QUALITY
MANUAL

BRIATHAR DÉ MO LÓCHRANN

MIC

MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
COLÁISTE MHUIRE GAN SMÁL

www.mic.ie

QUALITY MANUAL

Contents

Table of Figures

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 (NFQ).

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 workplace. 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".

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Interculturalism

The MIC EDII Office, led by the Director of EDII, exists to embed an ethos and practice of equality, diversity, inclusion and interculturalism (EDII) at Mary Immaculate College that is underpinned by a whole institutional approach with the staff and student community, and external partners. The important work of EDII is underpinned by the College's EDII Strategy, which is aligned to and guided by the Strategic Plan 2023. The Director of EDII is part of the 12-member MIC Executive Team that oversees executive decisions of the College.

The EDII Team are assisted by five EDII Champions drawn from staff, the Equality Committee (and its sub-committee, the EDII Implementation Committee), as well as the MIC Executive Team.

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 to contribute to local-global knowledge and further build our academic profile and reputation. This is embedded in the Research Strategy and Academic Staff Research Support 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. The principles and conduct required to ensure sound and ethical governance in the best interests of the College and the wider public are documented in the following codes of conduct:

Code of Conduct for Trustees

Code of Conduct for Members of An tÚdarás Rialaithe

The Instrument of Government is the document that 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 and Risk Committee has responsibility regarding risk management, internal control and audit (internal and external). The Director of Quality is a member of the Audit and Risk Committee thus ensuring linkage between risk, control and quality assurance oversight.

Risk management and internal audit are managed by the [Coordinator of Risk Management and Internal Audit](#) who reports to [Vice-President of Governance and Strategy](#). Systematic and ongoing risk assessment exercises (feeding into risk registers) are undertaken by academic departments 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. The Research Committee is chaired by the Vice President for Research (VPR), with the Graduate School Director and the Director of Research as Vice Chairs, either of whom may also act as Deputy Chairperson of the committee in the absence of the VPR.

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 PRSC is chaired by the Graduate School Director.

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. 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 and Operational Structures at MIC

MIC Governance and Operational Management Structure

Governance Committee

Academic Operational Committee

Executive Operational Committee

Statutory Committee

Board of Trustees

An tÚdarás Rialaithe (Governing Authority)

Audit & Risk Committee

Equality Committee

Finance & Resource Committee

Quality Committee

An Chomhairle Acadúil (Academic Council)

Academic Programme Appraisal Committee

Exam Board

Teaching & Learning Directorate

Arts Faculty Board

Education Faculty Board

School of Education Programme Board

Research Committee

Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee

MIREC (Research Ethics)

Executive Team

Access Committee

Bord na Gaeilge

Business Programme Appraisal Committee

Enterprise & Community Engagment Committee

Environment & Sustainability Committee*

Faculty of Arts Management Committee

Faculty of Education Management Committee

Generative AI Sub-Committee

Health Promoting College Committee

Health & Safety Committee*

ICT Services Committee

Student Wellbeing Committee

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, Reporting Structure and Oversight
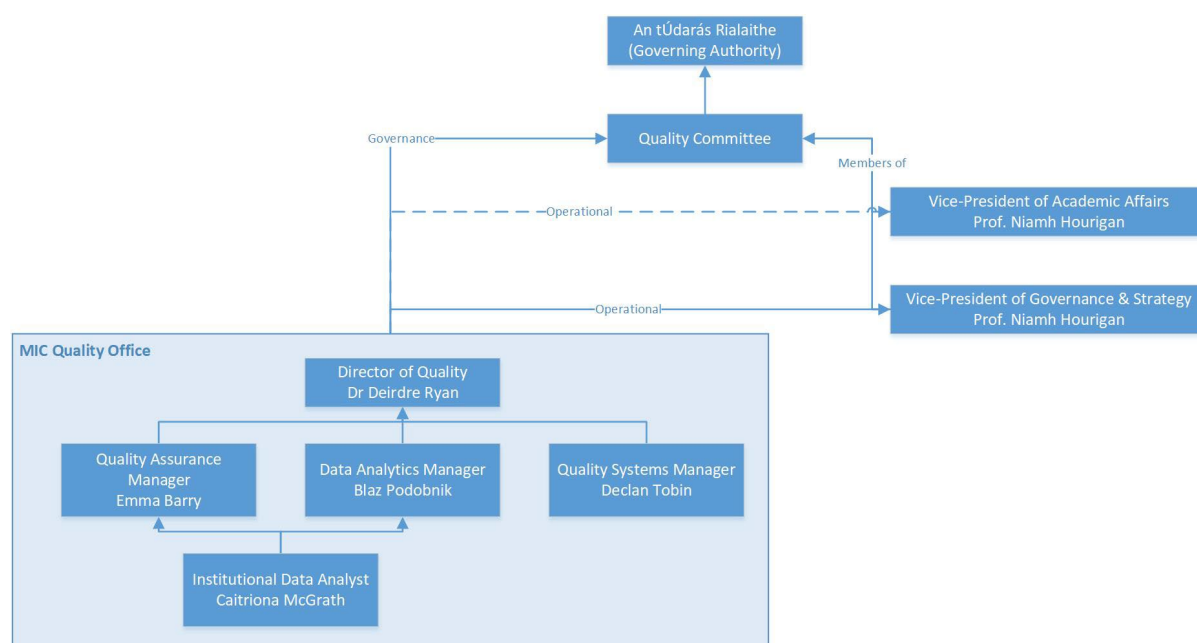
The Quality Office has day-to-day responsibility for the establishment and implementation of procedures directed at maintaining and improving quality guided by:

- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)
- 2012 Education & Training Act
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (Core) Guidelines
- QQI Policies
- QQI Topic Specific Guidelines
- University of Limerick Linked Provider Framework

- [UL-MIC Memorandum of Understanding](#)
- [MIC Strategic Plan](#)
- [MIC Quality Policy](#)

To achieve this, the Quality Office:

- Support the development of college policy and procedures in relation to quality assurance and improvement in line with best international practice
- Develop, maintain and evaluate the [College's Academic and Professional Service review processes](#) while promoting a sense of ownership by the individual department/service
- Provide the necessary help and support to all departments within the College in implementing the quality review process
- Assist Professional Services in the development of Quality Management Systems
- Gather stakeholder feedback through surveys, focus groups etc.
- Facilitate MIC's participation in surveys such as StudentSurvey.ie, PGR StudentSurvey.ie and HEA Graduate Outcomes
- Provide timely analysis of data for internal and external stakeholders

Protocol for Policy Development

The framework for development and amendment of College Policies is set out in policy PGP037 Protocol For Policy Development.

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

Critical Path for Adoption / Amendment of a College Policy

Ref: PGP37

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
Human Resource Management
Faculty Management Committees

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

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. 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. 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 Academic Programme Development Processes outline the stages in the design, development and approval of new programmes.

To ensure that decisions on education and training matters are made independently of commercial considerations programme approval follows the three-stage process outlined in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Programme Approval Workflow

New Programme Approval Process Workflow
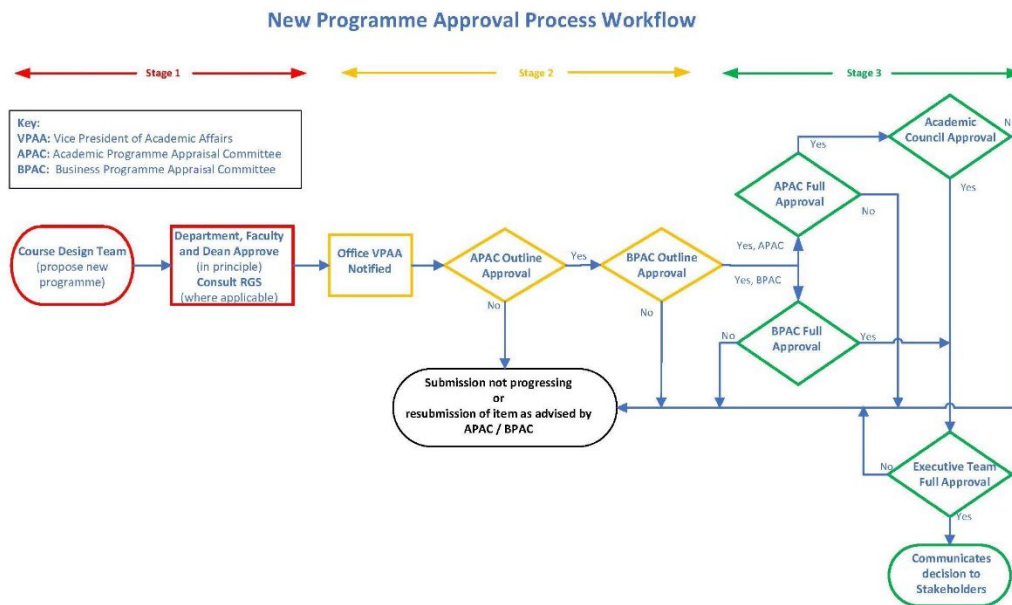
Stage 1:

The first stage of the programme approval process involves the establishment of a Course Design Team within a department or on a cross-departmental level and scrutiny of the programme's academic merit by the host department/faculty.

Stage 2:

In Stage 2 the academic strand of the programme approval process is managed by APAC (Academic Programme Appraisal Committee) and the business strand of the process is managed by a sub-committee of ET, the Business Programme Appraisal Committee (BPAC). BPAC considers submissions for proposed new programmes from strategic and resourcing perspectives, ensuring that business cases are reviewed at an early stage in the process. of the programme approval process.

Stage 3:

If outline approval is given at Stage 2, the proposed new programme is then submitted to both APAC and BPAC for full approval. If APAC grants full approval, a recommendation is submitted to An Chomhairle Acadúil (CA) to approve the programme. If both CA and BPAC

grant full approval the proposed new programme is submitted to the Executive Team (ET) for approval.

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 SharePoint Portal.
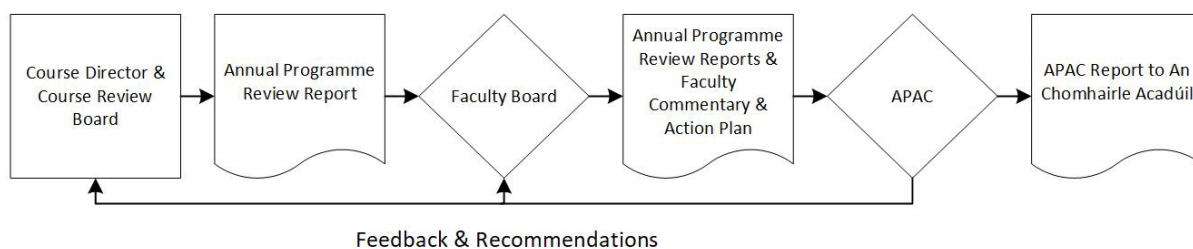
Academic Programme Review
Annual Programme Review of Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes

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.

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
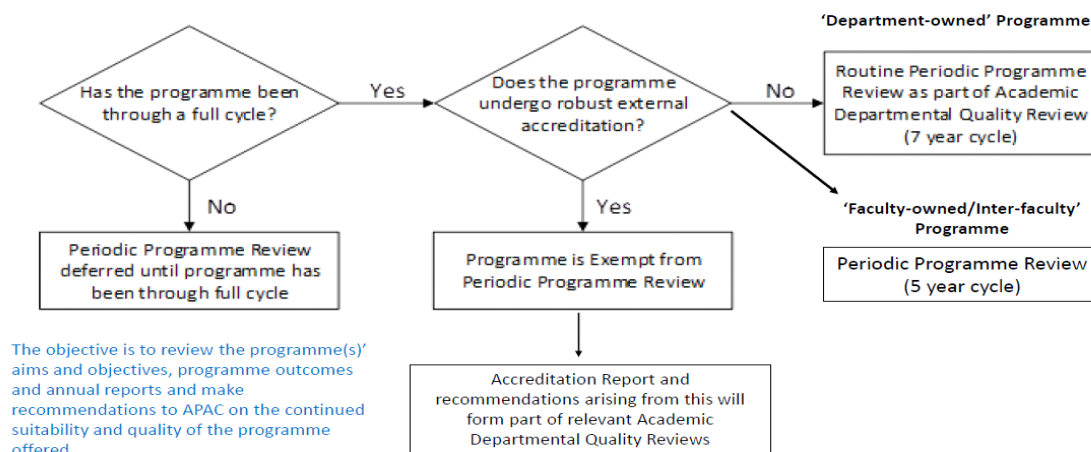
The Course Director is responsible for coordinating Periodic Programme Reviews. The review process is documented using the Periodic Programme Review Report template.

External Examiner Process

The Academic Council of the University of Limerick is charged under the University of Limerick Act with ensuring academic standards and the quality of all awards made by the University. In accordance with the University's External Examiner Policy, Academic Council appoints external examiners to all taught programmes including those of its linked providers. The purpose of the External Examiner process is to provide an independent view and report on student performance, programme outcomes and proposed awards. Faculty examination boards consider recommendations from faculty examination boards and submissions from both internal and external examiners before determining students' final awards.

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 Teaching and Learning Directorate;
* Learning 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;
* 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 Learning 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 committee, which includes academics, professional service staff and student representatives, ensures that the committee 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. In tandem with this the MIC Digital Teaching and Learning Policy aims to leverage from digital learning and teaching to achieve the strategic objectives of, excellence, inclusion, and a flourishing learning community.

Institutional-level student feedback is collected systematically by the Quality Office through survey activities including but not limited to StudentSurvey.ie, PGR StudentSurvey.ie and the HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey. Survey findings are disseminated by the Quality Office, and are considered, as appropriate, at local level (by individual academic staff, course boards, heads of department) and at institutional level (by Deans, Executive Team, An Chomhairle Acadúil and Quality Committee).

The Learning Enhancement and Academic Development (LEAD) Centre operates a confidential and comprehensive Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) to assist academic staff who wish to undertake an in-depth analysis of their teaching & learning.

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 synthesised 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 MIC Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures (section 2) which are approved by University of Limerick Academic Council.

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 MIC Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures (in particular chapters 2 and 5). Quality Assurance of Research Degree Programmes adhere to QQI's 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. In addition, there are co-governance arrangements in place, with MIC having direct representation on UL's Academic Council and UL having direct representation on An tÚdarás Rialaithe and An Chomhairle Acadúil.

MIC adheres to the policies and procedures for student enrolment, registration, assessment, grading, performance standards, progression and academic awards as outlined in the MIC Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures, which are approved by UL Academic Council.

Students are supported through their time in MIC by various support structures:

Admissions Office

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. Comprehensive information on all MIC programmes are provided in the *Study at MIC* section of the MIC website, the CAO courses web page (undergraduate level 8 programmes) and in the undergraduate and postgraduate prospectuses including the NFQ level of the programme, entry requirements and programme content. Information on the various access routes is also available on the MIC website.

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.

Recognition of Prior Learning

MIC has adopted the UL Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy, which 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.

Lisbon Recognition Convention

The Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) aims to ensure that holders of a qualification from a signatory country can have access to an assessment of the qualification in another country in a fair and transparent way. MIC has adopted the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) in assessing the qualifications of prospective international learners.

Adherence with the Lisbon Recognition Convention is achieved through the use of the QQI NARIC Ireland Foreign Qualifications website which provides advice on the academic recognition of a foreign qualification by comparing it, where possible, to a major award type and level on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and ECCTIS, a database which compares international qualifications from over 200 countries, former states or territories.

Student Orientation

MIC runs an extended student orientation programme for all new first year students in conjunction with the Students' Union which draws on all professional services and academic departments in those crucial first weeks of college life.

Access & Disability Office

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

Further Education Entry Routes via the Admissions Office are also available for QQI/FET/FETAC applicants through the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS).

Mature Student Access

MIC run a number of Access courses to facilitate mature student entry to undergraduate programmes including:

- The Pre-University Programme for Mature Learners
- The Teacher Education Access Programme (TEAP) for mature learners who wish to gain entry to the B.Ed. (Primary Teaching) at the College.
- The Pre-University Programme (PUP), a 40-hour certificate programme for mature learners from disadvantaged backgrounds who wish to continue their education, possibly with a view to going to third-level.

Work Placement

The Placement Office is responsible for the management and administration of the off-campus programme component of the following Faculty of Arts programmes:

- Bachelor of Arts
- BA in English Language & Literature
- BA in English & Drama
- Bachelor of Science in Psychology

- BA in Contemporary and Applied Theatre Studies.

School Placement is responsible for oversight of students on the following Faculty of Education programmes during their school placement:

- Bachelor of Education
- B.Ed. in Education and Psychology
- B.Ed. International
- Professional Master of Education

The School of Education, Thurles Campus is responsible for oversight of students on the BA in Education programmes on school placement.

The Department of Reflective Pedagogy & Early Childhood Studies oversees placement in Early Years settings.

The Department of 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 must be Garda vetted; this is facilitated by the MIC Garda Vetting Office.

The Careers Service provides information and guidance to current undergraduate students in respect of subject choice, postgraduate study, employability and career planning matters.

Postgraduate Research Students

Postgraduate research students apply to the Research & Graduate School for places on research programmes 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 (RGS 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 research review (progression) process. This is coordinated by the Research & Graduate School and involves the Research Review Panel (RGS SOP204), Research Confirmation Panel (RGS SOP205) and Research Appeal Panel (RGS SOP206) as required. Continuing postgraduate students are enrolled annually (RGS SOP217). The RGS manages leave of absence and subsequent readmission (RGS SOP212) and withdrawal (RGS SOP 213). The RGS also manages the submission of

Masters degree theses (RGS SOP 201), Doctoral degree theses (RGS SOP 202) and Professional Doctorate in Educational & Child Psychology theses (RGS SOP 203).

MIC's Doctoral Framework has been developed in relation to national and Europe-level policy benchmarking to:

- Facilitate consistent excellence in the quality of postgraduate education, research and training;
- Enable and encourage faculties, departments and institutional units to work more closely in the delivery of an improved learner-experience and outcome;
- Maximise the employability of doctoral graduates across a broad range of employment sectors;
- Underpin the value and relevance of the doctoral award in the context of MIC's institutional strategic priorities, national research policy agendas and global realities in higher education.

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. 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 student orientation programme, MIC Website and Students Union Website. International students are provided with additional supports by the International Office.

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.

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

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. A core feature of the charter are the in-semester staff - student forums held in both Faculties and the School of Education (Post-Primary). These forums facilitate direct feedback from students to faculty management and allows students to hear how their feedback has been actioned.

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 for Research. All professional service and academic departments are subject to periodic quality reviews, the reports from which are published on the Quality Office webpage.

STAFF RECRUITMENT, COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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 "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 are 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. The MIC Learning and Development Policy provides for staff to engage in CPD as required including accredited academic programmes, external short training programmes and training programmes delivered in-house.

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 (RGS [SOP101](#)/[101a](#)/[101b](#));

- Research Networking Grants ([RGS SOP102](#));

- Staff Conference Fund ([RGS SOP103](#));

- External Research Funding Applications ([RGS SOP105](#));

- PhD Fees Reimbursement ([RGS SOP106](#));

- Professional Leave of Absence ([RGS SOP108](#));

- MIRR Submissions ([RGS SOP109](#));

- Visiting Scholars ([RGS SOP110](#));

- Personal and Departmental Research Plans ([RGS SOP112](#)).

These are detailed in the [Academic Staff Research Support Policy](#).

The [LEAD Centre](#) provide opportunities for CPD including [Peer Observation of Teaching](#) and [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 Policy](#), which is regularly reviewed and updated.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning activity and direction is informed by the College's [Strategic Plan 2023](#), [Assessment & Feedback Policy](#), and overarching [Quality Policy](#). MIC through the LEAD centre encourages innovation in learning and teaching methods and the use of new technologies guided by the following policies, procedures and protocols:

- [Digital Teaching & Learning Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Virtual Learning Environment Protocol](#)
- [Academic Programme Development Processes](#)

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:

- Ongoing cyclical [academic departmental quality reviews](#);

- The external examiner system;

- Programme reviews (annually by the relevant course review board and periodically incorporated into the academic department quality reviews which includes peer review by an external panel);
- The Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) process;
- Adherence to the MIC Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures, which are approved by University of Limerick Academic Council.

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). The e-OLAS (Online Data Analytics System) dashboard is 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 articulates specific aims and objectives, each with accompanying outcomes and targets. The Implementation Plan outlines 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

MIC's Student Records System, Unit-e 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 HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey, StudentSurvey.ie, PGR StudentSurvey.ie and Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET). Analysis of the data gathered is presented to relevant internal stakeholders for consideration and follow up (e.g. An Chomhairle Acadúil, Executive Team, Quality Committee, Faculty Management Boards, Individual Academics and MISU 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, 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 Information Compliance Office (ICO), which is overseen by the Director of Information Governance & Compliance Management, 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 with the Director of Information Governance & Compliance Management fulfilling the role of both Data Protection Officer and Freedom of Information Officer at MIC. As well as handing these requests, the ICO 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 (ICP-005) provides 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.

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

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 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:

* Institutional Review Implementation Plans (IRIP);
* Quality Improvement Plans from Internal Quality Reviews;
* HEA Performance Compact System framework objectives;
* Department of Education and Department of Further and Higher Education; Research, Innovation and Science strategy;
* Risk Register Mitigating Actions;
* 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:

* Academic Department Quality Reviews;
* Professional Services Quality Reviews;
* Annual Programme Monitoring;
* Periodic Programme Review;
* External Examiners System (Yearly);
* 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:

- [Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, specifically Section 42](#)
- [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 through the submission of an [Annual Quality Report](#) (AQR) followed by an Annual Dialogue Meeting in which the AQR is discussed and targets for the following year are agreed.

AQRs, Quality Review Reports and the Quality Manual are available via the [MIC Quality Office website](#) in accordance with the Qualifications and Quality (Education and Training) Act, 2012.

REVISION HISTORY

Rev.	Date	Approved by	Details of changes	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: * Addition of link to the MIC Personal Data Handling Guidelines. * Role of ICT services committee documented. * Link to SCM-M-010.	Director of Quality, MIC.
1.4	19th October 2021	Director of Quality	* Update links to policies, procedures and documents that have been updated since the last revision of the Quality Manual. * Update links to MIC Staff Portal which were changed due to the migration of the staff portal online. * Update links to external (non-MIC) sites/documents that have changed since the last	Director of Quality, MIC.

Rev.	Date	Approved by	Details of changes	Process owner
			revision of the Quality Manual * Added reference and link to MIC Framework for Doctoral Education * Updated MIC Quality Office organization chart to reflect change in reporting structure * Replaced ISSE with StudentSurvey.ie to reflect national rebranding * Add reference and link to the Digital teaching and Learning Policy * Added reference and link to MIC Careers Service	
2.0	20th October 2023	Quality Committee	* Updating of existing hyperlinks where destination site/document URL had changed; * Updated Quality Office Organisation Chart to reflect current structure; * Added list of documents that guide the activities of the quality office; * Updated the roles of the Quality Office to reflect current range of activities; * Added PGR StudentSurvey.ie to sections referencing surveys; removed references to Exit Survey and changed name of module-based survey to Module Feedback Survey to reflect surveys currently administered; * Added references to MIC Academic Regulations which replaced UL Academic Regulations; * Added BSc Psychology to list of programmes supported by the Placement Office; * Added new SRS Unit-e; * Added role of Coordinator of Risk Management and Internal Audit; * Added role of Director of Information Governance and Compliance Management;	Director of Quality, MIC.

Rev.	Date	Approved by	Details of changes	Process owner
			∗ Added information about the Director of EDII and the EDII Office; ∗ Added Mature Student Access routes; ∗ Added reference to Digital Teaching & Learning Policy; Academic Integrity Policy; Virtual Learning Environment Protocol; Standard Operating Procedure for Programme Development;	
2.1	27 January 2025	Quality Committee	∗ Checked all hyperlinks and updated where required. ∗ Updated Figure 1 (p.5) to include School of Education Programme Board & BPAC. ∗ Added QQI Policies to the list (p.6). ∗ Removed reference to RGSO SOP210 (p.9) as APAC and BPAC have superseded this procedure. ∗ Updated Programme Approval Workflow diagram (p.9) to Rev 7 and updated accompanying text. ∗ Added the External Examiner Process (p.11) ∗ Updated title of access programme to Pre-University Programme for Mature Learners(p.15). ∗ Added new Faculty of Arts UG programmes, B.Ed. International and Thurles Campus to Work Placement section (p.15). ∗ Removed reference to Module Feedback Survey throughout document.	Quality Assurance Manager
2.2	18 March 2025	Quality Committee	∗ Updated Fig. 1 to include new committees (p.5) ∗ Added reference to IRQ (p.9). ∗ Amended text re surveys to clarify responsibilities and reporting of survey findings (p.14). ∗ Removed UL Governing Authority as MIC President is no longer on	Quality Assurance Manager

Rev.	Date	Approved by	Details of changes	Process owner
			UL GA due to restructuring of GAs due to HEA Act 2022 (p15).	
			* Moved RPL text to standalone paragraph (p.15).	
			* Added information on Lisbon Recognition Convention, NARIC & ECCTIS (p.15/16)	
			* Updated PGR section for accuracy (p.17)	
			* Added staff-student forums (p.20)	