UNIVERSITY *of* LIMERICK

O L L S C O I L   L U I M N I G H

AIQR Template for Completion by Mary Immaculate College

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 Institutional Quality Assurance Report (AIQR) in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

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 AIQR. 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, Sinéad O'Sullivan sinead.osullivan@ul.ie, by 30 October annually.

Reporting period (academic year): 2019 / 2020

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.

Athena Swan

In March 2020, following 18 months of data-gathering, gap analysis and self-assessment, leading to the development of a strong and ambitious Action Plan, Mary Immaculate College has been awarded, at first application, the internationally recognised Athena SWAN Institution Bronze Award. The attainment of this award is a critical success for the College and its staff, affirming our commitment to equality and diversity.

MIC Student Learning Partnership and Dialogue Charter

The MIC Student Learning Partnership and Dialogue Charter was approved by An Chomhairle Acadúil (CA2020#01) in January 2020. It replaces the MIC Student Charter and is based on identification by a joint Academic Council-MISU forum of best practice dialogue and mutual engagement between staff and students as well as the elements of the new MIC Teaching & Learning Strategy. Underpinning this Student Learning Partnership and Dialogue Charter are four thematic intersectional elements as follows:

- Teaching and Learning Environment
- Student Life
- Representation
- Community Engagement

Collectively, these four thematic elements outline the commitments, expectations and responsibilities associated with this charter between MIC and MISU.

Framework for Doctoral Education

The creation of a Framework for Doctoral Education was identified as a goal in the MIC Strategic Plan 2023 'A Flourishing Learning Community'. The document sets out the overarching framework for doctoral education in MIC and the benchmarks for best practice which have been established in the institution. The Framework for Doctoral Education was approved by An Chomhairle Acadúil in January 2020 (CA2020#1).

Linked Provider Approval of QA Procedures

A desk review of Mary Immaculate College's quality assurance procedures by the University of Limerick was undertaken in accordance with the University policy and framework on Linked Provision and using the procedures set out for legacy providers. Based on the information provided via the application and accompanying documentation, the review panel was satisfied that Mary Immaculate College has demonstrated its continuing capacity to meet QQI criteria. The panel was additionally satisfied that the provider has demonstrated both the capacity and the willingness to make appropriate enhancements in the areas suggested by the panel. The panel commended MIC's engagement with the process and their candid and complete self–evaluation. The panel noted evidence of a mature quality management system and commitment to enhancement.

Subsequently, in accordance with Section 33 of the Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act, 2012, as amended, the panel recommended to Academic Council, the approval of Mary Immaculate College's quality assurance procedures and application as a Linked Provider of University of Limerick subject to inclusion of the Level 1 recommendations in a quality improvement plan. Implementation of these recommendations will be monitored through the annual dialogue meeting (ADM). MIC was formally approved as a UL Linked Provider at the meeting of Academic Council (AC-UL) on 11th December '19. The Level 1 & 2 recommendations have been added to the QIP Tracker Database and articulated with the MIC Annual Operating Plan.

Quality Committee Membership

The Director of Executive Operations was invited to join the Quality Committee in December 2019 (QC2019#4). The Assistant Deans and the Head of School, MIC Thurles Campus were added to the Quality Committee membership in February 2020 in order to support the Deans and the Faculties in maintaining closer operational coordination with the Quality Office in respect of quality assurance matters (QC2020#1). Quality Committee Terms of Reference

The Institutional Review Implementation Plan (IRIP) Tracker Database

The IRIP Tracker Database has been re-designed and renamed (MIC QIP Tracker Database) to include both Linked Provider and Departmental QIP recommendations and action items. The MIC QIP Tracker Database will provide a centrally managed repository for all review recommendations and action items. As the College moves forward with the academic and professional services quality reviews a number of QIPs will run concurrently. Action items due for completion in the current quarter and any items overdue/delayed will be extracted and reported to Quality Committee. A recurring item has been added to the Quality Committee agenda in respect of this. An Annual Update Report accompanies the AIQR (**Appendix 1 & 1b**).

Governance Surveys

The Quality Office designed and administered self-evaluation surveys based on the revised *Code of Governance for Irish Universities 2019* to the following committees:

- Board of Trustees
- An tÚdarás Rialaithe
- Executive Team
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Equality Committee
- Finance and Resource Committee
- Quality Committee

The key findings from the Self-Evaluation Surveys were presented to each committee and an action plan for addressing the matters raised was developed. The action plans will be reported on to each meeting of the relevant committee.

The Codes of Conduct for the Governing Authority, Trustees and Staff (three separate codes) are being reviewed in accordance with the 2019 Code of Governance for Irish Universities, they are currently at the consultation phase of the MIC Protocol for Policy Development and will go to the Executive Team and GA for approval in November 2020.

Covid-19 – Pivot to Remote Teaching & Learning, March 12th 2020

MIC's COVID-19 Academic Response Group (a sub-group of MIC's Covid-19 Response Group) has been charged with developing a coherent response to the range of challenges to programme delivery and assessment posed by the COVID-19 crisis (see **Appendix 2** for Terms of Reference). Given the scale and extent of uncertainty facing the entire HEI system, the MIC Covid-19 Academic Response Group has been tasked with formulating a response that maintains the academic integrity of the College's programmes. The *MIC Covid-19 Academic Response plan* (**Appendix 3**) has been developed to meet these challenges and is governed by two key elements – flexibility on the part of staff and students in meeting the challenges presented by the crisis and compassion in recognising and responding to the particular difficulties being faced by all members of the MIC community at this time. *The Principles for Academic Programme Delivery 2020-21* were approved by Executive Team (15 June), presented to the COVID 19 Academic Response Group (19 June), and were adopted by An Chomhairle Acadúil (24 June 2020) (CA 2020#04) (**Appendix 4**). That in formulating programme design and delivery for the forthcoming year, the College would be led, first and foremost, by its prioritisation of public health concerns and by the need to ensure the safety and well-being of its students and staff across its campuses. An Chomhairle Acadúil (CA2020#4) also approved the temporary devolution of Academic Programme Approval Committee (APAC) powers to the COVID-19 Academic Response group. The rationale for the devolution of powers was that current 'normal' processes/pathways were not feasible given the timeframes on which they operate and the level of work they required in terms of documentation.   It was agreed by An Chomhairle Acadúil that this devolution of power was related solely to the programme/module modifications required to be approved during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Quality Enhancement Activities

Recognition and Accreditation of MIC Professional Development

A level 9 Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice has been developed to upskill both academic and professional services staff who teach in MIC. The programme is flexible both in terms of delivery and focus to meet the varying needs of those in specific disciplines and a wide variety of roles. The programme will model best pedagogical practice in HE teaching, and encourage staff to embed such practices in their own teaching through practice based learning. As part of the programme staff will be encouraged to make innovative changes to their learning and teaching and reflect and evidence how this enhances the quality of the student learning experience in MIC

Digital Learning and Teaching at MIC

1. MIC rolled out the National digital experience INDEx survey to analyse the digital experience of staff and students. This is being used to inform the design and delivery of blended and online programmes in MIC combined with other data such as a VLE audit, student engagement qualitative research and a survey on the professional development needs of all those who teach in HE

2. A Moodle baseline and template has been applied to all MIC programmes. This is to ensure a consistent approach to blended and online programme delivery. The template is based on digital pedagogy best practice and is informed by the latest standards such as UCL baseline, Universal Design for Learning principles, Instructional Design Practices and Assessment Design.

3. MIC are currently piloting the institutional wide adoption of LinkedIn Learning to develop the digital skills of staff and students. MIC have developed a number of pathways to support staff and students in adopting digital technologies that have come a pervasive part of our daily teaching and learning at MIC.

Scholarship of teaching and learning in MIC

MIC was successfully awarded €124,000 from the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SALTE) Funding in Higher Education 2019 to support teaching and learning initiatives at MIC. At a recent review of the 7 projects funded under SALTE the National Forum for Teaching and Learning international review team commended the quality of the projects in terms of advancing teaching and learning at MIC.

Institutional Policies Approved 2019-20

The following policies were approved at An tÚdarás Rialaithe in the AY 2019/20:

- ▫ Academic Staff Research Support Policy (Revised)
- ▫ Equality Policy (Revised)
- ▫ ICT Security Policy (Revised)
- ▫ Special Leave with Pay (Revised)

Institutional Level Student Feedback Data Collection		
Activity	**When**	**Overall / Average Response Rate**
Module Satisfaction Survey	Suspended pending review	
Student Survey.ie (Taught)	Semester 2 Week 4 - 6	First Question: • MIC - 40% • All Institutions - 32.1% Final Question: • MIC - 32% • All Institutions - 26.8%
Exit Survey	Suspended due to Covid-19	
HEA Graduate Outcomes	Suspended due to Covid-19	
MIC Covid-19 Student Experience Survey	May 2020	24%
Institutional Level Staff Feedback Data Collection		
MIC Academic Staff Emergency Remote Working Survey	June 2020	21%
Professional Services Emergency Remote Working Survey	June 2020	54%

Covid-19 Staff and Student Surveys

The Quality Office in conjunction with major stakeholders designed and rolled-out surveys to staff and students' seeking feedback on their experience of the move to remote teaching and learning during the initial lockdown period, which coincided with the final weeks of Semester 2 AY19-20. The response rate to the surveys was extremely good, as noted above. The feedback from respondents was reported to the main college bodies and disaggregated and disseminated at faculty level. An infographic using the by-line "You said…..We Listened" was developed to address some of the key issues highlighted by students and to close the feedback loop.

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.

Academic Programme Review Policy – Implementation of Revised Policy

In 2018 the University of Limerick revised its Academic Programme Review policy and that policy was adopted by MIC in January 2019. The first reviews using the revised policy were completed during AY19 – 20. The revised process included the following:

- The design and development of an automated function to populate the annual programme report data template for each programme.
    - A process flowchart outlining key dates for completion of the Annual Review Reports and Faculty Commentary and Action Plans
    - The inclusion of an additional meeting in the Academic Programme Appraisal Committee (APAC) schedule of meetings to review the Annual Programme reports and Faculty Commentary and Action Plans.
    - A feedback mechanism for actions arising from the review process.

Quality Reviews - Re-scheduling and Management

Both academic and professional services quality reviews due to take place in the 2nd half of 2020 were suspended due to the travel restrictions and public health guidelines imposed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Following consultation with Academic Heads of Department and Professional Service Line Managers revised schedules for both Academic and Professional Services reviews were developed and approved by both the MIC and UL Quality Committees. In order to facilitate the implementation of the revised quality review schedules the peer review phase will be conducted remotely for the academic year 20-21. The remote management of the peer review phase is outlined in the revised Academic and Professional Service Quality Review Guidelines.

Revisions to MIC's Quality Review Guidelines

Changes to the Academic Quality Review guidelines (Rev 2.0) were approved by the Quality Committee in September 2020 (QC2020#03). Minor revisions were made to the guidelines in October 2020 (Rev 2.1) and the Quality Committee were informed (QC2020#04). Academic Quality Review Guidelines Revision 2.1.

Changes to the Professional Service Quality Review guidelines (Rev 1.0) were approved by the Quality Committee in September 2020 (QC2020#03). Minor revisions were made to the guidelines in October (Rev 1.1) and the Quality Committee were informed (QC2020#04). Professional Services Quality Review Guidelines Rev. 1.1

A summary of the changes are set out in the revision history of each.

Revisions to MIC Quality Manual

Revision 1.3 (Minor Revision) of the Quality Manual (**Appendix 5**) was approved by the Director of Quality. The revisions include:

Inclusion of:

- Linked Provider Framework
- Student Learning Partnership & Dialogue Charter

▫ Professional Services Quality Review Schedule and Guidelines	

Changes arising from the Linked Provider QIP:

- ▫ Addition of link to the MIC Personal Data Handling Guidelines.
- ▫ Role of ICT services committee documented.
- ▫ Link to SCM-M-010.

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 tUdarás Rialaithe, an Chomhairle Acadúil and any sub-committees thereof). If relevant, please indicate and discuss deviations from the detail therein that occurred in practice.

Link to the MIC Academic Calendar:

https://www.mic.ul.ie/sites/default/files/uploads/534/Academic%20Calendar%202019.20.pdf

Schedule of Meetings of College Committees 2019 / 2020 (**Appendix 6**)

MIC College Governance, including Codes of Conduct:

http://www.mic.ul.ie/welcome/Pages/governanceofmic.aspx

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.

Department	*SAR Completion*	*Peer Review Group (PRG) Visit*	*PRG Report Received*
Psychology	July 2019	October 2019	Jan 2020
Education Psychology, Inclusive & Special Education	October 2020	11th January 2021	
English Language & Literature	October 2020	18th January 2021	
History	February 2021	April 2021	
Information Compliance Office	November 2020	1st February 2021	
President's Office	December 2020	15th February 2021	
ICT Services	February 2021	April 2021	

Section 5: Quality activity and interaction with third parties

The Assistant Registrar Dr Patrick Connolly is representing MIC on the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIM).

MIC's Data Analytics Manager Mr Blaz Podobnik joined the StudentSurvey.ie analysis and impact group. The membership of the group consists of a representative of each of the co-sponsoring organisations (HEA, IUA, THEA, USI) and QQI, and representatives from across the participating institutions, including staff and student representatives. The working groups' outputs include analysis guidance documents, templates for analysis, national publications and showcases of impact achieved through the analysis of results. The group also provides suggestions for future changes to the format of the survey to better fit the requirements of participating institutions.

Section 6: Quality-related objectives over the coming reporting period

Please list and briefly describe each objective.

Quality Assurance during Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has necessitated changes in the way both academic and professional services departments carry out their core functions. While the ultimate goal is to maintain the high quality and reputation of MIC's programmes it must be recognised that the processes and procedures underpinning this have undergone some changes to adapt to the current situation. The ways in which we assure the quality of our programmes has also required adaptation. The Quality Office will continue to fulfil its remit but within the parameters that the current situation necessitates. The objectives for AY20-21 are:

1. Continued Roll-out of Quality Reviews
2. Continued Development of the Professional Services Quality Management System (QMS)
3. New ways to assure quality

1. Roll-out of Quality Reviews

The Quality Office will continue to support both academic and professional services departments/offices to engage with the quality review process. The newly developed remote peer review process will be used during AY 20-21 in order to provide some certainty to peer reviewers and the department/office under review. This will allow for the continuation of the review process in the absence of site visits.

2. Development of the Professional Services Quality Management System (QMS)

The findings from the Professional Services Emergency Move to Remote Working survey highlighted that a number of services have amended/changed their processes to allow for continuity of service during the move to remote teaching and learning. This has highlighted to the professional services the need for robust quality management systems. The Quality Office will continue to work with the Professional Services to facilitate and support the development of their Quality Management Systems.

3. New ways to assure quality

The Quality Office will seek to find new ways to evidence quality assurance through enhanced data gathering, for example, the use of Moodle analytics particularly as it relates to student engagement. A reboot of the re-designed Module Satisfaction Survey (MSS) is

expected to occur in Semester 2 AY20-21. Bespoke staff and student surveys will be used to supplement available data to facilitate a timely response to the changing dynamics at play during the current pandemic.

Implementation of the Linked Provider QIP

The Quality Office will undertake the following work during the Academic Year 20-21:

LP-06: A mapping exercise of current QA procedures to topic specific guidelines for Blended Learning Programmes

LP-12: A review of the criteria for Reporting and Ongoing Monitoring of Blended Learning Programmes will be conducted

LP-16: The Students Support Section of the Website and Quality Manual will be updated to reflect the requirements of *5.1 Blended Learning Guidelines*
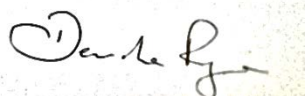
LP-07: A mapping exercise of current QA procedures to topic specific guidelines for *Research Degree Programmes*

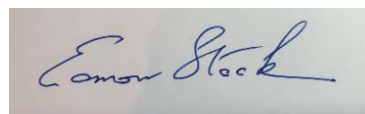**Section 7: Additional information**

Please use this section to provide additional information relating to quality assurance or to report upon relevant quality-focused topics or issues.

I confirm that this AIQR was reviewed and approved by The 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 of Quality Committee, MIC

This AIQR was submitted to the Director of Quality, University of Limerick on: _____

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

MIC Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Tracker
Annual Update 2020

Review Type	Allocated To	Rec No.	Recommendations	Action Level	Action	Status	Q4 2020 Update	Q4 2019 Update	Expected Completion - Target Quarter
Institution	Eugene Wall	5	That MIC build upon the collegiality fostered in the ISER / Self-evaluation process to address and resolve the issue of academic staff representation on the Governing Body, and, as part of due process, consider examples of governance models from other institutions.	1. First Order Action	Act upon recommendations contained in the 2016 Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) by capturing the essential balance between collective governance, and equity of representation at An tÚdarás Rialaithe in alignment with the Code of Governance for Irish Universities (2012).	Ongoing	Taking account of the review recommendation, the College agreed to restore academic staff representation to its status quo level, as sought by IFUT. However, IFUT recommended to its members that they should not participate on the Governing Authority on the basis that the College would not agree to IFUT's associated demand for academic staff representation on the Senior	Progress is stalled and following the implementation of the review recommendation to bring staff representation on the Governing Authority to its status quo ante level, the College is now dependent on IFUT to bring the matter to a conclusion in light of its apparent refusal to concede in respect of membership of the executive management.	Q4 2018
Institution	Deirdre Ryan	19	That a review and adaptation of the Student Evaluation of Teaching be undertaken with the aim of developing comprehensive and sustainable coverage across MIC.	1. First Order Action	Review MSS;	Ongoing	A proposal for a revamped MSS was brought to QC 2020#1 for discussion. It was agreed that the DTL & DoQ should revert to the next meeting of QC with changes based on the discussion. However due to Covid-19 the MSS review has been delayed. At QC2020#3 it was agreed that the revision of the Module Satisfaction Survey (MSS) on foot of the observations of the Quality Committee (QC 2020#1) will be on the agenda of	It was agreed at Quality Committee (May 2019) that the MSS be suspended for the Academic Year 19/20 to allow for a review to be conducted.	Q4 2020
Institution	Niamh.Hourigan	23	That more formal and consistent arrangements be put in place across MIC for closer student-staff liaison including wider involvement of students' representatives on programme boards.	1. First Order Action	Replacement of the MIC Student Charter with a new Learning Partnership & Dialogue Charter based on identification by a joint Academic Council-MISU forum of best practice dialogue and mutual engagement between staff and students as well as the elements of the new MIC Teaching & Learning Strategy.	Complete	The MIC Student Learning Partnership and Dialogue Charter was approved by An Chomhairle Acadúil CA2020#01 and is included in the AY20/21 Student Handbook.	The issue of student representation on programme boards will be dealt with under the initiative of the Student Learning and Partnership Dialogue.	Q3 2019
Institution	Gwen Moore	12	A proposal in relation to Best Practice in the Management of Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms for Oral (Language) Examinations will be developed	1. First Order Action		Complete	The proposal for the Oral Language Examinations SOP was approved at An Chomhairle Acadúil CA2020#02.	**A proposal in relation to Best Practice in the Management of Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms for Oral (Language) Examinations came before the Teaching and Learning Directorate on Sept. 25th 2019.** Approval in principle was given to the audio-recording of oral language assessments and the following was agreed; That Standard Operating Procedures be developed regarding the recording, storing and sharing of these recordings in order to standardise practices across various Departments; That suitable recording devices be identified and purchased (ICT to advise); Professional development be provided by LEAD to faculty with regard to best practice in assessment and feedback for oral assessments. Technological training, where necessary to be provided by ICTS.	Q2 2020
Linked Provider	Orla.Banks	LP-01	We will conduct a review of the Terms of Reference of the College Committees and where necessary include explicit reference to regular consideration of reports on programme	2	We will conduct a review of the Terms of Reference of the College Committees and where necessary include explicit reference to regular consideration of reports on programme quality.	Ongoing	Will be conducted AY 20-21		Q4 2020
Linked Provider	Gwen Moore	LP-02	CG1k. If blended learning is current or planned for your organisation, is there an organisational level strategy and plan for same? (Ref 3.1 BLGs)	2	Development of a new Strategy for Learning & Teaching governing integrated academic provision and professional service support.	Ongoing	Stalled due to Covid-19		Q2 2021
Linked Provider	Gwen Moore	LP-03	CG1k. If blended learning is current or planned for your organisation, is there an organisational level strategy and plan for same? (Ref 3.1 BLGs)	2	Development of a Digital Teaching and Learning Policy – currently underway (at draft stage).	Ongoing	Stalled due to Covid-19		Q4 2020
Linked Provider	Geraldine Brosnan	LP-04	CG1r. Is it clear how learners are made aware of the provider's quality assurance system and of their responsibilities and entitlements within it?	2	It is proposed to include information on QA system and learner responsibilities and entitlements in Student Handbook and Student Charter.	Ongoing	Will be included in the Student Handbook AY 21-22		Q1 2021
Linked Provider	Orla.Banks	LP-05	CG2a. Where/how can your documented quality assurance system be accessed? Is it available to all who need to access it in a manner appropriate to their needs? e.g. how does a learner know how to make a grade appeal? How does a staff member how to process a grade appeal?	2	A new digital staff handbook page will be devised which will be made available via the MIC Intranet. The handbook will contain information of relevance to both academic and professional services staff. CPD for staff on policy implementation will also be rolled out in 2020.	Ongoing	HR have begun work on creating a digital staff handbook, building on the work undertaken to move induction to the online environment.		Q1 2021
Linked Provider	Gwen Moore	LP-06	CG2c. Have the quality assurance procedures been updated to reflect all relevant QQI Guidelines	2	A mapping exercise of current QA procedures to topic specific guidelines is required for the following: Blended Learning Programmes	Ongoing	This will be combined with LP-12 and LP-16. The Quality Office will undertake this work in AY 20-21		Q1 2021
Linked Provider	VP Research	LP-07	CG2c. Have the quality assurance procedures been updated to reflect all relevant QQI Guidelines: Research Degree Programmes	2	A mapping exercise of current QA procedures to topic specific guidelines is required for the following: Research Degree Programmes	Ongoing	The Quality Office will undertake this work in AY 20-21		Q1 2021
Linked Provider	Niamh.Hourigan	LP-08	CG2d. Does the QA system address the additional responsibilities for oversight of contracted or collaborative provision?	1	MIC will review and make explicit how the QA system addresses the additional responsibilities for oversight of contracted or collaborative provision.	Ongoing	The Director of Quality has begun a scoping exercise and is liaising with the VPAA & VPG&S in relation to this.		Q1 2021
Linked Provider	Deirdre Ryan	LP-09	CG2f. Is it clear how QA procedures and processes can be amended to reflect experience and changing contexts? Who has responsibility and oversight of this?	2	An explicit statement setting out who has responsibility for and oversight of amendments to QA Procedures will be included in all QA documentation	Complete	Statement added to Draft Quality Review Guidelines Rev. 2.0. Approved QC2020#3.		Q3 2020

Review Type	Allocated To	Rec No.	Recommendations	Action Level	Action	Status	Q4 2020 Update	Q4 2019 Update	Expected Completion - Target Quarter
Linked Provider	Emma.Barry	LP-10	CG2f. Is it clear how QA procedures and processes can be amended to reflect experience and changing contexts? Who has responsibility and oversight of this?	2	The MIC Professional Services QP-010 QMS Document Control Procedure will be amended to include an explicit statement setting out who has responsibility for and oversight of amendments to the QA Procedures for particular professional services.	Complete	**Statement added to Draft Document Control Procedure Rev. 1**: *Section 6.2.5* Professional Services will approve their own procedures, processes and forms. The approval of a document is recorded in the Change History section of the document. *6.2.5.1* The procedure / process document must be approved by the line manager of the function that is responsible for the delivery of the procedure / process. This can be the line manager of the Professional Service or the line manager of a function within the Professional Service. Approved QC2020#3.		Q3 2020
Linked Provider	Niamh.Hourigan	LP-11	CG3a. Do the procedures make clear that your programmes will: ….be subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic review	2	APAC Programme Full Submission Form: Add statement to the effect that programmes will be subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic review (link to Academic Programme Review Policy).	Complete	Insertion of the following text in the APAC Full Submission Form. **MIC adheres to the University of Limerick's Academic Programme Review Policy. All programmes must undergo Annual Programme Review.**		Q3 2020
Linked Provider	Gwen Moore	LP-12	CG3b. If your programmes will incorporate blended learning, have you incorporated the relevant quality assurance guidelines relating to programme design, structure, assessment etc. (Ref. Section 4, BLGs)?	2	A review of the criteria for Reporting and Ongoing Monitoring of Blended Learning Programmes will be conducted.	Ongoing	This will be combined with LP-06 and LP-16. The Quality Office will undertake this work in AY 20-21		Q3 2021
Linked Provider		LP-13	CG5d. Are blended learning materials and media developed with a view to support effective teaching, learning and assessment? Is this monitored? (Ref 4.1, 4.2 BLGs)	2	A systematic mapping and documentation of the processes involved in the design, development and delivery of Blended Learning programmes will be undertaken	Ongoing	Will form part of the development of Learning Enhancement and Academic Deveopment (LEAD) Centre's QMS.		Q3 2021
Linked Provider		LP-14	CG6a. Are the areas of potential vulnerability in your quality assurance of assessment known in the organisation?	2	Sequencing of Internal/External Exam boards currently under review. Review completion date is February 2020.	Complete	The review has been completed and changes to the sequencing have been implemented.		Q3 2020
Linked Provider	Niamh.Hourigan	LP-15	CG6g. Are there approval processes for new assessment instruments	2	A new procedure for the approval of new assessment instruments for existing modules/programmes will be introduced by APAC.	Ongoing	Stalled due to Covid-19		Q4 2020
Linked Provider	Gwen Moore	LP-16	CG7a. Is it clear what supports are available to learners and how they are accessed? (Ref 7.1. Core Guidelines, 5.1 Blended Learning Guidelines, Section 5 Apprenticeship Guidelines	2	The Students Support Section of the Website and Quality Manual will be updated to reflect the requirements of 5.1 Blended Learning Guidelines.	Ongoing	This will be combined with LP-06 and LP-12. The Quality Office will undertake this work in AY 20-21		Q2 2021
Linked Provider	Gwen Moore	LP-17	4.4 STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT	2	Develop clear policies on the induction and training of staff involved in blended learning. Develop mechanisms to ensure that the diverse needs of staff (in relation to BL)are identified and facilitated.	Ongoing	*The Looking Forward* series of professional development designed and developed by LEAD to upskill staff during the Covid-19 pandemic will be reflected in their QMS.		Q1 2021
Linked Provider	Niamh.Hourigan	LP-18	4.6 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS	2	Develop policies to mitigate against conflicts of interest where staff or family/friends of staff are undertaking assessment.	Complete	Conflict of Interest Guidelines included in Examinations Risk Register.		Q3 2020
Linked Provider	Deirdre Ryan	LP-20	4.8 INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT	2	Provide an explicit link to the Personal Data Handling Guidelines in the quality manual.	Complete	Added to Revision 1.3 of the Quality Manual and submitted with the AIQR AY 19-20 in October 2020		Q3 2020
Linked Provider	Deirdre Ryan	LP-21	4.8 INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT	2	Document role of ICT services committee in quality manual as outlined in the self evaluation.	Complete	Added to Revision 1.3 of the Quality Manual and submitted with the AIQR AY 19-20 in October 2020		Q3 2020
Linked Provider	Deirdre Ryan	LP-22	4.9 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	2	Incorporate appendix 5; SCM-M-010 explicitly into the quality manual.	Complete	Added to Revision 1.3 of the Quality Manual and submitted with the AIQR AY 19-20 in October 2020		Q3 2020
Linked Provider	Eugene Wall	LP-23	4.12 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & HUMAN RIGHTS	1	Based on the legislative requirements of the IHREC Act (2014), review and implement the MIC Equality Policy.	Ongoing	ET is currently processing review of the MIC Equality Policy. ET is also proceeding with recruitment of a senior post-holder with responsibility for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and it is hoped an appointee will be in place in early spring 2021. This post-holder will have responsibility for implementation of the Equality Policy as well as the College's EDI strategy.		Q4 2020
Linked Provider		LP-25	4.13 TOPIC-SPECIFIC QA PROCEDURES: RESEARCH DEGREES	2	Clarify status of and update research support policy.	Complete	The revised version of the Academic Staff Research Support Policy (PGP93) was adopted by An tUdarás Rialaithe on 29 January 2020 (UR 2020#01)		Q4 2020

Recommendation	Reporting Mechanism Change	Action Item	Update AY 19-20
Unit E Implementation Plan	**Work Package**	**Work Package Action Items**	
4.0: With the development of a new student record system it is recommended, as an early administrative task, that legacy alumni data (where possible) is backfilled into the system. **18.0:** That the new MIC Student Records Management System adhere to UL data standards and formats, and that transfer of data between MIC and UL systems be facilitated.	Work Package 17	Data Transfer from SI System • Current Students • Backfill of Legacy alumni data (where possible)	Unit-E went live for the 1st year cohort AY 20 -21.
10.0: That training be put in place for all staff on interpreting and making best use of dashboards in the new student record system and that targeted reporting from the dashboard allow easy sight of focussed key information.	Work Package 18	Report Development • Audit of Key Reporting Requirements • Report Development using Unit E Report Generator • Staff Training on Report Generator • Dashboard Development for Key Function Areas	

MIC Annual Operating Plan			
15.0: That MIC formally recognise the impact of increasing the number of SPhDs on the staff resource and confirm that this is factored into staff workloads in an equitable manner.	SP Priority Objective3.1.1:	Staff research engagement will be built into an institutional workloads allocation model	AOP 18/19 & 19/20
20.0: That an annual performance management and development system be introduced, tailored to MIC requirements (which could incorporate personal research).	SP Priority Objective 6.1.1	Provide new opportunities for career development and for incentivising, supporting and rewarding professional excellence.	AOP 18/19 & 19/20
21.0: That a Workload Allocation Model be introduced in order to support fairness, equity, transparency and respect for diversity of contribution and it is recommended that a communication strategy be developed to sit alongside **the** delivery of the model.	SP Priority Objective 6.1.3	Create, through openness to innovation and contemporary best practice, a positive and healthy environment for all employees of the College that fosters high quality and self-reinforcing work-life balance and engagement	AOP 18/19 & 19/20 A pilot of the Workloads Allocation Model was undertaken with 3 Departments in Jan 2020. The results from their inputs and feedback are currently being reviewed.
17.0 Whilst MIC is to be commended for the availability of student handbooks it is recommended that in the Faculty of Arts a further mechanism be developed to support students to independent learning for longer and more directly provide targeted, focused and timely information. This may include negotiated supervision contact time with lecturers, minimum standards for dissertation supervisor contact at UG and PGT levels and preparing for assessment	SP Priority Objective 2.1.3	We will strengthen the teacher-scholar partnership between the College and its students by increasing commitment to shared responsibility for the quality of learning outcomes and a productive culture of learning dialogue and engagement	AOP 18/19 & 19/20
22.0 : The development of placement protocols is required to assure more consistent practices	SP Priority Objective 2.1.3	We will strengthen the teacher-scholar partnership between the	AOP 18/19 & 19/20

including: contact between advisors/tutors and students. It is then vital that all staff responsible for supporting students on placement familiarise themselves with the placement protocol and that the tutor's role in proactively maintaining contact with students is clarified.		College and its students by increasing commitment to shared responsibility for the quality of learning outcomes and a productive culture of learning dialogue and engagement	
Academic Plan Taskforce			
15.0: That MIC formally recognise the impact of increasing the number of SPhDs on the staff resource and confirm that this is factored into staff workloads in an equitable manner.		Incorporate into Terms of Reference	MIC Academic Plan revised timeline 2020 - 2022 • Information gathering via email (January - September 2020) **Completed**
21.0: That a Workload Allocation Model be introduced in order to support fairness, equity, transparency and respect for diversity of contribution and it is recommended that a communication strategy be developed to sit alongside the delivery of the model.		Incorporate into Terms of Reference	• Collation of Material for Working Document (October- November 2020) • Nomination of Members to Taskforce (December 2020 - January 2021)
24.0: That policies and procedures around postgraduate research student admission and recruitment and ongoing support be developed and consistently applied across the College.		Incorporate into Terms of Reference	• First Meeting of Taskforce and Formation of sub-groups (February - March 2021) • Sub-groups to develop draft text of plan (April- June 2021) • Plan to be collated, presented to staff at Town Hall meeting and circulated for comment (September - December 2021)

			• Integration of comments and plan shared with Executive Team (January - March 2022) • Plan to be submitted to Údarás Rialaithe (June 2022) • Launch of Academic Plan (September 2022)
	BA Programme Review		
17.0: Whilst MIC is to be commended for the availability of student handbooks it is recommended that in the Faculty of Arts a further mechanism be developed to support students to independent learning for longer and more directly provide targeted, focused and timely information. This may include negotiated supervision contact time with lecturers, minimum standards for dissertation supervisor contact at UG and PGT levels and preparing for assessment		Incorporate into Terms of Reference	Stalled due to Covid-19
	Protocol Development : RAPHAEL (Rapid Response Protocol for Students at Risk of Harm or Emotional Vulnerability)		
22.0 : That placement risk management and crisis response protocols be developed as a matter of urgency, and that staff and students be oriented to them.	A number of protocols have been developed to assist international students on placement in Ireland. These protocols have been developed for both students and staff. These protocols fall under RAPHAEL which by its nature will evolve as the nature of risk and crisis response is ever changing.		Ongoing

Terms of Reference

MIC Covid-19 Academic Response Group

Rationale

MIC's COVID-19 Academic Response Group has been established to develop a coherent response to the range of challenges to programme delivery and assessment posed by the COVID-19 crisis. Given the scale and extent of uncertainty facing the entire HEI system, the MIC Covid-19 Academic Response Group have been charged with formulating a response which maintains the academic integrity of the College's programmes. This response is governed by two key elements – flexibility on the part of staff and students in meeting the challenges presented by the crisis and - compassion in recognising and responding to the particular difficulties being faced by all members of the MIC community at the this time.

1.0   Terms of Reference

1.1   To work with Academic Staff of the College, the LEAD Team and Professional Services Staff to develop an Academic Response Plan to mitigate against the threat to academic programme delivery caused by the closure of the College's Campuses (Limerick and Thurles)

1.2   To adhere to the University of Limerick Academic Regulations in the development of the Academic Response Plan

1.3   To communicate regularly details of the Academic Response Plan to MIC staff and students using the College's Covid-19 communications channel

1.4   To update the relevant College Bodies on the progress of the Academic Response Group

1.5   To extend the scope and timeframe of the Academic Response Plan as necessary to mitigate against the ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic to the integrity of academic delivery at MIC

1.6   To operate in a flexible manner allowing for the reconfiguration of provisional measures at short notice

1.7   The Chair of the Academic Response Group may set up subgroups to consider specific topics of work as required and these will report back to the main Academic Response Group

Subgroups

Faculty of Education Covid-19 Academic Response Group

Faculty of Arts Covid-19 Academic Response Group

School of Post-Primary Education Covid-19 Academic Response Group

Covid-19 Academic Response Technical Group

Membership

Chair: Professor Niamh Hourigan VP Academic Affairs

Dr John Perry, Dean of Arts (Acting)

Professor Emer Ring, Dean of Education

Dr Finn Ó'Murchú, Head of School of Education (Post-Primary)

Dr Paddy Connolly, Assistant Registrar

Dr Gwen Moore, Director of Teaching & Learning

Dr Geraldine Brosnan, Director of Student Life

Mr Kieran Pearse, Director of ICT

Dr Orla Banks, Director of Executive Operations

Dr Deirdre Ryan, Director of Quality

Ms Kate Dwyer, Director of Academic Administration

Ms Aisling Cusack, MISU President

Key Professional Services Staff

Ms Áine Finucane, Librarian

Ms Aisling Kelly, Academic Systems Administrator

Ms Margaret Phelan, Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Manager

Ms Carrie Ryan, Student Academic Administration Manager

Ms Rachel Godfrey, Faculty of Arts Administrator

Ms Paula Hourigan, Senior Academic Administrator, MIC Thurles

Ms Triena Delany, Faculty of Education Office Manager

Ms Marie Quaid, Examinations Officer, Faculty of Education

Ms Anne-Marie Hannon, Manager Admissions Office

MIC COVID-19 Academic Response Plan

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Mary Immaculate College's COVID-19 Academic Response Group has been meeting regularly and consulting with our colleagues at the University of Limerick, in order to develop a coherent response to the range of challenges to programme delivery and assessment posed by the COVID-19 crisis. Given the scale and extent of uncertainty facing the entire HEI system, we have endeavoured to formulate a response which maintains the academic integrity of our programmes. We aim to ensure that MIC students will still be able to undertake assessments and complete their studies in a timely manner and progress to the next academic year or graduation. This response has been governed by two key elements – **flexibility** on the part of staff and students in meeting the challenges presented by the crisis and - **compassion** in recognising and responding to the particular difficulties being faced by all members of the MIC community at the moment. Given the challenging nature of the current situation, measures we have decided upon are provisional and may need to be reconfigured if required at short notice.

Mary Immaculate College will remain closed for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis which means that current programme delivery has moved online. Assessments will also be delivered through remote online methods. We recognise that working from home presents a range of challenges to both staff and students particularly in terms of internet broadband connectivity

CONNECTIVITY

It is recommended that staff and students engage in online programme delivery and assessment through Moodle, our virtual learning environment. The Learning Enhancement and Academic Development (LEAD) Centre has already developed and circulated guidance to staff on programme delivery and assessment through Moodle.

Useful links from LEAD's Moodle Support Page for Staff include:

1. [Getting Started with Moodle](#)
2. [Setting up Self-Enrolment to allow Students to access Moodle Courses](#)
3. [Assigning a Colleague Non-Editing Teacher Access to your Moodle Course](#)
4. [Uploading Learning Material to a Moodle Course](#)
5. [Using Discussion Forums to Facilitate Communication with your Students](#)
6. [Setting up Online Assignments](#)
   - If issues with connectivity seriously prevent a student from engaging with Moodle, we have provided for alternative forms of submission via **email.** Students experiencing these difficulties should contact their module co-ordinators to discuss these submissions and all submissions should be copied to the generic Faculty and School exam submission e-mail addresses.
   - In exceptional cases, where online or email delivery is impossible, we will consider **postal submission**. This postal submission must be agreed with module co-ordinators and all submissions for modules undertaken on both the Limerick and Thurles campuses should be submitted to Academic Submissions (with module co-ordinator and title of module) at Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick.
   - Finally, there is scope to consider obstacles to submission which ultimately inhibit a student's capacity to submit assessments within the **revised I-grade** process which is outlined below.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF REVISED ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE

- All terminal exams arranged at institutional level for May through Student Academic Administration will no longer go ahead.
- All other on-campus assessments, including oral examinations either planned or scheduled to occur later this semester, will no longer go ahead this semester.
- Continuous assessment continues as prior to the COVID-19 crisis. **End-of year-assessments** and remaining continuous assessment will be conducted

remotely and will replace formal sit-down examinations that should have taken place in May.

- All existing continuous assessments which can be completed remotely will go ahead as originally planned and within the timeframe communicated students. All continuous assessment already completed will be assessed and contribute to the final grade for the module.

- All alternative assessments will offer equivalent validity, reflect high standards, and address the learning outcomes as any award-related assessment ordinarily conducted on campus.

Dates

- To ensure we maximise the opportunity for students to complete all assessments, all remaining assessments (including any replacement for an end of semester exam) should be made available on Moodle and/or distributed via e-mail by **Monday 6 April.**

- Where module co-ordinators have set deadlines for existing assessments, they still apply. The **final deadline** for the submission of all **alternative assessments (including those replacing exams)** will be **Friday 15 May** – the final date of this current semester. This provides students with a six week window (06/04 until 15/05) to complete all required assessments. We ask academic staff to advise students in managing their workloads during this period and to encourage the early completion of assessments.

- Deadlines for alternative assessment submissions should be staggered across this six week window. Faculty administrators may request certain deadlines to be moved in order to avoid overload of the Turnitin system and overload of submissions for students. While we ask students to adhere to the deadlines indicated by module co-ordinators, we are suggesting flexibility with submissions up to and including the final deadline of May 15. No late penalties should be applied to assignments during this period. This model provides students with a six-week window (6/4 to 15/5) in which to complete all required assessments.

- All grades should be submitted by the **extended module grade entry** (MGE) deadline of **Tuesday, 9 June.**

Final Year Project and Dissertation

All final year projects and masters dissertations due for completion and submission between now and the end of the academic year will be offered remotely.

- The format of the project or dissertation may need to change where the original plan of work is not possible due to the restrictions related to COVID-19 and these changes should be discussed with project supervisors
- For Masters programme dissertations occurring over the summer, we will replicate the multiple Module Grade Entry processes in a similar way to AY 18-19 and facilitate a full Winter exam board.

Repeats

MIC will offer repeat assessments/exams. As we are preparing for all eventualities, academic staff have been requested to consider alternative models of assessment for annual repeats

Virtual Learning Environment: Moodle

- All module owners on *Moodle* should identify at least one other person as non-editing teacher who can access the module content if required
- All lecturers should assign an alternative faculty member as editing teacher to access to assessments if required in the event of illness.
- Where assessments are submitted by email, staff should ensure that the submission is sent to the relevant lecturer and copied to the Faculty's generic email address.
- Faculty administrators, Head of Departments, Course Leaders and Student Academic Administration should be aware of the deadline for each module in order to ensure that students do not have several final deadlines falling on the same day.
- Faculty should begin to put contingency plans in place for corrections and the inputting of grades in case of illness.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INCOMPLETE (I) GRADES

Clearly, during the COVID-19 pandemic the requirements for I-grades is highly unpredictable. As such, we will continue to operate the I-grade process as outlined in the UL regulations. In the case of a COVID-19 related impact that is not covered within our current regulations, a special (fourth) category will be facilitated. Details of this category as communicated to students are as follows:

'An expanded I-Grade process now been introduced to include a COVID-19 circumstantial category. This enables you apply for an I-Grade for your module if you encounter issues that impacts on the completion of your assessments, including but not limited to: changes in any home care arrangement; an inability to engage in remote assessment due to a change in personal circumstances; inability to access LENS-related learning supports remotely; or students who lack access to a digital infrastructure required for the completion of alternative assessments – this list is indicative only.

• Applications under the COVID-19 circumstantial category are based on self-certification, i.e. the application can be certified by the student themselves.

• I-Grades applications are for individual modules, not for individual assessments within modules.

• An I-Grade will allow the option for you to clear the I-Grade over the summer, and in time for the annual repeats period so as to enable progression to next year.

• An I-Grade can be cleared using one of the methods outlined within the regulations. There is no financial cost to clear an I-Grade.

• Where you feel that the impact of COVID-19 still remains in the summer and you cannot clear the I-Grade then, you can apply for 'double I-Grades' using the COVID-19 I-Grade category at the end of summer semester (i.e. annual repeat time).The impact of 'double I-Grades' will mean that you do not progress to the next year of your programme, and you must repeat those elements of the programme for which you received an I-Grade for; in some cases, the full semester, in other cases individual modules.

• It should be noted that you will automatically qualify for remission of link-in fees for modules in the event that you are granted double I-Grades.

Documentation linked to I-grades will be based around our current I-grade platform and processes.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE UNIVERSITY CALENDAR

The extension of the module grade entry period to facilitate assessment of remote assessment points will impact on the academic calendar. This will impact the processes and/or committee meetings outlined below. It should be noted that these dates are provisional and are in line with dates outlined by the University of Limerick and are dependent on the impact of COVID-19 and containment measures on students and staff. Additionally, further changes to the AY 19-20 and AY 20-21 calendar may be required.

	Previous Date	New Date(s)
Deadline for students to submit assignments	15 May	6 April – 15 May
Deadline for all student assessment submissions		15 May
End of Semester Two	15 May	15 May
I-grade Committee meeting	20 May	8 June
Module Grade Entry (opening and closing dates)	26 May	5 May to 9 June
MIC Examination Board meeting for progressing and actionable students	19 June	22 June
MIC Examination Board meeting for graduating students	17 June	23 June
MIC Academic Council	5 June	24 June
UL Academic Council for ratification of awards		TBC
Release of examination results to students	22 June	6 July
Recheck application period for Spring Semester	22 June	Monday 6 July – Friday 17 July
Viewing Process		14-15 July
Student Status Committee meeting	1 July	15 July
Faculty Grade Recheck return date		24 July

MEMBERSHIP OF THE MIC COVID 19 ACADEMIC RESPONSE GROUP

Vice President Academic Affairs (Chair); Dean (Acting) of the Faculty of Arts; Dean of the Faculty of Education; Head of School Thurles; Assistant Registrar; Director of Teaching and Learning; Director of Student Life; Director of ICT; Director of Executive Operations, and several key Professional Services staff.

Mary Immaculate College

Principles for Academic Programme Delivery

2020-21

The public health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic presents serious challenges for the delivery of higher education in Ireland. At Mary Immaculate College, we will maintain our fundamental and enduring commitment to the delivery of excellent academic programmes. The principles enunciated here will guide staff and students in building the optimal student experience in less than optimal circumstances. We plan to return to our model of on-campus teaching and learning when the pandemic abates, but for the foreseeable future, alternative models of academic programme delivery will be necessary. The principles in this document align with public health advice. Accordingly, we will continuously review and evaluate our programme delivery model in order to ensure that the health and wellbeing of our College community is safeguarded across both our campuses in Limerick and Thurles during the coming academic year.

1. Mary Immaculate College is committed to delivering its academic programmes during the Academic Year 2020-21 in a form that supports its mission and adheres to the commitments given as part of its Strategic Plan *'A Flourishing Learning Community'*.

2. In formulating programme design and delivery for Academic Year 2020-21, the College is led, first and foremost, by the **prioritisation of public health** concerns and by the safety and well-being of its students and staff across its campuses.

3. The values of **flexibility and compassion** which underpinned the MIC response to the immediate crisis will continue to underpin our approach to programme delivery as we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. During Academic Year 2020-21, MIC will operate a blended model of teaching and learning, drawing upon our significant expertise in order to provide a high quality teaching and learning experience which combines **online and on-campus provision.**

5. As the COVID-19 situation evolves during the next 12 months, and as public health directives change over time, **MIC's model of blended delivery will evolve in line with Government public health directives.**

6. All modules should be prepared with due regard to the possibility that Government health advice may again require a sudden switch to a completely online model. Module preparation should also be cognisant of the needs of students and staff who may not able to engage in on-campus interactions due to underlying health conditions.

7. The College recognises that on campus, face-to-face engagement optimises the learning experience for our students and will seek to provide opportunities for students to avail of some face-to-face engagement on campus during the academic year 2020-21.

8. It is envisaged that large lecture delivery will take place online with on-campus delivery focusing on small group interaction. These small group contexts will facilitate face-to-face support and socialisation for students in order to build small communities of learning. The College will put in place a range of precautionary measures to ensure the health and safety of staff and students in these small group contexts.

9. Online teaching will involve a combination of **synchronous and asynchronous learning**.

10. The on-campus experience model for students in Semester 1 will operate on a **weekly rotation model**, with each year group coming on campus for a specific number of weeks on a rotational basis over the semester. Details of this model as it applies to each student will be communicated by Course Leaders and Faculty Administrators.

11. Significant support will be provided to both staff and students in increasing their capacity to incorporate digital technologies into their teaching and learning for the academic year 2020-21. The scale of this support will be subject to the availability of fiscal and infrastructural resources.

12. The College is committed to further developing its digital campus to enhance the student experience and to provide all members of the MIC community with academic, technical and pastoral support online.

13. The College will continue to support work-based learning for students and where opportunities for this learning are not available due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MIC will seek to provide appropriate alternative arrangements.

14. Changes to the model of programme delivery necessitated by our response to the COVID-19 pandemic will be approved by the COVID-19 Academic Response Group as outlined in the COVID-19 approval

pathway. These changes will be approved on the basis that they will operate temporarily.

15. The Autumn Semester comprises 12 weeks; it will begin on 28 September 2020 and finish on 18 December 2020. In-semester assessment and feedback are required for all modules in Semester 1 as there will be no end of semester exam period.

16. The Spring semester will commence on January 25, 2021 and end on May 15, 2021. It will consist of 12 weeks of teaching and a three-week assessment period.

QUALITY
MANUAL

MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
COLÁISTE MHUIRE GAN SMÁL

BRIATHAR DÉ MO LÓCHRANN

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INTRODUCTION

History of the College

Founded in 1898, Mary Immaculate College (MIC) is a distinctive and inclusive university-level, Catholic College of Education and the Liberal Arts, offering undergraduate programmes as well as a range of research-based and taught postgraduate programmes at Certificate, Diploma, Masters and Doctorate levels. Qualifications in the professional development and lifelong learning categories complement the course offering so that MIC now has a range of programmes from Level 4 up to Level 10 on the [National Framework of Qualifications](#) (NQF).

In 1992, MIC became the first College of Education in Ireland to offer a degree in Liberal Arts and it was the first College of Education to establish a BA in Early Childhood Care & Education as well as a B.Ed in Education & Psychology (in 2003 and 2004, respectively). It was also the first College of Education to confer a doctoral award.

Academic Linkage & Accreditation

In 1991 an academic linkage governed by a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) was established between Mary Immaculate College and the University of Limerick. This provides for University of Limerick academic accreditation for NFQ Level 6-10 programmes at MIC.

MIC is a linked provider of the University of Limerick as defined in the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012](#). The University of Limerick (UL) is the designated awarding body (DAB) for all higher education programmes at MIC, save where other arrangements are jointly agreed by UL and MIC. The relationship between MIC and the UL is largely framed within the inter-institutional Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and the quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) oversight arrangements articulated in the [University of Limerick Linked Provider Framework](#). As a linked provider of UL, MIC is subject to review and external quality assurance by UL or, if requested, [Quality and Qualifications Ireland](#) (QQI).

Mission and Strategy

Mary Immaculate College is committed to ensuring the very highest standards of excellence in its teaching, learning and research activities. MIC's [Quality Policy](#) commits Mary Immaculate College (MIC) to the highest standards of quality in its core mission of academic teaching, learning and research, through a process of Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE). This is embedded in the [Strategic Plan 2023](#) *A Flourishing Learning*

Community which seeks to serve staff and students alike in achieving their potential for professional excellence and, in the case of students, the wherewithal for career entry and success in the 21st Century work place. Quality Assurance is a cross-cutting theme within the Strategic Plan 2023, which sets out ambitious targets such as significantly increasing the number of postgraduate research students registered at MIC along with defined KPIs in many areas. Quality Assurance underpins a cohesive and consistent approach to delivering excellence in teaching, learning and research. The College community has a collective responsibility for Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement and this is enshrined in the Mission Statement of the College "The College community promotes excellence in teaching, learning and research at undergraduate and postgraduate levels".

Research Strategy

Mary Immaculate College encourages, assists and provides practical support to faculty members and postgraduate research students to help them conceptualise and conduct original research, scholarship and inventive project work. Their research is both of intrinsic academic value in itself, and also of service to their academic fields, disciplines and communities of professional practice, as well as society at large. Both professional and student researchers are incentivised to promote and disseminate impactful research and to collaborate and reciprocate with others so as to contribute to local-global knowledge and further build our academic profile and reputation. This is embedded in the Research Strategy and Research Policy.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area:

1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance

QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines:

1 Governance & Management of Quality

2 Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

Governance

The governance of the College is regulated, primarily, by two documents, the Scheme of Incorporation and the Instrument of Government. The Scheme of Incorporation sets out the role of An tÚdarás Rialaithe (the Governing Authority of the College), which according to the Scheme is "the body appointed by the Trustees to govern and control all the affairs of the College, subject to [the] Scheme of Incorporation and in accordance with the Instrument of Government approved by the Trustees."

- **Code of Conduct for Trustees**
- **Code of Conduct for Members of *An tÚdarás Rialaithe***

The Instrument of Government is the document which sets out the structures and procedures for the governance and regulation of the College. The Universities Act (1997) requires that all universities adopt an Instrument of Government based on its provisions and, although MIC as a College of Education, is not covered by this statute, it has adopted an instrument based on the Universities Act model, subject to the provisions of the Scheme of Incorporation. The Instrument of Government describes the role of the College President (Uachtarán) who is Chief Executive of the College. The governance structures at MIC are set out in figure 1. The Terms of Reference and Schedule of Meetings details the terms of reference and meeting dates for all governance and operational committees of MIC.

The governance level bodies which report into An tÚdarás Rialaithe include the College's Finance and Resource Committee, Equality Committee, Audit and Risk Committee and Quality Committee. The MIC Quality Committee oversees the process of quality assurance at the College, and reports on the outputs and effectiveness of the quality improvement process. The Audit & Risk Committee has responsibility regarding risk management, internal control and audit (internal and external). The Director of Quality is a member of the Audit & Risk Committee thus ensuring linkage between risk, control and quality assurance oversight.

Systematic and ongoing risk assessment exercises (feeding into risk registers) are undertaken by academic and professional services.

The [Research Committee](#), a sub-committee of An Chomhairle Acadúil, is charged with providing active and practical support for academic staff research and postgraduate research within the College. It is chaired by the Vice-President for Research with the Head of Graduate School as Vice Chair, who may also act as Deputy Chair.

The [Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee (PRSC)](#), a sub-committee of the Research Committee, is the forum where the Research & Graduate School and the Deans of Faculties meet to oversee all aspects of postgraduate academic planning and management College-wide.

The [Mary Immaculate Research Ethics Committee (MIREC),](#) a sub-committee of the Research Committee, has responsibility for all aspects of research ethics insofar as they relate to research projects carried out by MIC staff and MIC postgraduate researchers where the projects involve human participants. Chaired by an external member of An tÚdarás Rialaithe, MIREC supports supervisors and researchers in ensuring that the research is carried out to the highest possible standards, with regard for the welfare of human participants and in accordance with recognised legal, professional and ethical standards.

Faculties

The College comprises of the [Faculty of Arts](#), [Faculty of Education](#) and the [School of Education (Post-Primary)](#), Thurles. Overall responsibility for the academic faculties resides with the Faculty Deans, who report to the Vice-President Academic Affairs. Each dean is supported in his/her role by an assistant dean, heads of academic departments and a faculty office manager. The faculty dean, assistant dean and heads of academic departments comprise the Faculty Management Committee. All academic members of a faculty, together with student representatives, comprise the Faculty Board.

Monitoring and Reporting

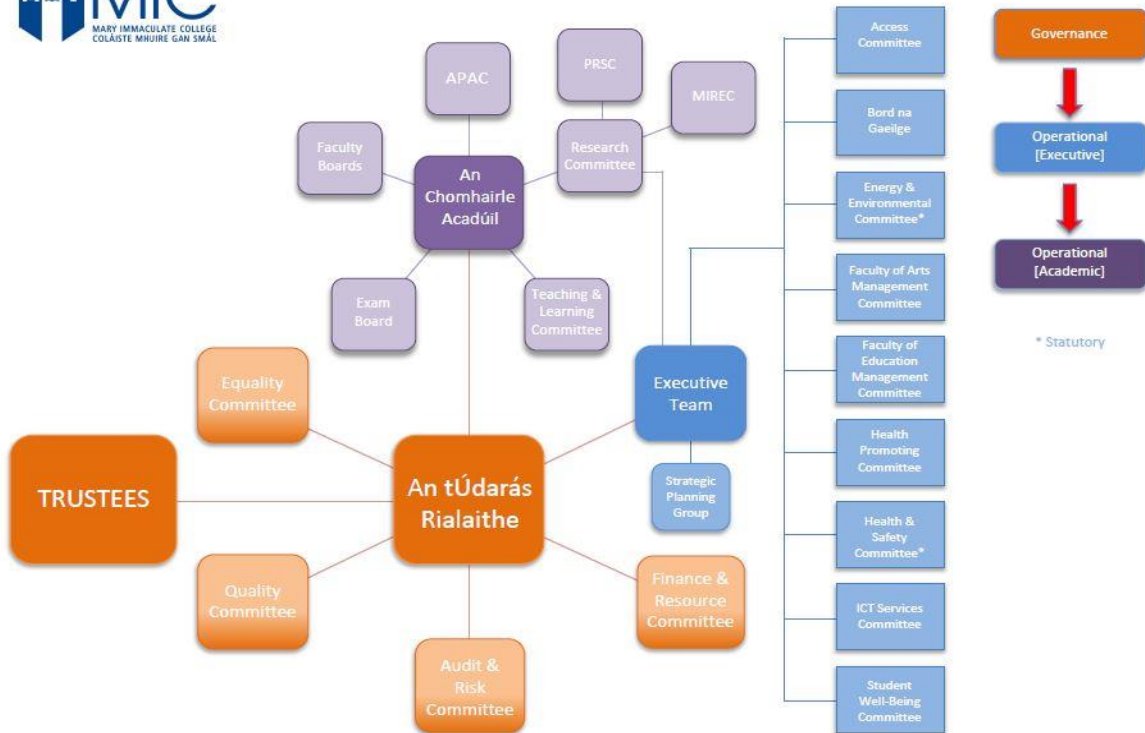All committees report quarterly and annually to An tÚdarás Rialaithe.

Figure 1: Governance Structures at MIC

Operational Management of Quality Assurance

Responsibility for operational management and decision making in respect of quality assurance and quality improvement is twofold. An Chomhairle Acadúil is charged with setting out the procedures and systems for maintaining quality academic standards. The design, development, modification and review of academic programmes is overseen and approved by An Chomhairle Acadúil under powers delegated to it by Academic Council of the University of Limerick, which accredits the College's awards. The Executive Team is mandated to resource academic programmes, research activity and professional services.

Day-to-day management and coordination of Quality Assurance is the function of the MIC Quality Office which is overseen by the Quality Committee and has a reporting relationship to Executive Team and An Chomhairle Acadúil through the Vice-President of Governance and Strategy and Vice-President Academic Affairs respectively. The organisation of the Quality Office is set out in Figure 2.
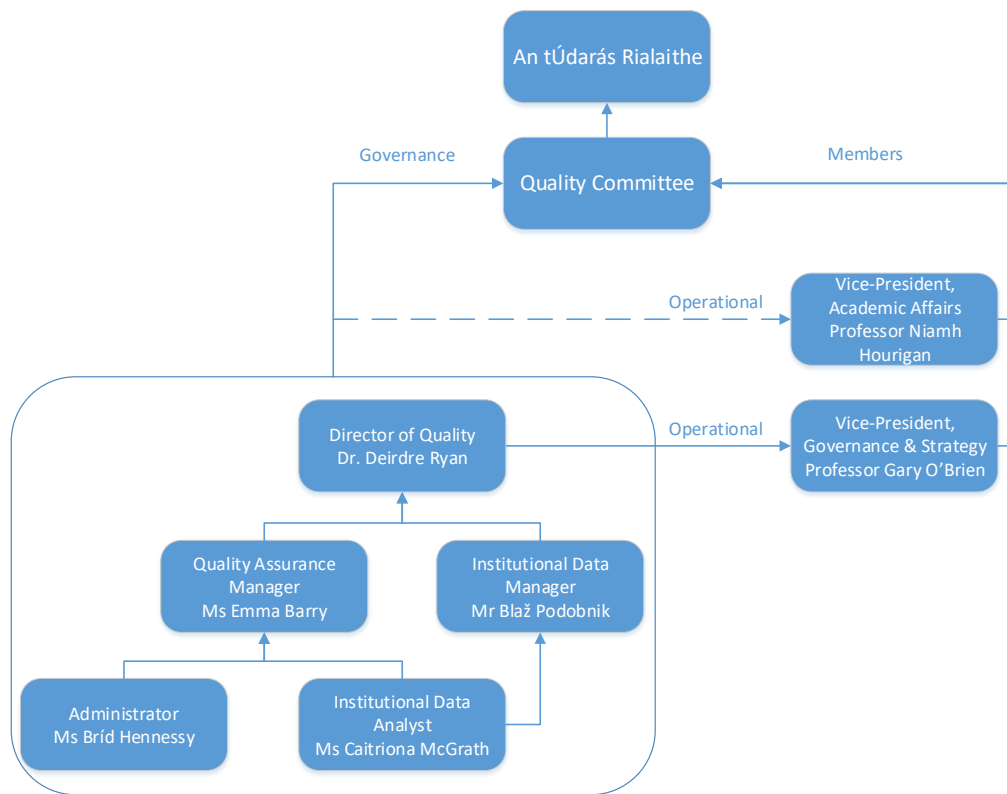
Figure 2: Quality Office Organisation Chart

The Quality Office (QO) has responsibility for the establishment and implementation of procedures directed at maintaining and improving quality.

To achieve this, the Quality Office:

- o Supports the development of College policy (Figure 3) and procedures in relation to quality assurance and enhancement in line with best international practice
- o Develops, maintains and evaluates the College's Academic and Professional Service review processes while promoting a sense of ownership by the individual department
- o Provides the necessary help and support to all departments within the College in implementing the quality review process.

Protocol for Policy Development

The framework for development and amendment of College Policies includes seven stages.

Critical Path for Adoption / Amendment of a College Policy

Process Stage	Action(s).	
1.	Commencement	Commencement of policy development / amendment process notified to *An tÚdarás Rialaithe* and all staff (and MISU[i] as appropriate) by VPG&S[ii].
2.	Nomination of Author(s)	Nomination of Author(s) of Draft Policy by the Executive Team.
3.	Drafting & Review	Successive drafts completed by Author(s) and reviewed by the Executive Team.
4.	Communication & Consultation	Draft Policy circulated to all MIC Staff by VPG&S, for information. Draft Policy circulated to Staff Unions by HRM[iii], FMC[iv]s and the Equality Committee by VPG&S, for suggested substantive amendments. Submission of suggestions for substantive amendments (via HRM / VPG&S, as appropriate) to take place within 6 weeks of circulation of draft.
5.	Finalisation of Draft	Finalisation of text of Draft Policy by the Executive Team.
6.	Adoption	Adoption of College Policy by An tÚdarás Rialaithe.
7.	Notification	All parties notified of adoption of Policy immediately (College Community via VPG&S and Unions via HRM) and invited to view the Policy on the MIC Website (with appropriate link provided). Policy added to Staff Handbook by HRM.

[i] Mary Immaculate College Students' Union
[ii] Vice-President of Governance and Strategy
[iii] Human Resource Management
[iv] Faculty Management Committees

Figure 3: Critical Path for Adoption/Amendment of a College Policy

DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL AND ON-GOING MONITORING OF PROGRAMMES

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area:

      1.2 Design and Approval of Programmes

      1.9 On-Going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes

QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines:

      3   Programmes of Education & Training

Development and Approval of Programmes

MIC follows a well-established, rigorous, documented procedure for the development and approval of new programmes. All new programmes must align with the UL and MIC strategic plans, with justification included in approval documentation.

Under the terms of the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) between MIC and the University of Limerick gives delegated authority to An Chomhairle Acadúil (to approve academic programmes from Level 6 up to and including Level 9. Programmes. Level 10 programmes are developed by the [Research & Graduate School](#) along with the MIC Faculties/Departments in consultation with colleagues in the University of Limerick. These programmes are processed through the same academic and administrative pathways as Level 6-9 programmes at MIC, but by exception, Level 10 programmes must receive final approval from the [Academic Programme Review Committee](#) (APRC) of the University of Limerick following a rigorous scrutiny of programme content, academic standards and quality KPIs.

Academic Programme Appraisal Committee (APAC)

The Academic Programme Appraisal Committee (APAC) is a subcommittee of [An Chomhairle Acadúil](#), and is chaired by the [Vice-President Academic Affairs](#) (VPAA). The terms of reference of APAC include:

      To review and make recommendations on proposals to:

- establish new academic programmes
- modify existing academic programmes
- ensure compliance following recommendations made by the Committee
- to consider Annual/Periodic Programme Review Reports

When a new programme/programme changes have been evaluated by APAC, a report is issued to An Chomhairle Acadúil which then decides whether to grant academic approval to the new programme/programme changes.

The VPAA is also a member of the University's Academic Programme Review Committee (APRC). The VPAA's joint membership of the two committees is intended to ensure that the work of APAC mirrors the processes and standards adopted by APRC.

The MIC Programme Development Standard Operating Procedure outlines the stages in the design, development and approval of new programmes. The specific process for the Approval of New Postgraduate Research Programmes is documented in RGSO SOP210.

To ensure that decisions on education and training matters are made independently of commercial considerations programme approval follows a twin-track route. The first stage in the development of programmes is

- The first route involves the establishment of a Course Design Team within a department or on a cross-departmental level. Scrutiny of the programme's academic merit by the host department / faculty. The New Programme Submission Form and supporting documentation are then reviewed by the Academic Programme Appraisal Committee (APAC) which then reports its recommendation on programme approval to An Chomharile Acadúil.

- The second route followed by a new programme is a submission to the College's Executive Team to determine the compatibility of the programme with the College's strategic plan and also to evaluate and approve the resource implications associated with running the programme (see Figure 4: Academic Programme Approval Process).
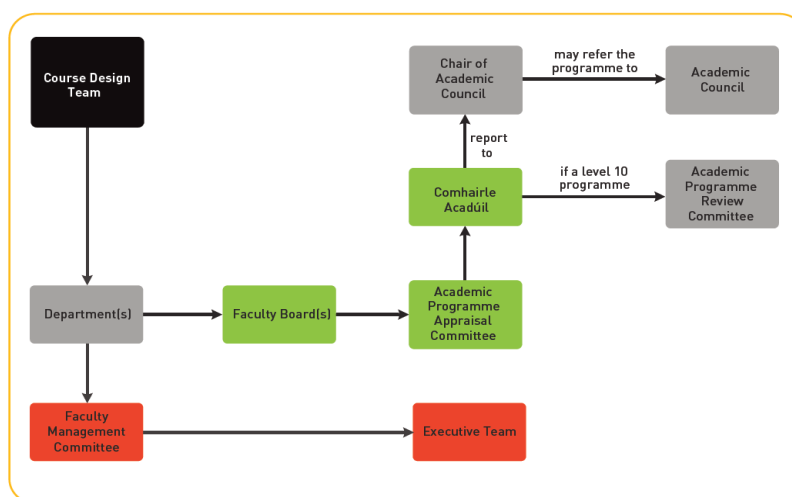
Figure 4: Academic Programme Twin-track Approval Process

All programmes (and modules therein) have associated learning outcomes, and the programme qualification is clearly specified and articulated in the context of the National Qualifications Framework for higher education (and consequently, in the framework for qualifications of the European higher education area). The procedure for the publication of information about validated programmes is documented in procedure SCM-M-010.

Modification of Programmes

Proposals to modify programmes and/or modules also follow a route from the Course Management Team through to APAC for consideration and approval. Programme and Module Modification forms are available on the MIC Intranet.

Academic Programme Review

MIC adheres to the University of Limerick's Academic Programme Review Policy. All

programmes must undergo Annual Programme Review. The issues that the Annual Programme

Review Report is expected to consider include:

- Key Strengths and challenges of the programme, recruitment, progression, graduation, student destination (e.g. employment, further study, professional training)
- Implementation of University Policies and/or strategies.
- Feedback from External Examiners
- Feedback from APRC or from any external accrediting body
- Feedback from students and staff.
- Good practices identified.
- Agree response to external examiners, where appropriate.

The Course Director is responsible for conducting the Annual Programme Review in conjunction with a Course Review Board. The programme review is documented using the Annual Programme Review Report template and Faculty Commentary and Action Plan. The Annual Programme Review and Faculty Commentary and Action Plans are submitted to APAC who will provide feedback and recommendations for consideration by the Course Review Boards, department and faculty prior to reporting to An Chomhairle Acadúil (see figure 5). The APAC report to An Chomhairle Acadúil will be in the form of a recommendation to the Faculty responsible for the programme: (i) noting the Annual Programme Report and the Faculty Commentary and Action Plan, (ii) recommendations to the Faculty, or (iii) a recommendation that the programme be subject to a full Programme Review. An Chomhairle Acadúil will be invited to endorse the recommendation of APAC.

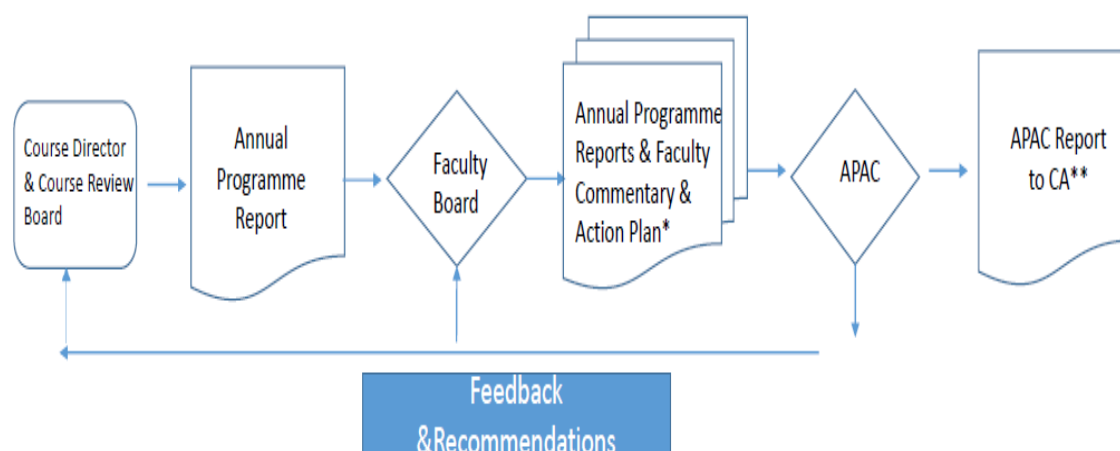*Annual Programme Review of Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes*

Figure 5: Annual Programme Review Process

Periodic Programme Review of Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes

All programmes must undergo Periodic Programme Review which in routine circumstances is conducted as part of Academic Departmental Quality Reviews (see figure 6). Programmes that undergo robust external accreditation will normally be exempt from Periodic Programme Reviews. A Periodic Programme Review may be initiated by Faculty Board or APAC where recurring issues are identified and remain unresolved in successive Annual Programme Review Reports and/or Faculty Commentary and Action Plans.
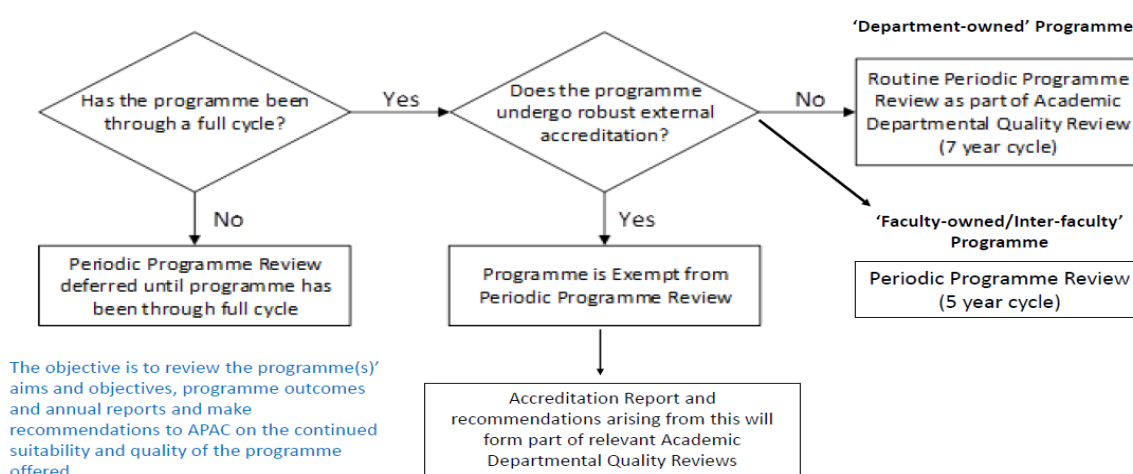

Figure 6: Periodic Programme Review Process

The Course Director is responsible for coordinating Periodic Programme Reviews. The review

process is documented using the Periodic Programme Review Report template.

ENHANCING AND ENSURING A QUALITY STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area:

1.3 Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

1.6 Learning Resources and Student Support

QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines:

3.2 Learner Admission Progression and Recognition

5.4 Learning Environments

6   Assessment of Learners

7   Supports for Learners

Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Mary Immaculate College has in place, several complementary mechanisms to ensure quality assurance in respect of student-centred, learning, teaching and assessment. These include:

- The Directorate for Teaching and Learning;
- Leading Enhancement and Academic Development (LEAD) Centre
- An independent system for Student Evaluation of Teaching;
- A dedicated Technology enhanced learning (TEL) team;
- A transparent system for the appointment of external examiners; and
- Department and Faculty-Level systems for the implementation of external examiners' observations and recommendations;
- A Research & Graduate School for the support of research postgraduate students and academic staff research

The Leading Enhancement and Academic Development (LEAD) Centre combines technical (through its Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) team) and academic expertise with a participatory governance structure (Teaching and Learning Directorate) to ensure on-going reflective praxis in enhancing and refining learning and teaching (face-to-face, blended, online) in Mary Immaculate College. The inter-disciplinary membership of the Directorate, which includes academics, professional service staff and student representatives, ensures that the Directorate provides a platform for information exchanges and the promotion of best practice in teaching and learning.

There is systematic student involvement in programme delivery and assessment-related activity. Programme boards include student representation as do associated QA oversight fora, including Quality Committee, Academic Programme Appraisal Committee, and An Chomhairle Acadúil.

Mary Immaculate College's commitment to championing good practice in teaching and learning, assessment and feedback is captured in the MIC Assessment and Feedback policy. The key driver for the formulation of the Assessment and Feedback Policy is the facilitation and enhancement of student learning.

Institutional-level student feedback is collected systematically through the annual Exit Survey and the Module Satisfaction Survey (MSS), as well as a range of other survey activities including but not limited to Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) and the HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey. The College operates a confidential and comprehensive Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) under the aegis of the Leading Enhancement and Academic Development (LEAD) Centre, complementing the MSS. Survey findings are considered, as appropriate, at local level (by individual academic staff, course boards, heads of department) and at institutional level (by Deans, Executive Team and An Chomhairle Acadúil).

The MIC Student Handbook is circulated to all students on admission. This handbook sets out the criteria for the assessment *of* and feedback *on* students' work and the classification of awards. The operational side of these criteria are synthesized and presented in an accessible manner in the handbook. All departments provide students with module outlines / descriptors in either hard copy or electronic format, and this document presents the learning outcomes, criteria on which assessment is to be based, the weighting allocated to each assessment instrument associated with the module, mode of feedback and the repeat assessment instrument(s) associated with the module. Assessment is externally reviewed through the external examiner system, which is considered to be part of programme reviews. The roles, functions and procedures associated with external examining are governed by the UL Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures (Section Two).

The Research & Graduate School provides active and practical support for academic staff research and postgraduate research within the College. This is comprised of academic services, professional development services, specialist services and technical and administrative services. The quality of research is reviewed through the quality review process. Regulations pertaining to the assessment of postgraduate research students are included in the University's Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures (in particular chapters 2 and 5). Quality Assurance of Research Degree Programmes is subject to QQI Topic Specific Guidelines for Research Degree Programmes.

Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

MIC is a designated linked provider under the aegis of the University of Limerick and satisfies UL's criteria for the delivery of programmes and UL academic regulations apply fully in MIC. In addition, there are co-governance arrangements in place, with MIC having direct representation on UL's Governing Authority and Exam Boards.

As a linked provider MIC adheres to the Policies and procedures for student enrolment, registration, assessment, grading, performance standards, progression and academic awards as outlined in the University of Limerick's Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures. Students are supported through their time in MIC by various support structures:

- o MIC has a dedicated Admissions Office, with all the requisite documentation available to students in an accessible format and on-line. Admission to Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught programmes is coordinated by the Admissions Office. Entry requirements for all MIC programmes are published annually. Admissions and related processes are periodically reviewed as part of the quality review process for professional services. The Office, which sits within the Student Academic Administration framework, supports students throughout their College trajectory, but especially in the period between the first round of CAO offers and the middle of the Autumn Semester.

- o A dedicated student orientation programme (scheduled and rolled-out in conjunction with the Students Union) draws on all professional services and academic departments in those crucial first weeks of college life.

- o MIC's Access & Disability Office provides for growing diversity of students. The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) are two undergraduate entrance schemes running at Mary Immaculate College. Further Education Entry Routes via the Admissions Office are also available for QQI/FET/FETAC applicants through the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS). MIC has adopted the University of Limerick Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy , RPL is used to enable applicants to gain entry to a programme, to award credits for part of a programme and to award exemptions for some programme requirements.

- o Work Placement

  - o The Placement Office is responsible for the management and administration of the off-campus programme component of the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Arts in Contemporary and Applied Theatre Studies.

  - o School Placement is responsible for oversight of students on the B Ed, B Ed in Education and Psychology and the postgraduate Professional Master in Education who spend time in schools on each year of their programme.

- The Department of Reflective Pedagogy & Early Childhood Studies oversees placement in Early Years settings.
- The Department Educational Psychology, Inclusive & Special Education oversees professional placements for students on the Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology.
- Students undergoing work placement involving activities relating to children or vulnerable adults are subject to the provisions of the MIC Garda Vetting Office.

Postgraduate research students apply to the Research & Graduate School for places on research programmes or for traditional 'monastic' or apprenticeship places within the academic departments. The selection of such students is based on academic potential and suitability for advanced study as determined by academic departments. Students must then formally apply in writing to the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee (PRSC - which is a sub-committee of the Research Committee) for official approval of their candidature and approval of the supervisory arrangements proposed by the department (RGSO-SOP216). Once approved the postgraduate student begins their studies. As well as oversight by assigned supervisors, a system of assessment involving annual progress reviews is conducted through the annual progression process. This is coordinated by the Research & Graduate School and involves Progression Review (RGSO SOP204), Confirmation (RGSO SOP205) and Appeals Panels (RGSO SOP206) as required. Continuing postgraduate students are enrolled annually (RGSO SOP217). The RGSO manages leave of absence and subsequent readmission (RGSO SOP212) and withdrawal (RGSO SOP 213). The RGSO also manages the submission of Masters degree theses (RGSO SOP 201), Doctoral degree theses (RGSO SOP 202) and Doctorate in Educational & Child Psychology theses (RGSO SOP 203).

Student Academic Administration maintains and controls the College's student records, including all personal information, grant records, student registrations, module grade entry, performance reports and student results, the issuing of all graduate parchments and the publication of all class and examination schedules. The Research & Graduate School maintains research student records, personal information, grant/award details, registrations, performance reports and results. Student progression information is considered at a number of fora, most notably the faculty exam boards, and An Chomhairle Acadúil. These results are also considered during the Annual Programme Review process, at which course boards propose quality enhancements on the basis of (in part) annual programme performance metrics.

Learning Environment, Resources and Student Support

Most teaching now takes place in the Tara Building, which was opened in 2010, and which also houses the main student support services, including The Medical Centre, [Counselling Service](), [Chaplaincy](), [Student Parent Service](), [Students' Union]() and exhibition and communal spaces. The John Henry Newman Campus has dedicated facilities for the support of staff research, office accommodation for postgraduate students, visiting scholars, visiting professors, headquarters for the [Mary Immaculate Research Ethics Committee]() (MIREC) and the [Mary Immaculate Research Repository]()(MIRR), facilities for several research institutes and centres, as well as meeting/function/seminar rooms and events spaces. In addition to its physical and infrastructural assets, MIC has in place a suite of student support services that are rooted in a philosophy of pastoral care. These services and the [Academic Learning Centre]() come within the portfolio of the [Director of Student Life](), and all support service providers participate in a collective forum – the Student Well-Being Committee, which reports directly to College management. All supports are accessible. Students are informed about the services available to them in a variety of ways, including [Orientation Week](), [MIC Website]() and [Students Union Website](). International students are provided with additional supports by the [International Office]().

The Research and Graduate School manage specific of supports and schemes for research postgraduate students including the allocation of study spaces (RGSO SOP209), Student Conference Fund (RGSO SOP104), Merit Awards (RGSO SOP207), Departmental Assistantships (RGSO SOP208) and the endorsement of funding applications e.g. IRC (RGSO SOP214 (postgraduate) and RGSO SOP215 (postdoctoral).

The governance of Learning Resources and Student support is further strengthened by the work of a number of College committees:

- The **Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee (PRSC)** is responsible for quality assurance and critical support of postgraduate research students;

- The **ICT Services Committee** (which reports to the Executive Team) has remit to support quality assurance measures undertaken in each of the following four portfolio areas for ICT Services:

  - Core Operations
  - Critical Projects
  - Compliance
  - Corporate Strategy

To support and enable these measures, the ICT Services Committee agrees and monitors the ICT Services Annual Operating Plan (AOP) implementation, ensuring that it is aligned to the budget as approved by the **Finance and Resource Committee**. The AOP includes works necessary to support, maintain, enhance and expand information systems, thus ensuring the security and sustainability of information systems.

- The **Library Users' Group** has responsibility for considering the changing needs of library users and proposing how the College might meet these strategically
- The **I-grade Committee** deals with students' applications for I-grades.
- The **Access Committee** deals with matters concerning students with disabilities and students coming from socio-economic groups under-represented at third level.
- The **Discipline Committee** hears all complaints in relation to alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct
- The **Student Status Committee** deals with those cases that are not fully covered by the remits of other committees. It also considers requests for leave of absence, exemptions, internal transfers, transfers from other HEIs and extraordinary requests from students.

All committees include students and representatives (elected and appointed) from professional services and academic staff. The office of the Vice-President Academic Affairs coordinates their operations, ensures quality assurance by enabling effective flows of information, provides feedback to the relevant offices / departments, monitors compliance with academic regulations and maintains a constant focus on the progression and needs of the student. Committee documentation (agendas, minutes, records) are accessed on the Staff Portal (intranet). The MIC Student Learning Partnership and Dialogue Charter is based on identification by a joint Academic Council-MISU forum of best practice dialogue and mutual engagement between staff and students as well as the elements of the new MIC Teaching & Learning Strategy. Underpinning this Student Learning Partnership and Dialogue Charter are four thematic intersectional elements as follows:

- Teaching and Learning Environment
- Student Life
- Representation
- Community Engagement

Collectively, these four thematic elements outline the commitments, expectations and responsibilities associated with this charter between MIC and MISU.

The Research & Graduate School, the Arts Faculty and the Education Faculty Offices provide support to both students and staff within each faculty and report directly to the relevant Dean / Vice-President of Research. All professional service and academic departments are subject

to periodic quality reviews, the reports from which are published on the [Quality Office Webpage](#).

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area:

> 1.5 Teaching Staff

QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines:

> 4.1 Staff Recruitment
>
> 4.2 Staff Communication
>
> 4.3 Staff Development
>
> 5.1 Teaching & Learning
>
> 5.2 A provider ethos that promotes learning
>
> 5.3 National and International Effective Practice

Recruitment and selection practice

Mary Immaculate College's Recruitment and selection practice is underpinned by the College Recruitment, Selection and Appointments Policy which states that "*Mary Immaculate College will recruit and appoint appropriately qualified and experienced staff to meet its strategic and operational needs. Appointments will be made on merit and as the result of fair and transparent processes based on best practice*" *(p.2).* The policy statement is supported by the procedures set out within the same document. The College provides interviewer training to ensure the quality of the interview process. The policy and practice is benchmarked against the Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil Service and Public Service. Following appointment, a formal probation assessment process is in place to support the new appointee from the commencement of their appointment and to ensure that the appointee is meeting the requirements of the appointment.

Staff Development

Staff members' academic capacity is further built throughout their careers with access to various supports including CPD events, educational opportunities, financial support for further education and research leave. A Learning and Development policy in in place which provides for CPD to be provided to staff as required. The Research & Graduate School provides a wide range of training for staff in matters to do with postgraduate supervision, *viva voce* examinations, research ethics, research methods, getting published and other similar areas. Several research support schemes for the support of staff research, including significant funded schemes, are available to support and encourage staff engagement in professional research including Research Seed Funding (RGSO SOP101/101a), Research Networking Grants (RGSO SOP102), Staff Conference Fund (RGSO SOP103), External Research Funding Applications (RGSO SOP104, PhD Fees Reimbursement (RGSO SOP106),

Professional Leave of Absence (RGSO SOP108), MIRR Submissions (RGSO SOP109), Visiting Scholars (RGSO SOP110) and Personal Research Plans (RGSO SOP112). These are detailed in the Academic Staff Research Support & PLOA Policy. The HR Department in MIC and LEAD Centre provide opportunities for CPD including Peer Observation of Teaching, Student Evaluation of Teaching, and support and mentoring for candidates submitting for Regional and National Teaching Awards.

A provider ethos that promotes learning

Through the MIC Research & Graduate School, staff members are supported and encouraged to engage in research and scholarly activity to strengthen the link between teaching & learning and academic / professional research / scholarly activity. This is underpinned by an institutional Academic Staff Research Support & PLOA Policy which is regularly reviewed and updated.

Teaching & Learning

Teaching and learning activity and direction is informed by the College's Strategic Plan 2023, Assessment & Feedback Policy, and overarching Quality Assurance and Continuous Quality Improvement Policy. MIC through the LEAD centre encourages innovation in learning and teaching methods and the use of new technologies. Implementation of the strategic plan is regularly monitored at various institutional fora, most notably Executive Team and An tÚdarás Rialaithe.

Cornerstone institutional QA/QE mechanisms for monitoring teaching-related activity include:

- o Ongoing cyclical **academic departmental quality reviews**
- o The **external examiner system**
- o **Programme reviews** (annually by the relevant course review board and periodically incorporated into the Departmental Level Academic Departmental. Reviewed by an external panel)
- o The **Student Evaluation of Teaching** (SET) process
- o The **Module Satisfaction Survey** (MSS)
- o The **Student Exit Survey**
- o Adherence to the **University of Limerick Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures**

INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area:

     1.7 Information Management

QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines:

     8.1 Information Systems

     8.2 Learner Information Systems

     8.3 Management Information Systems

     8.4 Information of Future Planning

     8.5 Completion Rates

     8.6 Records Maintenance and Retention

     8.7 Data Protection and Freedom of Information

Management Information Systems

The College has adopted a strategic focus on the development of integrated management information systems and analytics through the development of a data analytics platform or 'dashboard' that will gather and collate data against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This dashboard will be available to key officers with planning and decision-making responsibilities, from the President and Executive Team, to all heads of department and operational areas.

The Strategic Plan 2023, Institutional Review Implementation Plan (IRIP 2018) articulate specific aims and objectives, each with accompanying outcomes and targets. The Implementation Plan for each of these outline key deliverables, assignee and timeframe and are held centrally in a SharePoint Database. Internal procedures are in place to routinely monitor, document and report progress to key decision-making individuals or committees, including Executive Team, An Chomhairle Acadúil and An tÚdarás Rialaithe.

The Strategic Communications & Marketing (SCM) Office is charged with successfully marketing and effectively communicating the strategic priorities of the College.

The Communications division of the Office manages all media relations, public relations, social and digital media, web content, videography and photography for MIC; drawing attention to key strategic messages and successes of the College, its student community and alumni, in addition to promoting the many conferences, public lectures and other events that take place throughout the year.

The Marketing division of the SCM Office is responsible for all programme marketing campaigns; undergraduate, postgraduate, alternative pathway programmes in addition to a suite of Continuing Professional Development programmes; across two campuses. The Office provides support to the various College departments and offices ensuring that their key messages are in keeping with the overall MIC brand positioning and communications strategy.

Learner Information Systems

The Student Information (SI) System that MIC shares with UL contains a range of information about students, programmes, courses and systems. Profiles of the student population as well as student progression, completion and retention rates are gathered, reported and analysed in a number of ways for a number of stakeholders both internal (e.g. course review boards, An Chomhairle Acadúil, Executive Team) and external (e.g. Higher Education Authority (HEA).

Information for Current and Prospective Students is available via the MIC Webpage and through the relevant individual professional service webpages.

Student Feedback: Information relating to student engagement, satisfaction and outcomes is gathered in a number of ways. These include the Graduate Outcomes Survey, Irish Survey of Student Engagement, the Postgraduate Survey of Student Engagement, Exit Survey, Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) and Module Satisfaction Surveys. Analysis of the data gathered is presented to relevant internal stakeholders for consideration and follow up (e.g. An Chomhairle Acadúil, Executive Team, Faculty Management Boards, Survey Working Group, Individual Academics and Student Union Council).

Student input, feedback and dialogue is also facilitated by student representation on various committees and boards, both at institutional level (e.g. An tÚdarás Rialaithe, An Chomhairle Acadúil and Faculty Boards) and local level (e.g. course review boards).

Records Maintenance, Retention, Data Protection and Freedom of Information

The Audit & Risk Committee has governance oversight of the College records management, freedom of information and Data Protection policy, protocols and activities.

The Office for Information Compliance and Records Management (ICRM), which is overseen by the Vice-President of Governance and Strategy, has responsibility for central management of records storage. This office also has a key role as the coordinating body for compliance with statutory Freedom of Information and Data Protection requirements . As well as handing these requests, ICRM works in tandem with the HR Office to provide staff development and training in relation to the latter to ensure that best practice is adhered to at all levels within the institution. The MIC Record Retention Schedule lists retention periods and disposal instructions for all corporate records.

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Law Enforcement Directive and related Irish legislation, being the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 (together, Data Protection Legislation), MIC is obliged to keep safe and secure all personal data that is collected and

processed in the discharge of its core functions. The MIC Data Protection Policy sets out the data protection principles that all MIC end users of personal data need to comply with the MIC Personal Data Handling Guidelines is a further document, developed to provide end users with guidelines for handling personal data.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area:

    1.8 Public Information

QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines:

    9.1 Public Information

    9.2 Learner Information

    9.3 Publication of Quality Assurance Evaluation Reports

MIC adheres to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, 2014, Section 8 of the Act requires FOI bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in Sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act. MIC regularly updates its website so that the MIC's wide range of stakeholders can easily source information of relevance to them.

- General Information about Mary Immaculate College
- Information for Prospective Students
- Information on Faculties and Departments
- Information on College Services
- Annual Reports
- Compliance, Freedom of Information and Records Retention
- Publication of Quality Assurance Evaluation Reports

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SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area:

    1.10 Cyclical External Quality Assurance

QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines:

    11.1 Provider-owned internal review, self-evaluation and monitoring

    11.2 Self-monitoring procedures

    11.3 Self-evaluation, improvement and enhancement

    11.4 Provider-owned quality assurance engages with external QA

The [Strategic Plan 2023](#) sets out the key institutional objectives. Key targets and deliverables from the Strategic Plan are monitored and reported on through the Annual Operating Plan which is managed via a SharePoint Database. The Annual Operating Plan is also cross tabulated against other active plans including:

- o Institutional Review Implementation Plan(IRIP)
- o HEA Performance Compact System framework objectives.
- o The DES Strategy
- o Risk Register Mitigating Actions
- o Internal Audit reports

This allows monitoring of key strategic goals and resultant KPIs in an integrated and coordinated manner.

Internal review, self-evaluation and monitoring

A range of procedures are implemented at institutional and departmental level with a view to monitoring, self-evaluating and enhancing the quality of our activities. These include:

- o [Academic Department Quality Reviews](#) [(Click here for schedule)](#)
- o [Professional Services Quality Reviews](#) [(Click here for schedule)](#)
- o Annual Programme Monitoring
- o Periodic Programme Review
- o [External Examiners System](#) (Yearly)
- o External Accreditation

External Quality Assurance

MIC is a linked provider of the University of Limerick. This means that, based upon the terms of a [Memorandum of Understanding(MoU)](#) between the two institutions, UL is the designated awarding body (DAB) for all higher education programmes at MIC, save where other arrangements are jointly agreed by UL and MIC. The relationship between MIC and the UL is largely framed within the inter-institutional MoU and the quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) oversight arrangements articulated in the [University of Limerick Linked Provider Framework](#). As a linked provider of UL, MIC is subject to review and external quality assurance by UL or, if requested, [Quality and Qualifications Ireland](#) (QQI). MIC is also subject directly to QQI for the review and oversight of Access, Transfer and Progression arrangements.

Cyclical External Quality Review

Review, in this context, refers to the formal review of the effectiveness of the institution-wide quality assurance policies and procedures established and implemented by MIC.

Instruments that underpin the basis for external quality review include the following:

- o [Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, specifically Section 42](#)
- o [Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College](#)

Annual Monitoring & Review

MIC reports on all quality related activities to University of Limerick on an annual basis as follows:

- o [Annual Institution Quality Report](#) (AIQR) followed by an Annual Dialogue Meeting in which the AIQR is discussed and targets for the following year are agreed.

[AIQR](#), [Quality Review reports](#) and the [Quality Manual](#) is available via the MIC Website in accordance with the Qualifications and Quality (Education and Training) Act, 2012.

REVISION HISTORY

Rev.	Date	Approved by	Details of change	Process owner
0	30th Oct 2018	MIC Quality Committee	Initial release	Director of Quality, MIC
1	1st May 2019	Director of Quality	Update for: MIC-UL MOU (2019) Strategic Plan 2023 Approval of Assessment & Feedback Policy Changes to Annual Programme Review Policy URL links to new MIC Website	Director of Quality, MIC
1.1	16th September 2019	Director of Quality	URL link to new Student Handbook Change to Quality Office Organisation Chart	Director of Quality, MIC
1.2	12th November 2019	Director of Quality	Addition of links to RGS procedures. Addition of Terms of Reference and Meeting Dates for all MIC Committees. General review of document to coincide with submission of LP Self-Evaluation Report	Director of Quality, MIC
1.3	20th October 2020	Director of Quality	Inclusion of: • Linked Provider Framework • Student Learning Partnership & Dialogue Charter • Professional Service Quality Review Schedule and Guidelines Changes arising from the Linked Provider QIP:	Director of Quality, MIC.

			• Addition of link to the MIC Personal Data Handling Guidelines. • Role of ICT services committee documented. • Link to SCM-M-010.	

Mary Immaculate College
Board Schedule AY 2019/20

Trustees (all meetings start at 3.30pm)

Semester I	Semester II
Tuesday 5 November 2019	Wednesday 26 February 2020
Tuesday 17 December 2019	Tuesday 28 April 2020
	Wednesday 1 July 2020

An tÚdarás Rialaithe (all meetings start at 10.30am)

Semester I	Semester II
Wednesday 18 September 2019	Wednesday 29 January 2020
Wednesday 11 December 2019	Wednesday 8 April 2020
	Wednesday 17 June 2020

An Chomhairle Acadúil (all meetings start at 2.00pm)

Semester I	Semester II
Wednesday 11 September 2019	Wednesday 22 January 2020 (10.00am)
Wednesday 6 November 2019	Wednesday 11 March 2020
	Wednesday 6 May 2020
	Wednesday 24 June 2020

Audit & Risk Committee (all meetings start at 11.30am) – President's Office

Semester I	Semester II
Tuesday 10 September 2019	Monday 27 January 2020 (3.00pm)
Monday 18 November 2019	Tuesday 10 March 2020 (9.00am)
	Wednesday 27 May 2020
	Tuesday 14 July 2020 (Extraordinary Meeting - 10.00am)

Finance & Resource Committee (all meetings start at 8.30am) – President's Office

Semester I	Semester II
Monday 7 October 2019	Friday 14 February 2020 (1.00pm)
Monday 9 December 2019	Monday 31 March 2020 (budget)
	Wednesday 27 May 2020
	Monday 15 June 2020 (Extraordinary Meeting - 4.00pm)

Equality Committee (all meetings start at 11.30am) – President's Office

Semester I	Semester II
Friday 11 October 2019	Thursday 27 February 2020 (10.30am)
Thursday 5 December 2019	Thursday 7 May 2020

Quality Committee (all meetings start at 2.30pm) –G-08

Semester I	Semester II
Tuesday 1 October 2019	Tuesday 25 February 2020 (3.30 pm)
Tuesday 3 December 2019	Tuesday 19 May 2020