITE students with disabilities on practice placement.

UDL at MIC

Funding has been secured to support further embedding of UDL at MIC through PATH 4. The Inclusion by Design: Universal Design project in MIC aims to advance and strengthen existing inclusive practices within the College, establishing a coherent and sustainable institutional approach to Universal Design (UD). By embedding UD principles across policy, strategy, and everyday operations, the project aims to support the institution toward a more proactive, integrated model of inclusive practice. This formalisation of UD reinforces MIC's strategic commitment to supporting an increasingly diverse student body. Through the systematic identification and removal of participation barriers, the initiative contributes to a learning environment that is both inclusive and accessible, enabling all students to thrive within a culture that promotes belonging, equity, and academic success.

Learning Enhancement & Academic Development (LEAD) Activities

Academic Integrity Microsite

LEAD worked on the development of a [Generative AI Guidance](#) microsite. This site gives advice around the appropriate use of Generative AI as well as broader advice around best practice for academic integrity.

Generative AI Committee

The Generative AI Committee was formed and met twice in the 2024-25 academic year. The main responsibility of the Committee is to create clear policy and guidelines for the use of Generative AI in the College. The Committee will assess the possible use cases for Generative AI within the College and develop strategic recommendations for the Executive Team to review and consider. The Committee will highlight risk factors and make recommendations for how these risk factors might be managed with the aim of finding a path forward in the age of Generative AI.

Generative AI Advice for Marking

Guidance for the marking of assessment in the light of AI was produced and circulated to staff with the aim of making them aware of the policies and supports available to help them during the marking period.

Generative AI and Academic Integrity Conference

This conference, organised with our regional partners (UL and TUS) and NAIN, was planned in the 23/24 academic year and delivered in the 24/25 academic year. The conference brought together scholars, students, educators, and policy makers from across the globe to explore the relationship between Generative AI and Academic Integrity within the HE sector. The conference talks have been curated into accessible videos and shared on the conference website.

Generative AI in Education Series

LEAD supported the running and organisation of the Irish Centre for AI Research in Education (ICAIRE) Series of talks on [Generative AI in Education](#). The series covered topics such as, academic integrity and ethics; the use of AI in assessments; adopting AI into working practises, and the effective use of AI in research. The recordings of these talks have been made publicly available online.

Graduate and Academic Teaching Enhancement Centre (GATE)

Work was completed on the development of the GATE Centre which is a partnership between LEAD and the Research and Graduate School. It is an exciting new teaching, learning and digital resource development space for post-graduate students and MIC staff. The GATE Centre will provide a training space for hyflex teaching, a recording space for the creation of digital activities, artifacts and resources, and will function as a site for postgraduate students to develop transversal skills.

MIC UDL Community of Practice (CoP)

This initiative is supported by LEAD's Assistant Professor in Academic Practice, the Digital Learning Manager, a Learning Designer and the T&L Projects Manager. The bi-monthly meetings centred around one of the nine UDL guidelines. These meetings provided members with opportunities to contemplate the importance of embedding UDL principles within their own teaching and learning practices. The CoP continues to work collaboratively to identify strategies for enhancing support for both students and staff. Sessions encouraged and will continue to encourage participants to use existing College resources and share innovations from their practices. The CoP is run in a hybrid fashion to enhance accessibility.

Research Integrity Epigeum Course

LEAD supported the Research Office in their assessment, acquisition and deployment of Epigeum's Research Integrity training course on MIC's VLE.

Research & Graduate School (RGS) Activities

The Research and Graduate School QAE activities for AY 2024_25 included:

- Leadership of review of college research-related policies (research supports and research ethics). This work which has been ongoing from AY22-23 is now significantly advanced.
- Review of MIC Research Ethics Clearance Pathways and Processes via a Research Ethics Implementation & Facilitation Team ongoing from AY 22-23 is now largely complete. This has included the creation of a Joint Faculty-Level Research Ethics Committee (JF-REC).
- Implementation of automated on-line systems for initial screening/processing/approvals of Data and Safeguarding aspects of ethics applications.
- Final stages of roll-out of the Mary Immaculate Research Information System Project (MIRIS) which began in AY 2022-23.
- Review of Postgraduate Researcher Funding (ongoing from AY 23-24).
- Graduate School Director contributed to the annual review and associated updates of the MIC Handbook of Academic Regulations and Practice.
- Evaluation of the 2025 Writers' Retreat.
- Migration of RGS Annual Review documentation to Institutional formatting completed in AY24/25. Creation of a full RGS Quality Management System (QMS) encompassing annual review documentation and all other relevant documents is ongoing from AY24/25.
- Automation of processes relating to research support schemes including Seed Funding and Conference Funding.
- Staff upskilling and training in QMS development and Power Automate to support the ongoing development and streamlining of RGS processes.
- Ongoing preparation for RGS Quality Review (expected 2027).

Institutional Level Student / Graduate Feedback

Activity	When	Response Rate
PGR Student Survey	Feb 11 th – Mar 4 th 2025	31.3% (+ 4.4% on 2023)
HEA Graduate Outcomes	April – August 2025	48.5% (-3.2% on 2024)

Institutional Policies Approved 2024-25

All policies can be accessed on the [College Policies](#) page on MIC's website.

HR	PGP024	Parental Leave
HR	PGP058	Professional Services Staff Overtime
HR	PGP033	Staff Grievance
HR	PGP030	Special Leave with Pay
HR	PGP018	Force Majeure Leave
HR	PGP102	Professional Services Acting Up
HR	PGP023	Paternity Leave
HR	PGP076	Recruitment Selection & Appointment
ICT	PGP128	User Access Control
Quality	PGP129	English Language
EDII	PGP132	Irish Language
Academic	PGP133	Academic Freedom
Governance	PGP135	Business Continuity
EDII	PGP136	Domestic Violence Leave
Governance	PGP074	Risk Management

Section 2: Quality Assurance and Enhancement Activity and Evolution at Local Level

If relevant, please describe local-level quality-related innovations introduced by individual MIC units/offices during the reporting period.

Faculty of Education

Aligning Faculty Commentary and Action Plan to Faculty of Education Strategic Planning

Over the last couple of years, we have worked to embed the Annual Programme Reviews into the quality mindset of the entire faculty. We have used the reviews and the broader Faculty Commentary and Action Plan to examine and track both quality assurance and quality enhancement across the faculty. This has impacted upon the quality of analysis emanating from programme data, external examiner and student feedback and the qualitative feedback accompanying the reviews. This in turn has positively impacted the development (and quality) of the Faculty Commentary and Action Plan. The latter in particular, has moved from an annual commentary and review to a live document that identifies and tracks strategic Faculty priorities. It focuses on both quality assurance and quality enhancement indicators.

For instance, significant or priority faculty indicators identified from a programme review are now actioned as faculty strengths, opportunities and/or challenges and those indicators are tracked, monitored and commented upon over successive academic years. The Faculty Commentary and Action Plan plays a key role in identifying annual strategic priorities. For instance, generative AI has featured heavily in external examiner feedback since 2022, and this was the catalyst that led to the organisation of Faculty CPD sessions with our LEAD Centre on *AI and generative AI - implications for education*. In addition, we have also begun to include Department Quality Review actions, that have broader quality assurance or enhancement implications for Faculty into our Faculty Commentary and Action plan. This means that these broader issues can be moved from the remit or responsibility of a Department to the Faculty where there is greater capacity and scope to action and address an issue. In tandem with this, we have also used the Faculty Action and Commentary plan to set Faculty priorities. For instance, the roll out of the redeveloped Primary Curriculum, and specific key curricular changes (integrated learning outcomes) have been identified as both an opportunity and challenge for the Faculty. This resulted in the organisation of curriculum integration day in January 2024 with external facilitators. We also identified the Redeveloped Primary Curriculum as a key strategic planning initiative for the AY2024/25 period.

Faculty of Education Assessment Sharing Days (September 2024 & January 2025)

The Assistant Dean in the Faculty of Education organised two faculty assessment sharing days at the start of the Autumn and Spring semester for AY 2024/25. This day is used to plan and discuss teaching and assessment practices, and ensure quality and consistency in both teaching, learning and assessment across modules and programmes, and especially to share innovative good practice. As flagged above, in Autumn 2024 we focused on the impact of AI and generative AI on teaching and assessment, and in Spring 2025 the focus shifted to curricular integration. Curricular integration (including integrated Learner outcomes) is a key focus of the redeveloped primary curriculum, which is due to be rolled out in September 2027.

Postgraduate Programme Review

The annual programme review process has enabled us to reflect and review our postgraduate offerings. In Autumn 2024 we reviewed our postgraduate offerings with a view to consolidate our offerings, and expand further specialist routes within the general MEd modular programme. We retired a number of Master's programmes that were not viable but kept innovative modules from the retired programmes and repackaged them into specialist routes within the MEd programme.

This will enable greater student choice within the modular MEd programme. Over the 2024/25 academic year we explored the potential to offer education personnel access to standalone modules, via the model currently in place for offering bespoke modules to teachers qualified abroad that are required to clear Teaching Council shortfalls. The review process has also helped us to identify our unique strengths and identity.

Faculty of Arts Placement Office

The Placement Office staff have been working with Academic Information Systems to integrate student placement and placement provider information into Unit-E with the design of a number of tools and reports to track placements. The system is now live and is being used for current second years. It is envisaged that, in the future, the system will enable precise details of Bachelor of Arts programmes Off-Campus Placement and, BSc in Psychology placements, work and study abroad to appear on student' transcripts. The system will also ensure security and integrity of placement information and grades.

Section 3: Implementation of Quality Governance and Oversight

Please attach (or provide a link to) the MIC published academic calendar for the reporting period and, if relevant, please indicate and discuss deviations from the detail therein that occurred in practice. If not incorporated into the academic calendar, please attach or provide a link to the schedule of meetings of key governance and quality committee meetings (e.g. an tÚdarás Rialaithe, an Chomhairle Acadúil and any sub-committees thereof). If relevant, please indicate and discuss deviations from the detail therein that occurred in practice.

MIC Academic Calendar

[MIC Academic Calendar 2024-25](#)

Schedule of Meetings of Key Governance and Quality Committee Meetings

Appendix 3 contains the Schedule of Meetings of Key Governance and Quality Committee Meetings for the 2024-25 academic year.

MIC Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures AY 2025/26

The [MIC Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures](#) was reviewed and updated and was approved by UL Academic Council in June 2025.

Section 4: Internal Quality Reviews Undertaken During the Reporting Period

Please provide detail of any internal quality review activity that occurred during the reporting period.

Please include the name of the unit/activity/academic programme(s) reviewed, the composition of the quality review team (names, positions and home organisations), the dates of the review site visit, a link to any published review reports and any post-review quality improvement plan (QIP) oversight activity undertaken, as appropriate.

Peer Review Phase completed

- [MISU \(April 2025\)](#)
- Strategic Communications & Marketing Office (May 2025)
- Department of STEM Education (November 2025)

Quality Improvement Plan Close-off

- [Department of History](#)
- [Information Compliance Office](#)

Quality Improvement Plans approved by Executive Team

- Department of Media & Communications Studies
- Department of Arts Education and Physical Education

QMS Development - Self-Assessment Phase

- International Office
- Placement Office
- Human Resources Office

A revised Academic Quality Review Schedule was approved by Quality Committee (2025#05) and the proposed revised schedule and rationale for same submitted for approval to University of Limerick.

The current Quality Review schedules are published on the [MIC Quality Office Quality Reviews Webpage](#).

Section 5: Planned Reviews for the Coming Year

Please outline the schedule of reviews planned for the coming year.

The following Quality Reviews will commence in 2026:

Academic

- Department of Language & Literacy Education
- Department of Learning, Society & Religious Education
- German Studies
- Maths & Computer Science

Professional Services

- Library
- Building and Estates
- Quality Office

Section 6: Quality Activity and Interaction with Third Parties

Faculty of Education

NCCA and the Redeveloped Primary Curriculum

As part of the redevelopment of the Primary School Curriculum, a significant number of Faculty have engaged with the NCCA either as curriculum design committee leaders or members of committees. They have also contributed to the development of background research report and analysis. A number of Faculty have led the primary curriculum design committees as part of the new Primary Curriculum Framework (Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and wellbeing, Arts Education, Social and Environmental and STEM etc.). A member of staff is leading the NCCA development group tasked with designing the curriculum specification for the new Leaving Certificate subject – Climate Action and Sustainable Development.

Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education

Faculty continues to liaise with the Teaching Council with regard to the roll out of our Céim ITE programmes. We received full accreditation status and are now focused on the integration of Modern Foreign languages into our ITE programmes.

Droichead

In 2024/25 we contributed to the Teaching Council working group which reviewed the Droichead revised Policy for newly qualified teachers.

Section 7: Progress on Objectives outlined in Last Year's AQR

Please report on progress made on each of the objectives outlined in last year's AQR.

Quality Review Work

TrustEd (IEM)

As indicated in Section 1, MIC has achieved the Trust ED mark.

QMS Information and Training Programme

The MIC Quality Systems Manager continued to facilitate QMS training days organized in conjunction with HR. Currently 26% of Professional Services staff have taken part in QMS training with AY 2025-26 training underway.

The training has resulted in a significant improvement in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) documents submitted for review to the QMS Manager, particularly in terms of content and formatting.

Review of Academic and Professional Service Quality Review Guidelines

The review of the Academic and Professional Service Quality Review Guidelines is almost complete, and the proposed revised guidelines will be presented to the January 2026 meeting of Quality Committee for approval.

Section 8: Quality-Related Objectives over the Coming Reporting Period

Please list and briefly describe each objective.

QMS Information and Training Programme

The MIC Quality Systems Manager will continue to facilitate QMS training days. The Quality Office's aim for AY 2025-26 is to significantly increase the number of Professional Services areas with well-developed QMS. Similar to our successful data champions group, a QMS Champions Group will be created during AY2025-26 to support this work.

Annual Programme Review Process

The Quality Office will work with the Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Education and School of Education, Thurles to streamline the Annual Programme Review process with the aim of driving more timely reporting which feeds into other QAE process within each area.

Module-Level Feedback – Working Group

The Director of Quality will chair a working group tasked with determining how module level student feedback can be incorporated within the student survey and feedback mechanisms currently in place in the College.

Section 9: Additional Information / Case Studies

Please use this section to provide additional information relating to quality assurance/enhancement or to include additional case studies. Student Wellbeing

Case Study: Developing a Generative AI powered agent, in the form of an Assessment Design Guru

Funding: National Teaching & Learning Forum Pathfinder Project

This project sought to undertake a desk-based exercise to explore what materials, resources and development would be involved in creating a Generative AI powered agent, in the form of an Assessment Design Guru. The aim of the project was to explore whether chatbot technology could be used to support higher education teachers designing a new assessment strategy. The objectives included assessing whether a chatbot could be developed that might act as a critical friend, posing questions and offering solutions to HE educators.

In the 24/25 academic year the Project Team reviewed the relevant literature and began to compile a report that, drawing on existing scholarship, surveyed how this technology has been used in the past, and what the scholarship suggests the future use of this technology might be. From this literature review, the Project Team created a list of recommendations for those looking to develop their own custom chatbot agent.

The next phase accounted for the processes and struggles faced by the Project Team when seeking to develop an AI-powered Assessment Design Guru. As the review of the scholarship evidenced, and as we experienced, the limitations of the chatbot builder technology presented insurmountable obstacles when seeking to develop our Guru.

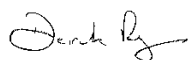
In the final phase of the project a report outlining how the Project Team pivoted away from an imagined Guru, to alternatively explore the type of Gen AI Assistant that is possible to create with GPT builder technology was created. The report introduced the 'Generative AI Use Statement' agent, a custom-made AI agent that we created using Co-Pilot's agent building technology. The report outlined how this was configured, including prompts. We closed the report by summarising the findings and outcomes of this project, bearing in mind our intention at the outset was not to develop a fully realised agent but rather to look at and seek to map the process of development, and articulate the lessons learned.

The project makes the following contributions:

- A comprehensive literature review, exploring the existing scholarship relating to chatbots and their use in higher education.
- A set of recommendations, arising from this review of scholarly literature.
- An account of the processes and struggles faced when seeking to develop our own chatbot.
- Practical guidance and tips for anyone in HE seeking to develop a chatbot to support academic practice.

The report is due for release at the National Teaching and Learning Forum Conference in December 2025.

I confirm that this AQR was reviewed and approved by the MIC Quality Committee and constitutes a comprehensive and accurate account of quality-related activities pertaining to MIC over the reporting period.



Director of Quality, MIC



Chair MIC Quality Committee

This AQR was submitted to the Director of Quality, University of Limerick on: 19 December 2025.

Revision history of this template

Rev.	Date	Approved by	Details of change	Process owner
1	4 Sept 2017	Director of Quality, UL VPA&R, UL	Initial release	Director of Quality, UL
2	June 2022	Director of Quality, UL Provost/Deputy President (UL)	Report format updated to include additional sections.	Director of Quality, UL