



Quality Review
Peer Review Report
MISU
May 2025



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1. Introduction

Quality at MIC

MIC's quality review process, as applied to both academic departments and professional services, was developed and continues to evolve in order to satisfy college quality policy and meet legislative quality assurance requirements.

MIC complies with the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#), which places a legal responsibility on the provider and linked provider to establish procedures in writing for quality assurance for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining and improving the quality of education, training, research and related services. (Part 3, Section 28).

These quality assurance procedures must take due account of relevant quality guidelines issued by [Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(QQI\)](#) and/or predecessor organisations. QQI is the statutory body responsible for reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of QA procedures adopted and implemented by higher and further educational institutions within Ireland.

The periodic quality review of functional areas (academic and professional service) within the College represents a cornerstone institutional quality assurance mechanism.

[MIC's Quality Review Process](#)

The purpose of the quality review process is:

- To provide a structured opportunity for the professional service to engage in periodic and strategic evidence-based self-reflection and assessment in the context of the quality of its activities and processes, and to identify opportunities for quality improvement;
- To provide a framework by which external peers, in an evidence-based manner, can independently review, evaluate, report upon and suggest improvements to the quality of the professional service's activities and processes;
- To provide a framework by which the professional service implements quality improvements in a verifiable manner;
- To provide MIC, its students, its prospective students and other stakeholders with independent evidence of the quality of the professional service's activities;
- To ensure that all MIC professional services are evaluated in a systematic and standardised manner in accordance with good international practice and in support of the objectives of the College's Quality Policy;
- To satisfy good international practice in the context of quality assurance in higher education and to meet statutory QA requirements as enshrined in national law.

Overview of the Quality Review Process for Professional Services

The quality review process for MIC Professional Services consists of three phases:

- Self-Assessment
- Peer Review
- Quality Improvement

Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is the first phase of the quality review process and takes approximately 6-9 months. It culminates in an analytical, evidence-based, Self-Assessment Report (SAR), which is written by the relevant professional service.

Peer Review

In the Peer Review phase, the members of the Peer Review Group (PRG) read the Self-Assessment Report and then spend a number of days in the college to meet with the management and staff of the service and other stakeholders. The review group completes a Peer Review Report (PRR) on its findings that comprises both commendations and recommendations.

Quality Improvement

The Quality Improvement phase comprises the following stages:

- Consideration of recommendations and formulation of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP);
- Identification of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed) action items necessary to implement the recommendations;
- Ongoing implementation of recommendations;
- Interim and final progress reports to the MIC Quality Committee.

MISU

Mary I Students' Union (MISU) is the recognised representative body of the students of Mary Immaculate College (MIC) Limerick & Thurles. MISU provides support, advice and representation for its members, the students of MIC. MISU are accountable to the students whom it represents.

MISU is an unincorporated entity, governed by the Constitution of MISU and upholds the principles of complete autonomy from all state, college or external authorities, allowing no interference in its elections, policy-making or finances.

Student Representation, Advocacy & Leadership is the core function which MISU carries out in order to promote, pursue and campaign for the betterment of the education and well-being of its members, as per the Constitution. MISU is also responsible for the administration and development of Clubs & Societies as well as the provision of a range of services to the student body, all which play a key role in enabling MISU to achieve its aims and objectives.

Peer Review Group Observations

The Peer Review Group (PRG) commends the Mary Immaculate College Students' Union (MISU) for its excellent engagement with the quality review process. MISU approached the review with enthusiasm, openness, and professionalism, underpinned by a commitment to honest critical self-reflection and continuous improvement.

The PRG was provided with comprehensive, high-quality background information ahead of the visit, enabling a well-informed review process. The Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was of a high standard, thorough, honest, and well-supported by evidence, providing a strong foundation for the Peer Review process. It is noteworthy that the Peer Review Group's findings closely align with MISU's own internal analysis, reflecting the Union's effective internal evaluation processes.

MISU demonstrated a high level of openness and constructive engagement throughout the visit. Union and College staff, elected officers, and student representatives contributed candidly and with a clear strategic awareness. A particular strength was the calibre of contributions from elected officers, class representatives, and society leaders, who showed maturity, insight, and critical thinking.

Service Engagement and Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder feedback consistently confirmed that MISU is highly regarded by both students and College leadership. Students highlighted the Union's approachability, responsiveness to welfare needs, and the strong visibility of elected officers. Institutional stakeholders praised MISU's professionalism, commitment to partnership working, and the meaningful influence that student representatives have within decision-making structures. It was evident that staff consistently demonstrate a genuine commitment to the values of the organisation.

The Peer Review Group also noted that the College is currently developing its new strategic plan. Encouragingly, there was strong alignment between the challenges identified by the College and those emerging through this Peer Review process, particularly in relation to student engagement, the need for enhanced social and shared spaces, improvements in digital communications, and the promotion of inclusive sporting opportunities. These shared priorities present a valuable opportunity for closer collaboration between the College and MISU to strengthen the overall student experience.

While stakeholder feedback was overwhelmingly positive, the Peer Review Group also identified several structural and operational challenges that will need to be addressed to strengthen MISU's long-term sustainability and student impact.

Challenges for Representation and Engagement

The Peer Review Group identified various challenges impacting student engagement, representation, and participation in extra-curricular life.

While the President and Vice-Presidents play an important role in ensuring student voice within the College's decision-making structures, the current expectation for elected officers to

attend over 40 institutional committees places a significant burden on the Officer team. Moreover, students reported the number of meetings that Student Representatives are expected to attend within the Union structures was overly burdensome. This workload reduces the time available for wider student engagement, leadership development, and the promotion of vibrant student democracy.

More broadly, MISU faces a challenge in re-energising student participation across its representative and extra-curricular structures. Engagement in the Union Council, elections, and class representative systems has declined significantly, a trend consistent with the national and international context, but nevertheless, it is a significant concern for MISU's long-term vibrancy and relevance. Students also reported limited opportunities for informal involvement and a lack of visibility of the Union's broader work beyond the officer team.

MISU has recognised these challenges and is preparing to radically review its student engagement and representation structures. A shift away from reliance on formal evening meetings and towards more accessible, daytime, and integrated activities is needed, supported by structural changes at both Union and College levels, including academic timetabling adjustments.

Communication also emerged as a consistent theme. Students involved in the Peer Review reported that those not actively involved with MISU were significantly less likely to be aware of the full range of Union services, representation structures, and opportunities for participation. Strengthening digital communication channels, improving outreach, and creating more visible and student-led engagement initiatives will be vital. The absence of a dedicated digital communications role at MISU remains a structural barrier to effectively addressing these challenges.

Sports Access and Facilities

Concerns about access to sports facilities emerged strongly during the review. Stakeholders consistently reported a perceived dominance of GAA sports in facility access, funding, and promotion. Non-GAA sports clubs and societies described difficulties accessing spaces, often being displaced or deprioritised. Equitable access to facilities and broader promotion of a diverse sporting culture will require urgent attention.

A broader strategic gap was also identified: the absence of an integrated sports strategy linking physical activity, well-being, and campus life. MISU, in collaboration with the College leadership, has a clear opportunity to lead in developing a holistic Sports Strategy that promotes equity, inclusion, and health across both campuses.

Governance and Commercial Sustainability

The Peer Review Group also noted structural governance challenges. MISU operates with two boards: the Management Advisory Board and the Commercial Services DAC Board. While providing oversight, this dual structure adds unnecessary complexity. The Management Advisory Board is advisory only and does not have formal decision-making authority. Moving

towards a single incorporated board with clear legal powers and responsibilities is strongly recommended.

The sustainability of MISU's commercial services, particularly An Siopa, is a serious concern. Rising costs, high staffing expenses, and the resource demands of maintaining commercial operations are placing a strain on Union finances. Capitation income alone is insufficient to sustain Union activities across two campuses. A formal and regular review mechanism for capitation and Union funding should be introduced to ensure the Union can meet baseline operational costs and avoid over-reliance on commercial income.

Space, Staff Capacity, and Operational Challenges

MISU's staff team reports a positive and supportive working environment, with high levels of autonomy and a strong sense of teamwork. Staff feel valued in their roles, and there is good evidence of commitment to continuous improvement.

However, the Peer Review Group identified ongoing challenges in relation to space, staffing, and operational capacity. A shortage of accessible and visible social spaces across both campuses, particularly at the Thurles campus, continues to limit opportunities for student engagement and community building.

Beyond individual staffing pressures, MISU faces broader organisational challenges. The Union is required to deliver a full range of core functions, finance, governance, administration, student advocacy, and digital communications, comparable to larger institutions, but with a much smaller staffing base and operational budget. Capitation income alone is insufficient to cover these demands, and the increasingly challenging commercial environment, particularly in relation to An Siopa, is further exacerbating financial pressures.

Finally, the Peer Review Group highlights the critical importance of the General Manager's role in providing stability and leadership within MISU. This was recognised by students, staff, and Institutional stakeholders. However, the scale of responsibility carried by the post presents a risk to organisational resilience if not addressed through additional structural support and long-term succession planning.

Conclusion

The Peer Review Group found MISU to be a highly professional, reflective, and student-centred organisation. The Service's student engagement, committed leadership, and a clear focus on student needs are commendable. With a strong foundation in place, MISU is well-positioned to adopt a more ambitious approach as it plans for the future and deepens its impact on the student experience. Addressing the structural, operational, and cultural challenges identified through this review, particularly around radical engagement reform, equitable sports access, governance restructuring, commercial sustainability, and succession planning, will be vital to ensuring MISU's continued success and resilience. The outcomes of this review provide a strong foundation for MISU's future strategic planning and its ongoing contribution to enhancing the student experience at Mary Immaculate College.

2. Structure, Governance and Mission

Commendations

2.1.1	The governance structure demonstrates a strong commitment to being a values-driven, student-led organisation, as evidenced by the recent constitutional review and student referendum on governance changes.
2.1.2	The introduction of the MISU Management Team structure and the implementation of annual planning cycles have strengthened governance continuity, succession planning, and strategic oversight. This structured approach has enhanced coordination between staff and officers, contributing to a more resilient and strategically aligned organisation.
2.1.3	The use of student referenda to inform governance decisions reinforces MISU's commitment to democratic practice and accountability.
2.1.4	MISU's strategic aims are well aligned with both institutional priorities and the evolving needs of its student body. This alignment was evident in both the SAR and feedback from College senior management.
2.1.5	Strong staff retention has contributed to organisational stability, trust, and long-term strategic development.
2.1.6	A strong and mutually respectful working relationship between MISU and the College is evident. MISU is recognised as a valued contributor to the student experience by College stakeholders.
2.1.7	The Union demonstrates ongoing reflection on its aims and objectives, creating opportunities to ensure continued relevance to the diverse and changing student population.
2.1.8	The Management Advisory Board provides effective strategic guidance and oversight, contributing to sound decision-making and operational planning.
2.1.9	The General Manager is highly regarded by staff, officers, and institutional stakeholders for their leadership, operational knowledge and commitment to improving the student experience and representation at MIC.

Recommendations

	Recommendation	Rationale
2.2.1	Conduct a comprehensive governance review, including: • Exploration of incorporation to establish MISU as a single legal entity encompassing all Union activities and services, including commercial operations currently managed by MISU Commercial Services DAC. • Introduction of Board sub-committees (e.g. HR, Audit and Risk) • Clarification of the role of the Company Secretary	MISU currently operates commercial services through a DAC structure without being a legal entity itself, which creates governance and legal ambiguity. Incorporation would bring all Union activities, services, and commercial operations under a single legal framework, strengthening accountability, reducing risk, and enabling more effective governance. The introduction of sub-committees would support good governance practice, risk management, and strategic oversight.
2.2.2	Development of a new strategic plan and staffing review that aligns to strategic priorities.	A refreshed Strategic Plan, with a staffing and student representation function to match, would better position MISU to deliver its aims, particularly given the changing needs of the student population. This will support both the continuity and responsiveness to student needs.
2.2.3	Conduct a full review of MISU's commercial operations, including cost-benefit analysis.	There is a need to assess the financial sustainability of MISU's commercial functions to ensure they are meeting both strategic and operational goals and not impinging on their central focus of representing, engaging and advocating for students.
2.2.4	Clarify the governance and management of sports provision by exploring the formal integration of non-GAA sports and recreational clubs into MISU's Clubs & Societies structure, with appropriate resourcing.	Feedback from all stakeholders raised ongoing concerns about limited access to sports facilities for non-GAA clubs, including perceptions of GAA prioritisation. This restricts participation and undermines inclusion, wellbeing, and broader engagement goals. The planned investment in new sports facilities provides a great opportunity to embed student voice and equity of access into these facilities.

		Although MIC oversees sports clubs, MISU continues to provide insurance access without oversight of risk management, posing organisational and legal risks. Clearer governance arrangements are needed to align responsibilities for access, support, and risk. A joint review should: • Define roles and responsibilities between MIC and MISU; • Promote inclusive access and visibility for all sports; • Explore integrating recreational clubs into MISU's engagement structures where appropriate. This approach would support a more inclusive, transparent, and student-focused sports culture across both campuses. Such a change would require careful planning and appropriate resourcing, including staffing, IT systems and facilities.
2.2.5	Review the capitation fee and MISU's financing model to ensure sustainable and equitable service delivery across both campuses.	With student needs diversifying and service expectations increasing, it is essential to ensure MISU has a financial model that allows it to deliver high-quality services across both Limerick and Thurles.
2.2.6	Review MISU's leadership structure, including the role of the General Manager and the potential creation of a Deputy GM.	The current leadership structure places significant operational and strategic demands on the General Manager, creating capacity constraints and potential organisational risk. The lack of a clear succession plan further limits MISU's ability to maintain continuity and adapt to emerging challenges. Establishing a Deputy General Manager role would help distribute responsibilities more effectively, enhance organisational resilience, and ensure leadership sustainability.

3. MISU Functions

3a. Representation, Advocacy & Leadership

Commendations

3.1.1	Student officers demonstrate strong leadership and a grounded understanding of operational realities, as well as a clear awareness of the structural and cultural challenges inherent in effective representation.
3.1.2	MISU makes thoughtful use of survey data and student feedback to inform its work, with examples shared in the SAR and interviews showing how this information shapes representation and services.
3.1.3	Officers maintain a high level of visibility and accessibility on campus, which contributes positively to their approachability and effectiveness as student leaders.
3.1.4	The “10 Key Principles of Representation and Leadership” document is an example of excellent practice and provides a clear framework for guiding officer conduct and leadership development.
3.1.5	MISU is open about the challenges facing its current representation systems and demonstrates a proactive willingness to collaborate with the College and wider student body to strengthen them.
3.1.6	There is a strong and constructive partnership between MISU and the College, with recent joint initiatives—such as the provision of free period products—highlighting shared values and a commitment to student wellbeing.
3.1.7	Officers demonstrate empathy and understanding regarding institutional challenges such as space constraints and funding pressures, which supports mature and balanced advocacy.
3.1.8	Student officers were well prepared and briefed for meetings during the review process and were articulate in expressing student priorities and the Union’s strategic direction.
3.1.9	Students are well represented on key College committees, ensuring that student voice is embedded within institutional decision-making processes.
3.1.10	Officers are well informed about the needs of the student body and demonstrate confidence and skill in articulating and advocating for those needs across a range of formal and informal contexts.

Recommendations

	Recommendation	Rationale
3.2.1	Undertake a radical review of the student representation system and development of a Student Engagement Strategy.	Students, MISU and MIC staff all agreed that the current student representation system needs to be modernised. Engagement at all levels has dropped considerably, particularly since Covid. A full review would allow MISU to design a model that better reflects modern student needs and democratic engagement.
3.2.2	Significantly reduce the number of meetings student representatives are expected to attend.	Excessive meetings limit student reps' ability to engage with peers and gather feedback. A streamlined system would enable better-quality representation.
3.2.3	Develop mechanisms to evidence and communicate the impact of student representation.	Students reported not being aware of what their representatives are doing. Enhancing visibility and impact reporting would improve accountability and engagement.
3.2.4	Increase staff support for the Representation systems.	Additional staff capacity is required to support student representatives, allowing them to focus more on advocacy and peer engagement rather than operational matters.
3.2.5	Review the scope and structure of the President's role.	The current scope of the President's responsibilities is considered too broad, creating sustainability and workload challenges. A role review would help clarify priorities and build capacity to assist in longer term strategising about how the College and Union continue to meet the needs of students and improve the student experience.

3b. Clubs & Societies

Commendations

3.3.1	The policies governing Clubs & Societies (C&S) are well-established, providing a clear framework for student involvement and activities.
3.3.2	The process for joining a club or society is simple and student-friendly, lowering barriers to participation and supporting inclusion. This ease of access has contributed to high levels of initial engagement, particularly among new students.
3.3.3	MISU has demonstrated a proactive commitment to early engagement, particularly with first-year students. This focus on student belonging is commendable and contributes meaningfully to a positive transition into college life.
3.3.4	The recent loosening of committee structures within clubs and societies reflects a progressive and responsive approach to student needs. By reducing bureaucracy, MISU is enabling more flexible, student-led participation, particularly among students with limited time or prior experience.
3.3.5	MISU staff were consistently praised by both students and stakeholders for the high levels of support they provide to C&S. Their hands-on approach, availability, and willingness to guide students through processes are seen as a key strength of the Union.
3.3.6	Students involved in clubs and societies consistently report high levels of satisfaction with their college experience, attributing much of this to their involvement in C&S.
3.3.7	There is clear evidence of pride in C&S activity among students

Recommendations

	Recommendation	Rationale
3.4.1	Initiate discussions to explore whether MIC should take over the management of club insurance or whether MISU should become the primary organisation responsible for managing sports clubs and societies.	The current dual management model presents a risk, particularly as MISU handles membership and pays for insurance but does not play a role in the development of GAA clubs.
3.4.2	Develop more comprehensive metrics for assessing engagement that go beyond just sign-ups and event attendance. Consider qualitative measures such as student feedback, student involvement, and long-term participation trends.	Current metrics (sign-ups and event numbers) do not fully reflect student engagement or demonstrate the depth of student involvement. Richer data could inform more effective engagement strategies.
3.4.3	Develop targeted outreach strategies to engage students who have not yet joined a club or society.	There may be missed opportunities to reach students who feel disconnected from student life.
3.4.4	Work with MIC to establish formal reward and recognition schemes for student involvement in C&S.	Recognition can drive deeper involvement and validate the contributions students make to student engagement. Currently, BICS is the only recognition measure. Students believe that the value of extra-curricular is not understood or appreciated by MIC management and academic staff.
3.4.5	Explore ways to make existing facilities more accessible, particularly to students not involved in competitive sports.	Limited facility access and priority given to GAA is a barrier to engagement and limits the variety of student-led activity. Several clubs and societies cited facility limitations as a barrier to activity and growth.
3.4.6	Encourage clubs and societies to host events and activities during different times of the day, catering to a wider range of students who may have different schedules.	Concentrating activity in the evenings may exclude students with other commitments. Daytime programming can broaden access. The model of a 'full-time student' in the traditional sense no longer exists.
3.4.7	Further streamline the processes involved in setting up a club or society, making it easier for students to initiate new groups and contribute to the diversity of student activities.	Reducing the complexity of setup procedures will make it easier for students to initiate new groups and contribute to the diversity of student activity.

3.4.8	Create a development plan for diversifying the range of club and society activity available to students.	There is strong student interest in expanding opportunities beyond the current dominant areas of GAA and MIDAS.
3.4.9	Review staffing levels and responsibilities to ensure they meet the current and future needs of C&S development.	Students reported high levels of time commitment involved in running a club or society, which can be managed within larger societies that are able to distribute responsibilities—but this poses sustainability challenges for newer or smaller groups. Targeted staff support could help alleviate pressure and ensure more equitable access to C&S leadership opportunities.
3.4.10	Clarify and communicate the distinction between a club and a society, including the rationale for classification.	Students reported confusion about how groups are categorised, for example, why a running club is considered a society. It is unclear whether this distinction affects how easy a group is to set up, what supports, or insurance obligations apply, or whether risk assessments differ. Providing clear, accessible definitions and explanations would support transparency, reduce student frustration, and ensure that groups are structured appropriately from the outset.

3c. Communications & Services

Commendations

3.5.1	MISU has established a wide range of communication channels, including email, social media, phone, and in-person services, ensuring that students can access timely information and support in a format that works for them. This multi-channel approach reflects strong operational planning and student-centred thinking.
3.5.2	There is a clear ethos of providing a supportive culture to students, evident in the structure of the Information and Support services. This demonstrates a commitment to student wellbeing.
3.5.3	Comprehensive policies, procedures, and operational documents (including finance processes, SOPs, and brand guidelines) demonstrate a commitment to good governance, consistency, and professionalism in MISU's service delivery.
3.5.4	Students value the approachability of MISU staff and the personal support they receive. This culture of genuine support strengthens students' trust in the Union
3.5.5	The MISU website provides a strong base of detailed information on student supports, services, and processes. This helps students navigate college life more confidently and independently.
3.5.6	Communication channels are inclusive and accessible, allowing students to engage through various means, including in-person, email, phone, and social media.
3.5.7	The clear guidelines for service delivery helps ensure that MISU services are consistently provided to a high standard contributing to reliability and professionalism.
3.5.8	MISU demonstrates a strong willingness to evolve and adapt its services in response to student feedback and changing needs. This responsiveness demonstrates a strong culture of listening and positions MISU well for future innovation.

Recommendations

	Recommendation	Rationale
3.6.1	Consider separating the communications function from the Info Services department while ensuring they remain closely aligned. This will allow communications to focus on outreach, engagement, and strategic messaging for the entire organisation.	Communications and Information should remain aligned but distinct to ensure each can fully meet its goals. Communication should support the work of MISU rather than be a standalone service.
3.6.2	Develop a comprehensive Communications and Engagement Strategy, shifting from a reactive model (focused on queries) to a proactive approach that uses communications to build engagement, awareness, and participation.	Communications are currently seen primarily as a service function. There's a major opportunity to position communications as a key driver of engagement, awareness, and participation.
3.6.3	Explore integrating MSL and the main website to address current capacity issues. Evaluate how systems like Shopify interact with MSL and ensure analytics are being captured and used effectively.	Improved platform integration would streamline services, reduce duplication, and support data-informed decision-making.
3.6.4	Improve integration between Information Services, Clubs and Societies	There is an opportunity to strengthen the integration between these teams to ensure students receive consistent messaging, are efficiently signposted, and have a more seamless student experience. It would also help raise awareness of C&S opportunities among students who may otherwise only interact with the Union through support services.
3.6.5	Strengthen MISU's capacity to gather, analyse, and apply student insights to inform service delivery, engagement, and strategic planning.	While MISU collects quantitative data such as the number of contacts or event attendees, there is an opportunity to develop more meaningful metrics that capture the relevance, quality, and outcomes of student interactions. Understanding the issues behind key data points, such as the nature of over 2,000 student support contacts, would enable MISU to better tailor services and communications to student needs. A more strategic approach to gathering student insights, including qualitative feedback, trend analysis, and outcome

		tracking, would support more responsive service design, stronger impact reporting, and better decision-making across the organisation.
3.6.6	Reassess the role of the shop and commercial services within the organisation. Determine whether these services are central to the mission and, if so, how they can be optimised for greater student engagement and revenue generation. Explore whether these services are still necessary or should be scaled back.	The value of the commercial services to the organisation's mission is unclear. Clarifying this will support better decision-making about the future of commercial services at MISU. Whilst students value the ability to purchase goods on campus, whether MISU or MIC should be providing this service needs to be explored.
3.6.7	Develop a more detailed brand pack that defines tone, language, personality, and key messaging pillars. This will help create a more consistent and impactful communications approach across all platforms.	While brand guidelines currently exist, they function more as a set of rules rather than a strategic tool. A more comprehensive brand pack would support consistency in MISU's voice and visual identity, ensure alignment across teams and channels, and strengthen the Union's presence and recognition among students. It would also help guide new staff and officers in communicating effectively on behalf of the organisation.
3.6.8	Formalise a relationship between MISU and MIC's Strategic Communications & Marketing Office to showcase the breadth of student life and student-led activity.	Students see MIC highlighting student achievement in the Sports domain but not on other student-led activity. A coordinated communications effort can enhance visibility, celebrate wider student achievement beyond sport, and build institutional pride amongst students.
3.6.9	Develop a strategy for communicating the work of the officer team and demonstrating the value of student representation.	Students report limited visibility around the work and impact of their elected representatives. Clear, consistent communication can enhance trust and participation in student democracy.
3.6.10	Launch targeted campaigns that highlight the benefits and value provided by MISU, increasing awareness and encouraging student engagement with the Union's offerings.	There remains a gap in awareness about the Union's services and their value—tailored campaigns can improve engagement and visibility.

3.6.11	Consider contracting out specific elements of communications (e.g., graphic design or content creation) to free up internal capacity for strategic priorities.	Outsourcing routine tasks could help the communications function focus on higher-value activities.
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4. Environment and Facilities

Commendations

4.1.1	Modern and well-designed, signposted MISU offices and facilities available on campus in Limerick, for example, common spaces, are well used by the student body.
4.1.2	Additional space requirements being recognised by the college – addition of the bank space to MISU as an example and plans for development in Limerick and Thurles outlined by the College.
4.1.3	Accessible campus with MISU Officers easily available to students and college.
4.1.4	The college has significant estate development plans to enhance the student experience on the campus, recognising this is an issue in terms of engagement and student experience.
4.1.5	Close working relationship between students and college hopefully lends itself to forward planning for increased student life /engagement spaces on campus, i.e. new library.
4.1.6	An Siopa's operational and financial sustainability issues are recognised by MISU and College.
4.1.7	Visibility of the Info desk near MISU is a positive for students and, indeed, visitors to campus.

Recommendations

	Recommendation	Rationale
4.2.1	Identify key existing facilities that can be made more accessible to the MISU and students on both campuses.	To improve access, enhance engagement with the campus generally and to support clubs and societies to develop.
4.2.2	Review usage of the Sports facilities on campus to ensure maximum usage that is also inclusive and potentially income-generating for the MISU and/or college	Excellent sports facilities on campus but difficult to access. Potential for much enhanced multi-functional use and increased engagement from a diverse pool of students. Feedback from staff and students indicates that GAA is given priority.
4.2.3	Ensure ongoing student voice is included in the future proofing/planning for estates and campus development.	Ensure students are involved in planning for new and refurbished campus spaces. There is strong demand for more informal, inclusive social spaces that support day-to-day campus life and foster community.
4.2.4	Full review of the long-term financial sustainability of An Siopa as a viable social enterprise.	Conduct a full review of An Siopa's financial and operational model in 2025 to determine its long-term viability. The shop's continued losses pose a risk to MISU's overall sustainability and divert significant organisational energy.

4.2.5	Review the income generation potential of spaces available to the MISU-managed spaces, such as An Siopa.	MISU-managed spaces have untapped potential to generate income and strengthen student engagement, particularly during underutilised times such as early mornings and evenings. Enhanced activity would encourage increased connection to the college. It could also enhance feelings of safety on campus.
4.2.6	Develop a campus-wide space management plan that incorporates the operational and storage needs of MISU services, including Clubs and Societies and An Siopa.	As campus development progresses, it is vital that the operational and storage requirements of MISU services, including Clubs and Societies and An Siopa, are proactively considered. Allocating appropriate storage and activity space will support sustainable growth in student engagement and ensure MISU can continue delivering high-quality services across both campuses.
4.2.7	Develop an online booking system for facilities that increases accessibility to key facilities for students.	Effective, transparent and open use of campus facilities would benefit MISU, all students and the college.

5. Organisation and Management

Commendations

5.1.1	Positive culture within the MISU with good working relationships evident between the staff and officer team.
5.1.2	Partnership working between college and MISU provides many positive opportunities for MISU to engage strategically with MIC into the future.
5.1.3	Quality of presentation by the student officers was very high, with a strong awareness of the organisational realities of their role – important critical analysis by officers of how existing structures can hamper their ability to deliver on the core mission of MISU.
5.1.4	Culture of open and regular communication channels between the senior management team of the college and MISU staff and officers.
5.1.5	Feedback from Advisory Board members on the high quality of documentation and reporting from the General Manager. Acknowledgement of the level of experience developed within MISU over time.

Recommendations

	Recommendation	Rationale
5.2.1	There is an opportunity for MISU to plan a significant organisational restructure as part of the upcoming strategic planning process. Review permanent staff structures to ensure alignment with future needs of the MISU - this may need to be done in parallel with the operational/financial sustainability review of An Siopa.	The organisational goal and mission need to be reviewed as part of the next strategic plan. Opportunity to query the importance of the “commercial” arm of MISU. Is this best served by being managed directly by the college? No student employment opportunities currently within the existing business model.
5.2.2	There is an opportunity for MISU to review key officer roles to ensure alignment with the mission and vision of the MISU into the future and to enhance representation generally.	Reduce any duplication and ensure there are resources to support key areas such as student engagement and representation. And/or Supporting access to facilities on campus.
5.2.3	Review and streamline the number of College committees attended by MISU officers, exploring delegation to other student representatives where appropriate to refocus officer capacity on meaningful engagement and representation.	The current volume of committee commitments limits officers’ capacity to engage directly with the wider student body. Delegating participation to trained student representatives, where appropriate, could free up officer time for strategic advocacy and leadership. This should be accompanied by a review of the overall class rep structure to explore alternative models of engagement that prioritise authentic student voice over mere presence in formal structures. Meaningful student voice more important than just a seat at lots of tables.

5.2.4	MISU should advocate strongly for a key point of contact for accessible facilities and for the development of a senior management role within MIC, such as “Active Campus Director” (possibly wider than a Sports role - danger this could be dominated by one sport for example), at senior management level in the college to work with MISU on increasing student engagement and levels of activity on campus.	MISU has limited access to key facilities on site to run activities and support student engagement. Gatekeeping of some facilities for sport only (lots of feedback about GAA consistently getting priority), a limited number of activities. This is not good use of college assets and blocks a more diverse engagement generally on campus.
5.2.5	Conduct a review of An Siopa’s operations and staffing levels to ensure financial sustainability, with a focus on eliminating ongoing losses. Engage the College proactively in evaluating the long-term viability of the service.	An Siopa has incurred repeated losses, placing strain on MISU’s limited resources. A thorough operational and financial review is needed to assess whether the current model is sustainable. As the service operates within a shared campus environment, proactive collaboration with the College is essential to determine its future role and value in supporting student needs.
5.2.6	Develop a new permanent role of “Student Officer Support Coordinator” to support the student representation system and provide line management functions for all officers.	Remove HR risk and free up the President to focus on student engagement work.
5.2.7	Review the sustainability of MISU’s management structure to ensure effective succession planning and continuity of organisational knowledge.	Risk of experienced staff moving to new roles and institutional knowledge lost. Annual work plans for key roles should be saved and available for future hires if/as required.

Annex 1: Peer Review Group Members

Sinéad Daly (Chair)	Chief Executive Officer University of West Scotland Students' Union
Podge Sheehan	Head of Student Engagement & Leadership Dublin City University Student Life
Jennifer Moroney-Ward	Chief Executive Officer Paul Partnership, Limerick

Annex 2: Schedule of Meetings with Stakeholders

Monday 7th April 2025

MISU General Manager

MISU Senior Management

- MISU Clubs & Societies Coordinator
- MISU Communications & Services Coordinator

MISU Staff

- Senior Administrator, Communications & Services
- Representation & Services Administrator
- Finance Administrator

MIC Vice-President Administration & Finance

MISU Full-Time Officers & Paid Part-Time Officers

- MISU President
- MISU Vice-President Student Experience & Wellbeing
- MISU Thurles Officer
- MISU Postgraduate Officer

MISU Part-Time Officers

- MISU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer
- MISU Welfare Officer
- MISU An tOifigeach Gaeilge (Irish Language Officer)

Tuesday 8th April

MISU Management Advisory Board Chair & Member

Tour of MIC & MISU Facilities

MIC Director of Estates & Sustainability

MISU Clubs & Societies Committee Members

Members of MISU Clubs & Societies

MISU Commercial Services Board Chair

MIC Vice-President of Governance & Strategy

MIC Academic Staff & Directors

- Assistant Dean of Arts
- Assistant Dean of Education
- Graduate School Director
- Director of EDII

MISU Class Reps & Other Students