



Ollscoil na hÉireann
National University of Ireland

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report



QOI REVIEW

CINNTE 

Message from the NUI Chancellor

The National University of Ireland (NUI) has always occupied a unique space in the Irish higher education landscape as a federal university and a national institution. The CINNTE review of NUI, a non-provider, will likely be an unusual one, even for seasoned reviewers. NUI is, notably, both the name of the federation and the name of the administration supporting the federation.



In preparing for the review, the self-evaluation team and the staff of the NUI Administration fully embraced the opportunity to examine quality processes, operations and governance arrangements. Development of this Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) involved consultation with a diverse range of stakeholders and thorough reflection by the staff across all units of the NUI Administration.

The ISER process highlighted areas for improvement that were already on NUI's agenda but also provided an opportunity to rethink how the NUI Administration operates and future strategic directions for the NUI Federation on a broader scale than is possible in day-to-day monitoring and review of operational processes.

The CINNTE review coincides with the development of NUI's next strategic plan (2023-2027), and these activities have influenced each other in a productive way. Many planned actions identified in this ISER will feature in the next strategic plan.

Though NUI has evolved a great deal since 1908, the value placed on academic achievement and the contribution of higher education to Irish society has remained a constant. We are proud of the work done during the ISER development process to ensure we remain an effective and valuable institution in an ever-changing Ireland.

We look forward to engaging with the Review Team and benefiting from their experience, expertise and perspectives to strengthen our plans for improving the quality of our processes and operations.

I would like to express my thanks to the stakeholders – NUI graduates, colleagues in member institutions, members of Senate – who gave their time and shared their views to support the enhancement of NUI's governance, quality assurance and the quality of our operations more generally. I am especially grateful to the staff of the NUI Administration for their commitment to making this a meaningful process.

Dr Maurice Manning

Chancellor

National University of Ireland

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Key Source Materials

NUI Materials

NUI's website: www.nui.ie

[NUI Strategic Plan 2014-17](#)

[NUI Strategic Plan 2018-22](#)

NUI Regulations, Policies, Procedures and Guidelines (RPPG):

- ▶ [Overarching NUI policy](#) for quality assurance and enhancement (2017)
- ▶ [Recognised college status](#) guidelines for applying (2018)
- ▶ [Approval of QA in the recognised colleges](#) policy and procedures (2017)
- ▶ [Institutional review](#) of recognised colleges that are linked providers guidelines (2020)
- ▶ [QA relationship between NUI and RCSI](#) (2020)
- ▶ [Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct](#) (2013; under review)
- ▶ [Recognition of prior learning guidelines](#) (2013; review on hold)
- ▶ [Usage of titles of degrees and other qualifications](#) policy (2020)
- ▶ [Approval of taught programmes](#) regulations and procedures (2020)
- ▶ [Approval of research degrees](#) policy (2021)
- ▶ [Transitioning to permanent online delivery](#) interim protocol (2022)
- ▶ [Collaborative and transnational provision](#) guidelines (2013; review on hold)
- ▶ [Periodic external review of programmes](#) guidelines (2019)
- ▶ [Higher doctorate degrees](#) regulations (2021)
- ▶ [Extern Examiners for taught programmes in the constituent universities](#) policy (2019)
- ▶ [Extern Examiners for taught programmes in the recognised colleges](#) regulations (2019)
- ▶ [Data Protection Policy](#) (2018)
- ▶ [Matriculation regulations](#) (minimum entry requirements) (2022)

[Code of Conduct for Members of the Senate](#) of the National University of Ireland

[Code of Conduct for Employees](#) of the National University of Ireland

NUI ICT Security Policy 2022 – available on request

Key Legislation and Guideline Documents

ESG	ENQA, ESU, EUA & EURASHE (2015) <i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area</i> . Brussels.
QAG1	QQI (2016) <i>Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines</i> . Dublin.
QAG2	QQI (2016) <i>Sector-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines</i> . Dublin.
IUA	Charter for Irish Universities 2019
1908	Irish Universities Act, 1908
1997	Universities Act, 1997
2012	Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012

Glossary of Terms, Abbreviations and Acronyms

NUI Member Institutions

Abbreviation	University	NUI Status
MU	Maynooth University	CU
UCC	University College Cork	CU
UCD	University College Dublin	CU
–	Ollscoil na Gaillimhe-University of Galway	CU
IPA	Institute of Public Administration	LP-RC
RCSI	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, University of Medicine and Health Sciences	DAB-RC

General

Acronym	
AQR	Annual Quality Report (formerly the Annual Institutional Quality Report, AIQR)
CAO	Central Applications Office
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CO	CINNTE Objective
DAB	Designated awarding body
DAB-RC	A recognised college that is also a designated awarding body
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science
DOE	Department of Education
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
EU	European Union
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HASR	Head of Academic Services and Registry
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEI	Higher education institution
HFA	Head of Finance and Administration
HICT	Head of Information and Communications Technology
HRPCC	Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct (<i>NUI publication</i>)
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEM	International Education Mark

Acronym	
IoB	Institute of Banking
IR	Institutional review
IRC	Institutional Review Coordinator
ISER	Institutional Self-Evaluation Report
IUA	Irish Universities Association
LP	Linked provider
LP-RC	A recognised college that is also a linked provider
MAA	Manager of Academic Affairs
Matric	Matriculation
NDA	National Disability Authority
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NStEP	National Student Engagement Programme
NCAD	National College of Art and Design
NUI	National University of Ireland
p.a.	per annum
PRG	Peer review group
QA	Quality assurance
QAE	Quality assurance and enhancement
QAG1	Quality Assurance Guidelines 1 (QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines)
QAG2	Quality Assurance Guidelines 2 (QQI Sector-Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines)
QE	Quality enhancement
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RC	Recognised college
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
SAR	Self-Assessment Report
SET	Self-Evaluation Team
SP	Strategic Plan
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
UK	United Kingdom
UL	University of Limerick
QIP	Quality improvement plan

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report

1

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Context

Key dates in NUI history

Establishment of Queen's University (QUB, QUC, QUG)

Establishment of Catholic University of Ireland (cannot award degrees)

1845-1854

University Education (Ireland) Act; Royal University formed

Catholic University reforms under name University College Dublin

1879-1882

Irish Universities Act, establishes NUI with three constituent colleges established by charter (UCC, UCD, UCG)

QUB becomes a separate university

1908

1.1 Understanding the National University of Ireland

The National University of Ireland (NUI) is a federal university comprising the largest element in the Irish higher education system with four constituent universities (CUs), two recognised colleges (RCs) and associated institutions. NUI is a designated awarding body (DAB) but not a provider of education, though it does directly award higher doctorate degrees.

NUI is both the name of the federation and the central organisation (NUI Administration) that supports the work of the federation.

NUI was founded in 1908 but has existed in other forms for almost [170 years](#), with each iteration reflecting the historicopolitical context prevailing in Ireland. NUI has also had different legal statuses during its existence; originally having a more direct role in the business of the member institutions, NUI now provides centralised services for the autonomous CUs.¹

NUI has had a significant role in Irish public life, and prominent Irish figures have been involved in NUI. The first (appointed) Chancellor of the University was Archbishop William J Walsh. After his death the first election of a chancellor took place and, unopposed, Éamon de Valera became Chancellor.² The chancellorship was subsequently held by Dr TK Whitaker, a former distinguished senior civil servant, Dr Garret FitzGerald, a former Taoiseach, and is currently held by Dr Maurice Manning, an academic historian, former parliamentarian and long-serving member of NUI Senate.

1 The term 'member institutions' refers to all types of institutions that are members of the federation whether direct (e.g. constituent university) or indirect (linked provider of a constituent university). Constituent universities are those institutions that, literally, constitute the federal university. Recognised colleges were traditionally educational institutions without awarding powers of their own but with quality standards on par with the federation. However, NUI now has an RC that has evolved into a DAB and gained the legal status of university.

2 McCartney, D (1983) *The National University of Ireland & Éamon de Valera*. Dublin: University Press of Ireland.



NUI in Contemporary Times

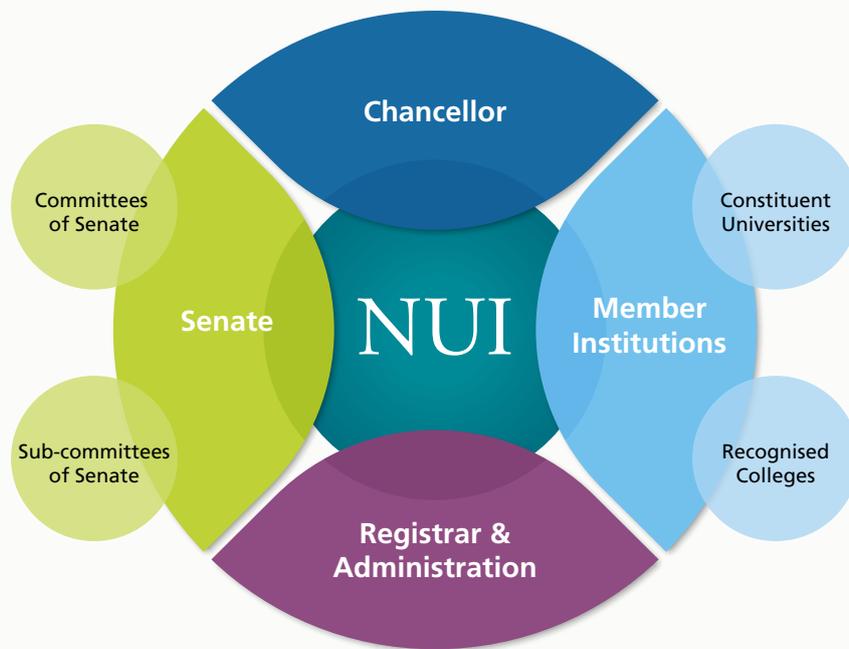


Figure 1: The National University of Ireland

The legal status of NUI is determined by law. [The Universities Act, 1997](#) (hereafter 'the 1997 Act') redefined the role of the University, giving autonomy to constituent institutions. It reconstituted the Senate, the governing body of NUI, with a membership of thirty-eight. The 1997 Act also reconstituted the three 'constituent colleges' and the recognised college (St Patrick's College, Maynooth), as constituent *universities*.

The [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#) (hereafter ‘the 2012 Act’) defines NUI as a DAB. As such, the 2012 Act requires NUI to establish quality assurance (QA) arrangements in respect of ‘linked providers’ that deliver educational programmes leading to awards of NUI. The Act also provides for periodic review of the University’s QA procedures by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). This legislative change brought NUI into QQI’s institutional review process for the first time.

Under the 1997 Act, the Senate of NUI has functions and responsibilities in relation to the following:

- ▶ determining basic matriculation requirements;
- ▶ reviewing the content and teaching of courses;
- ▶ appointing external examiners;
- ▶ awarding degrees and other qualifications.

NUI has further statutory functions relating to Seanad Éireann elections – [Bunreacht na hÉireann](#), Article 18(4) and the [Seanad Electoral \(University Members\) Act, 1937](#), as amended, identify NUI as a constituency for Seanad Éireann. NUI maintains and publishes this register. In addition, NUI administers the Seanad Éireann elections for the NUI constituency.

NUI has functions beyond those prescribed by statute. The primary purpose of NUI is to serve and promote the interests of its member institutions. The NUI Administration’s activities, in fulfilment of this purpose, are determined by three things:

1. Statute
2. Senate (and Senate Committee) initiatives and projects (operational and strategic)
3. Strategic Plan

The core ‘business’ activities of NUI reflect the primary purpose of serving and promoting the interests of the member institutions:

- ▶ Quality Assurance – for RCs
- ▶ Matriculation exemption processing – for prospective NUI students
- ▶ **Parchment production** – for conferring ceremonies (and, ultimately, NUI graduates)
- ▶ **Qualification verification services** – for graduates
- ▶ **Seanad Éireann register** – for graduates (and national government)
- ▶ **Awards** – for students, graduates and scholars
- ▶ Academic events and publications – for the NUI community and the public

Not all of these activities come within the scope of the CINNTE review (see Section 1.3) but some of them (in bold above) involve the storage and processing of personal identifiable information. For this reason, they are included in the review.

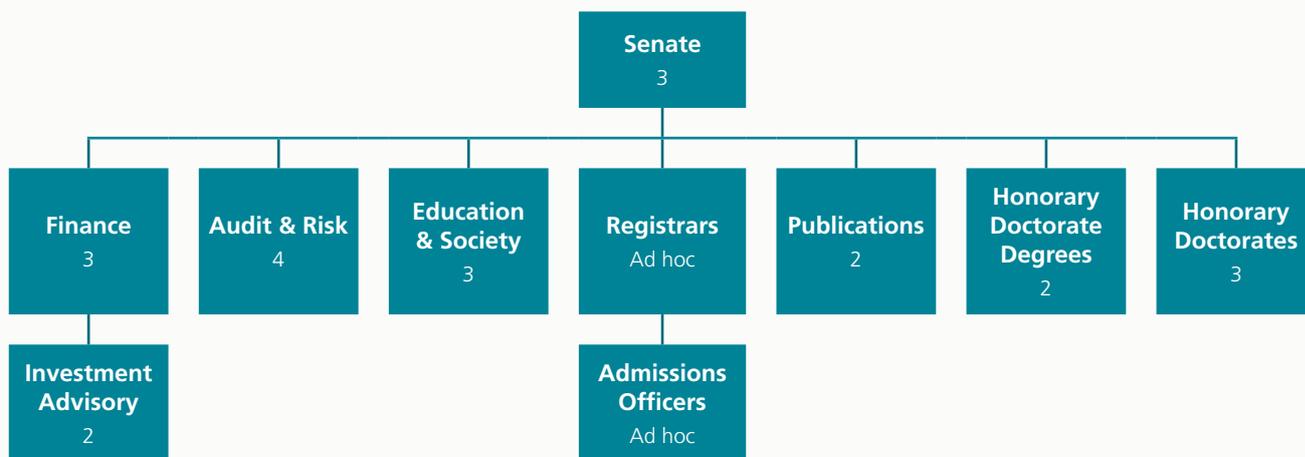
1.2 NUI Governance

NUI currently comprises four CUs, two RCs and five linked providers of a CU. Each institution within the NUI federation has its own governing authority; the overall governing body being the NUI Senate, headed by the Chancellor, with a membership of thirty-eight:

- ▶ **Chancellor**³
- ▶ **Chief Officers** of the Constituent Universities⁴
- ▶ **Registrar** of NUI
- ▶ Four members nominated by **Government**
- ▶ Four persons elected by each of the **CUs**⁵ (for a total of 16 members)
- ▶ Eight members elected by **Convocation**⁶
- ▶ Four **co-opted** members

Senate has a number of committees and sub-committees, which meet on a regular, or semi-regular, basis annually:

Figure 2: NUI Senate structure and number of meetings annually



3 The Chancellor is the head and chief officer of the University. The Chancellor holds office during his/her life or until his/her resignation.

4 These are the four presidents of the CUs. The Vice-Chancellor is the chief executive officer of the University. In 1914, the Senate decided that the President of each of the Constituent Colleges should be elected to the position of Vice-Chancellor, in rotation, and that the other presidents would be Pro-Vice-Chancellors. A Pro-Vice-Chancellor may act as Vice-Chancellor during a vacancy in that office and may act for the Vice-Chancellor during his/her absence.

5 While the governing authorities of the CUs have the power to elect people from outside the governing authority, they typically elect from within the governing authority. This generally includes academics and professional services staff.

6 Under the provisions of the original Charter, Convocation of the National University of Ireland consists of the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, the Members of Senate, the Professors and Lecturers and the Graduates of the University. Convocation has the following powers:

- To elect a person to be Chancellor of the University in succession to the present or any subsequent Chancellor
- To elect its own Chairperson, who shall, in the absence of the Chancellor, be entitled to preside at its meetings
- To elect eight of its own members as its representatives in the Senate
- To discuss and pronounce an opinion on any matter whatsoever relating to the University, including any matters referred to it by the Senate
- To make from time-to-time Regulations for governing its proceedings, subject to the provisions of the Charter and of the Statutes, and to the Regulations of the University
- To make representations to the Senate on any matter affecting the University.

Committee	Main Function
Finance Committee	Is an essential governance and compliance body for NUI. The Committee ensures that resources are allocated in a manner that best supports strategic commitments and oversees preparation of the annual accounts for audit. Annual financial statements are prepared for the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC). The Investment Advisory Committee (IAC) is an advisory sub-committee of the Finance Committee with external experts.
Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)	Maintains and monitors NUI's risk register and prioritises actions and schedules reviews of business units and activities. ARC recommends approval by Senate of the annual financial statements once it confirms they have been approved by independent auditors and the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG).
Education and Society Committee (ESC)	Guides NUI regarding its discursive role and contribution to civic society. ESC commissions research and supports education-related public engagement activities and publications.
Publications Committee	Advises on NUI publications activity and evaluates applications for the NUI Grant towards Scholarly Publication.
Higher Doctorate Degrees Committee	Decides whether applicants be recommended to Senate for the award on the basis of international assessors' reports.
Honorary Doctorate Degrees Committee	Evaluates nominations and decides a shortlist to be presented to Senate each year.
Committee of Registrars of the NUI Constituent Universities (Registrars' Committee)	Discusses and provides advice to the NUI registrar on governance, quality and strategic matters.
Committee of Admissions Officers of the NUI Constituent Universities	Discusses and provides advice to the NUI Registrar on matriculation matters, ultimately reporting to the Registrars' Committee. ⁷

⁷ Further detail on the Senate Committees and Sub-Committees is provided in Appendix A.

1.3 Scope of the CINNTE Review

Since the 1997 Act, CUs have been autonomous. The CUs and RCSI are DABs in their own right and subject to their own CINNTE reviews. RCSI is not a linked provider but remains an RC (DAB-RC). NUI administers a number of QA processes for the RCs, including RCSI. These NUI processes come within the scope of NUI's CINNTE review, but RCSI's QA policies do not.⁸ Maintaining the distinction between these is important to this review process.

As a linked provider, NUI has statutory responsibility for the QA of the IPA. NUI recently carried out an independent institutional review of QA in the IPA. In its role as an awarding body, NUI has developed a suite of policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure QAE within the RCs that are also linked providers (LP-RC).

A Note on the Review Period

This CINNTE review is the first external review of NUI. As the current QQI series of reviews of HEIs, the CINNTE cycle, runs for a seven-year period, NUI decided to take 2015-present as its review period.

CINNTE Review of NUI Terms of Reference

NUI and QQI agreed the terms of reference for the review, published in January 2022.

This [document](#) notes (2022: 5) that

the scope of quality assurance procedures applicable to NUI as a designated awarding body [that is not a provider of education and training programmes] are more confined, focusing primarily on NUI's responsibilities for the external quality assurance of *recognised colleges which are linked providers* of NUI.

The scope of the CINNTE review of NUI is technically limited to 'the implementation and effectiveness of procedures established by NUI for the QA approval, monitoring, review and follow up of recognised colleges which are linked providers of NUI,' currently the IPA only.

NUI and QQI have agreed that the scope of a review of NUI should also take account of certain broader QA roles and functions of NUI. These include QA arrangements concerning RCs, which are not linked providers of NUI, and CUs. It should be noted again that the IPA is currently the only RC that is a linked provider (LP-RC) of the University. As a DAB in its own right, RCSI (DAB-RC) will undergo a separate CINNTE review. The QA arrangements of RCSI are **not** within the scope of NUI's review.

⁸ The unique quality assurance relationship between NUI and RCSI (a recognised college of NUI since 1977 but a designated awarding body since 2012 and a university since 2019) is elucidated in NUI (2020) [The Quality Assurance Relationship between the National University of Ireland and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland – University of Medicine and Health Science](#).

1.4 NUI's Vision and Mission

The review period spans two strategic plans. The 2014-2017 vision was 'to make a distinct contribution to HE that is valued by our member institutions and recognised by the sector as a whole'. Similarly, the 2018-2022 vision is 'to continue to be an integral part of the Irish HE system, contributing to its development, being an advocate for its advancement and supporting our members'.

NUI's ongoing mission is to support the Irish higher education sector at home and abroad, by serving the interests of its member institutions and their students and graduates.

NUI actively promotes, recognises and rewards academic distinction and scholarship from undergraduates to professional academics. It assures comparable, high academic standards for degrees and qualifications awarded by NUI. NUI undertakes activities to advance HE, and to contribute to the civic, cultural and intellectual life of Ireland. NUI has a particular commitment to supporting the Irish language and the rich and diverse culture of Ireland.

1.5 Strategic Plans during the Review Period

The strategic goals for the two recent plans are provided below, but the focus is on the 2018-22 plan. The Registrar, with the support of the NUI Administration, implements NUI's strategic plan (SP), which is developed collaboratively with input from all stakeholders and then approved by Senate.

Strategic Plan 2014-2017

[SP 2014-2017](#) identified four strategic goals:

1. Add value to the member institutions and demonstrate the value added
2. Capitalise on the strength of the NUI brand internationally and re-define the meaning of the brand nationally
3. Develop a discursive role and contribute to civic society
4. Promote scholars and scholarship

Strategic Plan 2018-2022

[SP 2018-2022](#) sets out five strategic goals, building on those of the previous plan:

1. Add demonstrable value to NUI's constituent universities, recognised colleges associated institutions
2. Support Irish higher education and advocate for its advancement at home and abroad
3. Develop and capitalise on the NUI brand nationally and internationally, for the benefit of members and the wider sector
4. Make a meaningful contribution to Irish civic society
5. Enhance NUI's staff skills-base and its enabling support structures

NUI's current SP is now in its concluding stages and, in conjunction with reflective work for the CINNTE review, the development of the next strategy is underway.

1.6 Development of the NUI ISER

NUI's Approach

In January 2022, NUI Registrar Dr Patrick O'Leary replaced the previous registrar, Dr Attracta Halpin, who had held office for seventeen years. A new Senate will be convened in November 2022 and SP 2023-2027 is in development. Other significant staff changes in the organisation have occurred since October 2021 and a reconfigured NUI team has embraced the CINNTE review process as an opportunity to reflect on existing strengths and make meaningful changes where appropriate. A frank and critically reflective approach has been communicated and adopted at all levels in the organisation from the outset.

The Self-Evaluation Team

With fewer than twenty people on staff, NUI must be agile but intensive projects – such as developing the ISER for the CINNTE review – place significant demands on limited resources. In early 2022, key roles in the organisation were vacant; the staff of the Registrar's Office (RO) were to lead the ISER preparations but staffing issues meant the team was stretched to capacity. Therefore, the majority of preparatory work was done by the Registrar and the Manager of Academic Affairs, who is also the institutional review coordinator (IRC). By mid-2022, all vacant positions had been filled and new staff had taken up office.

The core team (highlighted below) consists of the Registrar, the (new) Head of Academic Services and Registry (HASR) and the Manager of Academic Affairs (MAA), with staff of the RO playing a more central role once fully staffed and other members of staff with essential skills or institutional knowledge completing the self-evaluation team.

CINNTE Self-Evaluation Team (SET)
Dr Patrick O'Leary, Registrar (Chair)
Dr Sorcha Uí Chonnachtaigh, MAA (IRC)
Dr Kieran McGovern, HASR
Dr Emer Purcell, Publications Manager
Mr Cian Spillane, Manager of Registrar's Office
Ms Maura Tierney, Manager of Graduate Services
Ms Cora Lenihan, Registrar's Office
Ms Audraí O'Driscoll, Registrar's Office
Mr Eddie Smyth, ICT Unit

Challenges

Beyond the noted systemic and circumstantial issues, there were some operational challenges in preparing for NUI's first external review. In gathering data for the ISER, it became clear that there were QA processes taking place across the organisation by a small but dedicated staff, but these were often informal and not logged or reported centrally. Much institutional knowledge of the University's activities was held by individuals. From the outset, the need for consistent and formal data collection, monitoring and review in a number of areas was recognised as an area for improvement, both operationally and strategically, at an institutional level.⁹

The Process

The Registrar and MAA recognised the limited institutional knowledge in the key areas of the RO and the Academic Services unit and started by consulting widely with all staff in the organisation and with retired staff to identify important data for the ISER and to confirm key stakeholders.

The process was guided throughout by consultation with the NUI Advisory Panel¹⁰ who had experience of institutional reviews and working with NUI. The Registrar made regular updates on progress to NUI Senate and staff, soliciting comments and feedback at the same time.

9 Please note, Finance is one area that is consistently and formally monitored and reviewed, internally and externally.

10 Professor Jim Walsh (Maynooth University; NUI Senate), Professor Joe Brady (UCD; NUI Senate), Ms Sinéad O'Connor (Director of Quality, NUIG) and Ms Elizabeth Noonan (Director of Quality Enhancement, UCC). The panel was expanded to include student advisers in 2022: Michaela Waters (Maynooth University graduate), Kevin McStravock (former VP for Academic Affairs, USI), Stephanie Joyce (University of Galway and Maynooth University graduate) and Brenda Meira de Azevedo (NCI graduate).

Stage	Steps
Initial Planning Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Appointment of Advisory Panel ▶ Establishment of Self-Evaluation Team (SET) ▶ Consultation session on CINNTE Objectives with NUI Staff ▶ Internal survey of relevant documents (e.g. AQRs, Senate minutes, Committee documentation, QA documents) and data available (e.g. databases for services, benchmarking exercises, audit reports) ▶ Identification of key activities of NUI ▶ Mapping of statutory QQI guidelines and ESGs to NUI activities
Data-gathering Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Building a digital repository of QA documents ▶ Development of surveys, including internal consultation on questions ▶ Distribution of surveys to a variety of stakeholders ▶ Analysis and reflection on survey results by SET
Report Development Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identification of appropriate report structure ▶ Recruitment of student advisers (in partnership with NStEP) ▶ Distribution of structured chapters to relevant staff for input (including reflection on survey responses) ▶ Updates to Senate and NUI Staff meetings on progress ▶ IRC edits chapters
Revision and Rewriting Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review of draft chapters by other core members of the SET, and subsequently all staff ▶ Revise chapters ▶ Compilation of appendices ▶ Dissemination of full ISER draft with a diverse range of stakeholders and advisers for comments ▶ Presentation of full draft to Senate ▶ Revision of full draft based on Senate and stakeholder feedback

Due to the timing of CINNTE deadlines and NUI Senate's annual calendar, a draft of the ISER was presented to Senate prior to submission in November. This draft was noted on 15 September 2022, with feedback provided in person and by email.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report

2

CHAPTER 2

Managing and Governing Quality

2.1 Introduction

Individual institutions have the main responsibility for the quality of provision and the assurance of quality, NUI's role is in establishing a robust governance system for quality. NUI's main aim is to ensure the highest quality standards of education in the RCs, aligned with those of the CUs and compliant with relevant statutory provisions and benchmarked against national and international standards (e.g. QAG1 and ESG).

Who Manages and Governs Quality in NUI?

The Registrar has ultimate responsibility for QAE in NUI and delegates this to the Manager of Academic Affairs (MAA) with support from the Head of Academic Services and Registry (HASR). These three constitute the NUI Quality Team.

The MAA coordinates and implements QA processes (e.g. programme approval) and the NUI Quality team produces documents (e.g. QA policies) for review and approval by NUI Senate. This final stage in the process is the mechanism by which the CUs play a role in determining the quality standards of the federation.

2.2 Management and Governance of Quality

Background

It is in the realm of quality assurance, enhancement and governance that NUI's uniqueness in the HE sector comes to the fore. NUI acts as a marker of quality internationally without having significant influence on the teaching and learning cultures within the federation. Rather than setting the quality standards for individual institutions, the CUs set the general standards and govern quality across the federation through their positions on Senate. All institutions have a vested interest in maintaining a similarly high standard within their institutions.

- ▶ As the central organisation, NUI recognises that every graduate of its member institutions receives a parchment from NUI and it is with this document that graduates seek further education or employment opportunities, nationally and internationally. An NUI degree is a marker of a quality education, no matter the institution where the learning occurred.

NUI Senate is responsible for appointing extern examiners (EE) to CUs, on their recommendation. The administration of EE appointments is devolved to CUs, but NUI fully administers the EE system for RCs (RCSI and the IPA). Senate also has a remit in the approval of new programmes and amendments to programmes within the RCs.

The vast majority of NUI's QA documents are developed with the RCs in mind, and most of these aim to ensure the LP-RCs have QA procedures comparable to the CUs. NUI consults with the RCs in the development of relevant QA document prior to approval by Senate. The LP-RCs then align the development of their own institutional policies with NUI's guiding documents.

NUI's arrangements for the governance and management of quality are guided by statutory and international guidelines: [QAG1](#) guideline 2.1 (governance and management of quality), [QAG2](#) guideline 5.2 (approving the QA procedures of linked providers) and [ESG](#) 1.1 concerning policy for QA partially concerns governance and approval of policy in this area.

In terms of NUI activity, the RCs, represented by senior staff in steering committee meetings with the NUI Quality team are the main stakeholders.

Overview of NUI QA Responsibilities

Activity	Member Institution	Oversight Pathway
Extern Examiner appointments	CUs, DAB-RCs, LP-RCs	Registrar's Office (and MAA) ▶ Senate
Extern Examiner administration	DAB-RCs, LP-RCs	RO and MAA
Programme approval (and amendments)	DAB-RCs, LP-RCs	MAA ▶ Registrar ▶ Senate
External programme review	DAB-RCs, LP-RCs	MAA ▶ Registrar ▶ Senate
Institutional review of QA effectiveness	LP-RCs	External Panel (coordinated by MAA) ▶ Registrar ▶ Senate
Review of QA policies and procedures for prospective RC	(potential RC)	CU (coordinated by MAA) ▶ Senate

Benchmarks

It is difficult to make comparisons between NUI and other institutions; there are federal university systems in the US (such as the University of California), but not federal universities. Perhaps the closest comparable institution is the University of London, though that institution has a more direct interaction with teaching and learning activities than NUI, specifically in the provision of distance learning education.

Quality and the NUI Strategic Plan

NUI has one QA-specific [strategic goal](#):

- ▶ Goal 1: To add demonstrable value to NUI's constituent universities, recognised colleges and associated institutions

The NUI Quality team has referenced SP Goal 3, Objective 1, 'ensure recognition of the NUI brand in Ireland and internationally as a mark of the highest academic quality standards,' in revising existing QA documents and developing new policies and procedures during the review period. For example, in 2020 NUI published *Regulations, Procedures and Guidelines for the approval of New Programmes and Changes to Existing Programmes in the Recognised Colleges*.

In order to keep NUI policies relevant, the NUI Quality team attends webinars by quality agencies and university associations and is actively engaged with the QQI and the IUA (IUA Registrars' Committee; IUA Quality Committee; IUA Quality Officers Group). Recently NUI was involved in the IUA Working Group on Non-major Awards and provided feedback on a number of QQI consultations, e.g. the International Education Mark (IEM).

Management & Governance of Quality and the CINNTE Objectives

The first two parts of the tripartite CINNTE Objective (CO) 2 apply here:

- i. To review the enhancement of quality by the institution through governance, policy, and procedures.
- ii. To review the congruence between quality assurance procedures and enhancements and the institution's own mission and goals or targets for quality.



Figure 3: NUI QA oversight and monitoring cycle for linked provider recognised colleges

NUI and the RCs

Senate governs NUI's activities as a DAB for the LP-RCs and a number of QA services that NUI provides to all RCs. QA matters in the RCs are reported to Senate three times a year. The registrars of the CUs provide advice and support on QA matters, either individually or via Committee, as required.¹¹ Operational business between NUI and its RCs is conducted through individual steering committees. For LP-RCs (IPA only), this committee is the key forum for deliberation and decision-making on QA matters, leading to formal decision-making by the Senate where warranted. Notes of steering committee meetings are reported at Senate.

The NUI Registrar chairs or co-chairs degree award examination boards for the following institutions: IPA, RCSI (Dublin), RCSI Bahrain, RCSI Perdana and RUMC (RCSI-UCD Malaysia Campus).¹² This gives the NUI a degree of input into QA mechanisms for these transnational education programmes. The NUI Registrar is also a member of the Senate of RUMC.

While learner experience is a core concern of NUI's QA framework, NUI does not have a direct relationship with learners. The development of the next strategic plan is an opportunity to rethink that and input student perspectives in NUI activities. While students are not involved in QAE activities of NUI, the NUI SET reached out to [NStEP](#) and recruited student advisers to review the ISER.

Data on Management and Governance of Quality: Findings and Reflections

For the NUI survey of Senate, 58 Senate current and former members were canvassed, with a 36% response rate.¹³ 90% of respondents understood the governance role of Senate. The overall quality of governance of NUI was rated at 95%. The RCs' steering committees were also surveyed, and five of the eight members responded. 100% were aware of the NUI's mission, goals, values and strategy and how these align with QA. Questions relating to the administration of quality matters were also 100% satisfactory.¹⁴ Four respondents indicated that the steering committee meetings capture the ongoing needs of their institution, with the other respondents indicating 'mostly'.

The feedback from the survey of Senate was positive. This would suggest that NUI is achieving what it needs to in the quality arena.

11 See Ch.1 with more information on Senate.

12 RCSI Bahrain and RCSI Perdana are extensions of the RCSI operation that apply the same Marks and Standards and are assessed in the same way. RUMC has its own procedures and Marks and Standards agreed between RUMC, RCSI, UCD and NUI.

13 NUI used MS forms to create survey questionnaires for a variety of stakeholders. The link to these online surveys were emailed to relevant stakeholders during May-August 2022. The number of questions depended on the activity concerned. Service-oriented surveys (in the areas of matriculation exemption, graduate document services and graduate record services) were relatively short (with between seven and twelve questions) while the survey of colleagues on the steering committees of the recognised colleges covered a number of activities and was considerably longer (51 questions). A report was created for each survey. These reports were considered by the relevant teams in NUI when reflecting on what worked well and what needs to be improved. Unless otherwise stated, the questions were developed by the MAA, and reviewed by the Registrar and relevant NUI staff. Please see Appendix J for further information on surveys.

14 Questions were drafted by Manager of Academic Affairs, checked by Registrar and fine-tuned against NUI objectives for the CINTE review and data identified as necessary for the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER).

The average rating for understanding of QA matters (3.81/5 or 'good') was slightly lower than respondents' understanding of NUI governance and strategy (4.14/5 and 4/5, or 'very good' respectively). More detailed questions revealed that the QA processes are not explained well and that induction for new members of Senate have been lacking. A clearer demarcation of where NUI acts more proactively within the federation is merited.

The feedback did reveal a new space for NUI to operate within, providing a forum for discussion on newer learning initiatives, such as [microcredentials](#) and 'stackability'. NUI could aid in establishing a commonality of approach within the federation.

In reflecting on the survey feedback from different stakeholders and in gathering material for the ISER, the Quality team considered how the processes worked internally and what mechanisms would make processes more efficient and facilitate better data for future reviews. The AQRs submitted to QQI each year show that NUI's Quality team regularly reviews the suite of QA documents and revises as appropriate based on external, sectoral changes and NUI strategic commitments. However, the internal mechanism for monitoring and review was limited. A rolling log with a schedule of systematic cyclical reviews is essential for the organisation's records, for continuity and future reviews (internal and external). This will further contribute to NUI's strategic goal of adding demonstrable value to member institutions.

2.3 NUI Recognised College Status

Background

NUI has had 13 RCs; some former RCs of NUI are now linked providers of CUs and so remain in the federation (e.g. NCAD was an NUI RC from 1996-2011 but has been a UCD RC since 2012).¹⁵ Since the 2012 Act introduced the term linked provider, new RCs are also linked providers of the DAB (NUI), that is they are not legally permitted to award their own degrees.¹⁶

During the review period, NUI had another RC, Uversity (2013-18), which ceased operating as an LP-RC due to funding difficulties.¹⁷ An independent review of the collaborative educational [programme](#) offered by Uversity was commissioned by NUI and published in 2018. No QA issues arose during or after the closure of the RC and none were identified in the review.

¹⁵ More detail is provided in Appendix E - NUI Recognised Colleges 1910-2022.

¹⁶ RCSI's status as a recognised college predated this change. RCSI also gained DAB status under the 2012 Act but remains an NUI RC.

¹⁷ [Uversity](#) now operates as a scholarship awarding body.

NUI Statute 86 (RCs generally) and the 2012 Act (with regard to LPs specifically) guide the policy and procedure for gaining RC status, and the governance of the RCs (see Appendix D). NUI has three functions in relation to the RC¹⁸ Oversight is discussed in this chapter on governance while service provision and support are discussed in Chapter 3.

Applying for RC status is a key QA process. The policy and procedure guidelines used by TCD and UL (for approving linked providers in their case) are largely similar, with minor differences in process due to their status as single institutions rather than federal universities.

The RCs (staff, students and graduates) are the main stakeholders, of course, but the CUs have an interest in the QA framework of the RCs, which are intended to be comparable. There are two current RCs:

1. RCSI has been a RC of NUI since 1977, a DAB since 2012 and a university since 2019.
2. The IPA was a RC of NUI from 2002-2011, a RC of UCD from 2011-2018 and returned to NUI in 2018. It is the only current linked provider (LP-RC) of NUI.

Recognised Colleges' Student Numbers

Between 2015 and 2020, there was a total of over 26,000 students in the RCs; both institutions saw an increase in student numbers during this period (33% for IPA and 15% for RCSI).

Table 1: Recognised Colleges' Student Numbers 2015/16-2019/20

Institution	2015-16	2016-17	2017-2018	2018-19	2019-2020
IPA	1,404	1,584	1,630	1,629	1,873
RCSI	3,419	3,486	3,550	3,780	3,923
Total	4,823	5,070	5,180	5,409	5,796

18 See NUI (2018) [Recognised Colleges of the NUI: Information for prospective applicants](#).

NUI Recognised College Status and the CINNTE Objectives

CO1 'encompasses the effectiveness of the procedures established by the institution for the assurance of the quality of collaborations, partnerships and overseas provision, including the procedures for the approval and review of linked providers' and applies to the process of applying for RC status in NUI.

NUI's quality governance cycle for LP-RCs, along with the relevant QA documents for each stage, is outlined in the figure below:

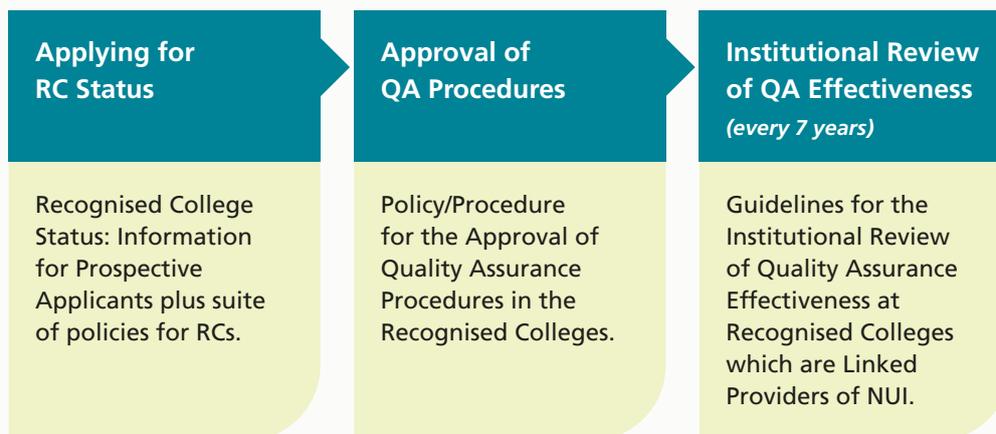


Figure 4: QA Process for applying for NUI recognised college status

Data on Recognised College Status: Findings and Reflections

In the survey of Senate, the majority who could comment found the process to be satisfactory, but a small minority indicated that this is an area for review. 100% of respondents found the QA documents and processes satisfactory. Responses indicate that Senate believes governance of quality in the RCs operates appropriately.

In the survey of colleagues in the RCs, all respondents were very clear on the mission, values and strategic goals of the NUI. All respondents found the working relationship with NUI to be very good or excellent; NUI staff were found to be approachable, helpful and supportive and the advice provided was identified as clear and applicable to their needs. The governance of the relationship via regular steering committee meetings continues to work very well in meeting the needs of the RCs. Colleagues in the RCs responded positively when asked whether the RPPG documents were effective, based on their own metrics for QA.

2.4 Conclusion

Management and governance of quality is generally operating well, and stakeholders are satisfied. Some refinement of quality policies and improved induction and regular briefings for members of Senate will facilitate easier decision-making on quality matters:

Proposed Actions

The aim of the Quality team is to ensure that everyone involved in the management and governance of quality can engage in processes to their full capacity.

Governance and Management of Quality

Regular and clear briefings regarding NUI governance structures and Senate's role in quality matters (through Senate induction and subsequently during Senate, or Senate committee, meetings).

- ▶ Implement a cyclical review of QA policies and guidance.
- ▶ Explore the possibility of establishing a forum or working group for quality activities in discrete areas of common interest.

Applying for RC Status

- ▶ Review the guidance on applying for RC status on an as needed basis, in consultation with Senate.
- ▶ Improve the information provided to members of Senate regarding the process of applying for RC status.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report

3

CHAPTER 3

Assuring Quality in the Recognised Colleges

3.1 Introduction

Almost all of NUI's QA documents relate to the RCs. The process that is regulated for the whole federation is that of extern examiner appointments. NUI effectively supports a number of QAE activities in the two RCs. NUI has most involvement with IPA's suite of QA policies and procedures because the IPA is also a linked provider. The relationship with RCSI is more complex; an NUI [document](#) provides detail on this.

3.2 NUI's Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

Background

There are two relevant objectives falling under Goal 1 (add demonstrable value to NUI's CUs, RCs and associated institutions) of NUI's Strategic Plan:

- i. Continue to meet the needs of member institutions for shared services.
- ii. Ensure responsiveness to changing members' needs, through dialogue and feedback.

There are established mechanisms for meeting the needs of RCs for shared services, which are greater than those of the autonomous CUs. For example, NUI administers the process of extern examination for RCs and manages the approval of new programmes (see Section 3.3). The QA documents pertaining to these activities have been published by NUI and are reviewed as necessary.

NUI ensures responsiveness to the evolving needs of the RCs by holding regular steering committee meetings and through ongoing contact between the MAA and colleagues in the RCs.

NUI's [QAE policy](#) emphasises that the primary responsibility for quality lies with the LP-RCs themselves, guided by NUI as the DAB and in line with national policy and European best practice guidelines, where relevant.

In addition to the NUI Strategic Plan, the development of QA documents is guided by the ESGs, QAG1, QAG2 other QQI guidelines (as relevant), and sectoral developments discussed at meetings of the IUA. NUI consults the QA documents of benchmark institutions, such as Russell Group institutions in the UK, including University of London, another federal university. NUI is also cognisant of the QA frameworks in the CUs, to which the QA standards of the RCs must be comparable.

NUI reports on QA developments at each of the three statutory meetings of Senate and annually to QQI via the AQR.

NUI has 16 [regulations, policies, procedures and guidelines](#) (RPPG) documents that, directly or indirectly, relate to quality. Some concern the whole federation but the majority are for the RCs with a number that apply only to LP-RCs (see Appendix C):

- ▶ Overarching NUI [policy](#) for quality assurance and enhancement (2017)
- ▶ [Guidelines](#) for applying for NUI recognised college status (2018)
- ▶ [Policy and procedures](#) for the approval of QA in the recognised colleges (2017)

- ▶ [Guidelines](#) for institutional review of recognised colleges that are linked providers (2020)
- ▶ [QA relationship between NUI and RCSI](#) (2020)
- ▶ Human Rights Principles and [Code of Conduct](#) (2013; under review)
- ▶ [Guidelines](#) for the recognition of prior learning (2013; review on hold)
- ▶ [Policy](#) on usage of titles of degrees and other qualifications (2020)
- ▶ [Regulations](#) for the approval of taught programmes (2020)
- ▶ [Policy](#) for the approval of research degrees (2021)
- ▶ [Protocol](#) on transitioning to permanent online delivery (2022)
- ▶ [Guidelines](#) on collaborative and transnational provision (2013; review on hold)
- ▶ [Guidelines](#) on periodic review of programmes in RCs (2019)
- ▶ [Regulations](#) for higher doctorate degrees (2021)
- ▶ [Regulations](#) and guidelines for Extern Examiners for taught programmes in RCs (2019)
- ▶ [Guidelines](#) for Extern Examiners for taught programmes in constituent universities (2019)
- ▶ Regulations for Extern Examiners for research degrees in RCs (2022; at press)

The process for developing these documents varies (for example, the Human Rights Principles document was developed by an expert group) but most QA documents are developed in a consultative manner, and all are approved by Senate. For documents relating to QA in the RCs, the process is:

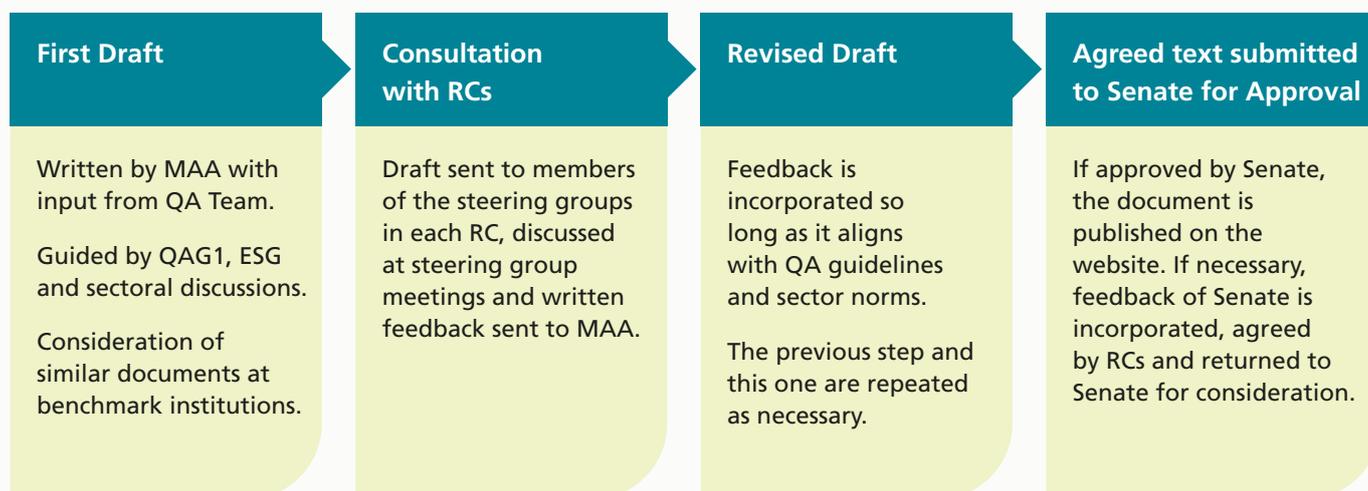


Figure 5: Development process for NUI QA documents

Revision to QA documents mirrors the above but also considers difficulties that arise in implementation. Quality documents that are not focused on the RCs, for example the guidelines on the appointment of extern examiners in the CUs, would replace the consultation with RCs with direct consultation with CU quality colleagues.

NUI's Documented Approach to QA and CINTE Objectives

CO1 is the most relevant here:

to review the effectiveness and implementation of the QA procedures of the institution through consideration of the procedures set out, primarily in the AIQR... [t]his objective also encompasses the effectiveness of the procedures established by the institution for the assurance of the quality of collaborations, partnerships and overseas provision, including the procedures for the approval and review of linked providers.

As a non-provider, the information provided in NUI's AQRs is limited. Some of the more recent AQRs outlined planned developments that were delayed due to COVID-19, and the institutional review of the IPA fell outside the reporting period of the most recent AQR.

Some of the documents relate to QE, therefore there is some overlap with CO2(i): to review the enhancement of quality by the institution through governance, policy, and procedures.

Recent Changes and Improvements

The recent complete change in personnel in the NUI Quality team has brought fresh perspectives to QAE activities in NUI. For example, an internal review log has been developed so that QA documents will be reviewed on an appropriate schedule rather than as necessary. The administration of extern examiners was previously handled by the RO, but this has been moved to the Academic Services unit, which handles the regular dialogues with the RCs, facilitating more efficient improvements in that area.

One of the significant additions to the suite of QA documents in recent years is the (2021) [Policy, Regulations and Procedures for the Approval of Research Degrees in the Recognised Colleges](#). Previously, the approval of research degrees was handled in the same way as taught programmes. Given the higher NFQ level of research degrees, a slightly different approach was deemed appropriate.

NUI also introduced an [interim protocol](#) in 2022 addressing the change to permanent online delivery of programmes, which became more pressing following the temporary change in delivery mode during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recently updated QA documents incorporate NUI's EDI statement, but some have yet to have this amendment made. The statement on EDI may be expanded in future to include broader social commitments as NUI more recently formalised a commitment to the UNSDGs in its [Code of Conduct for Employees](#) and its [Code of Conduct for Members of Senate](#) approved at a meeting of Senate in May 2022.

Data on NUI's Documented Approach to QA: Findings and Observations

As mentioned in Ch.2, 100% of respondents to the Senate survey found the QA processes and documents in the RCs to be satisfactory.

The survey of colleagues in the RCs confirmed there is a high level of trust in the quality of NUI standards and compliance with national and European guidelines. The average rating of the comprehensiveness of NUI's quality framework was 4.6 (out of 5), between 'very good' and 'excellent'. RC colleagues were satisfied with the clarity of language, the regularity of document revision, the accessibility and applicability of QA documents.

There was a stronger consensus on the effectiveness of QA documents in areas that directly involve NUI, such as approval of taught programmes, than on general areas of activity, such as guidance on public information and communication.

In addition to the surveys, the Quality team has reviewed systems and documents with external institutional review in mind, which is new for NUI. Small things, that are aligned with NUI's values, were not being done, e.g. publication of AQRs. There were other areas identified as being suitable for development (guidance on QE), while others have been on hold until sectoral consensus has been achieved (microcredentials, which in turn has put revision of the RPL policy on hold). Internal developments are also relevant here – the revised version of the *NUI's Human Rights Policy and Code of Practice* will influence the revision of NUI's guidance on collaborative and transnational provision.

3.3 Quality Assurance and Enhancement in the NUI Recognised Colleges

Introduction

The MAA manages the relationships with the RCs. The Quality team meets with the RCs at the regular steering committee meetings.

There are a number of ways that NUI supports and serves the RCs with respect to quality assurance and enhancement (QAE):

- ▶ Approval of extern examiners (this is done by Senate for all member institutions)
- ▶ Appointment and payment of extern examiners (LP- and DAB-RCs)
- ▶ Processing reports of extern examiners (LP- and DAB-RCs)
- ▶ Analysing and synthesising extern examiners' reports (all member institutions)
- ▶ Arranging for the review and approval of new programmes and changes to existing programmes (LP- and DAB-RCs)
- ▶ Coordinating periodic programme reviews (LP- and DAB-RCs)
- ▶ Coordinating institutional review of quality assurance effectiveness in LP-RCs
- ▶ Re-validation of quality assurance policies and procedures in the LP-RCs (approval of Senate following successful institutional review)

The procedures for the QAE activities listed above are set out in the relevant QA documents, which are developed with reference to QAG1, ESG, and good practice in the sector.

Assuring Quality in the NUI Recognised Colleges and the CINNTE Objectives

The second part of CO2 is the most relevant to NUI's QAE activities for the RCs:

- ▶ To review the congruency of quality assurance procedures and enhancements with the institution's own mission and goals or targets for quality.

Extern Examiners

The Universities Act 1997 (the 1997 Act) assigns statutory responsibility to NUI for the appointment of extern examiners across the federation. All members nominate their own externs. The CUs' nominations are presented to Senate for approval annually (in November). The CUs send extern examiner (EE) reports to NUI at the end of the examination cycle. This process is guided by the Senate [policy](#) document on extern examiners for taught programmes in the CUs. The involvement of NUI and the process for extern examiners in the RCs is governed by a separate Senate [policy](#) document.

In the case of the RCs, NUI carefully inspects the list of nominations to ensure EEs have not acted for the same institution in the recent past. The data on EEs are stored and managed through NUI's database.

Along with confirming no conflicts of interest exist, NUI also reviews RC EE reports, and any significant issues are flagged for action. The reports submitted by RC externs are sent by NUI to the RCs, for dissemination to the relevant teaching teams. This activity is now overseen by the MAA. As the MAA manages relationships with the RCs, oversight of a key service for the RCs by the MAA is more sensible. Small amendments to the extern examiner process by the MAA have created efficiencies for both parties, primarily allowing the process to become paperless.

In recent years, the RO has produced an analysis of major themes arising from EE reports as a service to members. For example, one report was generated focusing on medicine and health sciences for the three relevant CUs (UCC, UCD and University of Galway) and the relevant RC (RCSI). These reports are presented at Senate for consideration. However, the impact of the reports is currently unknown. To truly fulfil NUI's strategic goal of adding demonstrable value to member institutions, this exercise should include the reports for the RCs and perhaps be communicated to Registrars for onward discussion by local academic councils.

One further point to note is that NUI designs the EE report form for the RCs. The content of this form has not changed substantively in over 10 years. The matters to be covered in the report in terms of programme design, assessment and outcomes has not changed much and the form remains relatively comparable.

Reflections on the Administration of Extern Examiners

The survey of the RCs showed that the timings of the processes for appointment of externs is not ideal – nominees are approached in Springtime for the following academic year and go through the internal process of approval in May, too late to be submitted to NUI for approval by Senate at the early May meeting, which means they do not get approved until the next meeting in November, over six months after being first approached by the RCs. NUI will seek agreement to move the timing of the internal RC processes or/and a move in the May Senate meeting.

Another issue that the survey highlighted was that colleagues in the RCs were not clear what documents EEs received when appointed. NUI has now amended its communications to address this; each year after appointments have been made the key documents will be sent to professional colleagues in both RCs.

The low rate of return for EE reports was cited as an issue in the survey of RC colleagues. It has also arisen in steering committee meetings. RCSI and NUI have been exploring ways to improve the return of EE reports in 2022 and will continue to monitor and jointly review the matter.

The survey of EEs (64 respondents who had examined since 2015) showed that the quality of the relevant regulations, the comprehensiveness and clarity of the report form, responsiveness of the teaching teams to feedback, communication with NUI and timeliness of payments were all in the ‘very good’ to ‘excellent’ range. 89% of the respondents said the regulations for extern examining were, or were mostly, comparable to those in their own institutions. 9% said they were ‘somewhat’ comparable.

The macro-level analysis of themes arising from EE reports should include all member institutions.

EE reports are a valuable resource that can add to our QE, guiding improvement consistent with NUI’s and member institutions’ values. A perennial issue is closing the feedback loop and we will explore integrating space for a response from the programme team, which is standard practice in the UK. The addition of guiding questions on EDI covering learning experience and student achievement would benefit students and our institutions.

Approval of Academic Programmes

The approval, monitoring and review of academic programmes is a key element in the QA relationship with RCs. NUI supports the RCs in ensuring the quality of their provision. NUI therefore has the responsibility of managing the approval of all new programmes and amendments to programmes in the RCs.

The main quality document in this area is the (2020) *Regulations, Procedures and Guidelines for the approval of New Programmes and Changes to Existing Programmes in the Recognised Colleges*. In 2021, [regulations](#) pertaining to the approval of research degrees was introduced.

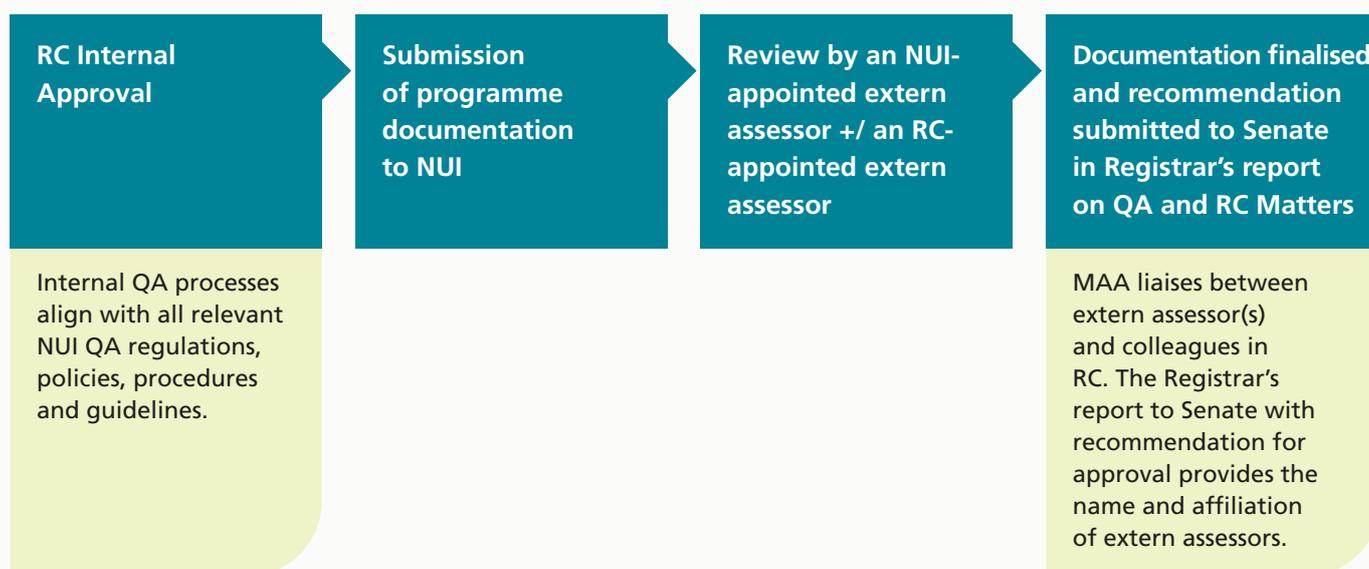


Figure 6: Process for programme approval

There is a separate process of approval for minor, supplemental and special purpose awards. In practice, minor awards are most often approved in the context of a related major award (as an exit award). The type of award determines how many extern assessors are required and whether NUI appoints them, or the RC appoints them directly. Regardless of whether the extern assessor is appointed by the RC or by NUI, the assessor's report must be submitted to NUI. If the programme leads to a major award on the NFQ, an external programme review, coordinated by NUI, will ordinarily be scheduled within the first five years.

RCs meaningfully engaged in QE processes will need to make changes to programmes. Minor changes need to be reviewed by an extern assessor but are only noted by Senate. Major changes need to be reviewed by an extern assessor and approved by Senate.

Reflections on the Programme Approval Process

As mentioned previously, colleagues in the RCs were surveyed on NUI QA processes, including programme approval, and these were found to be effective.

The NUI team noted that timeline conflicts lead to some pressures in approvals but is committed to engaging with RCs earlier to ensure that Senate approval is achieved in a reasonable fashion.

Periodic Programme Review

NUI's periodic programme review oversight role involves the following three core elements:

- i. ensuring that the LP-RC's periodic programme review policies and procedures are aligned with NUI's overall QA policies;
- ii. appointment of external expert(s) to programme review panels;
- iii. reporting on the outcome of periodic reviews to NUI Senate, to support the re-validation of programmes on a cyclical basis.

These are outlined in the relevant [guidelines](#), which apply to all programmes, including collaborative programmes.

It is in this area that NUI most emphasises the importance of QE. The LP-RC sets specific objectives for the 'point in time' review but the approach is always enhancement focused. NUI's *Guidelines* provide guidance on scope, frequency, and methodology of programmatic reviews and outlines the composition of the peer review group (PRG), which is a mix of subject specialists, internal and external stakeholders and NUI- and LP-RC-appointed reviewers. The report of the programme review is presented to Senate in consultation with the RC for revalidation of the programme(s) at the next meeting of Senate following submission of the report to NUI. Senate may:

- ▶ withhold revalidation pending further developments,
- ▶ approve revalidation subject to conditions being fulfilled,
- ▶ approve revalidation subject to amendments or changes to be implemented as soon as possible, or
- ▶ approve revalidation of the programme(s).

Periodic programme reviews in RCSI, NUI's DAB-RC, are somewhat different. The nature of the process, and NUI's involvement, is outlined in the [NUI-RCSI QA relationship document](#). The process is designed by RCSI, as appropriate for a DAB, but involves an NUI-appointed reviewer. The report of the review panel is noted by the governing body for all RCSI educational programmes leading to degree awards aligned to the Irish National Framework of Qualifications, the Medicine and Health Sciences Board (MHSB). Following this, it is presented to NUI Senate in support of a recommendation for revalidation of the programme.

CASE STUDY: Review of RCSI Bahrain's BSc Nursing: Programme review during a global pandemic	
CONTEXT:	The schedules for programmatic review in both RCs were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic but the issue was kept under review at each steering group meeting throughout. The BSc Nursing in RCSI Bahrain had been due for review but delayed by the pandemic. In April 2021, the Education and Training Quality Authority in Bahrain (BQA) were in a position to carry out their planned academic programme review (APR).
ACTION:	As it continued to be unclear when an RCSI programme review team could be convened, RCSI requested that the BQA's APR be, exceptionally, accepted in place of an RCSI programme review. RCSI and NUI conducted independent equivalency analyses of the report, which outlines the process, the four review 'standards' and 21 'indicators' applied, the findings and recommendations of the panel. The report was detailed and identified areas of good practice (e.g. supports for female staff, stakeholder engagement, informal learning opportunities) and areas where specific improvement would benefit the programme (e.g. extending the scope of benchmarking, increased staff time for scholarship, amendments to capstone course).
OUTCOME:	Both RCSI and NUI deemed the review to be on a par with NUI and RCSI programme reviews. The RCSI Bahrain BSc in Nursing will be recommended for revalidation at the next meeting of the NUI Senate in November 2022.
REFLECTION:	The thorough and engaged review found that the programme satisfied all four review 'standards'. Because of this and the exceptional context of a global pandemic, NUI accepted the BQA review as meeting the requirements for periodic programme review. It was also the view of the Quality team that, where possible, NUI should avoid duplication of work for member institutions. The condition that NUI QA standards are met remains and it is important to note that the review report in this instance was sufficiently detailed and the findings adequately balanced, that NUI could be assured the necessary standards were satisfied.

Reflections on Periodic Programme Review

The survey of colleagues in the RCs showed they found NUI's QA (RPPG) documents were effective for assuring quality in developing programmes of education and learning.

In reflecting on the experience of the RCSI Bahrain BSc in Nursing, the Quality Team noted that the Bahraini Directorate of Higher Education Reviews carries out such reviews on a regular basis thus involving the programme team in a second programmatic review (outside of COVID times). The Quality team is committed to maintaining NUI's high standards of quality but is also conscious of the administrative and operational burden involved in reviews of this type. In cases where NUI can ascertain that the requisite standards are met, it would be keen to avoid duplication of a review process. The Quality team is generally keen to maintain high standards while minimising bureaucratic burden.

Institutional Review

NUI's [institutional review guidelines](#) were informed by a number of QA guidance documents – national and European, statutory and voluntary – most notably QQI's (2019) [Statutory Guidelines for the Review of Linked Providers by the National University of Ireland](#).

In its reviews of LP-RCs, NUI is concerned primarily with how they assure the effectiveness of QA arrangements for educational programmes leading to qualifications placed on the NFQ and made by NUI in its capacity as a DAB, including research degrees. In conducting an institutional review of QA effectiveness in an LP-RC, NUI has the opportunity to demonstrate the full capacity of the University to 'quality assure quality assurance', which is its most significant QA function.

Institutional review of QA effectiveness (hereafter institutional review) reflects the QQI's process in many respects:

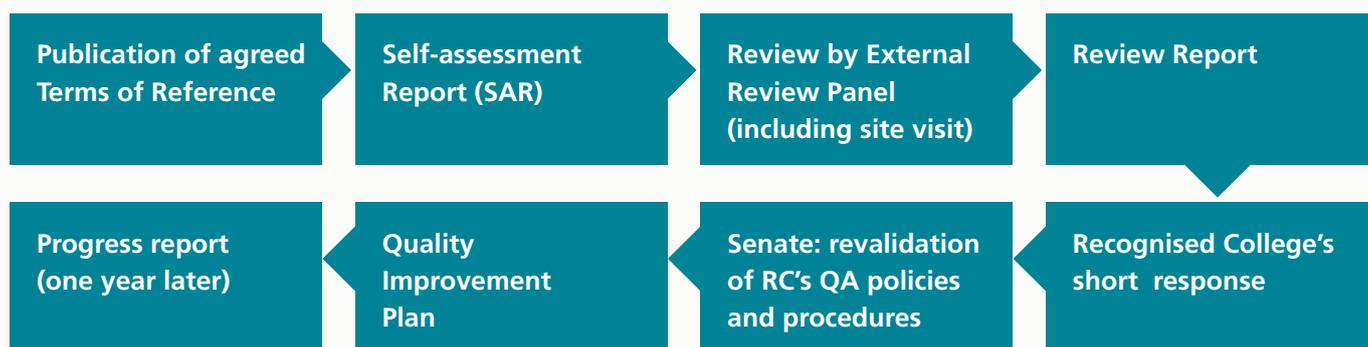


Figure 7: Institutional review process for LP-RCs

CASE STUDY: IPA Institutional Review**PROCESS:**

NUI's [institutional review guidelines](#) guided the process. The IPA and NUI remained in regular contact, with the NUI MAA acting as the NUI's designated liaison person. At meetings of the Steering Committee, the parties agreed formal terms of reference, panel composition and arrangements for the review and site visit.¹⁹ At these meetings, the IPA provided updates on related QA initiatives. The timeframe for the review was also agreed.

In December 2020, after consultation with the IPA, the NUI appointed a panel of reviewers to conduct the external review. In accordance with NUI's Guidelines, the panel was composed of peer reviewers who were primarily senior institutional leaders from comparable third-level academic institutions and from the leadership of external stakeholders such as public sector bodies.²⁰

In early 2021, it was clear the Covid-19 pandemic would require the review panel to conduct its site visit online. NUI agreed this arrangement with QQI.

Following the submission of the IPA's Self-Assessment Report in June 2021, NUI arranged for a virtual planning meeting in July 2021 between the Chairperson and Coordinating Reviewer and senior staff at the IPA. The group discussed arrangements for the main online site visit in September and any requests from the reviewers for additional information. Over the summer, the IPA, NUI and Review Panel identified relevant parties to be interviewed during the site visit. A timetable for the two-day visit was agreed.

The online site visit, hosted by NUI on MS Teams, necessitated a large amount of administrative organisation by NUI in conjunction with the IPA but the visit ran smoothly and feedback from all parties was positive.

The review report of the IPA showed that the RC satisfied the three agreed objectives. There were a number of positive commendations and recommendations for further enhancement. On the basis of the review report and IPA's response, IPA's QA procedures were revalidated by the NUI Senate in January 2022. NUI supported IPA in the development of their quality improvement plan (QIP). As required, the IPA submitted the QIP to NUI in April 2022. The QIP was reviewed and accepted by the NUI Registrar and the Chair of the Review Panel. IPA will provide a progress report to NUI, which will be presented to Senate, in 2023.

19 In 2020, the IPA and NUI discussed the Terms of Reference and scope of the review and the NUI set three agreed objectives:

1. To review the implementation of NUI-approved QA policies and procedures in the IPA.
2. To review how the IPA enhances quality through governance, policies, and procedures, with regard to its stated mission and quality targets.
3. To review the effectiveness and implementation of the IPA's procedures for student access, transfer, and progression.

20 The panel consisted of a senior academic in the field of public administration working internationally (Chairperson); a senior academic in the field of public administration from an Irish university (NUI federation rep); a chief executive from an international institute of public management (international rep); a former Secretary General of an Irish government department (stakeholder rep); a QA officer based in an Irish university (Co-ordinating Reviewer); and representative of students with experience of adult education and part-time learning.

CASE STUDY: IPA Institutional Review <i>(continued)</i>	
OUTCOME:	The positive report from the review panel was a good outcome for the IPA, which has worked systematically since 2014 to enhance QA procedures underpinning its blend of academic and practitioner-oriented education for public servants across all sectors of government – local and central – and at all levels from junior inductees to senior managers, policymakers and leaders.
REFLECTION:	<p>NUI had a strong and effective working relationship during the review process with good communication and collaboration where appropriate.</p> <p>The online site visits proved efficient, and the flexibility suited the IPA's stakeholder group and student demographic (public sector professionals working around the country).</p> <p>The IPA sought clarification from NUI about whether some issues during the site visit were in line with the TOR and whether some draft findings lay outside the agreed objectives. The process also raised questions about the procedures for developing and approving the QIP that were not quite covered by the NUI guidelines.</p>

Reflections on Institutional Review

NUI surveyed the senior management team in IPA and other members of the self-evaluation team in IPA on their experience of the institutional review. All respondents indicated they trusted the independence of the panel and felt supported by NUI. The most significant matter – satisfying the three agreed objectives – was confirmed in the review report. The NUI Quality team notes that, unlike the regulations on programme reviews, the regulations for institutional review do not stipulate what should happen if the NUI Registrar or the chair of the review panel is not willing to approve the QIP. The latter did not arise, but it is vital that such a possibility be addressed in the next version of the regulations. One respondent mentioned that there was not a lot of guidance on the QIP provided in the regulations, and the Quality team accepts that some expanded advice on the format and content of the QIP would be helpful. There was some lack of clarity regarding the scope of the review, which also needs to be addressed through guidelines and induction/training for the review panel.

3.4 Conclusion

A recent institutional review of IPA (the only LP-RC) demonstrated that their QA policies and procedures are effective, and that NUI 'quality assurance of quality assurance' is also operating effectively. This validated NUI's suite of QA guidance documents. However, in practice, the policies and processes for a number of QAE activities could be improved.

Proposed Actions

One of the main aims of the NUI Quality team is to develop, in consultation with stakeholders, policies and procedures relating to QA and QE that are risk-based, reasonable from the user perspective and provide genuine opportunities for improvements to practice rather than being perceived as 'box-ticking exercises'. Providing the highest quality service to the RCs informs all the work of the Quality team. The actions below illustrate these ongoing commitments:

QA Documents

- ▶ Publish more information about NUI quality activities: AQRs, ISER and Review Report.
- ▶ Further develop policy and guidance on QE.
- ▶ Implement planned cycle of internal review of QA documents – focus on reducing bureaucratic burden while maintaining rigorous principles, and increasing clarity in language and format.
- ▶ Integrate EDI (and sustainability) statement into all relevant QA documents.

Assuring Quality in the Recognised Colleges

- ▶ Review of appointment of extern examiners process (and the relevant regulations) to improve efficiencies.
- ▶ Monitor and explore further changes to the process to increase the rate of return of extern examiner reports with the RCs.
- ▶ Share extern examiner documentation with relevant staff in the RCs each year when appointments are made.
- ▶ Revise extern examiner report form.
- ▶ Communicate with RCs regarding programme approval timelines, particular the notification of programme development, to facilitate an efficient process.
- ▶ Review of programme review regulations to allow for substitute reviews where the process and standards are demonstrably aligned with those of NUI, and to generally avoid duplication of work by stakeholders where possible while ensuring standards are maintained.
- ▶ Revision of institutional review process and regulations to provide more guidance on the scope of institutional reviews (outlined in terms of reference) and the QIP process.

4

CHAPTER 4

Supporting and Promoting Academic Achievement

4.1 Introduction

Supporting and promoting academic achievement is a key element of NUI's mission, which involves two significant areas of NUI business: NUI Higher Doctorate Degrees on Published Work and NUI Awards.

4.2 NU Higher Doctorate Degrees: Recognising academic excellence at the highest level

Introduction

Higher Doctorate Degrees (HDDs) on Published Work are the highest qualifications awarded by NUI, and the highest degrees awarded in the State.²¹ HDDs are awarded to scholars who have, over a sustained period, published a substantial body of ground-breaking and influential work in a field of specialisation and who have achieved outstanding distinction internationally in that field. Further details on the criteria can be found in the [Regulations](#).

The following Higher Doctorates are currently awarded by NUI:

1. Doctor of Celtic Studies (DLittCelt)
2. Doctor of Economic Science (DEconSc)
3. Doctor of Engineering (DEng)
4. Doctor of Literature (DLitt)
5. Doctor of Laws (LLD)
6. Doctor of Medicine (DMed)
7. Doctor of Music (DMus)
8. Doctor of Science (DSc)

²¹ 460 higher doctorate degrees have been awarded by NUI since 1911. Further detail on higher doctorate degrees awarded by NUI is in Appendix E.

The Team and the Process

The Registrar and his office are responsible for initial engagement with applicants, identifying *prima facie* reviewers, the operation of committee meetings, recruiting extern assessors and communicating outcomes to applicants. The process is generally well-established and implemented effectively. Applicants are guided by [regulations](#) developed by the HDD Committee (last updated April 2021).

The HDD Committee reviews recommendations at both the *prima facie* and second stage. This Committee comprises the NUI Registrar, registrars of the CUs supplemented by up to two academics from each CU. This ensures a broad and substantive consideration at each stage of the process.

The Committee is empowered to make decisions regarding *prima facie* applications based on reviewer reports.

At the second stage, where a candidate receives two assessors' reports with a conflicting view, a third assessor is appointed before a decision is made. Where the Committee does not support an award, the Committee makes the decision and communicates it to the candidate. Where assessor reports are positive, the Committee recommends awards to Senate, for the final decision.

In 2019, a benchmarking exercise of NUI against nine institutions that conferred higher doctorates was undertaken.²² This analysis compared:

- ▶ criteria
- ▶ eligibility
- ▶ award
- ▶ titles
- ▶ evaluation process
- ▶ application procedures (*prima facie* and second stage)
- ▶ number and provenance of assessors
- ▶ timescale
- ▶ appeals
- ▶ ethical guidelines and
- ▶ commentary length.

Analysis demonstrated that NUI's process compared favourably with both Irish and UK institutions. For example, seven of the nine institutions had a two-stage process in place.

22 In the context of higher doctorate degrees, NUI identified nine comparable institutions offering such an award in universities in Ireland and the United Kingdom with international standing: Trinity College Dublin, Queen's University Belfast, University of Oxford, University of Manchester, University of Cambridge, University of St Andrews, Imperial College London, University of Warwick and Durham University.

NUI Higher Doctorate Degrees and CINNTE Objectives

The HDD is the only degree processed and awarded directly by NUI. As such it comes within the scope of CO2:

- i. To review the enhancement of quality by the institution through governance, policy, and procedures.
- ii. To review the congruence between quality assurance procedures and enhancements and the institution's own mission and goals or targets for quality.
- iii. To identify innovative and effective practices for quality enhancement.

There is a robust process underpinning and governing the HDDs involving the Committee and the Senate.

NUI's QA structures and procedures include:

- ▶ A detailed application process
- ▶ A two-stage review process with the systematic use of external expertise
- ▶ Clearly defined policies, procedures, and regulations
- ▶ Senate and Committee oversight
- ▶ Benchmark reviews against international best practice
- ▶ Regular review and updating of policies and procedures
- ▶ Periodic evaluation and feedback

This is supplemented by the overall governance structures and process in place within NUI as outlined in Chapter 1.

Recent Changes and Improvements

Following the benchmarking exercise, it was agreed that the Senate Committee should have responsibility for overseeing the entire process and that the Committee, rather than Senate, should consider the reports of the extern assessors. This allows the Committee to refer any reservations expressed in relation to the reports and recommendations back to the assessors for response, making it possible for such issues to be resolved. Positive recommendations are presented to Senate for approval, but a negative decision is made by the Committee. Senate is then empowered to act as the appeal body.

Data on NUI Higher Doctorate Degrees

As part of the ISER consultation process, NUI surveyed applicants on the operation and effectiveness of the higher doctorate degree process from their perspective. There were 29 respondents, including both successful and unsuccessful applicants.

Table 2: Data from survey of applicants for higher doctorate degrees

Topic	Average Score	
	<i>(Scale of 1-5: 1= bad / 5 = excellent)</i>	
Satisfaction with pre-application stage	4.65	93%
Clarity of regulations	4.41	88%
Responsiveness to queries	4.64	92.8%
Appropriateness of standards	4.64	92.8%
Communication with applicant	4.17	83.4%

NUI also conducted a survey of Committee members. The scope of the survey encompassed Committee members' views on the operation and effectiveness of the Committee and the process more generally. There were seven respondents to the survey, which represented a 64% response rate.

Table 3: Data from survey of members of the NUI Higher Doctorate Degrees Committee

Topic	Average Score	
	<i>(Scale of 1-5: 1= bad / 5 = excellent)</i>	
Standards in comparison comparable institutions	4.83	96.6%
<i>Prima Facie</i> stage as a preliminary screen for applications	4.29	85.8%
Clarity of NUI regulations, do they clearly explain the processes and the standards	4.29	85.8%
Overall view of the higher doctorate process in NUI	4.14	82.8%

All respondents felt that the Committee had sufficient scope to respond to issues and recommend any necessary changes to Senate. Respondents felt that they could make informed decisions. All respondents noted, that when issues arose with conflicting reports, they were well managed and dealt with appropriately. Respondents expressed a broad satisfaction with the *prima facie* stage and were particularly positive regarding the appointment process for second stage reviewers.

A survey of assessors and reviewers gauged their satisfaction with NUI's performance and the quality of the process more generally. The survey received 29 responses from 180 invitations, representing a response rate of 16%.

Table 4: Data from survey of reviewers and assessors for NUI higher doctorate degrees

Topic	Average Score	
	<i>(Scale of 1-5: 1= bad / 5 = excellent)</i>	
NUI's performance during the appointment	4	80%
The clarity of the NUI regulations, did they clearly explain what was required of you?	4.28	85.6%
NUI's responsiveness to any queries you might have had	4.5	90%
The standards set by NUI for the award of higher doctorates on published works compared to those in your institution and/or others with which you are familiar	4.12	82.4%
NUI's performance after you reported in terms of payment and keeping you informed	4.21	84.2%

Some respondents noted opportunities to enhance current practices:

- ▶ Communicate the outcome to reviewers.
- ▶ Provide additional clarity to a reviewer/assessor in the regulations.
- ▶ Streamline the cost and timeline for applicants.

Reflections

Examining the approach of other institutions was instructive and should continue to be part of the review of regulations and process.

In our analysis of the recent figures for the HDDs, it emerged that a gender gap exists regarding successful applicants. Further work is needed to understand the specific reasons for this gap, but NUI will seek to narrow this gap significantly during the next strategic cycle.

While the HDD documentation reflects good practice, review of this documentation should take place systematically to ensure that they remain contemporary and responsive to emerging issues, e.g. discipline-specific advancements. Feedback from the reviewer survey suggested that additional clarity in the regulations and guidelines for *prima facie* reviewers would be helpful.

Some respondents to the applicant survey indicated that delays in the submission of a *prima facie* review or an external assessor's report was an issue, which mirrors the RO's experience of delays in the process. The establishment of a broad panel of *prima facie* reviewers may provide efficiencies at that stage.

Several respondents identified information-flow from the RO to the applicant as a matter for enhancement and standardisation. Work is currently underway to adjust our communication approach through the identification of various stages where an update will be provided to the applicant (and reviewers).

NUI recognises that the composition of committees is critical to their success. The composition of the HDD Committee will be informed by the skills, experience and diversity needs of the Committee. NUI intends to develop a skills matrix for all committees upon the appointment of a new Senate in 2022, which will inform future Committee membership.

NUI is equally keen to ensure that there is enhanced awareness of all schemes, programmes, and awards offered by NUI. NUI has identified that this will be best achieved through a more streamlined and targeted communications approach with member institutions. This approach will also take into consideration the specific objective of reducing the gender gap.

4.3 NUI Awards: Recognising and promoting academic achievement

Introduction

NUI has a tradition of recognising and promoting academic excellence by awarding scholarships, prizes and grants (collectively referred to as 'Awards') since before the foundation of the State. The Awards portfolio distributes, on average, €1m per year to undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, doctoral, post-doctoral levels, including grants and prizes for early career and established academics (see Appendix G). Through its Awards, NUI recognises excellence across the NUI federation, creates national and international opportunities for collaboration and partnerships, and facilitates the formation of closer bonds between its members to forge a stronger sense of identification with NUI. Encouraging academic achievement and providing the highest quality services to the member institutions are two core strategic goals of NUI, and the NUI Awards programme demonstrates fulfilment of these goals in practice.

The relatively large portfolio is managed by one member of staff in the Academic Services and Registry unit with support from two further colleagues (the Awards team). Development of the portfolio is subject to internal review and Senate approval and the administration of the awards is subject to periodic external audit.

During the review period, NUI awarded an average of 141 scholarships, grants and prizes each year:

Table 5: Number of NUI award recipients, 2015-2021

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
130	136	145	135	153	141	146

NUI typically offers around 50 distinct awards per year, including long-established and one-off Awards. While many of the NUI Awards are one-off monetary prizes to recognise academic achievement, other Awards provide longer-term funding to support doctoral and post-doctoral research.

The NUI Travelling Doctoral Studentships (1910-), the Dr Henry Hutchinson Stewart Literary and Medical Scholarships and Prizes (1888-), and the French Government Medals and NUI Prizes for Proficiency in French (1926-) are examples of long-established NUI Awards.

The NUI Travelling Doctoral Studentships allow researchers in all disciplines to undertake doctoral research overseas as part of their studies. Researchers supported by this scheme have travelled to every continent to conduct research.

UCC graduate, James Millea, was awarded an NUI Travelling Studentship in Music in 2016:

“The National University of Ireland, and the community of scholars that it connects, have created a highly influential and well-respected community within various disciplines and universities around the world. Securing a Travelling Studentship not only gives each recipient some well needed confidence in their own work, something that can often be in short supply in academia, but also offers an already established platform for you and your research.”

Awards Criteria

The eligibility criteria for awards vary depending on the award type. All awards require affiliation to NUI. Eligibility criteria and regulations can be found at www.nui.ie/awards.

Benchmarks

In reviewing its awards, NUI looks to major funding bodies in Ireland and overseas for benchmarking purposes.

In 2018-2019, an internal review of awards was conducted, including a benchmarking exercise of NUI’s doctoral and post-doctoral funding against schemes offered by the NUI member institutions, the Irish Research Council and Science Foundation Ireland, and funding councils in the UK. NUI assessed both application procedures and requirements, and financial value.

This exercise demonstrated that the NUI process compared favourably with other schemes, with similar criteria, processes and oversight, while maintaining some unique elements. In relation to the Travelling Doctoral Studentships, NUI found:

1. The four-year duration is comparable Irish and UK schemes.
2. The stipend was comparable.
3. The eligibility of existing PhD students is narrower than the IRC scheme, but more open than many internal university awards.
4. Six-monthly progress reports are more frequent than comparisons, but they are not onerous in terms of length/time.

At post-doctoral level, NUI found that:

1. The two-year duration is comparable.
2. The annual salary of the Fellowships is significantly higher than the IRC scheme, but comparable to other Irish/UK posts.
3. The Fellowships are only tenable in NUI institutions, whereas IRC awards can be held in any recognised Irish higher education institution and even in research-only bodies, like Teagasc.

Recent Changes and Improvements

In its Strategic Plan 2018-2022, NUI committed to reviewing the scope and operation of NUI Awards, identifying key findings for improvement and, where feasible, introducing new and/or re-structured Awards, to further enhance its support for scholarship. The overall improvement of NUI Awards since 2018 has been significant.

In developing the programme each year, NUI aims to have awards that are topical, relevant, and valuable to recipients. In finalising the list of awards for the year ahead, NUI considers both the regulations of permanent Awards, and the potential value of new Awards, so that the full programme is of the highest possible quality.

Recent changes, in particular, have increased inclusivity and accessibility:

- ▶ Electronic submissions
- ▶ Online interviews
- ▶ Online awards ceremony.

In November 2021, Senate approved an increased stipend for the Travelling Doctoral Studentships from €16,000 to €18,500 per annum, to match the stipend offered by the IRC Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarships.

A small fund, launched in March 2022, is available to support NUI-funded doctoral students facing extenuating circumstances that might prevent them completing their studies.

Data on NUI Awards: Findings and Reflections

NUI surveyed award applicants and those involved in the judging of awards. 664 applicants were contacted, and 96 completed the survey. 417 of those involved in judging (subject specialists, extern examiners and interview panellists) were contacted, and 83 completed the survey.

It is clear from the data that applicants trust the process and integrity of the procedures. It is also clear that there is some frustration around timeframes and overly bureaucratic elements to submissions. Two areas of improvement emerged clearly from the data:

- i. Communication:
 - ▶ Adhere to timeframes
 - ▶ Pertinent and reasonable feedback
- ii. Modernisation/updating: Less bureaucratic application process; embrace online submission of forms and documents.

Likewise, those involved in the selecting and judging of applications trust the process and integrity of the procedures. There are few overall or specific concerns with the procedures. One area of improvement emerged clearly from the free text comments:

- ▶ Communication: Feedback to selectors on their role

The survey feedback was largely very positive. However, the Awards team noted that the processes and strategic alignment of awards should be reviewed. The application procedure needs to be simplified, including the introduction of online forms. Internally, the development of a database would create great efficiencies, allowing staff to utilise their more critical professional skills in the assessment of applications and providing more time for communication with stakeholders.

4.4 Conclusion

Consultation showed that stakeholders are largely satisfied with the regulations and operation of processes in both Higher Doctorate Degrees and NUI Awards. Reflection on benchmarking exercises showed that processes are also comparable with those in other relevant organisations.

Proposed Actions

NUI Higher Doctorate Degrees

Actions below have been identified from stakeholder suggestions and internal review:

- ▶ Conduct a further benchmarking exercise in 2023.
- ▶ Actively encourage female applications by amplifying the programme through relevant academic networks.
- ▶ Implement review cycles for academic regulations.
- ▶ Develop and define a skills matrix for all Senate Committees, including the Higher Doctorate Degrees Committee.
- ▶ Establish defined communication approach in terms of engaging with applicants and reviewers throughout the process.
- ▶ Full economic costing with a view to generating savings for NUI and applicants, which may make it more accessible.

NUI Awards

The Awards team aims to keep the Awards portfolio relevant and aligned with NUI strategy, as well as accessible and desirable to NUI students and scholars. The proposed actions below will enable the team to meet these aims effectively and efficiently:

- ▶ Development of online applications forms.
- ▶ Development of an awards database.
- ▶ Rationalise awards criteria and selection processes.
- ▶ Continuous review of portfolio to ensure strategic alignment.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report



CHAPTER 5

Serving Students and Graduates

5.1 Introduction

NUI provides centralised services to prospective students and graduates: Matriculation Exemptions and Graduate Services, both of which relate to CO3 on access, transfer and progression. NUI has incorporated compliance with the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners in relevant QA guidance documents (CO4).

5.2 NUI Matriculation Exemptions

Introduction

The NUI Senate has statutory responsibility for setting basic matriculation (minimum entry) requirements for the member institutions. These are administered centrally by NUI in consultation with the CUs and RCs. The increasing diversity, mobility and internationalisation of the students applying to our institutions adds new layers of complexity to the process. While maintaining admission standards, NUI and its member institutions are called on to consider a growing variety of qualifications and combinations of qualifications among applicants.

In specific circumstances, set out in the NUI Matriculation Regulations, exemptions to the matriculation requirements are permitted.²³ Processing applications for an exemption to the language requirement(s) is a core service NUI provides to all member institutions, contributing to NUI Strategic Goal 1 - to add demonstrable value to member institutions.

Between 2015-2021, NUI processed an annual average of 3,263 applications for exemptions and special consideration of exceptional circumstances.

Table 6: Number of exemptions to NUI matriculation language requirements, 2015-2022

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
3,676	2,936	3,018	3,119	3,210	3,113	3,349	3,680

Applicants who do not meet the language matriculation requirements are the main stakeholders; granting or refusing an exemption has a significant impact on their access to higher education. Parents, guardians and guidance counsellors have a vested interest in the process.

As NUI administers the process of exemption centrally for the federation, NUI member institutions are also stakeholders. Representatives of the institutions liaise with the Registrar on matriculation matters directly and participate in meetings of the Senate where policy discussions take place.

²³ To matriculate, or gain admission, to an NUI member institution, applicants must pass a minimum of six Leaving Certificate (LC) subjects (or equivalent); two at higher level (at least Grade H5), and four others (at least Grade H7 or O6). All students must present English, and all students born and educated in Ireland must present Irish as a subject (and pass at Ordinary or Higher level; Foundation level is not accepted). Many NUI programmes require a third language, which is any LC language that is not English or Irish.

The NUI benchmarks its matriculation and exemption processes against those in other Irish universities and considers the general approach to matriculation taken further afield. The matriculation requirements in NUI are largely similar to those in TCD and UL.

NUI differs from its Irish peers by having Irish as a mandatory matriculation subject. NUI manages exemptions to this for applicants born outside of Ireland, with a specific learning disability or other defined criteria.

The 'third language' referred to by NUI means any LC language that is not English or Irish. NUI will also, in many cases, accept a non-LC language, provided the student has taken a Junior Certificate/GCSE equivalent or higher examination in that language.

Matriculation Exemptions and CINTE Objectives

As the matriculation process regulates access to NUI member institutions, CO3 is the most relevant: 'to review the effectiveness and implementation of procedures for access, transfer and progression'. NUI does not directly govern processes of transfer or progression in member institutions,²⁴ but matriculation exemptions can indirectly support transfer and progression processes for NUI students.

Recent Changes and Improvements

The introduction of GDPR in 2018, required changes to the exemption process. Previously, CAO would provide the Matric team with applicant details. A significant redesign of the process was required after 2018, with greater involvement of NUI staff.

The matriculation regulations are updated on an annual basis and the list of accepted GCSE/A-level subjects is regularly reviewed to stay current and inclusive.

While the matriculation regulations document covers the whole process in detail, a poster, published in 2022, has an 'if-then' type flow chart to make the process more straightforward and accessible.

Data on Matriculation Exemptions

As data on the quality of the exemption process had not previously been formally recorded, surveys of the two main stakeholders involved (applicants and guidance counsellors) were conducted.²⁵ Applicants, in this case, includes parents or caregivers who may have applied on behalf of their child.²⁶

24 NUI does require recognised colleges to have appropriate procedures in place for access, transfer and progression, in line with QQI guidelines.

25 Guidance counsellors were essential to include as they generally have experience assisting students with the application process over a number of years. Applicants ordinarily would have had only one instance of application (except in cases where they had re-applied), so their feedback was a valuable look at the process at a glance.

26 The matriculation exemption surveys had 11 questions, including multiple choice questions, rating questions using a Lickert scale, and open questions with a free-text box for responses.

The surveys opened on 9 May 2022 and closed 27 July 2022. One survey was sent to all students who were applying for a matriculation exemption in 2022 while the survey was open. The survey received 15 responses. The other survey was sent to all guidance counsellors who had engaged directly with the application process on behalf of a student while the survey was open. The survey received 13 responses.

Table 7: Data from surveys of applicants and guidance counsellors who have engaged with NUI Matriculation Services

Topic	Average Rating – Applicants <i>Scale of 1-5: 1= poor / 5 = excellent</i>	Average Rating – Guidance Counsellors <i>Scale of 1-5: 1= poor / 5 = excellent</i>
Communication with NUI Staff	4.87	5
Clarity and accessibility of the matriculation exemption form	4	4.08
Efficiency in processing the request	4.4	4.61
Overall satisfaction	4.6	4.85

Reflections

All respondents were 'confident' that NUI would make a fair decision. Guidance Counsellors were asked to rate the clarity of the *NUI Matriculation Regulations* and the average response was 4.27 ('very good'). This indicates that system is working well.

The surveys confirmed the Matric team's impression that improvements to the application form are still required. NUI is currently developing an online application form, which will simplify the application process for all.

5.3 NUI Graduate Services

Introduction

The NUI Graduate Services team, within Academic Services and Registry, is responsible for the primary service that the federation requires. They provide the parchments and certificates to all NUI institutions for their conferring and presentation ceremonies on the basis of data provided by the member institutions. The team also provides graduates with duplicate documentation and English versions of the Latin parchments. These documents enable graduates to register with professional bodies and to apply for post-graduate study and employment. They are also required for visa applications and third-party education and recruitment screening.

The NUI Graduate Services unit has a manager and two members of staff working on:

- ▶ parchments for conferrings
- ▶ duplicate/replacement parchments
- ▶ customised parchments for joint degrees and for degrees based on other partnership arrangements.

The related Records area, with one staff member, also falls under the overall Academic Services and Registry remit.²⁷

²⁷ See Appendix B – NUI Organisational Chart.

Conferrings

Table 8: Number of parchments and certificates printed by NUI and the number of conferrings for 2015-2021

Year	Parchments & Certificates Printed by NUI	Number of Conferring Ceremonies
2015	38,994	174
2016	41,800	210
2017	41,614	150
2018	39,068	211
2019	43,369	277
2020	36,624	Ceremonies postponed or conducted virtually.
2021	37,288	Mix of ceremonies and postal distribution following virtual conferrings

From 2015-2021, NUI processed the following number of graduate and third-party requests:

Table 9: Number of graduate and third-party requests processed by NUI Graduate Services, 2015-2021

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
4,385	4,524	4,775	4,889	4,827	4,127	4,727

Graduate Records Services

NUI is constitutionally mandated to maintain the NUI Seanad Éireann electoral register, published on 1 June annually.²⁸ Every citizen of Ireland who has received an NUI degree (other than an honorary degree) is entitled to be registered in the NUI register of electors.²⁹

The number of registered electors has steadily increased since 2015:³⁰

Table 10: Number of registered electors in the NUI Seanad Constituency, 2015-2021

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
103,165	104,121	106,286	108,251	112,216	110,156	111,166

28 The deadlines for elector registration and publication of the annual register are determined by the 1937 (as amended) Seanad Éireann (University members) Act.

29 NUI is also responsible for facilitating Seanad Éireann elections in the NUI constituency, whenever there is a change in government. The last election was in 2020; there were X number of ballots cast.

30 The number of additions to the register has been adversely affected by the COVID pandemic and the move to online conferrings; graduates cannot be added to the register until they have been conferred and previously, NUI staff distributed Seanad Éireann registration forms to graduates in-person following their conferring ceremonies.

Graduate Services and CINTE Objectives

CO3: to review the effectiveness and implementation of procedures for access, transfer and **progression**³¹ is relevant here. The qualification verification service provided by the Graduate Services team also ensures that graduates can progress in their academic and professional careers where overseas institutions/professional bodies may need to map qualifications in order to assess their equivalency.

Recent Changes and Improvements

The COVID-19 pandemic required a reimagining of processes to accommodate virtual conferring ceremonies with the provision of digital parchments to our member institutions and to enable NUI staff to work remotely when Government advice restricted access to the physical office. This also meant that NUI graduates who resided domestically and globally in regions where strict lockdowns were imposed were not in any way disadvantaged as they were able to access their parchments electronically. NUI has since been monitoring developments in the area of digital parchments more generally.

In addition to the pandemic, there was a change in operating system (OS), which had and continues to impact on the efficiency of the unit. Currently, the unit is working with a cross system/hybrid model, which involves accessing two different systems across two separate platforms as the ICT platform is not yet fully integrated with our conferring and document services database. This is recognised as a risk and a key area for improvement, which is an ongoing/current focus for the IT team.

Data on Graduate Services: Findings and Reflections

A **Graduate Services** survey was devised and distributed to NUI graduates and third parties who were looking for duplicate documentation and/or education verifications between 16 May and 30 June 2022.³¹

Table 11: Data from survey of graduates and third-parties who have engaged with Graduate Services

Topic	Average Rating <i>(Rating 1-5: 1= poor / 5 = excellent)</i>
Communication	4.93
Efficiency	4.77
Quality of qualification verification process (if applicable)	4.76
Overall satisfaction	4.8

In the general feedback section, one respondent noted an issue with adding an electronic signature to the PDF of the application form. An online form, with an alternative to a signature, would avoid this problem.

³¹ The survey had 30 respondents during this time.

Plans to progress to a fully integrated ICT platform are being formulated and a more automated process is being discussed with IT; plans to launch easily accessible online forms and online payments are in development.

A **Graduate Records** survey opened on 16 May 2022 and closed 26 August 2022. The survey was sent to a selection of stakeholders who contacted the Records office while the survey was open.³²

Table 12: Data from survey of graduates who have engaged with Graduate Records

Topic	Average Rating (Rating 1-5: 1= poor / 5 = excellent)
Communication	4.89
Efficiency	4.63
Overall satisfaction	4.79

While the number of respondents was small, overall, the results of the survey were encouraging. This service could be improved for all, if the application process for inclusion on the Seanad Éireann register could move to a secure, fully online model.

5.4 Supports for International Learners

Context

CO4 is relevant here: 'to determine compliance with the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners (hereafter, the Code)'. NUI is not involved in the recruitment of students at home or abroad. NUI member institutions actively recruit international students and have overseas campuses; for example, NUI degrees were awarded to over 1,500 students at overseas campuses in 2020. However, NUI has no current LP that recruits international students.

NUI QA Documents and the Code

As a non-provider, NUI's focus is on ensuring that LP-RCs are compliant with the Code. To this end, this requirement has been embedded in several NUI QA documents that provide guidance on quality assurance in an institution at the macro level, which must be referenced by institutions applying for RC status, or revalidation:

- ▶ [Policy for Quality Assurance and Enhancement](#) (p.6)
- ▶ [Policy/Procedures for the Approval of Quality Assurance Procedures in the Recognised Colleges](#) (pp.5 and 10)
- ▶ NUI's [institutional review guidelines](#)³³

³² The survey had 19 respondents. Stakeholders included anyone who sought inclusion in the Seanad Éireann Register or to update their details on the register and graduates who applied to NUI for changes of name or gender on their graduate record (some of whom will have requested a parchment reissue reflecting that change).

³³ NUI's current LP-RC, IPA, particularly targets its programmes of education and training at professionals in the Irish public sector and is a rare educational institution not actively recruiting international students. Consequently, their institutional

Reflections

NUI has always been conscious of its responsibilities as a federal university and as a civic actor.³⁴ NUI has an oversight role regarding appropriate compliance with the Code in the LP-RCs. As a DAB, NUI engages with ongoing sectoral discussions and consultations with QQI on the Code and the related International Education Mark (IEM). However, NUI's QA documents need to be appropriate for all types of LP-RCs and certain publications could have more explicit reference to the Code.

5.5 Student Engagement and Partnership

Context

As noted, NUI has limited direct engagement with students; all NUI students are first and foremost the students of NUI member institutions. No students are currently involved in NUI governance or quality assurance processes. NUI graduates are members of Senate (elected by Convocation) but tend to be senior professionals, not necessarily with current experience of university life.

While there is no specific objective referencing student engagement, it is a principle underpinning the process of review (p.17 and p.24, QQI CINNTE Handbook) and QQI activities more generally. It is now standard practice in member institutions, and other provider institutions in Ireland, to have students involved in governance from micro-level to macro-level.

Reflections

While student engagement is more essential in provider institutions, it was clear to the SET that there are several avenues for student engagement and partnership that had not previously been explored by NUI. The SET recruited student advisers for the ISER development process as a starting point.

review did not include an objective on compliance with the Code. However, the IPA does have a policy for the protection of enrolled learners, which addresses many of the concerns formalised in the Code.

34 Based on the work of an Expert Group chaired by the NUI Chancellor, Dr Maurice Manning (former President of the Irish Human Rights Commission), NUI published [Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct for the National University of Ireland and its Member Institutions](#) (HRPCC) in 2013. The principles and the related code of conduct were designed to provide guidance to NUI member institutions in their activities at home and abroad in the context of increasing internationalisation and growing recognition of the need for public institutions to operate in full compliance with the highest standards of human rights. Recognising the significant legal, sectoral and socio-cultural changes in Ireland since its original publication, Senate approved a Registrar's recommendation to review and revise this document in 2021.

5.6 Conclusion

NUI is providing consistently excellent services to prospective students and graduates (and its member institutions), but online applications are a necessity. NUI's QA documents incorporate requirements of the Code, where appropriate. Student engagement is the area for focus and improvement.

Proposed Actions

Matriculation Exemptions

- ▶ Develop an online form for applicants.

Graduate Services

Graduate Services:

- ▶ Fully integrated ICT platform
- ▶ Online applications and payments.

Graduate Record Services:

- ▶ Developing and implementing a robust fully digital filing system
- ▶ Online registration forms for Seanad Éireann electoral register
- ▶ Online application form for graduates needing to update their record, including those wishing to record a change of [name](#).

Support of International Learners

- ▶ Update programme approval and application for RC status documents to have more explicit reference to the requirements of the Code.
- ▶ Incorporate compliance with the Code in the revision of NUI's *Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct* (planned for 2023).

Student Engagement and Partnership

The involvement of student advisers in the ISER development process, which also fed into the parallel strategic planning process, was viewed as a bridging measure, while NUI works on embedding student partnership in NUI's structures and activities.

These actions represent a new (explicit) strategic focus for NUI:

- ▶ NUI Student Forum: The details of this would be decided with the participating student representatives (from each member institution) but it is envisaged that the forum would meet twice annually with admin support from NUI and actions agreed collectively.
- ▶ Student Representation on Senate: Request that the Minister consider nominating a member with experience of student governance, explore the option of co-opting a senior student representative onto Senate.

Both actions above would have a minimal impact on financial resources without interfering with the autonomy of the member institutions.

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CHAPTER 6

Protecting Information and Communicating with the Public

6.1 Introduction

NUI is entrusted with the personal data of over a hundred thousand of people. The protection of personal information in NUI's care and the effective sharing of information about NUI activities are key to maintaining the reputation of the University.

6.2 Data Protection

Introduction

NUI's operating context from a Data Protection perspective is informed by its legislative responsibilities:

- ▶ Matriculation (Universities Act 1997)
- ▶ Graduate Records (Universities Act 1997)
- ▶ Seanad Electoral (University Members) Acts, 1937-2015.

NUI holds data on:

- ▶ Prospective NUI students
- ▶ NUI graduates (Seanad Éireann Register of Electors)
- ▶ NUI honorary graduates
- ▶ Applicants for NUI awards (scholarship, grant or prize) – this includes students, graduates and employees of the NUI member institutions.
- ▶ Assessors and subject specialists for the NUI Awards programme
- ▶ Reviewers and assessors for NUI higher doctorate degrees
- ▶ Employees and candidates for jobs within NUI
- ▶ Retired NUI employees
- ▶ Third-party business suppliers
- ▶ Archival applicants.

NUI was guided by the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR principles in developing its [data protection policy](#), which is available on the NUI website. In the terms of the Act, NUI is a data controller, joint data controller and data processor depending on the data and the related activity concerned, with all the associated responsibilities. NUI has data protection agreements with all member institutions and the CAO. Most data are stored in computer-based databases or files, which means that NUI's ICT Security Policy is also relevant to data protection.

An internal audit of IT system developments including GDPR was conducted in 2019. This audit was conducted in line with the standards of the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors and Public Service Internal Audit Standards issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

NUI ICT platform moved to a cloud service in November 2021. This service included enhanced security on each server that complies with [ISO/IEC 27017](#). In addition, all databases containing personal identifiable information (PII) were upgraded to the latest version and the data was fully encrypted.

Data Protection and CINNTE Objectives

Data protection is indirectly relevant to CO1, as data protection is an essential element of many of NUI's strategic and operational activities. NUI is also cognisant of Objective 8.7 from [QAG1](#) in making data protection arrangements and the security of relevant ICT systems.

Recent Changes and Improvements

NUI SP Goal 5(ii) is to ensure that the organisation has the resources and policies to fulfil data protection legislative requirements. This, coupled with the introduction of GDPR compliant legislation, provided NUI with an opportunity to reflect on and enhance practices relevant to data protection.

In preparation for the Data Protection Act 2018, NUI established a working group to oversee and implement any changes needed by the new legislation. Notable enhancements included

- ▶ Inhouse training for all staff
- ▶ Review and refresh of NUI policies and procedures as they relate to Data Protection
- ▶ Data-sharing agreements with RCs and CUs were drawn up

A member of the Senior Management Team was appointed as NUI's Data Protection Officer (DPO) in 2018. The risk of non-compliance with GDPR was recorded on NUI's Corporate Risk Register. Data protection became a standing agenda item on the agenda of Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) meetings. As part of NUI's internal audit approach, some key elements of GDPR compliance were reviewed by NUI's internal auditor in 2019. A follow up audit is scheduled for 2022.

Following some staff turnover in 2021, a new DPO was appointed in June 2022. This staff member also has responsibility as Chief Risk Officer for NUI. During the interim period, NUI availed itself of external data protection expertise as needed.

NUI ICT moved to a cloud platform in November 2021. The move allowed NUI data backup to exist off-site for the first time. Disaster recovery from on-site and off-site facilities are both now possible. The NUI ICT Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) has been completed and each element has been tested except for a full DPR exercise, which will be conducted in October 2022.

Data on Data Protection

NUI holds an information asset register, which is regularly reviewed by the DPO in consultation with all staff. There have been no breaches of NUI's cyber security system and no incidents that left NUI data at risk of access by bad actors. There have been two minor accidental disclosures of NUI data (one in 2020 and one in 2021). In both cases, the accidental disclosures were due to human error, the disclosures were deemed 'low risk' and the affected individuals were informed.

Reflections

NUI's biggest asset in relation to data protection is the awareness, care and diligence of staff members when handling personal data. This is reflected in the relatively low number of data protection incidents that have arisen since the advent of GDPR.

There has been a considerable investment of time and resources by NUI in enhancing ICT security, work that has been closely monitored by NUI's ARC. This ensures that the information held electronically remains secure and NUI is protected from any cyber security incidents.

6.3 Public Communication

Introduction

NUI has a website where all relevant corporate and academic documents are uploaded and made available to stakeholders, students of NUI and members of the public.

Regulations that govern areas such as quality assurance, higher doctorate degrees, and matriculation exemptions are available on the website and accessible in hard copy. Matriculation regulations along with FAQs are posted to secondary schools when revised, while only particular QA documents are published and disseminated in hard copy.

The Team

Many units in NUI are involved in the process of public communication. Information is disseminated through publications and the website, the content of which is produced by the relevant team. Content is added to the website by the IT unit and is shared on social media the RO, which handles communications. Content for publication is sent to the Publications Office, where it is edited and formatted before sending to NUI's third-party graphic design team.

Social Media

NUI has an active social media presence with two social media platforms: [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Announcements are shared on both, but most cross-promotion takes place on Twitter where there is greater engagement. The Twitter profiles for CUs and RCs are regularly checked and retweeted. Activity by NUI's partners, such as the IUA, is regularly promoted, as are the tweets of other organisations relevant to the HE sector.

The main use of social media is to promote NUI's activities. Events such as lectures, seminars and launches are promoted on Twitter and Facebook. Any deadlines relating to awards, matriculation, Convocation or Seanad elections are posted with the dual purpose of reminding followers of the deadlines and also of providing a platform for any queries to be addressed relating to these activities. Awards recipients are also announced on social media.

NUI Publications are advertised while tagging any associated publishers or contributors.

While useful in promoting NUI, social media also allows for transparency and awareness-building of issues in higher education. It keeps NUI's followers informed on relevant topics that relate to the education sector in general, as well as NUI's own role in this area.

Traditional Communications

In addition to the website, NUI encourages direct enquiries by phone and email. Stakeholders (such as applicants for matriculation exemption, awards applicants, graduates needing duplicate documents) will ring the University. During office hours (9.15am-5pm, Monday to Friday), members of the public can ring NUI and their call will be handled directly by the NUI receptionist.

Public Communication and CINTE Objectives

Public communication indirectly relates to CO1 and CO2 as it is an element of NUI governance and quality assurance activities. NUI activity in this area is informed by Guideline 1.8 of the [ESG](#), which states that 'Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible.' Objective 9 of [QAG1](#) stipulates that information pertaining to QA procedures and reports of QA reviews should be publicly available.

NUI, as a public sector body, is also guided by the POUR Principles included in the European Union (Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Bodies) Regulations 2020 (hereafter the 2020 Regulations), which require the websites of public sector bodies to be Perceivable, Operable, Understandable and Robust. The NDA is responsible for monitoring compliance.

Recent Changes and Improvements

The current strategic plan has an objective (Goal 1, Objective 3) to develop an NUI communications strategy and policies for enhanced engagement with members, associated institutions and other stakeholders. While a comprehensive communications strategy and policy has not been finalised due to COVID-related disruption to work schedules, initial research and drafting in the area of social media communications has been done and the objective will be carried into to the next strategic plan.

There has been a notable increase in NUI's social media activity and engagement during the review period, for example NUI's Twitter account saw a greater than ten-fold increase in followers.³⁵ NUI is currently conducting a review of its social media channels to assess what other platforms can be utilised to enable us to communicate more effectively. One recent development is the establishment of a LinkedIn profile for NUI.

Reviewing NUI's existing strategic plan/drafting the next plan has revealed opportunities to enhance communication practices and target specific audiences.

Reflections

While the NUI website is regularly updated, an internal review of the website in 2018 found that it needed significant redesign, restructuring and renovation. Because of the organisation of material and labelling of sections, information is not always clear or readily accessible. Larger projects (e.g. transition from one ICT platform to another) and limited IT resources resulted in a postponement of the website project, but NUI fully acknowledges that the website is outdated and in need of complete renewal with simpler language, easier navigation and greater accessibility. This is a planned action, which will contribute to existing and future strategic goals pertaining to NUI identity and profile.

The website meets standards set by the [WCAG 2.1](#) but is not yet in full compliance with the 2020 Regulations. NUI's [digital accessibility statement](#) can be found on the website.

While developing the ISER, it was discovered that AQRs had not been regularly published on the NUI website. QA documents are all published on the NUI website but information on internal QA processes was not clearly and easily accessible. A new [page](#) on QA was created, initially to provide general information on the QA activity of institutional review. AQR documents will be added here in future and the Review Report will be published in this location when available. It is likely that this page will have an expanded scope when the website renovation takes place.

35 NUI had 460 Twitter followers in June 2016 and 4,843 in October 2022.

6.4 Conclusion

Many of NUI's core functions involve the processing of personal data and it is, therefore, a key operational priority for NUI. On-going audits, policy development and staff training play a role in data protection. Despite significant ICT and environmental changes, NUI has maintained the integrity of its data protection system.

Public communication has been, historically, under-resourced but its importance is recognised.

Proposed Actions

Data Protection

IT security and data protection are evolving frontiers and areas that require constant monitoring, oversight and vigilance to ensure the safeguarding of personal data, the actions identified below will assist NUI in this regard.

- ▶ Develop a suite of bespoke practical guidance for NUI staff (to supplement existing guidelines). The immediate areas identified include working from home, data breaches and subject access requests.
- ▶ Examine NUI's current approach to the management of GDPR compliance programme to assess how technology could assist from a record-keeping and staff training perspective.

Public Communication

Digital communication with the public and stakeholders is a key activity for identity-dissemination and profile-building. Transparency, accessibility

- ▶ Publish AQRs each year (an action from 3.2) and ensure quality documents are easily accessible to all stakeholders via the website.
- ▶ Complete work on an NUI communications strategy and related policies
- ▶ Website renovation: to ensure that information is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible, and to comply fully with the 2020 Regulations.
- ▶ Implement a more targeted approach to social media.

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CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The CINNTE Objectives (COs) are set out in the [Terms of Reference](#) and referenced throughout this report. NUI has carefully and thoroughly considered the extent to which it meets these objectives and discussed this in Chapters 2-6. NUI identified a number of areas for further development and improvement, while demonstrating fulfilment of the CINNTE Objectives, insofar as they apply to NUI.

A synopsis of the strengths and weaknesses of NUI with respect to the CINNTE objectives is provided below.³⁶

7.2 Objective 1: Effectiveness and Implementation of QA Procedures

CO1 is to review the effectiveness and implementation of the QA procedures of NUI through consideration of the procedures set out, primarily, in the AQR. [...] The scope of this includes the procedures for reporting, governance, and publication. [...] The scope of this objective also extends to the overarching procedures of NUI for assuring itself of the quality of research degree programmes under its approval.

NUI has an effective quality management system and overarching procedures for assuring quality in linked provider institutions (LP-RCs).

There is some unavoidable overlap between CO1 and CO2 for NUI (as a non-provider engaged in meta-level quality assurance).

Relevant Planned Actions

Table 13: Planned actions relating to CO1

Section	Action	Notes
1.6	Develop a formal and centralised system for collecting, monitoring and reviewing QA data relating to key processes in NUI.	This is a key action that applies to all COs.
2.3	Review the guidance on applying for RC status on an as needed basis, in consultation with Senate. Improve the information provided to members of Senate regarding the process of applying for RC status.	SP Goal 1(i)
3.2	Publish more information about NUI quality activities: AQRs, ISER and Review Report. Further develop policy and guidance on QE. Implement planned cycle of internal review of QA documents. Integrate EDI (and sustainability) statement into all relevant QA documents.	SP Goals 1(iii) and (i)
4.2	Develop and define a skills matrix for all Senate committees	

36 A full table of planned actions is provided in Appendix I.

7.3 Objective 2: Enhancement of Quality

CO2 has three parts:

- i. To review the enhancement of quality by the institution through governance, policy, and procedures.
- ii. To review the congruence between quality assurance procedures and enhancements and the institution's own mission and goals or targets for quality.
- iii. To identify innovative and effective practices for quality enhancement.

It should be noted that much of NUI's QAE activity is on a meta-level (i.e. 'quality assurance of quality assurance' in linked providers). NUI is directly involved in providing a limited range of QAE services to the RCs.

NUI has effective governance, policies and procedures to guide and support enhancement of quality in LP-RCs.

With respect to CO2 part (i), NUI strictly ensures that LP-RCs put governance arrangements and quality enhancement policy and procedures in place, which is then reviewed through the institutional review of quality assurance effectiveness.

Regarding part (ii), it is part of NUI's mission to 'assure comparable, high academic standards for degrees and qualifications awarded by NUI'. NUI fulfils this mission through its governance structure (Senate, and its committees, and the joint NUI-RC steering committees).

Considering part (iii), NUI's remit precludes it from being overly prescriptive regarding the QAE practices of its RCs. However, NUI QA documents require LP-RCs to consider effective QAE in teaching, learning and research activities in applying for RC status, in developing their own QA policies and procedures and for the purposes of institutional review and revalidation.

Relevant Planned Actions

Table 14: Planned actions relating to CO2

Section	Action	Notes
2.2	<p>Regular and clear briefings for anyone involved in governance regarding NUI governance structures and Senate's role in quality matters (through Senate induction and subsequently during Senate, or Senate committee, meetings).</p> <p>Implement a cyclical review of QA policies and guidance.</p> <p>Explore, with Senate, the possibility of establishing a forum or working group for joint quality activities in discrete areas of common interest.</p>	SP Goal 1(ii)

Section	Action	Notes
3.3	Review of appointment of extern examiners process (and the relevant regulations) to improve efficiencies.	SP Goal 1(i)
	Monitor and explore further changes to the process to increase the rate of return of extern examiner reports with the RCs.	SP Goal 1(ii)
	Communicate with RCs regarding programme approval timelines, particular the notification of programme development, to facilitate an efficient process.	SP Goal 1(i) and (ii)
	Review of programme review regulations to allow for substitute reviews where the process and standards are demonstrably aligned with those of NUI, and to generally avoid duplication of work by stakeholders where possible while ensuring standards are maintained.	SP Goal 1(ii)
	Revise institutional review process and regulations following IPA review to provide more guidance on the scope of institutional reviews (outlined in terms of reference) and the QIP process.	SP Goal 1(ii)
4.2	Conduct a further benchmarking exercise of higher doctorate degrees in 2023.	SP Goal 2(i); SP Goal 3(i)

7.4 Objective 3: Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression

CO3: To review the effectiveness and implementation of procedures for access, transfer, and progression, established and maintained by linked providers of NUI.

As a non-provider and a federal university, NUI meets this objective in a very specific way. NUI regulates access to all member institutions in the setting of basic entry requirements for the federation. Transfer and progression are facilitated through NUI's Graduate Services unit in verifying qualifications and providing official English-language versions of parchments.

NUI serves the member institutions and prospective students by processing matriculation exemptions in a fair, consistent and efficient manner. The stakeholders for matriculation and graduate services were exceptionally pleased with the personal, helpful and efficient services provided.

Relevant Planned Actions

Table 15: Planned actions relating to CO3

Section	Action	Notes
5.2	Develop an online form for matriculation exemption applicants.	SP Goal 1(i); SP Goal 5(iii)
5.3	Fully integrated ICT platform for Graduate Services	SP Goal 1(ii);
	Online applications and payments for Graduate Services	SP Goal 5(iii)

7.5 Objective 4: Supports for International Learners

CO4 is to determine the compliance of a linked provider of NUI with the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners.

NUI has embedded compliance with the Code in all relevant QA documents for the LP-RCs.

While NUI has no current LP-RC that recruits international students, the possibility of an LP-RC recruiting internationally is provided for in NUI's QA documents.

Relevant Planned Actions

Table 16: Planned actions related to CO4

Section	Action	Notes
5.4	Update programme approval and application for RC status documents to have more explicit reference to the requirements of the Code.	SP Goal 1(i) SP Goal 1(i)
	Incorporate compliance with the Code in the revision of NUI's <i>Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct</i> (planned for 2023).	

7.6 Final Reflections

Broad themes emerged from the full list of actions (see Appendix I) identified during the ISER development process, some with relevance to the COs and some with broader implications for NUI:

- ▶ Formalisation and centralisation of quality review processes and data handling processes to facilitate regular and efficient internal monitoring and review.
- ▶ Streamlining of processes by maximising use of ICT resources.
- ▶ Development of online application forms (for a variety of services) and payments, where applicable.
- ▶ Greater involvement of students in governance and quality assurance activities.
- ▶ Integration of EDI and sustainability commitments across operations and activities of NUI.

NUI is incorporating the lessons learned into the next strategic plan and into operational activities, as appropriate.

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APPENDIX A – NUI Senate Committees and Sub-Committees

Finance Committee	
Reports to:	Senate.
Membership:	Chaired by the Chancellor and includes the NUI Registrar, the four presidents of the constituent universities (CUs), the four registrars of the CUs, the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) and three other members of Senate. The NUI HFA is in attendance.
Meetings:	Three p.a. (prior to Senate meetings).
Responsibilities:	Set out in NUI Statute 267, these include budget, investment and asset management, financial reporting, regulatory compliance and audit planning.
Further notes:	It is a core responsibility of the Committee to ensure that resources are allocated in a manner that best supports the University's strategic commitments. Each November, NUI financial statements are presented and approved by Senate and are then filed with the HEA and DFHERIS. The annual Consolidated Financial Statements, including a Statement of Governance and Internal Control, Statement of the Senate's Responsibilities, a report of the independent auditors, and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), are prepared for audit each year. The Committee also oversees compliance with taxation law, public sector policies and other relevant codes and regulations, for example the IUA Code of Governance for Irish Universities 2019.

Investment Advisory Committee (IAC)	
Reports to:	Finance Committee.
Membership:	Chaired by the Chancellor and has a minimum of three independent external members, appointed by Senate.
Meetings:	Two p.a.
Responsibilities:	To provide advice on NUI investments to the Finance Committee.

Audit & Risk Committee (ARC)

Reports to:	Senate.
Membership:	Five members, three appointed by Senate, and an additional two external members to be co-opted by the ARC. ³⁷
Meetings:	Four p.a.
Responsibilities:	To maintain and monitor the NUI risk register, review annual NUI financial statements and to prioritise actions and schedule reviews of NUI business units and activities.
Further notes:	After reviewing the annual financial statements and confirming they have been audited by the independent auditor and C&AG, the ARC recommends they be accepted by Senate (in November).

Education and Society Committee (ESC)

Reports to:	Senate.
Membership:	Chaired by the Chancellor, and includes the NUI Registrar, the HASR and at least five other members of NUI Senate. External members may be invited to join by the agreement of the current members.
Meetings:	Three p.a.
Responsibilities:	To guide NUI with reference to the strategic goals of enhancing and making more visible NUI's discursive role and contribution to civic society (SP Goal 4), and thereby support the advancement of Irish Higher Education at home and abroad (SP Goal 2).
Further notes:	The ESC commissions and supports academic research (e.g. NUI Dr Garret FitzGerald Post-doctoral Fellowship), guides public policy dialogue (NUI submissions on consultations) and identifies issues of relevance to the past, current and evolving role of the university in society for debate (e.g. NUI Education and Society Seminar Series).

Publications Committee

Reports to:	NUI Registrar (who reports to Senate).
Membership:	Chaired by NUI Registrar with at least four external members.
Meetings:	Two p.a. (following submission of applications for NUI Grants toward Scholarly Publication in June and December).
Responsibilities:	To advise on NUI publication activity to support our cultural and historic role and evaluates applications for the NUI Grant towards Scholarly Publication award.

³⁷ In the context of Senate committees, 'external' means external to Senate itself.

Higher Doctorate Degrees Committee

Reports to:	Senate.
Membership:	Chaired by NUI Registrar, includes the four registrars of the CUs and up to two representatives from each of the CUs (one in the Sciences and one in the Humanities).
Meetings:	Two p.a.
Responsibilities:	To decide – based on the applications and the reports of international assessors – whether applicants should be recommended to Senate for the relevant higher doctorate award.

Honorary Doctorates Committee

Reports to:	Senate.
Membership:	Chaired by the NUI Chancellor, includes four other members of Senate, two nominated by the Chancellor and two nominated by Senate.
Meetings:	Once a year.
Responsibilities:	To consider nominations, and to agree a shortlist.
Further notes:	The shortlist is presented to Senate and subject to a private ballot. Honorary degrees are awarded to persons meriting recognition at the highest level. The main purpose is to honour distinction in scholarship and creativity in the candidate's own right or in their representative capacity. In addition, honourees may be selected on the basis of significant contribution to public life, the betterment of society, and the interests of humanity, in Ireland, Europe or elsewhere.

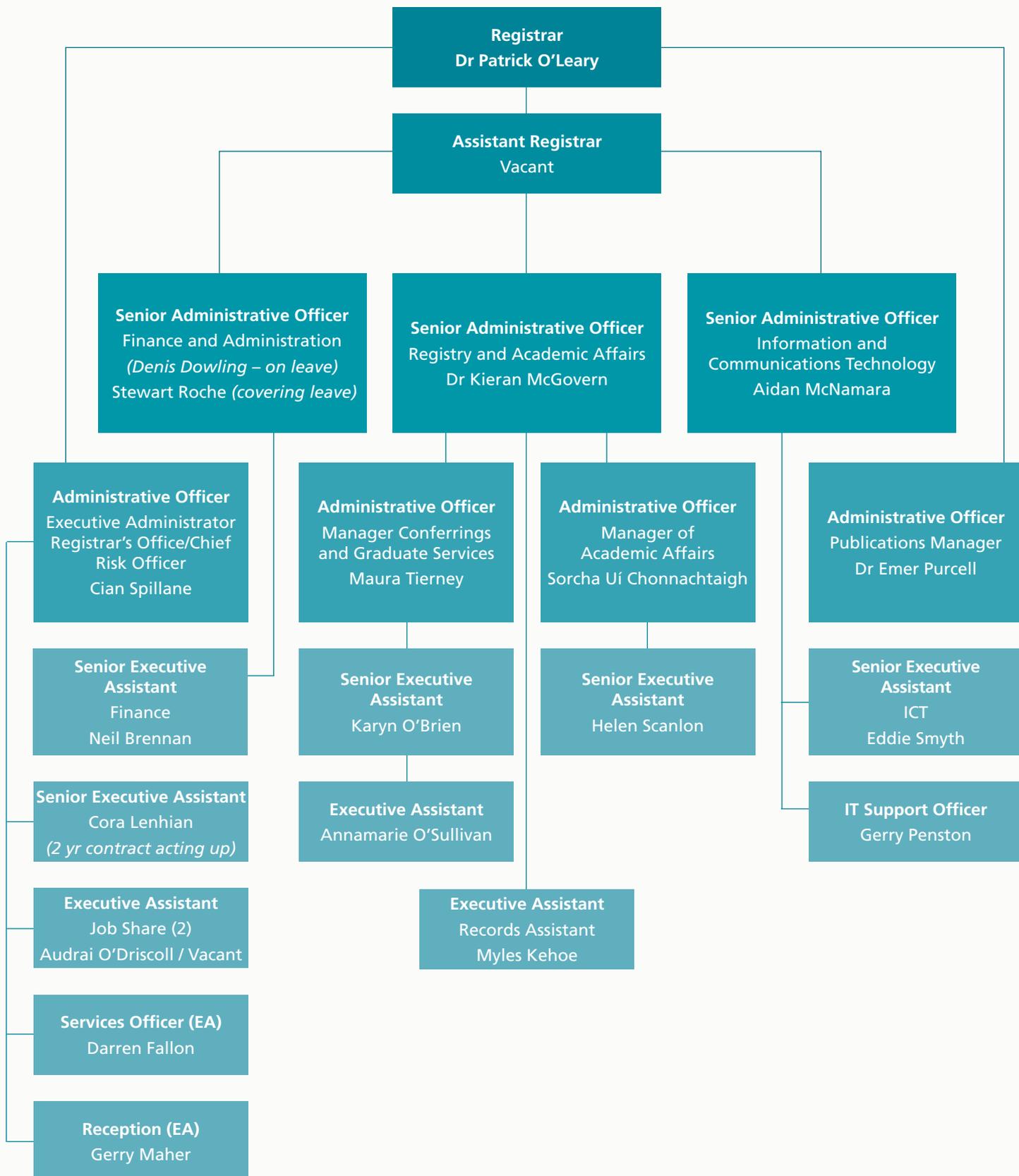
Committee of Registrars of the NUI Constituent Universities

Reports to:	Senate.
Membership:	Chaired by NUI Registrar, includes the registrars of the four CUs.
Meetings:	As needed.
Responsibilities:	To discuss NUI governance, quality assurance and strategic matters and to advise the NUI Registrar. A meeting may be requested by the NUI Registrar or a member of the Committee.

Committee of Admissions Officers of the NUI Constituent Universities

Reports to:	Committee of Registrars.
Membership:	Chaired by NUI Registrar and includes four admissions officers (one from each of the CUs).
Meetings:	As needed.
Responsibilities:	To discuss admissions matters that impact on NUI Matriculation Regulations, including changes to the DOE approach to Irish language exemptions, English language requirements for non-native speakers, and developments in international state examination systems.

APPENDIX B – NUI Organisational Chart



APPENDIX C – NUI Regulations, Policies, Procedures and Guidelines Index



QA: Overarching NUI Policy

2017. *Policy for Quality Assurance and Enhancement.* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/NUI_Quality_Assurance_Policy_2018.pdf



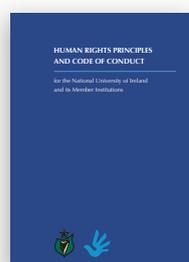
QA Relationship: NUI and RCSI

2020. *The Quality Assurance Relationship between the National University of Ireland and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland – University of Medicine and Health Sciences.* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/QA_Relationship_NUI_RCSI.pdf



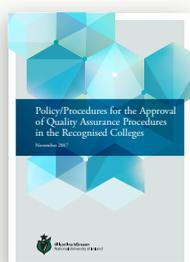
QA and RC Status: Applications to NUI

2018. *Guidelines for higher education institutions considering an application for NUI Recognised College status.* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/NUI_RC_ProspectiveApplicants.pdf



UI POLICY: Human Rights Principles

2013. *Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct for the National University of Ireland and its Member Institutions* [NOTE: scheduled for review] http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/HumanRights.pdf



QA: NUI Approval of QA in Recognised Colleges

2017. *Policy and Procedures for the Approval of Quality Assurance Procedures in the Recognised Colleges.* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Procedures_Approval_Quality_Assurance_Procedures_Recognised_Colleges_2018.pdf



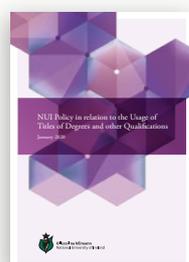
NUI POLICY: Recognition of Prior Learning

2013. *Recognition of Prior Learning* [NOTE: due for review] http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Recognition%20of%20Prior%20Learning.pdf



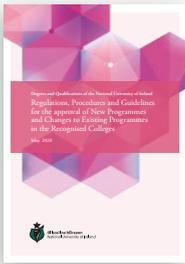
QA: Institutional Reviews in RCs

2020. *Guidelines for the Institutional Review of Quality Assurance Effectiveness at Recognised Colleges that are Linked Providers of the NUI.* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Guidelines_QA_Institutional_Review.pdf



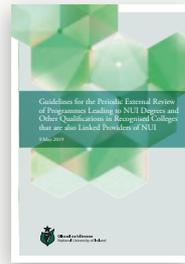
NUI POLICY: Titles of Degrees (Qualifications)

2020. *Policy in relation to the usage of Titles of Degrees and other Qualifications.* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Policy_in_relation_to_the_usage_of_titles_of_degrees.pdf



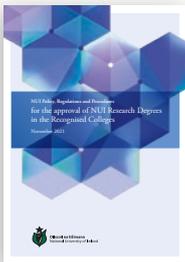
PROGRAMMES: Approval of New Programmes in Recognised Colleges

2020. *Regulations, Procedures and Guidelines for the Approval of New Programmes and Changes to Existing Programmes in the Recognised Colleges.* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Programme_Approval_Regs.pdf



PROGRAMMES: Periodic Review of Programmes in Recognised Colleges

2019. *Guidelines, Criteria and Procedures for the Periodic Review of Programmes Leading to NUI Degrees and Other Qualifications in the Recognised Colleges.* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/NUI_Guidelines_External_Review.pdf



PROGRAMMES: Policy for Research Degrees

2021. *Policy, Regulations and Procedures for the Approval of Research Degrees in the Recognised Colleges.* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/policy/NUI_Research_Degree_Policy.pdf



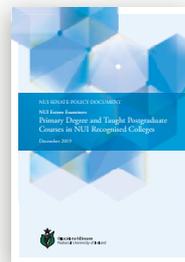
PROGRAMMES: Higher Degrees on Published Works

2021. *Higher Doctorate Degrees on Published Work awarded by the National University of Ireland: Criteria, Regulations, Application Procedures and Guidelines.* http://www.nui.ie/college/docs/published_Work_Regs.pdf



PROGRAMMES: Revalidation of Programmes

2022. *Protocol on transitioning to permanent online delivery for the 2022-2023 session in the Recognised Colleges.* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/policy/NUI_Protocol_for_transitioning_to_Permanent_Online_Delivery_in_the_2022-23_Session_in_the_Recognised_Colleges.pdf



EXTERN EXAMINERS: Taught Programmes in RCs

2019. *NUI Extern Examiners: Primary Degree and Taught Postgraduate Courses in NUI Recognised Colleges.* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/NUI_Guidelines_External_Review.pdf



PROGRAMMES: Collaborative and Transnational Provision

2013. *Quality Assurance for Collaborative and Transnational Provision of Academic Programmes Leading to NUI Qualifications.* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/gvrnce_docs/Collaborative%20&%20Transnational.pdf



EXTERN EXAMINERS: Taught Programmes in CUs

2019. *NUI Extern Examiners: Primary Degree and Taught Postgraduate Courses in NUI Constituent Universities.* http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/policy/NUI_Extern_Examiners_Universities.pdf



EXTERN EXAMINERS: Research Degrees in Recognised Colleges

(Forthcoming: 2022/23) *Policy on extern examiners for research degree programmes in the recognised colleges, including professional doctorates.*

APPENDIX D – NUI Statute 86

Chapter LIX: Recognised Colleges

1. The Senate may recognise a College in Ireland which fulfils the conditions mentioned in this Section, as a College in which Matriculated Students of the University who are pursuing therein Approved Courses of Study of a University type, under Teachers recognised by the Senate for the purpose, may be given the benefit of any privileges of Matriculated Students of the University who are pursuing a course of Study at the University, or at any of its Constituent Colleges, including the right of obtaining University Degrees;

PROVIDED –

- (a) That the College does not prepare Students for Intermediate or other School Examinations, or does not give education of an Intermediate or Secondary kind;
 - (b) That the Senate is satisfied as to the general character and financial position of the College as a whole, the adequacy in numbers and qualifications of its Teaching Staff, the University standard of its teaching, the adequate provision of laboratories and all appliances necessary for giving instruction in the subjects in respect of which recognition is contemplated, the conditions as to age and attainments on which Students are admitted to it, the number of its Students proceeding or likely to proceed to a University Degree, and the relations of the College to any other University;
 - (c) That the College shall not be recognised
 - (i) if it be situate in Munster (elsewhere than in the County of Clare), without the consent of the Governing Body of University College Cork;
 - (ii) if it be situate in Connacht or in the County of Clare, without the consent of the Governing Body of University College, Galway;
 - (iii) if it be situate elsewhere in Ireland, without the consent of the Governing Body of University College, Dublin.
2. An application to have a College recognised as aforesaid shall be made in writing, and shall be signed by the Principal or Head of the College on behalf of which the application is made.

3. Every such application shall set forth the following particulars regarding the College for which recognition is sought:
 - (a) The general Character of the College;
 - (b) The subjects in which instruction is given in it, and in respect of which recognition is sought;
 - (c) Whether it prepares Students for Intermediate or other School Examinations, or gives education of an Intermediate or Secondary kind;
 - (d) The number and names of the Members of the teaching Staff of the College, with their University Degrees or other qualifications;
 - (e) Its financial position, including the emoluments of the Members of its Teaching Staff, and the fees charged to its Students;
 - (f) The usual age at which Students are admitted to it, and the conditions as to attainments required for their admission;
 - (g) The number of its Students proceeding, or likely to proceed, to a Degree of the University;
 - (h) Its relation to any other University, including the number of its Students proceeding, or likely to proceed, to a Degree in any other University;
 - (i) The names, emoluments, and tenure of office of those Members of its Teaching Staff whom it desires to have declared Recognised Teachers, and a statement of the duration and scope of the Courses of Instruction given by them, and any other evidence required by the Senate to show the University standard of such instruction;
 - (j) The provision of appliances necessary for teaching in the subjects in respect of which it seeks recognition, including the provision of Laboratories, if required;
 - (k) Whether the College has already either wholly or partially prepared Students for any University Degree, specifying the subjects in which it has so prepared them and the approximate number of such Students.
4. The application shall be referred by the Senate to the Governing Body of University College, Cork, if the College making the application be situate in Munster (elsewhere than in the County of Clare); to the Governing Body of University College, if the College be situate in Connaught or in the County of Clare; to the Governing Body of University College, Dublin, if the College be situate elsewhere in Ireland.

5. The Governing Body of the University College to which the application has been so referred shall report thereon to the Senate, and should the Governing Body consent to the recognition sought being granted in whole or in part, the application, together with the Report received from the Governing Body of the University College, shall be laid by the Registrar before the General Board of Studies, and the Board, as soon as may be, shall make a Report thereon. Before making such report the Board may obtain a Report from the Faculty or Faculties in the subjects in respect of which recognition is sought.
6. The Senate shall also be entitled, if it shall deem it necessary, to depute such person or persons as it may select to make an inspection of the College on behalf of which the application has been made and to obtain from such person or persons a Report embodying the results of their inspection.
7. The Senate shall consider the Report of the General Board of Studies, the Report of the Inspector or Inspectors, if any inspection shall have been ordered, the general character and financial position of the College as a whole, the adequacy in numbers and qualifications of its Teaching Staff, the University standard of the teaching, the adequate provision of Laboratories, if the same shall be required, and of the other appliances necessary for giving instruction in the subjects in respect of which recognition is contemplated, the conditions as to the age and attainments on which Students are admitted, the number of Students proceeding or likely to proceed to a University Degree, and the relations of the College to any other University.
8. If it shall be of opinion that the College ought to be recognised, the Senate shall by resolution declare it to be a Recognised College of the University. Such Resolution shall state the subjects in respect of which the College is recognised, and it may define the time during which such recognition, if not sooner withdrawn, shall continue.
9. The recognition of a College may be withdrawn by the Senate at any time.
10. So long as a College shall continue to be recognised, Matriculated Students of the University who are pursuing therein, under Teachers recognised by the Senate for the purpose, an Approved Course of Study in all or any of the subjects in respect of which the College is recognised, shall have the benefit of any privileges of Matriculated Students of the University who are pursuing a Course of Study in such subjects or subject in a Constituent College, including the right of obtaining a University Degree.
11. It shall be the duty of the Principal or Head of a Recognised College to notify to the Registrar of the University all changes in the Teaching Staff of the College, or in the duration or scope of the Courses of instruction given by those Members of the Teaching Staff who have been recognised by the Senate as Teachers.
12. At any time after a College has been recognised the Senate may call for a report from the Principal or Head of the College as to its state and condition in relation to the subjects in respect of which it has been recognised, and the Senate may hold an inspection.

APPENDIX E – NUI Recognised Colleges, 1910-2022

The Irish Universities Act, 1908, empowered the Senate to recognise courses of study in other institutions for the purpose of degrees, and the following institutions have been granted the status of Recognised College:

Years	Recognised College
1910 to 1997:	St Patrick's College, Maynooth
1975 to 1995:	St Patrick's College of Education, Drumcondra, Dublin
1975 to 1988:	Our Lady of Mercy College, (Carysfort) Dublin
1975 to 1994	Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
1976 to 1977:	The National Institute for Higher Education, Limerick
1976 to 1977:	Thomond College of Education, Limerick
1977:	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)
1978 to 2005:	St Angela's College of Education, Sligo <i>(from 2006, a Constituent College of NUI Galway; now a campus of the new Atlantic Technological University)</i>
1996 to 2010:	National College of Art and Design, Dublin (NCAD) <i>(From 2010, a Constituent College of UCD)</i>
2002 to 2016:	Shannon College of Hotel Management <i>(from 2016, a School in the College of Business, Public Policy and Law, NUI Galway – now University of Galway)</i>
2002 to 2011:	Institute of Public Administration (IPA) <i>(from 2011-2018, a Constituent College of UCD)</i>
2005 to 2015:	Milltown Institute of Theology
2013 to 2018:	Uversity
2018:	Institute of Public Administration (IPA)

APPENDIX F – Higher Doctorate Degrees Data

A. Total Number of Higher Doctorates awarded

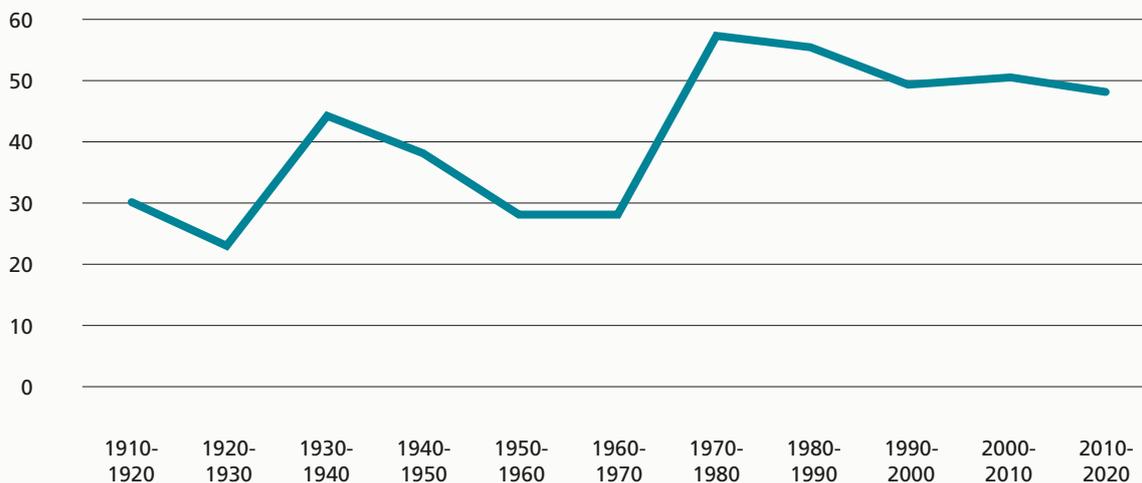
Degree Title	No. awarded Jan 2008-May 2020
DEconSc	0
DEng	3
DLitt	12
DLittCelt	1
DMed	11
DMus	1
DSc	31
LLD	5
TOTAL	64

B. Breakdown by gender and qualification

Higher Doctorate awarded (2008-May 2020)	No. of Women awarded Doctorate	No. of Men awarded Doctorate	Total Higher Doctorates awarded in each Discipline
DEng	–	3	3
DLitt	4	8	12
DLittCelt	–	1	1
DMed	2	9	11
DMus	1	–	1
DSc	4	27	31
LLD	2	3	5
Total	13	51	64

C. Higher Doctorates Awarded by Decade

Higher Doctorates awarded each decade by NUI 1910s – 2020s



D. Breakdown of 164 applications received during the period 2000-2018

	Applications
Degrees Awarded	101
No of applications where <i>prima facie</i> was not established	46
No of applications where <i>prima facie</i> was established by application was unsuccessful at second stage	8
Number of candidates who withdrew from the process (or did not lodge a second stage application)	9
TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS	164

APPENDIX G – NUI Awards Portfolio

Post-Doctoral Level

NUI Grant Scheme for Early Career Academics (*offered since 2018/19*)

NUI Post-Doctoral Fellowship in the Humanities/Sciences & Engineering
(*offered in alternate years*)

NUI Dr Garret FitzGerald Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Higher Education Studies
(*offered every two years, previously in Social Sciences*)

Fulbright-NUI Scholar Award

One-off post-doctoral awards (*offered 2015-2022*)

Government of Ireland-NUI Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Rural Development 2022

NUI Dr Éamon De Valera Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Mathematical Sciences 2021

NUI Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Irish and Celtic Studies 2016

Doctoral Level

NUI Travelling Doctoral Studentships in the Humanities & Social Sciences

NUI Travelling Doctoral Studentships in the Sciences

NUI Denis Phelan Scholarship

NUI EJ Phelan Fellowship in International Law

NUI Mary L Thornton Scholarship & Prize in Education

Masters Level

NUI Scholarship and Prize in Education

Duaisianna an Dr TK Whitaker sa Ghaeilge

Graduate and Undergraduate Level

Pierce Malone Scholarship in Philosophy

Scoláireacht agus Duais Chiste Theach an Ardmhéara sa Ghaeilge
(Mansion House Fund Scholarship and Prize in Irish)

Mansion House Fund Scholarship and Prize in Irish History

NUI Art and Design Prize

NUI Club London Scholarship

French Government Medals and NUI Prizes for Distinction in Collaborative Degrees

French Government Medals and NUI Prizes for Proficiency in French

Dr HH Stewart Literary Scholarship & Prizes

Chinese, English, French, Gaeilge (Irish), German, Italian, Latin and Spanish

Dr HH Stewart Medical and Health Sciences Scholarships & Prizes

Anaesthesia, Anatomy, Biochemistry, Clinical Radiology, General Practice, Medical, Microbiology, Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Ophthalmology, Paediatrics, Pathology, Pharmacology, Physiology, Psychiatry, Public Health, Surgery, Dentistry, Diagnostic Imaging, Midwifery, General Nursing, Intellectual Disability Nursing (alternating with Paediatric Nursing and Mental Health Nursing), Occupational Therapy, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Podiatric Medicine, Speech & Language Therapy

Previous graduate award

NUI Rural Development Scholarship, 2016-2018

APPENDIX H – Sample Regulations for NUI Awards

NUI Post-Doctoral Fellowship in the Humanities 2022

Regulations and Procedures

The National University of Ireland (NUI) is pleased to invite applications for the NUI Post-Doctoral Fellowship in the Humanities 2022. The Fellowship will be awarded on the basis of a common competition open to NUI graduates.

Section 1: General Regulations of the Fellowship

1. General Regulations

- 1.1 The Fellowship will be awarded on the basis of a common competition open to NUI graduates in all branches of the Humanities.
- 1.2 All branches of the Humanities will be deemed as including, but not limited to, all academic disciplines within Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, including Business, Law and Psychology.

2. Value of the Fellowship: approx. €80,000 salary plus €5,000 research support fund

The value of the Fellowship is approximately €80,000, before taxes and deductions, plus employment on-costs, to be paid monthly over the period of the Fellowship. The exact salary starting point is aligned with Point 2/3 on the IUA (2022) post-doctoral researcher 1 salary scale and will increase annually thereafter. Additional research support expenditure costs of €5000 will also be made available over the two years of the Fellowship - see Appendix A for a list of eligible expenditures.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 The Fellowship is intended to encourage and support a suitably qualified post-doctoral candidate of proven academic excellence to advance their scholarly research on a full-time basis in their chosen field, under the mentorship of a senior member of academic staff in a constituent university or a recognised college of NUI. It is expected that the research will result in a substantial contribution to knowledge worthy of publication.
- 3.2 NUI welcomes applications from all eligible candidates in all research areas within the broad definitions of the Humanities. NUI does not designate preferred thematic research areas for this Fellowship.

4. Eligibility

- 4.1 To be eligible to apply for the Fellowship, candidates must be graduates of doctoral status (awarded no earlier than 1 January 2017)[\[1\]](#), and holders of any degree of the National University of Ireland, awarded by a constituent university or in a recognised college.
- 4.2 Applications will be accepted from candidates who have yet to be conferred with their doctoral degree but can confirm that they have fulfilled all the formal requirements for the awarding of the doctoral degree by the closing date for the competition, i.e. **Friday, 25 February 2022**.

- 4.3 Full-time permanent members of staff of the NUI constituent universities, other NUI member institutions, or other higher education institutions are not eligible to apply for this Fellowship^[2].
- 4.4 Applications will be accepted from interested candidates on no more than two occasions.
- 4.5 Candidates may only apply for one NUI Post-Doctoral Fellowship in 2022.

5. Application Procedure

The following documents are required to apply for the Post-Doctoral Fellowship in the Humanities:

- i. **Application Form:** Application forms are available to download at www.nui.ie/awards.
- ii. **Research Proposal:** Candidates are required to submit a detailed statement (max. 2500 words exclusive of captions, references, and bibliography) concerning the research they propose to undertake during the tenure of the Fellowship. The Research Proposal should give details of:
 - the proposed topic, nature and scope of the research;
 - the proposed methodology of the research;
 - the relevance and importance of the study;
 - a preliminary literature review;
 - where the research will be conducted and reasons for choosing that centre;
 - other investigators involved in the research, including mentor, where appropriate;
 - potential future developments for the study;
 - a proposed timeline or workplan for the duration of the Fellowship.
 - Appendices may be included in addition to the research proposal but should not exceed a further 2500 words.
- iii. **Abstract of Research Proposal:** Candidates are required to submit a short abstract of the research proposal (max. 300 words), and to highlight key words that can be used to source appropriate experts in the field(s) of study. Where the proposed research is interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary in nature this should also be highlighted.

To note: the abstract will be included in the invitation to prospective independent subject specialists and it may also be used by non-specialist members of the appointed Selection Panel.
- iv. **Personal Statement:** This brief statement should outline how the Fellowship will contribute to the candidate's plans for academic career training and development (max. 1000 words).^[3]

- v. **Curriculum Vitae (CV):** To include (i) relevant work experience, (ii) academic and research achievements to date, (iii) previous research grants awarded, (iv) scholarly publications, and (v) other relevant experience (max. 6 pages/ 3000 words).
- vi. **Letter of Support for Application:** A letter from the relevant Head of Department/ School in the host institution should also be submitted indicating (i) support for the application, (ii) details of the nominated academic mentor and (iii) confirming that necessary resources will be provided should the application be successful.
- vii. **Certified Academic Transcripts:** electronic/scanned copies to be submitted for each degree and diploma awarded.
- viii. **Reports of Two Academic Referees:** a specific NUI report form (available at www.nui.ie/awards) is to be completed by the referee(s) and emailed directly to awards@nui.ie. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that the references are submitted to NUI by their referees by the closing date. Nominated academic mentors may not act as academic referees. If references are not submitted by the closing date, a candidate's application may be deemed ineligible for consideration.

6. Selection Process

- 6.1 The NUI Registrar and designated NUI staff will administer the competition for the Fellowship.
- 6.2 A shortlisting process will apply, and shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend for interview.
- 6.3 Two independent subject specialists will assess the applications of each eligible candidate.
- 6.4 The reports of the subject specialists will be made available to the NUI Registrar and will inform the decision on the long list of candidates to be made available to the Selection Panel for consideration.
- 6.5 Where there is a divergence of 20-29 marks based on the reports of two independent subject specialists, and where the candidate's score is near the threshold for shortlisting, the application will be referred to the NUI Registrar for consideration. Where the divergence is greater than 30 marks a third subject specialist will be appointed. Where a third subject specialist cannot be appointed^[4] in good time, then the application will be referred to the NUI Registrar for consideration.
- 6.6 The Selection Panel, to be appointed by NUI, will be chaired by an independent (i.e. non-NUI) senior academic with relevant experience and expertise in funding competitions of this nature. The full Panel will comprise experts in a range of relevant discipline areas and will include representatives from within the NUI federal system and other higher education institutions.^[5]

- 6.7 Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview by the Selection Panel.
- 6.8 Following the interviews, the Selection Panel will finalise its recommendations to the NUI Registrar on the awarding of the Fellowship. The NUI Registrar will inform the successful candidate in writing of the Senate's decision regarding the awarding of the Fellowship.
- 6.9 Following the completion of the assessment process, all candidates will be informed of the outcome and feedback from the assessment process will be available on request.
- 6.10 The decision of the Senate on the awarding of the Fellowship will be final.
- 6.11 NUI has an Appeals Process in place to guarantee that the University has acted fairly and reasonably and followed the appropriate steps in its selection process. Further details can be found on the NUI website.

7. Lodgement of Documents

- 7.1 All applications and associated documentation must be submitted by email to awards@nui.ie. The email should state the NUI award being applied for, i.e. Post-Doctoral Fellowship in the Humanities.
- 7.2 Candidates should ensure the electronic documents included in their application (listed in section 5 above) are saved as separate files and compressed into a zip file (max. size 20MB)
- 7.3 The closing date for receipt of the full application is **Friday, 25 February 2022**.

Section 2: Terms and Conditions of the Fellowship Tenure and Conditions of Employment

8. General Conditions

- 8.1 The Fellow's first duty is to the successful completion of the Fellowship for which they have been awarded funding.
- 8.2 The Fellowship is held subject to these terms and conditions and any supplementary conditions set out in the Fellowship offer. If any of these terms and conditions are breached, the NUI Senate reserves the right to suspend or terminate the Fellowship and may require reimbursement of such payments as have already been made.
- 8.3 These terms and conditions will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of Ireland, and all parties will expressly and irrevocably submit to the jurisdiction of the Irish courts.
- 8.4 It is the responsibility of the Fellow to inform NUI of any change of address, telephone number, or email address within a month of any change.
- 8.5 The institution is responsible for ensuring that the Fellow has access to effective procedures for resolving problems that arise and prevent the Fellow from effectively carrying out the research and main duties associated with the Fellowship.

- 8.6 In the event that the Fellow experiences serious problems with mentoring or any other academic matter that cannot be resolved at the Department/School level, the Fellow should follow the Institution's own grievance procedures. Should these problems prove to be intractable, the Fellow should inform the NUI Registrar directly.
- 8.7 The institution at which the Fellowship is tenable should ensure that a clear and reasonable policy on annual leave entitlement exists and that this is made known to the Fellow at the start of their Fellowship.
- 8.8 If the Fellow is unable to pursue their project in accordance with these terms and conditions, the Fellow and their mentor must inform the NUI Registrar and the relevant office(s) in the institution. The Fellow must do this no later than two weeks of such a situation arising. The Senate will have regard to the usual conventions of the institution in which the Fellow is based; however, it reserves the right to suspend or terminate the Fellowship.

9. Tenure and Conditions of Employment

The holder may elect to take up the Fellowship in any of the [constituent universities \(or their linked colleges\) or recognised colleges of NUI](#), subject to the concurrence of the Senate and the institution concerned. The Fellowship will be tenable by way of a fixed purpose contract between the Fellow and the Institution where the Fellow is based. The Fellow will be subject to the terms and conditions as set out in the fixed purpose contract.

9.1 Hours of Work

- 9.1.1 Fellows must engage full-time in their Fellowship, and the working time is that reasonably required to fulfil the duties of the post, in accordance with the terms of the fixed purpose contract, taking account of socially acceptable norms.
- 9.1.2 The Fellow is not entitled to hold any other appointment or undertake any work, which in the opinion of the Senate, may impair or hamper the due discharge of the terms of the Fellowship. The Senate expects the research approved for funding under the Fellowship to be completed within the agreed term.

9.2 Additional Duties outside the remit of the Fellowship

- 9.2.1 Notwithstanding point 9.1(i) above, the Fellow may undertake some teaching duties including supervision, education provision and support activities, providing:
- The additional duties do not adversely affect the Fellow in carrying out their research;
 - The Fellow is suitably remunerated and additional duties are recognised by the institution, as appropriate^[6];
 - The additional duties are not excessive and are relevant to the research funded by the Fellowship and consistent with the training and career development plan agreed by the Fellow and their mentor.

- Teaching hours do not exceed 50 hours per academic term, including contact and non-contact hours.
- Suitable training is provided for teaching activities as part of the professional development of the Fellow.

9.2.2 Where a Fellow wants to undertake additional, remunerated duties in their host institution e.g. teaching work, this arrangement must be formally agreed in writing with the Head of School or Department in that institution and NUI must be notified of any such arrangement

9.2.3 From time to time, the Senate may require the Fellow to attend events or meetings as arranged by NUI.

9.3 Fellowship Payments

9.3.1 Post-Doctoral Fellowship payments are subject to deduction of Taxation, Pension and all related statutory deductions at source, in accordance with the terms of the fixed purpose contract.

9.3.2 Payments are made in accordance with the terms of the fixed purpose contract with the NUI host institution. Specific details including date and method of payment will be as outlined in the fixed purpose contract with the NUI host institution.

9.4 Termination of Fellowship and Right of Appeal

9.4.1 Should the Senate determine that the conditions of the Fellowship are not being fulfilled satisfactorily, it shall reserve the right, on the recommendation of the NUI host institution, to terminate the Fellowship. In such circumstances, the holder of the Fellowship shall have a right of appeal in accordance with the terms of the fixed purpose contract with the NUI host institution.

10. Duties and Expected Fellowship Outputs

10.1 The holder of the Fellowship will be required to complete a substantial piece of research and publish the results in book form, or as articles in refereed journals, with an acknowledgement of the support received from NUI.

10.2 The holder of the Fellowship will be required to give a commitment that they will participate in at least one event arranged with NUI with a view to communicating and disseminating the research outcomes of the Fellowship. NUI will make conference rooms available to the Fellow in the NUI building on 49 Merrion Square, Dublin 2 and the Fellow is encouraged to use these NUI facilities.

10.3 The holder of the Fellowship will be required to conduct a seminar in the Department/School to which they are assigned and/or within the NUI system, and on an occasional basis, to participate in the programmes on offer in the Department/ School, subject to the conditions set out in Section 9.2.

11. Responsibility to the Head of Department/School (and appointed mentor)

- 11.1 The holder of the Fellowship will be ultimately responsible to the Head of the Department/School (and the appointed mentor) in the institution to which they are assigned and will be required to report on the progress of their work. Thereafter, they will be responsible to the NUI Senate.
- 11.2 The appointed mentor should be a senior member of academic staff, based in the same institution, and have regular contact with the Fellow.

12. Institutional Support

The Department/School will acknowledge the holder of the Fellowship as an independent investigator who will be assigned the resources and the normal facilities available to members of the academic staff in that Department/School. In applying for the Fellowship, candidates are required to indicate any specific facilities required for their research.

13. Review of Progress

- 13.1 The Senate is committed to ensuring effective progress for the duration of the Fellowship and monitoring the research performance of Fellows.
- 13.2 The Fellow, with the mentor, will be required to provide comprehensive six-monthly progress reports to NUI, in order to adhere to the payment conditions attached to the Fellowship. Failure to supply these reports may result in the payment of the Fellowship being suspended until such a time as they are received.
 - The report will include but is not limited to the following:
 - Research progress and outputs
 - Career development progress and update
 - Outreach activities
 - Financial update
- 13.3 A confidential evaluation of progress to date of the Fellow will be submitted annually by the appointed mentor.
- 13.4 Where a progress report is deemed unsatisfactory, the NUI Registrar will liaise with the Fellow and the mentor in the first instance to seek clarification of the issues that have arisen and agree on an appropriate course of action.
- 13.5 Where a satisfactory course of action cannot be agreed, the Senate reserves the right to right to approve the appointment of an independent third party, as recommended by the NUI Registrar, to evaluate the Fellowship in accordance with the aims and objectives outlined in the original proposal. In these circumstances, the Fellow and their mentor must attend to provide an account of the progress made to date. See also section 9.4.

13.6 Following the review, the Senate will then provide feedback to the Fellow indicating that the Fellowship will be renewed for a further limited period after which the Fellow's progress will be reviewed again, or terminated.

13.7 The Fellow will be required to submit a final report (c.1000 words) to NUI at the end of their tenure detailing the outcomes of their final research and other outputs from their Fellowship.

14. Ethics

14.1 The Senate will not award funding for research activity in any area prohibited by law in Ireland and/or in the legal jurisdiction where the Fellow will be based during the tenure of the Post-Doctoral Fellowship.

14.2 A Fellow may be required to confirm that appropriate ethical approval has been obtained to carry out their research project from the relevant approval or regulatory body at the institution where they are employed as a post-doctoral research fellow. This regulation may also apply to candidates in advance of the awarding of the Fellowship.

14.3 Ethical issues should be interpreted broadly and consistent with policies and guidelines set out in the NUI constituent universities. They may include, but are not limited to, appropriate codes of practice; the involvement of human participants, tissue or data in research; the use of animals; research that may result in damage to the environment; and the use of sensitive economic, social or personal data.

15. Protection of Intellectual Property

15.1 The Senate will not make any claim to the intellectual property arising from the Fellowship.

15.2 The responsibility for protecting and managing any intellectual property during the tenure of the Fellowship will rest with the Institution in which the Fellow is based and must be in accordance with national and/or international guidelines as appropriate.

16. Acknowledgement of NUI Support

The Fellow must acknowledge receipt of NUI support in all publicity relating to the research undertaken. The publicity may include but is not restricted to the following: letterheads, office signs, media appearances, press releases, public lectures, interviews, conferences, publications, monographs, print materials, social media and online materials including e-mail signatures, television and radio advertisements, websites, film, and video/audio recordings associated with or arising from the research undertaken. Where possible, NUI's logo should be included in any such acknowledgement.

17. Additional Awards

Fellows must inform NUI of any awards or bursaries obtained before or during the tenure of the Fellowship. This information must also be recorded in the appropriate progress reports.

18. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

NUI is committed to upholding and implementing the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities.

NUI's annual programme of scholarships, fellowships, prizes and grants seeks to recognise, reward and support academic and wider scholarly achievements. We welcome applications from all students and scholars who meet the academic eligibility criteria for each competition. We particularly welcome applications from eligible students and scholars in groups that are under-represented in Irish Higher Education, noting the following protected characteristics: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age, race and membership of the Traveller Community and socio-economic status.

We commit to implementing fair and equitable processes and procedures for all applicants and to providing reasonable accommodations, for example during Interview processes, where necessary for individuals.

NUI will always seek to secure the most relevant academic (disciplinary) expertise for our Selection Panels for NUI Awards. NUI will carefully consider the composition of panels, mindful of the diversity of our member institutions, across the wider Irish Higher Education sector and further afield.

19. Data Protection

The National University of Ireland is committed to a policy of protecting the rights and privacy of individuals in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988, the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 and the European General Data Protection Regulation (as per the Data Protection Act, 2018).

Personal data supplied by candidates as part of the application process will be shared with independent subject specialists and with selection panel members. Personal data is retained by NUI for a maximum period of five years for successful candidates and three years for unsuccessful candidates. Further information is available in NUI's Data Protection policy, accessible at: http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/data_protection/NUI_Data_Protection_Policy.pdf

Appendix A: Eligible Research Support Expenditures

1. Only vouched expenditures incurred in carrying out the research project during the agreed funding terms will be admissible.

These may include:

- Materials and small consumable items necessary for the research work
 - Equipment costs and software that is critical for the research work
 - Access to relevant national research infrastructures
 - Archival research costs
 - Reasonable travel, subsistence and conference costs (for the NUI Fellow)
 - Reasonable travel and subsistence costs for invited speakers in conferences/symposia organised by the NUI Fellow
 - Skills-training directly related to the objectives of the NUI Fellowship
 - Transcription/Translation/Publishing costs.
2. Living costs (e.g. rent) are not permissible
 3. Travel and subsistence expenses must be vouched – a per diem rate is not eligible.
 4. Fellows must adhere to any NUI guidelines provided in relation to eligible direct research expenditures
 5. The constituent university or recognised college must ensure proper financial management of the NUI direct research support funding

Note that equipment and computer hardware costs are not eligible costs under the NUI Post-Doctoral Fellowship.

Endnotes:

- [1] An extension to the five-year period following the awarding of the doctoral degree will be considered on the basis of eligible post-PhD career breaks. Career breaks include maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave, prolonged sick leave and carer's leave. Documentary evidence must be submitted to support the claim and only career breaks of up to 5 years will be considered.
- [2] Where a candidate is employed on a temporary contract at the time of application and is successful in the competition, NUI will require evidence that this contract will be completed before the NUI Fellowship can be confirmed.
- [3] [The Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#) (VDF) may provide a useful resource for completing this statement.
- [4] In some cases where the proposed research is focused on a niche area or interdisciplinary in nature it may not be possible to source a third expert. In other exceptional cases where there may be a significant delay in returning a report and hence insufficient time to appoint a third subject specialist, the application will automatically be referred to the NUI Registrar for consideration.
- [5] The number of representatives on the Selection Panel will be determined according to the number of applications received and the range of discipline areas included. Additional expert(s) may be invited by NUI to sit on the Panel, if required.
- [6] Any such payments will not affect the funding of the Fellowship. Compliance with Irish laws and regulations on taxation will be a matter for the Fellow, the institution, and the Office of the Revenue Commissioners.

APPENDIX I – Table of Planned Actions

Section	Action	CINNTE Objective	Other Objectives (ESG, QAG1, QAG2, Strategic Plan)
1.6	Develop a formal and centralised system for collecting, monitoring and reviewing QA data relating to key processes in NUI.	All	ESG 1.7; QAG1 8.1; QAG1 11.2
2.2	Regular and clear briefings for anyone involved in governance regarding NUI governance structures and Senate's role in quality matters (through Senate induction and subsequently during Senate, or Senate committee, meetings).	CO2	
	Implement a cyclical review of QA policies and guidance.	CO2	
	Explore, with Senate, the possibility of establishing a forum or working group for joint quality activities in discrete areas of common interest.	CO2	SP Goal 1(ii)
2.3	Review the guidance on applying for RC status on an as needed basis, in consultation with Senate.	CO1	
	Improve the information provided to members of Senate regarding the process of applying for RC status.	CO1	
3.2	Publish more information about NUI quality activities: AQRs, ISER and Review Report.		SP Goal 1 (iii); ESG 1.8
	Further develop policy and guidance on QE.	CO1	
	Implement planned cycle of internal review of QA documents.	CO1	
	Integrate EDI (and sustainability) statement into all relevant QA documents.	CO1	SP Goal 1; SP Goal 4(ii)
3.3	Review of appointment of extern examiners process (and the relevant regulations) to improve efficiencies.	CO2	SP Goal 1(i)
	Monitor and explore further changes to the process to increase the rate of return of extern examiner reports with the RCs.	CO2	SP Goal 1(ii)
	Share extern examiner documentation with relevant staff in the RCs each year when appointments are made.		SP Goal 1(i)
	Revise extern examiner report form.		SP Goal 1(i)

Section	Action	CINTE Objective	Other Objectives (ESG, QAG1, QAG2, Strategic Plan)
3.3 <i>cont'd</i>	Communicate with RCs regarding programme approval timelines, particular the notification of programme development, to facilitate an efficient process.	CO2	SP Goals 1(i) and (ii)
	Review of programme review regulations to allow for substitute reviews where the process and standards are demonstrably aligned with those of NUI, and to generally avoid duplication of work by stakeholders where possible while ensuring standards are maintained.	CO2	SP Goal 1(ii)
	Revise institutional review process and regulations following IPA review to provide more guidance on the scope of institutional reviews (outlined in terms of reference) and the QIP process.	CO2	SP Goal 1(ii)
4.2	Conduct a further benchmarking exercise of higher doctorate degrees in 2023.	CO2	SP Goal 2(i); SP Goal 3(i)
	Actively encourage female applications by amplifying the programme through relevant academic networks.		SP Goal 1(iii)
	Implement review cycles for academic regulations.		SP Goal 1(ii)
	Develop and define a skills matrix for all Senate committees, including the Higher Doctorate Degrees Committee	CO1	
	Establish defined communication approach in terms of engaging with applicants and reviewers throughout the process.		SP Goal 1(iii)
	Full economic costing with a view to generating savings for NUI and applicants, which may make it more accessible.		SP 2023-2027
4.3	Development of online applications forms (for NUI Awards).		SP Goal 1(i); SP Goal 5(iii)
	Development of an Awards database.		SP Goal 5(iii)
	Rationalise awards criteria and selection processes.		SP Goal 1(iv)
	Continuous review of portfolio to ensure strategic alignment.		SP Goal 1(iv)

Section	Action	CINNTE Objective	Other Objectives (ESG, QAG1, QAG2, Strategic Plan)
5.2	Develop an online form for matriculation exemption applicants.	CO3	SP Goal 1(i) and Goal 5(iii)
5.3	Fully integrated ICT platform for Graduate (Document) Services	CO3	SP Goal 1(ii) and Goal 5(iii)
	Paperless applications and online payments for Graduate (Document Services)	CO3	SP Goal 1 (ii) and Goal 5(iii)
	Developing and implementing a robust fully digital filing system for Graduate Records		SP Goal 5(ii)
	Online registration forms for Seanad Éireann electoral register		SP Goal 4(i)
	Online application form for graduates needing to update their record, including those wishing to record a change of name.		SP Goal 5(iii)
5.4	Update programme approval and application for RC status documents to have more explicit reference to the requirements of the Code.	CO4	
	Incorporate compliance with the Code in the revision of NUI's <i>Human Rights Principles and Code of Conduct</i> (planned for 2023).	CO4	
5.5	Introduce an NUI Student Forum.		SP2023-2027
	Enhance Student Representation on Senate: Request that the Minister consider nominating a member with experience of student governance, Explore the option of co-opting a senior student representative onto Senate.		SP2023-2027
6.2	Develop a suite of bespoke practical guidance on data protection for NUI staff (to supplement existing guidelines). The immediate areas identified include working from home, data breaches and subject access requests.		SP Goal 5 (ii)
	Examine NUI's current approach to the management of GDPR compliance programme to assess how technology could assist from a record-keeping and staff training perspective.		SP Goal 5 (ii); QAG1 8.7

Section	Action	CINNTE Objective	Other Objectives (ESG, QAG1, QAG2, Strategic Plan)
6.3	Publish AQRs each year (an action from 3.2) and ensure quality documents are easily accessible to all stakeholders via the website.		ESG 1.8
	Complete work on an NUI communications strategy and related policies		SP Goal 1 (iii)
	Renovate NUI website, ensuring that information is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible, and to fully compliant with the European Union (Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Bodies) Regulations 2020.		SP Goal 1 (iii)
	Implement a more targeted approach to social media		SP Goal 1 (iii)

APPENDIX J – Information on Surveys

In total, 17 stakeholder surveys were conducted online in the data-gathering stage of the ISER development. Stakeholders were invited to participate via email with a direct link to the relevant survey.

Methodology

Questions were drafted by Manager of Academic Affairs, checked by Registrar and fine-tuned against NUI objectives for the CINNTE review and data identified as necessary for the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER). The main aim was to determine the quality of everyday operational, governance and quality assurance processes from the perspective of those engaged with them from outside NUI.

The surveys were created using MS Forms as it is an application available within the native computing system. The surveys had a mix of questions, including multiple choice questions, rating questions using a Lickert scale and a number of open questions with a free-text box for responses. The number of questions in each survey varied, depending on the nature of the relationship with NUI (one-off service user or senior manager in a recognised college) from 7 to 51. Some stakeholders will have received an invitation to participate in more than one survey, for example an applicant for a higher doctorate degree may also have acted as a reviewer for NUI Awards.

Short title	Long title	Open	Responses
NUI Senate	Survey for Members of Senate (past and present)	06-30/05/2022	21/58
NUI Staff	Survey of NUI Employees		15/17
DAB-RC	Survey on the Relationship between NUI and the Recognised Colleges	-27/05/2022	2/5
LP-RC	Survey on the Experience of the Recognised Colleges	-27/05/2022	3/3
Extern Examiners	Survey on Extern Examiner Appointment Process	26/05-26/06/2022	64/271
IPA Board	Survey of Members of IPA Board	23/05-05/07/2022	5/?
IPA (SMT)	Survey on IPA Institutional Review for IPA Steering Committee	31/05-13/06/2022	3/3
IPA (Non-Mgt SEG)	Survey on IPA Institutional Review for Non-Management Staff Engaged in the Process	13/06-27/07/2022	2/2
HDD	Survey on Higher Doctorate for <i>Prima Facie</i> and Second Stage Assessors	12-26/5/2022	35/~180

Short title	Long title	Open	Responses
HDD (Applicants)	Survey on Higher Doctorates for Applicants	12-26/5/2022	35/78
HDD (Committee)	Survey on Higher Doctorates for Committee members	16-20/05/2022	7/11
Awards (Applicants)	Survey of Stakeholders who have Engaged with NUI Awards (Applicants)	16-30/06/2022	98/664
Awards (Third Parties)	Survey of Stakeholders who have Engaged with NUI Awards (Third Parties)	22-30/06/2022	83/417
Service Users (Matric Applicants)	Survey for Stakeholders who have Engaged with Matriculation Exemption Services of the NUI:	09/05-27/07/2022	15/x
Service Users (Matric – guidance counsellors)	Survey for Stakeholders who have Engaged with Matriculation Exemption Services of the NUI	09/05-27/07/2022	15/x
Service Users (Graduate Services)	Survey for Stakeholders who have Engaged with Graduate Services of the NUI	16/05-30/06/2022	30/x
Service Users (Records)	Survey for Stakeholders who have Engaged with Graduate Record Services of the NUI	16/05-26/08/2022	19/x

X = number of people who used the service while the survey was open; all were contacted with the direct link for the relevant survey. Due to GDPR limitations, past users were deemed uncontactable and because of the nature of the business in the relevant offices the exact number of users contacted was difficult to track.

Analysis

The data for each survey were analysed by a member of the NUI SET not directly involved in the processes being surveyed; the data and analysis are presented in a report for each survey (available on request). The current MAA, the Registrar, the HASR and the Executive Administrator in the RO all analysed data on areas of activity within their current remit as they were **not** in post for the review period.

Use of Reports

The reports were shared with the relevant members of staff in NUI who reflected on the prior to contributing to the ISER.



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