[Higher Education Institution]

2021

Annual Quality Report (Institution)

Reporting Period 2019-2020

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PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Reporting Period 2019-2020

PREFACE

The **Annual Quality Report (AQR;** formerly AIQR) forms part of Quality and Qualifications Ireland's (QQI) quality assurance (QA) framework of engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The AQR provides documentary evidence of the development and evolution of each institution's internal quality system. It provides QQI with assurance that internal QA procedures have been established and are being implemented consistent with regulatory requirements.

The AQR, particularly part A, should assist with **document management** in the institutional review process and will facilitate institutions in providing review teams with procedural QA documentation in preparation for the external review process. It is an important part of the evidence base considered by external **review teams** as part of QQI's CINNTE cycle of institutional reviews, demonstrating that the institution's internal QA system is aligned with QQI's Core and relevant Sector- and Topic-specific Statutory QA Guidelines, and with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 (ESG). It enables the review team to satisfy itself of compliance with these requirements for the purpose of the institutional review process.

Each AQR is **published in full on QQI's website**, providing transparency on the HEIs' assurance and enhancement of quality to external stakeholders. (As such, institutions should ensure that their submissions do not contain any data that they consider to be commercially sensitive.) Collectively, the AQRs comprise a single national repository of quality assurance practice in Irish higher education institutions.

Each year, QQI produces a synthesis report of the key themes highlighted across the AQRs, primarily arising from Part B of the reports.

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Guidelines on Completing the Report

The AQR is aligned with QQI's Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines and with the ESG (2015). A mapping of the ESG to QQI Core QA Guidelines is included in Table 1 below; the structure of Part A of this report template aligns with the first column of the table. Additional guidance on completing this template and reference material is included in each section. Institutions should adhere to this guidance and have regard to QQI Core, Sector and Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. **The guide text within each section should be deleted before submission of the report.**

Submission Process and Timeline

The deadline for submission of the AQR each year is in February of the relevant year, with the call for submission sent to institutions in November of the preceding year. Once the call for submission has been made, QQI will provide access to QQI's provider portal, QHub, to the designated institution contact(s) to facilitate submission of the report. Through QHub, each institution will have access to an editable version of its AQR for the previous reporting period. This document can then be amended/updated to reflect any changes or developments that occurred during the current reporting period before submitting the final report to QQI.

Completing the AQR

- When completing the AQR template, all relevant colleagues in the institution should be consulted.
- Consider whether external audiences will be able to understand the terminology used (particularly local abbreviations and acronyms); it may be helpful to include a glossary.
- Aim to avoid duplication in the report – where information is relevant to more than one section, the first mention may be referenced in subsequent sections.
- Provide reflections on what worked well, but also what may have been tried but did not work.

Report Structure

Part A: Internal QA System

Part A of the AQR comprises a record of each institution's current QA policies and procedures and should provide links to those policies and procedures. Private HEIs may provide links to the policies and procedures approved by QQI during initial access to validation (IAV) or reengagement. It is the responsibility of each HEI to ensure before submission of the AQR that all links are correct and functional, and that the policies and procedures referred to are the most up-to-date versions available. Given that the AQR is submitted in respect of a discrete reporting period, it may be helpful for institutions to establish a SharePoint/OneDrive folder (or similar) for each reporting period that contains the current versions of their policies and procedures, and that hyperlinks to these versions of the documents be provided in the AQR

Part A is to be completed only if there have been **material** changes to QA policies and procedures during the reporting period. Such changes may include the approval and implementation of new polices or procedures, or significant amendments to existing ones.

Part B: Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE)

Part B of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**. Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR were progressed during the reporting period – these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

Case Studies

In each reporting period, QQI may request updates on specific thematic areas or may invite the institution to submit case studies in response to specific topics. Further, institutions may include case studies to share good practice on topics of their choosing, demonstrating QA and QE in action. In formulating case studies, institutions are encouraged to reflect on and highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination. Further guidance is provided in Part B.

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template[1]

Legislation

- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended)
- Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 (as amended)
- Technological Universities Act 2018
- Universities Act 1997

QQI Documents

Statutory QA Guidelines (QAG)

- Core QAG
- Sector-specific QAG for Independent/Private Providers
- Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies
- Sector-specific QAG for Institutes of Technology
- Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes
- Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes
- Topic-specific QAG for Blended Learning

Other QQI Policy Documents

- QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012
- QQI's Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners, 2015
- QQI Policy Restatement on Access, Transfer and Progression, 2015

Other National/International References

- European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015)
- IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision
- National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland
- Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes, 2019
- HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education
- The Salzburg Principles
- The Salzburg II Recommendations
- SOLAS Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices
- UN Sustainable Development Goals

[1] These links will be updated as further guidance documents are published.

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Table 1

Table 1 Mapping of ESG (2015) to QQI QA Guidelines (QAG)				
AQR Part A Section	QQI QAG Core Sub-section No.	QAG Core Sub-section Title	ESG Standard No.	ESG Standard Title
1.0 - *Internal QA Framework*	**2.1**	Governance and Management of Quality	1.1	Policy for Quality Assurance
	2.2	Documented Approach to Quality Assurance		
2.0 - *Programme Development and Delivery*	**2.3**	Programmes of Education and Training	1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
4.0 - *QA of Research Activities and Programmes*				
8.0 - *Monitoring and Periodic Review*			1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
5.0 - *Staff Recruitment, Development and Support*	**2.4**	Staff Recruitment, Management and Development	1.5	Teaching Staff
2.3 - *Teaching, Learning and Assessment*	**2.5**	Teaching and Learning	1.3	Student-centred Teaching, Learning and Assessment
	2.6	Assessment of Learners		
3.0 - *Learner Resources and Supports*	**2.7**	Supports for learners	1.6	Learning Resources and Student Support
6.0 - *Information and Data Management*	**2.8**	Information and Data Management	1.7	Information Management
7.0 - *Public Information and Communication*	**2.9**	Public Information and Communication	1.8	Public Information
2.0 - *Programme Delivery and Development*	**2.10**	Other Parties Involved in Education and Training	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - *Monitoring and Periodic Review*				
9.0 - *Details of Arrangements with Third Parties*			1.2	Design and Approval of Programmes
2.0 - *Programme Development and Delivery*	**2.11**	Self-evaluation, Monitoring and Review	1.9	On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes
8.0 - *Monitoring and Periodic Review*			1.10	Cyclical External Quality Assurance
4.0 - *QA of Research Activities and Programmes*	QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes			

Introduction and Overview of Institution

This is the AQR for **Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT)** for the reporting period **1 September 2019 – 31 August 2020.**

It is to be submitted by **Friday, 26 March 2021**.

The AQR has been approved by **Academic Council** and is submitted by **Carmel Brennan, Head of Academic Quality.**

Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) was established, in 1972, as Galway Regional Technical College. In January 1993, it became an autonomous institution of higher education under the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992. The Institute was legally designated an Institute of Technology in January 1998 and renamed Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology.

The Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 specified that the principal function of a college is 'to provide vocational and technical education and training for the economic, technological, scientific, commercial, industrial, social and cultural development of the State with particular reference to the region served by the college' (Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992: section 5.1).

GMIT is a multi-campus, multi-discipline, multi-award Institute serving a diverse student body, with approximately 7, 900 registered students across all campuses on programmes ranging from apprenticeship to PhD. It is a student-centred organisation, with a primary focus on learning and teaching, informed by research. It operates across a wide geographical area with campuses in Galway City (Dublin Road and Centre for Creative Arts and Media), Mayo (Castlebar), Letterfrack (National Centre for Excellence for Furniture Design and Wood Technology) and Mountbellew (Agricultural College). See HERE for a profile of the Institute.

GMIT will provide our students with a transformative university experience, empowering our graduates to fully contribute to the social, economic, and cultural betterment of society. GMIT's Strategic Plan is available HERE.

The Annual Quality Review is developed with input from across the functions of the Institute and with contribution from the student representative body. It is reviewed by the Executive Board and approved by Academic Council prior to submission.

1.0 Internal QA Framework

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)

The last two decades have witnessed some significant milestones in the institutional autonomy of GMIT, its validation by external agencies, and by implication its standing within Ireland's higher education sector. In 2004 GMIT was granted delegated authority from HETAC to make awards up to level 8 honours bachelor and level 9 taught masters degrees. In 2005 additional delegated authority was confirmed for research degrees including the awards of Ph.D. in Aquatic Science and Mechanical Engineering. In January 2020 GMIT became a Designated Awarding Body.

GMIT has a robust quality assurance framework (QAF) available HERE with a suite of Codes of Practice and Academic Polices approved by Academic Council and Governing Body. These codes and policies in addition to national requirements also embed the 2015 European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance. As a supporter of the European Higher Education Area, GMIT is committed to the implementation of the Bologna process and the Institute operates the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) where all modules are either 5 credits or multiples thereof. Additionally, all programmes were redesigned in 2004 to be aligned with the learning outcomes-based approach.

Students automatically receive the European Diploma Supplement after graduation and the Institute actively engages in European projects in relation to quality and benchmarking as they arise. Each component of the Quality Assurance Framework is accessible online and updated at least once during the 3-year lifetime of the Academic Council. GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework is implemented uniformly across all campuses. The overarching Quality Framework Policy available HERE outlines GMIT's approach to academic quality assurance.

Institute Strategy and Governance

GMIT's Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023 underpins the Institute's ambition to become a Technological University (TU) with our CUA partners IT Sligo and Letterkenny Institute of Technology. The CUA has already agreed a vision and mission for the new TU that aligns very closely with the vision and mission encapsulated in this plan. It is appropriate as we move along this new trajectory that visions and missions converge. The creation of a TU for the Northern and Western region will have a transformative impact on the population served by this new entity in producing employment-ready graduates competent in the skills in demand by business, enterprise, the professions, the community, local interests and other stakeholders.

This Strategic Plan adopts a different approach to previous plans by placing the emphasis predominantly on the student experience and lifecycle. The student enters GMIT as an individual and is shaped both personally and professionally through engagement with the GMIT community. As the student transitions to the workplace or further education the impact of the GMIT experience becomes evident through the added value they bring to their new community. Hence, the three strategic pillars of individual, community and impact permeate the structure of the plan. The three strategic pillars are subdivided into Institute Goals and thirteen Strategic Enablers are identified to support the Institute Goals. Each strategic enabler has several actions identified and it is envisaged these will change annually to reflect the dynamic and flexible nature of the higher education landscape. The plan is available HERE.

GMIT sees itself continuing to increase the provision of STEM focussed programmes at Levels 6/7 (Higher Certificate / Ordinary Degree) and Level 8 (Honours Degree), with advanced entry, exit and transfer opportunities to facilitate student choice and meeting the technology driven skills needs of Ireland. There will also be increased provision of minor and special purpose awards under programmes such as the HEA Springboard and HCI funded initiatives to support workforce up-skilling and re-skilling in line with Ireland's National Skills Strategy to 2025 and enhanced flexible/online learning opportunities. GMIT will also provide Level 9 structured Masters programmes in a flexible manner to meet the needs of our existing workforce.

GMIT aims to foster a culture of gender equality and is implementing the recommendations of the 'Report of the Expert Group HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish HEIS'. It is also working toward the achievement of an Athena SWAN bronze award, submitting an application for same in late 2020.

Governance

GMIT is governed by a Body of members representing Institute and community interests and led by the Chair. Membership is listed HERE. GMIT complies with the THEA Code of Governance for Institutes of Technology 2018 available HERE. The Governing Body carries out all its activities in accordance with its statutory functions set out in the Schedule of Matters reserved for Governing Body decisions as established by the IOT Acts 1992 – 2006 and the THEA Code of Governance of Irish Institutes of Technology. The composition of the Governing Body, as determined by the IOT Acts 1992 -2006, is the Chairman, The President and seventeen ordinary members representative of Institute and external stakeholders.

The President is the Chief Officer of the Institute and the Registrar is the Chief Academic Officer. The Institute's Executive Board, led by the President, comprises the senior management team of the Institute. Its fundamental role is to monitor and implement Institute strategy and to ensure the effective management of the Institute. Its focus is on strategic rather than operational issues.

The Management Group supports the President and the Executive Board in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of managerial actions throughout all functional levels within the Institute. Its primary role is an operational one. GMIT's Organisation Chart is available HERE and an outline of GMIT's governance structure is available HERE.

Academically GMIT is structured on a school and department basis. The schools in general have a specific disciplinary focus, for example Engineering, Science, Creative Arts, Hotel and Business. Some Schools/Centres have a multi-disciplinary focus such as the Mayo Campus with a focus on Health and Wellbeing programmes.

The Academic Council is the principal academic body of the Institute, responsible for academic standards and for formulating and recommending academic policy. All academic matters are dealt with by the Institute's Academic Council subject to the approval of Governing Body. As currently constituted the membership of the Academic Council comprises forty-seven members, twenty-four of whom are elected by the Institute's academic community, with the President as Chairperson and the Registrar as Secretary. For the purpose of undertaking its workload the Council has eight dedicated sub- committees outlined in the Academic Council Code of Practice (available HERE) which are:

- Academic Standards Committee
- Programme Amendments Committee
- Research Committee
- Collaborations Committee
- Access and Transfer Committee
- Retention Committee
- Disciplinary Committee
- Examinations Appeals Board

Representation of Learners and External Stakeholders

GMIT is proud to be recognised as a student centred organisation where the student voice is heard – all Programme Boards, which are advisory to the Academic Council, have student representation; the Students' Union is represented on the Academic Council and Governing Body, and training is provided annually to the class representatives on the Quality Assurance Framework.

Students/graduates are represented on the review panels for Academic Units, Functions and Programmes.

Stakeholders such as industry, professional and regulatory bodies, the community are integral to the operations of the Institute at all levels. Governing Body has representatives of five stakeholder groupings, with suggestions for these positions arising from Academic Council. Programme Boards consult with and involve external stakeholders in the design and review of all programmes. All programme validation panels and review panels for Academic Units, Functions and programmes include external stakeholder representation.

Research

Academic oversight and governance of GMIT's research quality assurance is the responsibility of the Academic Council mediated by that Council's Research Sub-committee. The executive management of GMIT's research activity is the responsibility of the Vice President for Research and Innovation and is administered by GMIT's Research and Innovation Office.

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

GMIT has QA procedures in place for the collaborative provision of taught programmes available HERE.

This policy document specifies Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology's (GMIT) quality assurance procedures for the collaborative provision of taught programmes, including for joint awards and transnational collaborative provision. It sets out the context, guiding principles, and framework of responsibilities, structures, and processes for:

- the establishment, approval and governance of partnerships for collaborative provision;
- the development of collaborative provision programmes, the validation or re-validation of collaborative provision programmes and awards, and the authorisation to proceed; and
- the on-going management of joint awards and collaborative provision programmes, including delivery, assessment, monitoring, periodic review, evaluation and response, and the provision of information for students and for the general public.

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

As part of its QAF the Institute has a Code of Practice on Validation and Monitoring, available HERE.

New programmes and related awards are normally proposed within the overall context of an Academic Plan for a College/Centre/Campus/School (hereafter referred to as the 'Academic Unit').

There are two separate, but interrelated elements involved in the approval of new programme proposals. Validation is primarily concerned with the academic quality of a proposal and is the responsibility of the Academic Council. However, new programmes may have resource and strategic implications for the Institute. As such, the authorisation to proceed with development, and subsequently to offer the programme following a successful validation, is the responsibility of the Executive Board.

The process is consistent with the generic quality assurance model promoted by the ESG.

Procedures are outlined for the approval of major awards, special purpose, and minor awards. Each is a multistage process. Figure 1 outlines the procedure for validation of major awards:

Figure 1 Stages in Validation of Major Awards

The approval of major awards commences with the programme proposers developing a proposal outlining the rationale for the programme and award, demonstrating the relationship to the Institute's strategy and academic plan, resource requirements and viability. If approved by the Executive Board a full proposal is developed. The development of the proposal requires research and consultation with relevant stakeholders to both justify the need for the programme and shape the learning outcomes, structure, content and delivery of the programme. Once complete the programme is reviewed by an internal panel, which is intended as a supportive process providing independent, constructive feedback and advice to the proposers, and as a preparation for external validation. The internal panel can approve or reject the programme proposal or make recommendations to amend the proposal as deemed necessary. If the proposal is approved subject to recommendations these are addressed by the proposers prior to the programme proceeding to external validation. The external validation panel

consists of discipline experts from academia and industry who review the documentation and meet the proposers to discuss the proposal. If approved, any conditions of approval must be met and recommendations addressed prior to commencing the programme. The programme is approved by Academic Council with authorisation to offer the programme provided by Executive Board and Governing Body, with the programme being granted a Certificate of Approval until the next Programmatic Review.

All stages of the validation process for new programmes requires stakeholder engagement. Beginning with initial approval and progressing to internal and external validation requires evidence of the rationale and need for the programme and of employment opportunities and potential demand for graduates. This requires conducting research with the relevant industry sector aligned to the new programme. At the external validation stage, the external validation panel always contains an experienced practitioner with necessary knowledge and expertise from the industry/services/professional sector, as appropriate.

The Validation and Monitoring code also outlines the procedures for changes to programmes through Differential Validation and minor amendments to modules which are reviewed by the Programme Amendments Committee.

Craft apprenticeships are designed nationally by SOLAS. GMIT is a collaborating provider for two craft apprenticeships – Electrical and Motor Mechanics, delivering 2 phases of each. Programme Boards for craft apprenticeships meet at least once each term. Student representatives participate on the Programme Board providing student feedback on course delivery. Apprentices also complete a course feedback form annually which is used by the Programme Board to identify areas for improvement. The theory assessments are delivered by GMIT (collaborating provider) at the time and date indicated by SOLAS (coordinating provider). All assessments are carried out in accordance with GMIT's examinations quality assurance policies and procedures. Apprentices are facilitated in reviewing their assessment papers/scripts as part of any recheck request and can request a review or appeal in line with GMIT's procedures. Assessment results are ratified at the end of term examination board meeting. A *Recording and Reporting Matters Relevant to Quality Assurance of SOLAS Apprentice Programmes Form* is completed and signed by the Head of Function and Head of School at the end of this meeting. This form is then submitted to SOLAS. Although, SOLAS, as coordinating provider, is responsible for the quality of assessments pertaining to craft apprenticeship programmes, GMIT, as collaborating provider, furnish SOLAS with detailed feedback for every assessment paper administered in GMIT. This feedback is sent to SOLAS at the end of each term. In delivering SOLAS apprenticeships GMIT adheres to the following:

The further education and training authority SOLAS is the agency with primary responsibility for management of apprenticeship nationally, working in partnership with the Higher Education Authority, Quality and Qualifications Ireland, industry, and education and training providers across further and higher education. Ireland is actively seeking to expand its apprenticeship provision, and since 2016 educational and industry consortia can seek to develop new apprenticeship programmes from levels 5 to 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications. GMIT is the lead partner on the Manufacturing Engineering apprenticeship (Levels 6 and 7) working with a number of other Institutes of Technology and the Irish MedTech Association to develop and deliver same. These programmes were developed in accordance with the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes and GMIT's own quality assurance policies and procedures for new programme validation.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

Attracting, retaining and supporting students are key objectives of GMIT's Quality Assurance system. The Institute's policy on Access, Transfer and Progression is available HERE. The code outlines access routes, entry requirements, transfer mechanisms and withdrawal procedures for GMIT programmes. It allows for the appeal of access, transfer and progression decisions. It provides for admission of students through alternative entry routes targeted at students with disabilities and learning difficulties, mature applicants, and young applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Institute publishes its Garda Vetting for Students Policy HERE so that prospective students and students are aware of the necessity, process and implications of the vetting process for identified programmes. Information on GMIT's awards with reference to the National Framework of Qualifications is published annually in the student prospectus.

GMIT has been successful in broadening access to its programmes with significant growth in participation from students with disabilities and students from target socio economic groups being testament to the success of its access strategy.

GMIT also seeks to support student access through its policy on the Administration of the Student Assistance Fund and the Student Support Fund (available on the Student Hub) and through its policy on the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Examinations and Assessments, available HERE. GMIT offer a range of pre- and post-entry student scholarships, many targeted at increasing access. Details are available HERE. They include 13 Access scholarships funded by the Institute and 1916 scholarships which are funded by the HEA under PATH 2 in collaboration with the West / North West Cluster - NUI Galway, Letterkenny Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Sligo. These scholarships are designed to encourage participation and success by students from sections of society that are significantly under-represented in Higher Education.

The institute actively encourages applications to the Institute on the basis of recognised prior learning and its policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning is available HERE. In collaboration with its partners in the Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA), GMIT has developed an on- line tool to facilitate prospective students wishing to apply on the basis of recognised prior learning. The tool is accessible HERE.

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

GMIT became a Designated Awarding Body (DAB) in January 2020 and as such has the authority to make its own awards and set standards for those awards. GMIT make awards within the National Framework of Qualifications. GMIT's Academic Council adopted the QQI generic and discipline standards. Programme learning outcomes (PLOs) for all awards are aligned with those standards when developed. The appropriateness of the level of programme learning outcomes is considered by the external validation panel, and subsequently whether the assessments and students' performance in those assessments meets the relevant standards is confirmed by each programmes' External Examiners.

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

As part of its QAF the Institute has a Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy, available HERE. In addition, the Institute has assessment guidelines which are made available to all staff through the Office of the Registrar SharePoint.

At GMIT learning and teaching is a core activity of the institute. Through its academic programmes and approach to learning, teaching and assessment, the Institute will ensure that all graduates have a comprehensive understanding of relevant disciplines, professional knowledge and skills appropriate to their awards.

The need for a formal strategy for Learning, Teaching and Assessment arises from a number of challenges and opportunities for the Institution, which include:

1) The commitment to providing a high-quality learning experience for all students.
2) The importance of developing high quality graduates with robust transfer and adaptable skills.
3) The transformation of Irish society, its economy and its cultural and social diversity.
4) The internationalisation of education and the impact of globalisation.

The Institute's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2019-23) is focused on six themes aligned with the Institute's Strategic Priorities as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Themes

The Institute has a detailed annual implementation plan for the Teaching & Learning Strategy which is regularly monitored.

Good practice in teaching and assessment is shared annually at the Teaching & Learning Showcase and each year one or more lecturers are presented with the Presidents' Award for Teaching Excellence.

As part of its QAF the Institute has a Code of Practice on Student Assessment: Marks & Standards, available HERE. The Code of Practice is divided into: Section 1, which deals with the regulatory context of assessment and the general guiding principles; Section 2, which deals with roles and responsibilities; Section 3, which deals with procedures and regulations, and Section 4, which contains appendices.

GMIT monitor each programme on an ongoing basis to ensure:

- that the programme intended learning outcomes are being attained by students;
- the continuing appropriateness of the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes;
- that programmes remain current and valid in light of developing knowledge in the discipline and practice in application; and
- that issues arising in relation to the academic quality of programme design, delivery and assessment are identified and addressed on a timely basis.

The responsibility for managing and ensuring the quality of academic processes in accordance with Institute policy lies with the Heads of Academic Units and with Programme Boards. Individual members of staff are required to co-operate with the quality management procedures within the academic structures. The Institute review and evaluate the effectiveness of programme monitoring processes on a regular and systematic basis.

The Registrar is responsible for the overall integrity of the assessment process. Assessment is a core element of the responsibility of lecturers who act as internal examiners. External Examiners with relevant disciplinary knowledge are appointed to programmes to ensure standards and to benchmark GMIT standards against that of other Institutions. The role of the External Examiner is outlined in Marks and Standards and in the Policy and Procedures governing external examining in GMIT which is available HERE.

Academic Integrity is core to the operation of the Institute. Guidelines relating to education about, prevention and detection of plagiarism are outlined in the Plagiarism Policy available HERE. A range of resources to support students in avoiding plagiarism are provided on both the library website and the Student Hub, and all first-year students complete a unit on Academic Integrity as part of their Learning Innovation Skills module. The Institute is represented on the National Academic Integrity Network and has set up its own Academic Integrity Workgroup to develop and coordinate a plan to ensure a culture of academic integrity exists within the college.

The increased use of technology in teaching and learning and the expansion of online and blended programmes is reflected in the development of new policies related to teaching and learning. The Institute's Social Media Policy available HERE was recently supplemented by a Digital Learning Charter available HERE which outlines the obligations that students and staff have to each other as part of a digital community and provides a framework for managing our communication and behaviour in a digital world. The use of data derived from teaching and learning to advantage students is governed by the Learning Analytics for Student Success policy available HERE. GMIT is committed to using data to enhance student success in an open and transparent manner. The digital footprint that students leave as they engage with online services such as Moodle can be an invaluable source of information for institutions as they aim to increase retention, progression and completion rates, protect students' welfare and enhance their depth of learning. Even more importantly, from a student perspective, Learning Analytics has the potential to provide students with constructive and timely feedback on how they are performing and provide them with the information they need to take appropriate action. The Institute's Recording of Lectures Policy available HERE describes the Institutes policy in relation to recording classes and making those recordings available for students.

Whilst recognising that it is not always appropriate to record teaching sessions it acknowledges the benefit of lecture recordings as a learning support.

Work Placements or other forms of professional practice are increasingly being embedded in programmes of study. The Institute's QAF has evolved to reflect this. The Professional Practice policy available HERE is a principles based document guiding the use of professional practice learning opportunities within GMIT programmes. Professional Practice provides a unique and valuable learning experience for students to enable them to gain the transferable generic skills that employers seek. Within the context of GMIT, Professional Practice is defined as Work Placement or Work Based Projects. Benefits of Professional Practice include the integration of employability skills into the curriculum, providing students with the opportunity to apply disciplinary knowledge and skills and improving communication between GMIT and outside organisations. A Student Fitness to Practice Policy available HERE has been developed in recognition of the Institute's duty of care to the public as well as to support students in fulfilling programme requirements and helping to prepare students for future professional practice in the discipline areas of Nursing, Health Sciences and Wellbeing. This policy document with embedded procedures is intended to be followed in instances where student fitness to practice concerns have been formally raised. It also describes the roles and responsibilities of relevant parties in managing student fitness to practice concerns. This document should be read in conjunction with the necessary policies in GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework (QAF).

GMIT is very active and engaged with a range of national networks advocating for best practice in teaching and learning, and the development of educational resources that benefit both staff and students. National networks where GMIT is represented in teaching and learning development include:

1. National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Ireland (www.teachingandlearning.ie).
2. Educational Developers Network in Ireland (www.edin.ie).
3. ALT, Association of Learning Technology, UK (https://www.alt.ac.uk/).
4. Online Learning Consortium in the US (https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/).
5. ILTA, Irish Learning Technology Association.
6. RPL Practitioner Network, Ireland.
7. THEA T&L Network (previously LIN).

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

Library

GMIT Library consists of four campus libraries namely Dublin Rd, CCAM, Mayo Campus and Letterfrack Campus. In addition to over 130,000 print items the library offers access to numerous electronic information resources available on a 24/7 basis and operates a very efficient interbranch (between campuses) and document supply service (external libraries) ensuring optimisation of the collection.

Each branch offers study spaces, networked computers and Wi-Fi throughout. The Dublin Road library also has a range of special rooms including an IT room, Training room, Silent Study room, Independent Learning room, an Archive room and a Copy room for copying, scanning and printing. The library also has a suite of fifteen group study rooms which are available for booking by students for student group work. The diversity in library services ensures that all users are catered for, both novice and knowledgeable. Ongoing promotion is maintained through the regular marketing channels and newsletters and guides are available online via the library webpage.

The Information Skills module developed by the library staff in Galway is embedded in the Learning and Innovation Skills module to support first year students. Users with special needs make extensive use of the Independent Learning Unit. This room is equipped with specialist hardware and software for students with visual, reading or physical disabilities.

The library also publishes online help and support guides via LibGuides for subject-focused library information services at: http://libguides.gmit.ie. The library continues to develop online tutorials and podcasts to support the learning and teaching of GMIT particularly online/distance education students. These resources are available on the library website at: https://library.gmit.ie/support/tutorials/ The institutional repository, Research@THEA, available at: https://research.thea.ie/ contains over 355 full text items based on GMIT research output. Subject Librarians for each school are available to help identify and meet the information needs of all users to deal with in-depth reference questions and to support the informational needs of all users.

Student Transition

All students are provided with a Programme Handbook or equivalent which includes *inter alia* the programme learning outcomes, programme outline, assessment strategy and schedule, regulations, contact details for lecturers and module descriptors.

Orientation and induction are provided for all students. An institute-wide 'Welcome Programme' is delivered over the first five weeks of the first semester, familiarising first year students with the college and student supports and aiding the transition to higher education. College-wide inductions are also provided for transfer and international students. In addition, Programme Boards provide programme level induction for new students. All first-year students complete the Learning Innovation Skills module which aims to provide knowledge and skills required to succeed in college. A peer mentoring programme, PASS, is also provided as widely as possible, to support students in their first year in higher education.

The Student HUB is an internal communication platform providing students with a wide variety of information and resources in the following general categories:

- Your Studies
- Your IT
- Your Campus
- Your Health & Wellbeing
- Your Student Life
- Your Finance
- Your Future
- Your Rights and Responsibilities

Student Retention

The retention and progression of students is a priority for GMIT. GMIT has approved a policy for student retention along with an associated implementation plan, available HERE. Initiatives include an extended induction programme - First5Weeks, Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS), the Learning and Innovation Skills module and a new Transitions module aimed at easing the transition for students new to third level education.

GMIT produces a retention report annually which allows for the monitoring and analysis of student progression and retention across all programmes and stages. In an effort to support students and improve retention, GMIT is developing new supports for students on an ongoing basis. Examples of recent initiatives in this regard are the establishment of the Maths Learning Centre and the Academic Writing Centre supported through the GMIT library. Given the increasing number of students studying remotely these services are available onsite or online.

Access Service

The Access and Disability Service provides a range of supports and services to students with disabilities, mature students and students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. These supports and services are designed to ensure students have equality of access, participation and outcome. Underpinning the work of the Access and Disability Service is the recognition that certain categories of students experience barriers, and all services and supports provided are designed to address these barriers through the assessment of individual student needs, and the provision of appropriate academic, technological and financial support. The Institute has recently joined both the HEAR and DARE schemes.

The Access and Disability Service provides a range of supports and services for students applying to GMIT and attending full-time and part-time courses within the Institute. It facilitates equality of access and participation for all students. It supports students with physical and sensory disabilities, students with significant ongoing illness, students with mental health difficulties, students on the autism spectrum and students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Supports offered include alternative induction, alternative print format, radio aids, accessible class location, personal assistants, interpretation services, note takers, mentoring, one-to-one academic support, assistive technology, examination support and examination accommodations. The Access and Disability service also provides supports for mature students.

The organisation and delivery of support services for students is documented in the Access and Disability Service Procedures and Reference Manual (Version 5: Updated September 2015). This sets out the aims and objectives of the service, the target group of students, and procedures for the approval and delivery of supports and services. This document is distributed to all staff delivering supports and is shared on the internal staff drive. The document also includes as reference the 'HEA Guidelines for the Fund for Students with Disabilities' and includes the Procedures for the Recruitment and Employment of Support Workers'.

GMIT's policy on the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Examinations and Assessments is outlined HERE.

Diversity

GMIT is supportive of a diverse student body and has a Student Equality Policy available HERE which promotes equality of opportunity for all students and a Gender Identity and Gender Expression Policy available HERE in which GMIT recognises the range, type and nature of gender diversity within its community and supports an individual's gender identity and gender expression, ensuring that students & staff experience a positive, safe and non-discriminatory environment within the Institute.

IT Infrastructure

Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) are an integral part of all academic activities in GMIT. Learning is complemented by Moodle (Learnonline) which GMIT uses as its learning management system. This allows students and staff to view course information including lecture notes and other resources. It allows students to be assessed and/or upload assignments online, and for lecturers to monitor student engagement with the module. Each student has access to the full Microsoft Office suite on up to five personal devices along with all the features of Office 365. The Institute is trialling 'Flexilabs' which allows students access to the software they require on a virtual basis on a whenever and wherever they require it basis.

There are 42 designated IT laboratories and approximately 1,100 networked PCs available for students across the Institute for use in classes and for research and assignments. Wi-Fi is available in many locations on each campus.

The Learning Centre on the Galway Campus incorporates the Library and the Information Technology (IT) Centre. The IT Centre has 188 workstations, which are available to students for research, project work, assignments, on-line training and learning and tutorial support. The IT Centre also has a fully equipped training room, a multimedia studio, and technical support facilities.

Student Services

GMIT has a comprehensive range of student services aimed at supporting students throughout their studies in the college:

- The Career Development Centre - helps students make informed career decisions and identify occupations that would suit their interests, personalities and skills.
- Counselling Services at GMIT – offers students the opportunity to discuss any issues of concern to them with a trained professional in a confidential, non-judgemental service.
- Student Health Unit – a low cost and confidential physical and mental health service provided by a team of doctors and nurses.
- GMIT Chaplaincy - assists and supports students, by providing care, helping to build a sense of community and supporting the spiritual life of the student.
- Financial Assistance – GMIT administers two funds to assist students who find themselves in financial difficulty.

Extra-Curricular Activities

The Students' Union operates a wide variety of Clubs and Societies at GMIT promoting community, personal development, and student involvement. A diverse range of sports are catered for with sports facilities available on each campus in many instances in conjunction with local clubs.
Volunteering is supported through an annual volunteering fair and rewarded through the GMIT President's Award for Volunteering (Thrive award). The Thrive Award was developed to recognise and acknowledge the valuable contributions students make to their communities whether that is their home community, the community where they live whilst at college or within the college community.

International Learners

International students are supported by the International Office, as follows:

- Support prior to arrival, as well as induction & orientation events once they arrive and register with the institute.
- Providing visa and immigration support to international students, including arranging appointments with the local Immigration Office
- Providing various levels of supports for international students in conjunction with the Students' Union and the Student Services Team (including the Institute Chaplain).
- Providing career advice to international students in collaboration with GMIT's Career's Office – This incorporates support understanding the various stay back options available to international students along with the application process for employment permits
    - Arranging various activities for international students throughout the academic year including day trips, celebration of international occasions and outdoor activities and sports to encourage socialisation and familiarisation with life in the region.

CUA partner IT Sligo are piloting a free English language course called 'The Native Speaker Experience'. The resource is free to students in all CUA campuses if English is not their first language and focuses on writing and communication skills plus reading and speaking.

Online and Blended Learning

GMIT's Blended and Online Learning Policy (available HERE) is intended to support GMIT in developing flexible learning opportunities and providing access to higher education. It also guides GMIT in managing the potential risks posed by challenges and complexities in the arrangements for blended and online learning programmes and to safeguard academic standards. GMIT has more recently approved a CUA policy (available HERE)

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

As part of its QAF the Institute has a Code of Practice on Research, available HERE. This Code of Practice specifies the Institute's policy and procedures for the admission, registration, transfer of registration, and assessment of students who embark on programmes leading to the award of degrees by research and thesis or published work. It follows good practice for the organisation of quality assurance for research degrees in Ireland. It outlines and specifies the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the postgraduate research process, viz. the student, Supervisors, Examiners, College/Schools, the Research Office, the Vice- President for Research and Innovation, and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs & Registrar / Registrar's Office.

Research ethics for research programmes are covered in the Research Ethics Policy available HERE and for taught programmes are covered in the Taught Programmes Research Ethics Committees Policy available HERE. The latter recognises the research activity that is being conducted in undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes and allows for research ethics approval be considered and granted, if appropriate, by local committees.

Members of the GMIT community developing research funding proposals submit these for budgetary evaluation to the institute's Finance function and for approval to the Research and Innovation Office. Dependent on the grant submission systems of the funding agencies these approvals, and approvals of IP and Technology Transfer aspects, are mediated through the agency platforms.

Online training for postgraduate research supervisors is provided via the Epigeum module "Supervising Doctoral Studies" which is implemented via GMIT's Virtual Learning Environment. The module supports postgraduate research supervisors in developing their supervisory practice, and in ensuring the best possible environment and outcomes for postgraduate research candidates. The course offers comprehensive, flexible and engaging training in the core principles and practices of postgraduate research supervision to equip new and more experienced supervisors to support their candidates' development into independent researchers.

GMIT has also maintained an individual institutional subscription to Epigeum module on "Research Integrity" since 2015. The module provides comprehensive, institution-wide research integrity training and is also implemented via GMIT's Virtual Learning Environment. It identifies the principles and responsibilities required of every researcher throughout the research process, from planning through to publication, providing practical advice on dealing with complex issues. The programme provides funders with evidence of comprehensive training in the responsible conduct of research at GMIT, building confidence that researchers are working to the highest integrity standards.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

Recruitment

GMIT recruits teaching staff in line with the selection procedures included in the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 and GMIT's procedure for the Review of Recruitment and Selection Decisions. All staff must have a qualification of at least the level of which they are teaching. While L8 is the minimum requirement for a lecturing position with a level 9 desirable, an increasing number of new hires have a PhD qualification. Interview panels are chaired by the Governing Body Chair or nominee. Other panel members include the President or President's nominee and Head of School/Function. In addition, external expertise is provided by a nominee from the Higher Education sector and a relevant industry nominee. The Institute aims to achieve gender balance with all panels. Interview training for managers is regularly offered to those involved in recruitment panels.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion

GMIT is committed to the principles of equality and diversity in the recruitment, development and support of staff. A new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy was approved in December 2020 available HERE. This policy broadens the scope previously covered in the Equality Policy to include all staff and students and applicants for jobs and seeks to actively promote and mainstream EDI through GMIT. GMIT has operated a minimum 40% gender balance protocol for all interview boards since approval by Governing Body in January 2018. Unconscious bias training contributes to improved decision making on interview boards. This has been provided for staff through the EDI Office since October 2019.

The Institute has an EDI implementation plan to further improve EDI within the Institute. The Institute has committed to take positive actions to ensure inclusivity in the recruitment process, through advertising, use of different recruitment channels and strong messaging on welcoming applications from diverse groups. The collection of gender-disaggregated data is essential to track progress in disciplines/function where there is gender underrepresentation and GMIT has committed to establishing a mechanism for capturing, reporting and retaining data sets on gender and intersectionality across staffing levels, recruitment and promotion processes, composition of committees and boards, and outreach activities. There is a plan to review all HR policies and procedures, including recruitment documentation, to ensure that language used is inclusive, gender-sensitive and supportive of applications from diverse cohorts. GMIT applied for Athena SWAN Bronze award accreditation in December 2020.

Management

There is sectoral support for developing capacity at executive level. A Senior Executive Development Programme funded by the HEA through THEA was delivered by Advance HE. It covered leadership, agile strategic leadership, strategy development and implementation.

Researchers employed on research projects each report to a nominated Principal Investigator within their project. Principal investigators of projects undertaken within GMIT's Strategic Research Centres report to the designated Centre Leader. Principal investigators of projects undertaken outside GMIT's Strategic Research Centres report to the relevant academic Head of Department / School. The Leaders of GMIT's Strategic Research Centres each report directly to the Vice President for Research and Innovation.

Continuing Professional Development

GMIT is committed to supporting the continuous professional development of all staff with a view to providing the best possible learning environments for its students. A general induction for all staff is provided as is a Teaching & Learning Induction for relevant staff annually. The Institute actively encourages staff to be research active and supports staff engaged in Level 9 and 10 research programmes both financially and through its Scheme for Thesis Write up at PhD Level.

GMIT have designed a flexible blended learning MA in Teaching and Learning with elements of this offered annually to staff. In addition to supporting staff in their engagement with accredited teaching development modules, GMIT has developed two new online learning courses for staff that incorporate Digital Skills Badges. The programmes are designed for independent learning and flexible engagement. On completion of the online courses, staff can choose to progress further to the MA in Teaching & Learning.

GMIT also supports staff in attending conferences and provides a schedule of professional development workshops as part of its Staff Development Week each year. GMIT's policy on Continuous Professional Development is available HERE.

Communication with Staff

The Institute communicates with staff using a range of modes. The President holds all staff online meetings. The Registrar's Office communicates changes to policies/procedures annually to all staff via email or cascades messages down through line managers. Policies, procedures and other resources are available to staff on the SharePoint sites of each function including the Registrar's Functional area. School, Department and Function meetings are held regularly to share information.

New staff are provided with the GMIT staff handbook and the link to the online staff induction site which is hosted on the Institute's staff SharePoint.

Staff Wellbeing

GMIT signed up for inclusion in the Healthy Ireland Healthy Campus Charter and Framework by which

GMIT agrees to promote health and wellbeing throughout the Institute's mission, strategy and policies, wherever possible. By appointing a working group and providing funding to the group GMIT has adopted a strategic approach to achieving this on campus. The voluntary Healthy Campus Committee consists of representatives from various departments, from GMIT's remote campuses, and students. The committee aims to combine resources and expertise from within GMIT with external partners to make GMIT a healthier and happier place to work and study.

Staff Development regularly organised workshops and/or information sessions related to staff wellbeing and health.

All staff have access to an Employee Assistance Scheme (EAS) which is a confidential counselling service providing support to employees and their family. The EAS is available 24/7, 365 days a year covering numerous topics such as counselling, infertility & pregnancy loss, elder care support, parent coaching, international employee support, legal information, financial information and more.

6.0 Information and Data Management

GMIT utilises a number of information systems to both support student learning and manage information.

Virtual Learning Environment

Moodle is used as the Institute's virtual learning environment (VLE) supporting student learning through information provision, learning resources and its assessment facilities. Online lectures are delivered through MS Teams. 'Landing Pages' are created for each programme through which the student accesses the Moodle pages for each of their modules. The landing pages provide general information relevant to the programme of study.

Academic Planning Process

GMIT has developed a robust academic planning process which allows us to predict and plan for future student enrolments. An academic planning template has been developed to accurately forecast student numbers based on historic student retention data. All relevant functions (including Academic Units, Buildings and Estates, HR, Computing Service, Academic Affairs and Student Services) are involved in the academic planning process to ensure a holistic approach to academic planning whereby staff recruitment, infrastructure development and procurement are linked to the academic plan to ensure that predicted student numbers can be accommodated and supported.

To assist in the academic planning process and in the development of realistic and viable academic plans, the Institute has developed a series of reports to assist those involved in the academic planning process. These include target student numbers, planned vs. actual intakes in prior years, retention rates by programme and stage, summary charts of various student cohorts, etc.

Predictive models aid in decision making and planning for first year intakes. A model for the prediction of first year intake has been developed based on historic analysis of application numbers and accepts over several years. This model has proved helpful in planning resource requirements in advance of CAO offers and accepts.

GURU

Following a review of examination processes, GURU, a secure system for the submission, transmission and review of examination material has been introduced. GURU collaborated with DCU in the development and roll-out of GURU and subsequently this system has been adopted by other Higher Education Institutes. In addition to secure submission, transmission and review, the system also supports External Examiner nominations and allows for better management of External

Examiners and their annual reports. The system allows for monitoring of External Examiner review of assessment material and report submission and facilitates replies annually to externs from the Heads of School addressing any issues raised.

Statistics

GMIT utilises the data from the Student Record System (Banner) to provide relevant and timely information to the Institute's managers. A template has been developed for weekly monitoring of student enrolments by Academic Units against the academic plan to ensure that we are meeting our student enrolment targets.

An interactive dashboard to display HEA SRS data relevant to decision makers has been developed. The dashboard allows managers to access the required information easily and to view trends in student statistics, graduate statistics, etc. over time.

GMIT annually produces retention reports which are broken down by programme stage. A report showing trends overtime is also available. This data is used by programme boards in their annual Programme Board reports, by School/Campus executives in developing their retention strategies and by the Retention sub-committee of Academic Council in developing Retention policy.
To enhance the usability of these reports the Institute has identified targets for different programme stages and has developed a traffic light system to indicate how programme stages and Schools/Campuses are performing. Programme stages which are identified as performing less well are identified and discussed when School Executives meet with the Retention Committee.

Student Retention

To complement the Institute's Annual Retention Reports a suite of module performance reports have been developed for use by Programme Boards. The purpose of these reports is to review the performance of cohorts of students in their assessment in each module in an exam sitting, and over time. These are not retention or progression reports, but rather focus on one of the factors which impacts on student retention and progression i.e. their success or otherwise in their module assessment. The module performance reports available are as follows:

- Module Performance by Examination Sitting
- Programme Specific Module Performance
- All Programmes Module Performance
- Result Category Crosstab
- Trends in Overall Module Performance

Unit Costing

A process for the reconciliation of timetabled teaching hours vs. contracted staff hours for each programme has been developed through the extraction of data from the Timetable System and reconciliation to staff contract hours as recorded on the HR system. This informs our Unit Costing.

Student Engagement

Student engagement and satisfaction is measured, annually, through StudentSurvey.ie, formerly the Irish Student Survey of Engagement (ISSE). GMIT has been active in increasing response rates each year. A summary report of the feedback received is prepared and circulated to staff and students while a more detailed analysis is provided to the Executive and to each Academic unit. A number of new initiatives including placement on BIS programme, more site visits on construction programme, a tailored LIS module on Science programme, upgraded labs, revised library website and development of an assessment strategy have been implemented at GMIT as a result of student feedback.

To make the feedback from StudentSurvey.ie more accessible, a data model was developed to visualize student feedback. The visualisation includes benchmarking of GMIT scores against the scores of all Institutes of Technology both at index and individual question level. It also allows for the comparison of ISSE scores between academic units within GMIT, benchmarking of discipline areas, trends in scores over time and easy access to responses to free text questions.

Graduate Outcomes Survey

GMIT participate in the annual HEA "Graduate Outcomes Survey" which is used to improve higher education policy and outcomes for future graduates from all higher education institutions in Ireland. The data obtained from this survey is centrally defined by the HEA in consultation with HEIs, and locally managed by HEIs. The Graduate Outcomes Survey provides consistent data across institutions in the following areas:

- Data on graduate qualifications and employment both within Ireland and overseas
- Relevance of employment to area of study
- Data on graduate further study
- Data on graduate unemployment and unavailability for work
- Graduate perceptions of the quality and relevance of their higher education experience.

Within, GMIT, the Careers Service manages the Graduate Outcomes Survey project and produces a customised report with GMIT specific outcomes. This report includes analysis of GMIT graduates,

those employed and those seeking employment, in addition to levels of participation in further study and training. The survey gives information concerning the salaries, region of employment and migration patterns of graduates. It also provides feedback on the student experience at college and course level. This report is presented annually to Academic Council and published for Schools and programme boards to consider and make improvements as relevant. A dashboard to display GMIT output from the survey has been developed. Data from the survey is decoded and displayed in this dashboard which is accessible by all staff via the Office of the Registrar SharePoint site.

Module/Programme Database

Academic Module Manager, the module and programme database used by GMIT, is used to create and store module and programmes. The newest version allows for recording of new delivery modes, collecting information on exit awards, and allowing display of programme themes and assessment matrices. It provides for better reporting for Heads of Department in relation to delivery, and clearer programme documents for review panels. It is planned that it will link to the public website when that is redeveloped.

Programme Boards

Programme Boards have access to and consider several reports on an annual basis to inform programme improvement:

- Student Retention
- Student Performance
- External Examiner
- Student Feedback (from the QA3 end of year survey)

As part of Code of Practice No. 2 (Validation and Monitoring, each Programme Board is required to complete an annual report. The Head of School compiles all these reports into a School report, which is presented to Academic Council for consideration and review.

Academic Council Reports

Each year several reports are presented to Academic Council including the following:

- Exam Results
- Award Classifications
- Student Retention
- External Examiner
- Student Exam Appeals
- Disciplinary Committee Outcomes
- School Annual Reports
- Graduate Outcomes Survey
- External Examiner Feedback

Data Management

GMIT holds and processes personal data about many different types of people such as its current, past or prospective employees, applicants, students, alumni, suppliers, contractors, members of the public, etc. The Institute processes this personal data to carry out its business and administrative functions and to comply with statutory requirements. This personal data is subject to data protection legislation, specifically the GDPR and Data Protection Acts. GMIT is committed to a policy of protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals with respect to the processing of their personal data. GMIT's Data Protection Policy is available HERE. Data subjects have a number of rights under GDPR. GMIT's Data Subject Rights Procedure is available HERE.

GMIT is a body established for a public purpose and thus falls within the scope of the Freedom on Information (FOI) Act 2014. The FOI Act 2014 provides the following statutory rights:

- A legal right for any person to access records held by GMIT
- A legal right for individuals to have personal information relating to them amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading
- A legal right for any person to obtain reasons for an act of GMIT which affects them and in which they have a material interest.

GMIT's Guide to Freedom of Information is available HERE.

Key Performance Indicators

In the development of its compact with the HEA, GMIT has identified a number of KPIs that are monitored regularly in preparation for the strategic annual dialogue with the HEA. As part of our ambition to become a TU, the three merging partners developed a common CUA Compact objective with a key focus on the metrics required for designation.

7.0 Public Information and Communication

The main platform for communication with the general public – locally, nationally and internationally is GMIT's website – www.gmit.ie The website has been designed as an external facing platform, and as such provides information on (inter alia) :

- GMIT's programmes of study
- Admissions, Registration, Fees and Scholarships
- Guidance for particular cohorts including international, Further Education, students with disabilities
- Student Services
- Institute Facilities
- Student Life
- Campuses and Schools
- Research and Innovation
- Governance
- Quality Assurance

The Marketing Officer uses several social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram to communicate key messages to prospective students and other stakeholders.

Prospective Students

The Institute publishes both a printed and on-line version of its prospectus which gives details of the programmes on offer in the Institute along with admission requirements, selection criteria and qualifications awarded, etc. The on-line prospectus is available HERE.

GMIT's School Liaison Officer visits schools and attends career fairs to provide information on GMIT and its programmes. Open Days/Evenings are held during the year targeting particular cohorts of students to provide information on programmes of study and student life in GMIT. The Institute has developed a 24/7 Virtual Open Day which can be accessed HERE. Recently, the college has also been delivering live open events and school talks through an online platform.

Employers

Amongst the information available for Employers the Careers Office provide details of how they can support employers seeking to recruit students HERE. The Institute has published an Employability Statement available HERE profiling how the college develops employability within our students.

All GMIT graduates receive the European Diploma Supplement, part of the Europass framework transparency tools after graduation. Details available HERE.

Research

The website is used to communicate with prospective research students and with industry who may be seeking research. It provides an overview of GMIT's research centres and the activities and services provided by GMIT's enterprise centres (iHubs). Details of GMIT's Technology Transfer Office is included as is the GMIT Campus Company Policy and Spin-Out Procedure (available HERE) and Intellectual Property Policy (available HERE).

Quality Assurance

GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework is available on the public website HERE in addition to being published internally on the Office of the Registrar SharePoint. The reports from all validations and reviews – programmatic, academic unit, function and institute – are also published on the public website HERE.

The Code of Student Conduct outlines the general rights of students and what they can expect and what is expected of them in relation to Learning, Teaching and Assessment. This includes, for example, the provision of full information on programmes, an outline of module content, adequate notice of, and feedback following, assessments etc. Most of this information is provided to the student in a Programme Handbook, details of which are included in Code of Practice No. 2. The Code of Student Conduct is available HERE.

At GMIT, the Academic Module Manager is a central repository of all approved programme documents and module descriptors. It is planned to make module descriptors accessible via the public website in the future.

Irish Languages Act

Tá GMIT tiomanta do chur chun cinn agus d'fhorbairt na Gaeilge ar champas. Tá mar sprioc againn chomh maith raon agus cáilíocht na seirbhísí atá ar fáil i nGaeilge don phobal a mhéadú. Tá breac-chuntas le fáil ar ghealltanais GMIT i leith na Gaeilge i Scéim Ghaeilge GMIT 2019-2022. Leagann an Scéim seo amach raon na réimsí ina bhfuil an Institiúid tiomanta d'fheabhas a chur ar na seirbhísí

dátheangacha sna blianta atá amach romhainn. Ullmhaíodh an Scéim seo faoi alt 11 d'Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003.
(GMIT is committed to the promotion and development of the Irish language on campus. We also aim to increase the range and standard of services available in Irish to members of the public. GMIT's commitments to the Irish language are outlined in the GMIT Irish Language Scheme 2019-2022 . This Scheme sets out a range of areas in which the Institute has committed to improving bilingual services in the years ahead. This Scheme was prepared under section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003.)

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

GMIT implements a range of actions to ensure the quality of its programme delivery and management. In accordance with GMIT's policy on Programme Validation and Monitoring available HERE, the Heads of Academic Units and Programme Boards are responsible for managing and ensuring the quality of academic processes. The Head of Academic Unit is responsible for strategic planning, implementation and co-ordination of academic and related processes, staffing and other resource requirements, programme development, and management of change. The Head of Department has responsibility for all programmes/awards in his/her Department including, the day-to-day delivery of programmes, timetabling, and ensuring the ongoing quality and continued development of programmes.

A Programme Board is established for each programme, consisting of all lecturers on the programme(s), the Head of Academic Unit, the Head of Department and at least two students per stage (with gender balance where possible) of the programme. The Programme Board monitors the design, delivery, academic standards, students' performance and academic development of programmes and awards. Formal meetings of the Programme Board are held at least three times during the academic year. Programme Boards consider *inter alia* student feedback, External Examiner reports, graduate surveys, retention reports, and will annually devise a continuous assessment schedule, and review programme design, delivery and assessment as part of planning for the forthcoming year.

In addition to providing feedback through the Programme Board, students are provided with the opportunity to evaluate their programme of study and support services through module evaluation forms, and an end of stage Programme Survey. They also have an opportunity to participate in StudentSurvey.ie, Ireland's national student engagement survey available HERE.

Every five to seven years, programmes undergo Programmatic Review to ensure and assure *inter alia* that required academic standards are being attained; that programmes and awards remain relevant and viable; that student needs including academic and labour-market needs are addressed; the quality of programmes and awards is enhanced and improved; and public confidence in the quality of GMIT's programmes and awards. The Programmatic Review Policy is available HERE. Programmatic Review involves a self-evaluation review and an external peer review process. The Programme Board involves a range of stakeholders in reviewing the programme including *inter alia* students, graduates, employers and industry/professional bodies.

A review of each Academic Unit (AU) is scheduled prior to a programmatic review of programmes in that AU. The Policy for the Strategic Review of Academic Units is available HERE. The main elements of the review are a self-evaluation and an external peer review process. The review of Academic Units focuses on the performance of the academic unit since the last review and involves an environmental review and a self-evaluation identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the unit and plans to deal with the opportunities and challenges facing it. The findings from the review of academic units feed into the programmatic review process.

Reviews are also undertaken of Support Services and Facilities, the policy for which is available HERE. The main elements of the review are a self-evaluation and an external peer review process. This review of support services focuses on the contribution of each of the services and how they can be developed to enhance the quality of provision to learners, staff, and all stakeholders.

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) carry out an Institutional Review of GMIT on a cyclical basis. Institutional Review is an element of the broader quality framework for Institutes of Technology undertaken by QQI. It is interdependent on and integrated with a wider range of QQI engagements: Quality Assurance Guidelines, GMIT's Quality Assurance Procedures; Annual Institutional Quality Reports (AIQR); and Dialogue Meetings; DAB Status and Sectoral Protocols. Institutional Review is a key and critical element of Quality Assurance. It evaluates the effectiveness of institution-wide quality assurance procedures for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of education, training, research and related services the institution provides. The Institutional Review measures institution accountability for compliance with European standards for quality assurance, regard to the expectations set out in the QQI quality assurance guidelines or their equivalent and adherence to other relevant QQI policies and procedures as established in the lifecycle of engagement between the institution and QQI. Institutional Review explores institution enhancement of quality in relation to impacts on teaching, learning and research, institutional achievements and innovations in quality assurance, alignment to the institution's mission and strategy and the quality-related performance of the institution relative to quality indicators and benchmarks identified by the institution. GMIT's Institutional Review Policy is available HERE.

External Experts

External experts are appointed to provide an independent expert overview and input into the validation of new programmes and the reviews of programmes, academic units and functions.

In the case of External Examiners, they must have an award at least equivalent to the level of the award that they have responsibility for external examining. The Head of Schools, in consultation with Programme Boards, will nominate the External Examiners to the Registrar for ratification, having

regard to the requirements of the programme, and discipline area, the need for independence, and avoidance of conflicts of interest. External Examiners may be from academia or industry and are approved by Academic Council.

Independent reviewers also participate in programme validations, programmatic review, academic review and function reviews. The nominees should have the necessary academic and professional expertise to engage in the review. They are nominated by the Registrar following consultation with the relevant Head of Academic Unit/Function. Ideally panels are gender balanced. The move to online panels has allowed the involvement of more international panel members, and this will be continued even after the return to onsite panels.

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	19
Awarding bodies	-
QA bodies	-

1. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) in General Nursing BSc (Hons) in Psychiatric Nursing
Date of accreditation or last review	28th November 2018
Date of next review	2022/23

2. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Engineers Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	B.Eng (Hons) Civil Engineering Level 8 B.Eng Civil Engineering Level 7 B.Eng (Hons) Energy Engineering Level 8 B.Eng Energy Engineering Level 7 B.Eng (Hons) Mechanical Engineering Level 8

	B.Eng Mechanical Engineering Level 7 B.Eng (Hons) Software and Electronic Engineering Level 8 B.Eng Software and Electronic Engineering Level 7 https://www.engineersireland.ie/Professionals/Membership/Become-a-member/Accredited-third-level-courses/Find-accredited-programme/
Date of accreditation or last review	06/06/2019
Date of next review	2023

3. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Construction Management (Level 7) BSc (Hons) Construction Management (Level 8) https://d7.ciob.org/sites/default/files/Overseas%20Accredited%20Jan21%20v2.pdf?_ga=2.95230239.2010875753.1612430841-1297416483.1612430841
Date of accreditation or last review	05/05/2016
Date of next review	2021

4. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) civil engineering (Level 8) https://d7.ciob.org/sites/default/files/Overseas%20Accredited%20Jan21%20v2.pdf?_ga=2.95230239.2010875753.1612430841-1297416483.1612430841
Date of accreditation or last review	05/05/2016
Date of next review	2022

5. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	The Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) in Architectural Technology (Level 8) BSc in Architectural Technology (Level 7) https://www.riai.ie/careers-in-architecture/how-to-become-an-architectural-technologist
Date of accreditation or last review	Nov 2016
Date of next review	2022

6. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) in Architectural Technology (Level 8) https://architecturaltechnology.com/education/study.html?q=galway&search_by=location
Date of accreditation or last review	17/05/2019
Date of next review	2021

7. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) in Quantity Surveying & Construction Economics (Level 8) https://scsi.ie/students/studying/where-you-can-study/#1603289706160-c95f180e-784b
Date of accreditation or last review	23/11/2017
Date of next review	2023

8. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB

Name of body:	Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) in Quantity Surveying & Construction Economics (Level 8) http://www.ricscourses.org/Course/#Establishment=Galway-Mayo%20Institute%20of%20Technology/Country=Ireland/
Date of accreditation or last review	23/11/2017
Date of next review	2023

9. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE)
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) in Architectural Technology (Level 8) BSc in Architectural Technology (Level 7) BSc (Hons) in Quantity Surveying & Construction Economics (Level 8) B.Eng (Hons) Civil Engineering (Level 8) B.Eng Civil Engineering (Level 7) BSc (Hons) Construction Management (Level 8) BSc Construction Management (Level 7) https://cbuilde.com/page/cabe_academic_partners_and_accredited_courses
Date of accreditation or last review	23/11/2017
Date of next review	2022

10. Type of arrangement (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Teaching Council
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Education (Design, Graphics and Construction)
Date of accreditation or last review	2014
Date of next review	2022

11. **Type of arrangement** (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Institute of Biomedical Science, UK
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc (Hons) in Medical Science https://careers.ibms.org/students/accredited-degree-courses/undergraduate-non-uk-courses/
Date of accreditation or last review	2016
Date of next review	2022

12. **Type of arrangement** (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Institute of Physics
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Physics & Instrumentation (Honours - Level 8) GA783. BSc Physics & Instrumentation (Level 7) GA773 Institute of Physics Register of Recognised Courses: https://www.iop.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/register-recognised-courses.pdf
Date of accreditation or last review	Annual (July 2020)
Date of next review	Annual (July 2021)

13. **Type of arrangement** (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc Forensic Science and Analysis https://www.csofs.org/Accredited-course-search
Date of accreditation or last review	September 2020
Date of next review	June 2022

14. **Type of arrangement** (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	National Strength & Conditioning Association (NSCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	NSCA Recognised Education Partner (BSc) BSc Sports & Exercise Science Journal of Strength & Conditioning Research (JSCR); Strength & Conditioning Journal (SCJ)
Date of accreditation or last review	2019
Date of next review	2022

15. **Type of arrangement** (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	United Kingdom Strength & Conditioning Association (UKSCA) UKSCA Recognised Education Partner (MSc)
Programme titles and links to publications	MSc Strength & Conditioning Professional Strength & Conditioning Journal
Date of accreditation or last review	2020
Date of next review	In perpetuity (based on a member of staff is accredited with the UKSCA)

16. **Type of arrangement** (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting Bachelor of Business in Accounting & Financial Management (Mayo Campus) Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting (Mayo Campus) https://www.accaglobal.com/ie/en/help/exemptions-calculator.html
Date of accreditation or last review	Feb 2021
Date of next review	Dec 2025

17. **Type of arrangement** (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Accountants Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting Bachelor of Business in Accounting & Financial Management (Mayo Campus) Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting (Mayo Campus)
Date of accreditation or last review	Feb 2018
Date of next review	Dec 2022

18. **Type of arrangement** (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body:	CPA Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting Bachelor of Business in Accounting & Financial Management (Mayo Campus) Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting (Mayo Campus) https://www.cpaireland.ie/Become-A-Student/Exemptions/Courses/Exemptions-Results?col=16
Date of accreditation or last review	
Date of next review	2021 (CPA Syllabus under review)

19. **Type of arrangement** (PRSB/awarding body/QA body)	
Name of body:	CIMA
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting (Mayo Campus) Bachelor of Business (Hons) Bachelor of Business in Business Information Systems

	Bachelor of Busines in Rural Enterprise and Agri-business https://www.cimaglobal.com/Starting-CIMA/Starting-CIMA/Exemptions/Exemption-Search/Galway-Mayo-Institute-of-Technology-GMIT-9552/
Date of accreditation or last review	2020
Date of next review	2023/2024

9.2 Collaborative Provision

Definitions:
QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012 defines **collaborative provision** as a process that occurs where two or more providers are involved by formal agreement in the provision of a programme of higher education and training.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines '**joint award**' as a single award made jointly by two or more awarding bodies

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (as amended) defines '**linked provider**' as a provider that is not a designated awarding body but enters into an arrangement with a designated awarding body under which arrangement the provider provides a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body.

Type of arrangement	Total number
Joint research degrees	-
Joint/double/multiple awards	2
Collaborative programmes	5
Franchise programmes	-
Linked providers (DABs only)	-

1. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Joint Award
Name of body (/bodies):	Ghent University (BE), University of Pierre and Marie Curie (FR), University of Western Brittany (FR), University of the Algarve (PT), University of Oviedo (ES), Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (IE), University of the Basque Country (ES), Polytechnic University of Marche (IT), University of Bergen (NO)
Programme titles and links to publications	International Masters in Marine Biological Resources www.imbrsea.eu
Date of last review	2018
Date of next review	2022

2. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Joint Award
Name of body (/bodies):	NUI Galway
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Science, Technology and Engineering (Foundation Studies) https://www.gmit.ie/science/foundation-studies-diploma-science-engineering-and-technology-joint-nui-galway-and-gmit

Date of last review	18/06/2018
Date of next review	2022

3. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Joint Award
Name of body (/bodies):	NUI Galway
Programme titles and links to publications	Certificate in Business Studies (Foundation Studies) https://www.gmit.ie/business/foundation-studies-diploma-business-galway
Date of last review	18/06/2018
Date of next review	2022

4. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Consortium-led Apprenticeship (Post-2016) GMIT is the co-ordinating provider.
Name of body (/bodies):	Collaborating providers include: IMDA Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) Institute of Technology Sligo (IT Sligo) Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)
Programme titles and links to publications	BEng in Manufacturing Engineering (Apprenticeship) Higher Certificate in Manufacturing Engineering (Apprenticeship) https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/about/docs/beng-manufacturing-engineering-apprenticeship.pdf
Date of last review	17th February 2017
Date of next review	2022

5. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Provision
Name of body (/bodies):	Irish MedTech Association
Programme titles and links to publications	Higher Diploma in Medical Technology Regulatory Affairs
Date of last review	11th November 2020

Date of next review	2022

6. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Provision
Name of body (/bodies):	Europus
Programme titles and links to publications	Ard-Diplóma i nGaeilge Fheidhmeach agus Aistriúchán Higher Diploma in Applied Irish and Translation https://www.gmit.ie/humanities/ard-dioploma-i-ngaeilge-fheidhmeach-agus-aistriuchan
Date of last review	2014
Date of next review	2022

7. Collaborative provision (Type of collaborative provision)	Collaborative Provision
Name of body (/bodies):	Mountbellew Agricultural College
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Agriculture and Environmental Management (L7 and L8) https://www.gmit.ie/agri-science/bachelor-science-hons-agriculture-and-environmental-management Bachelor of Business in Rural Enterprise and Agri-Business (L7 and L8) https://www.gmit.ie/agri-business/bachelor-business-hons-rural-enterprise-and-agri-business BEng in Agricultural Engineering (L7 and L8) https://www.gmit.ie/mechanical-industrial-engineering/bachelor-engineering-hons-agricultural-engineering
Date of last review	2014
Date of next review	2022

9.3 Articulation Agreements

Definition:
Per the IHEQN Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision, an **articulation agreement** may be defined as a process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advance standing to a subsequent stage of a programme of a degree awarding body. These arrangements are subject to a formal agreement between the parties.

Articulation agreements - Total number	

1. **Articulation agreement:**	
Name of body (/bodies):	St Lawrence College, Kingston, Ontario, Canada
Programme titles and links to publications	BBs Hotel and Catering Management (Bachelor of Business in Hotel and Catering Management | GMIT) Hospitality Diploma
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	June 2020.
Date of next review	June 2024
Detail of the agreement	This agreement provides opportunities for student study for Canadian and Irish students plus degree completion opportunity for SLC students in GMIT. The latter is part of the IOT Ontario Colleges agreement which first began in 2012.

2. **Articulation agreement:**	
Name of body (/bodies):	Lingnan Normal University, Guangdong province, China.
Programme titles and links to publications	BA Hons Culinary and Gastronomic Sciences GMIT and Bachelor Hons Food Science and Food Engineering, Lingnan Normal University, China.
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	March 2020
Date of next review	March 2025
Detail of the agreement	This agreement provides multiple opportunities for students in culinary and gastronomic sciences. The agreement is part of the Chinese Ministry of Education joint programme process and provides advanced entry routes for Lingnan students to GMIT BA Hons Culinary and Gastronomic Sciences programmes. In addition, GMIT faculty will visit Lingnan annually to deliver modules and there are opportunities for reciprocal international work placement which is a key component of the award.

[Higher Education Institution]

2021

Annual Quality Report (Institution)

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT

Reporting Period 2019-2020

PART B: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Guidelines on Completing Part B

As outlined in the general guidelines for this template (p.5), **Part B** of the AQR documents and captures QA activities, developments and enhancements undertaken by institutions **during the reporting period** and their **impact**.

Insofar as is possible, institutions should demonstrate in Part B how plans set out in the previous AQR submission were progressed during the reporting period – these may be plans linked to strategic objectives, to reengagement advices, or to institutional review recommendations.

Part B of the AQR is an opportunity for self-reflection and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of QA activities over the reporting period. Institutions are encouraged to reflect both on what worked well and what did not work well, and to consider impact measures, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence (metrics, benchmarks and feedback/judgement) in how they led to specific QA improvements and enhancement.

Part B provides evidence of quality improvement and enhancement and impact[2] of QA activities within the totality of an institution's QA system.

Section 1 pertains to internal quality assurance implementation and developments since the previous reporting period.

Section 2 deals with institutional analysis of IQA enhancements and impacts including activities undertaken in respect of academic integrity, and the enhancements and impacts resulting from same.

Section 3 relates to IQA developments and plans for the next reporting period.

Section 4 provides an opportunity for institutions to illustrate IQA in action through case studies in relevant thematic areas.

Institutions are invited, if they wish to do so, to use case studies to demonstrate quality in action and to highlight areas of practice for dissemination at any point in this part of the report.

Case Studies

QQI recommends that written case studies should:

- Be between half a page and two pages in length;
- Relate to a specific time- and subject-bound issue;
- Include an introduction that sets out a brief overview of contextual matters;
- Include any relevant supporting data and data analysis;
- Include links to any sources cited;
- Include a clear concluding paragraph with overview of key outcomes/learning.

Although case studies will generally be in written form, institutions may also provide links to audio-visual/multimedia case studies. QQI does not prescribe a format for case studies.

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[2] The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education have considered impact and measures leading to development and improvement specifically in terms of teaching and learning. See: https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/NF-2020-Insights-from-Practice-About-Impact-in-Teaching-and-Learning-web-ready.pdf.This is a very useful reference, though impact in the context of this report should be considered

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1 Strategic QA Updates

This section is divided into three topics:

A. QA updates related to the implementation of GMIT's Strategic Plan
B. QA Framework Updates
C. GMIT's QA response to COVID-19

A. QA updates related to the implementation of GMIT's Strategic Plan

GMIT's Strategic Plan for 2019-23 adopts a different approach to previous plans by placing emphasis predominantly on the student experience and lifecycle. The students enter GMIT as an individual and is shaped both personally and professionally through engagement with the GMIT community. As the student transitions to the workplace or further education the impact of the GMIT experience becomes evident through the added value they bring to their new community. Thus, the strategic pillars of individual, community and impact permeate the structure of the plan. The Institute's goals relate to:

- Learning
- Wellbeing
- Fundamental Disciplinary Knowledge
- Skills for the 21st Century Citizen
- Diversity Arising from Opportunity, Equality and Inclusion
- Innovation Through Cross-Disciplinary Working
- Research Leadership in Niche Areas
- A Healthy Community Rooted in a Positive Culture
- Destination of Choice for Students and Staff
- Best Prepared Graduates in the Region
- Research and Innovation Excellence to Support Regional Development
- Support for Enterprise
- An Integral Part of the Social, Cultural and Economic Ecosystem in the West of Ireland

To support these goals the Institute identified enablers with associated actions. Below is a summary of updates relating to relevant enablers:

1. Programmes with an applied focus
   All major awards developed during the reporting period have engaged with industry in the design, development and evaluation of their programmes. Two new programmes in particular stand out in relation to their applied focus namely those pertaining to Automation and Robotics and Civil Engineering.

The Higher Certificate and BEng in Automation and Robotics were developed in partnership with Thermoking with strong input from other medical device manufacturers in the region. The programmes are work-based programmes designed for people working within manufacturing companies. They provide upskilling opportunities for staff to contribute to the increasing demands of a high-tech manufacturing environment. Thermo King are making available their new automation lab which will be used for the OEM training element, for automation and project modules. The Institute's newly formed Centre for Graduate and Professional Development were instrumental in developing and maintaining linkages between industry and the academic department.

The Higher Diploma in Civil Engineering is a work-based learning programme which seeks to provide graduates from the current GMIT level 8 BEng in Civil Engineering with a shorter and better-defined route to the registered professional title of Chartered Engineer (CEng). The proposed programme has a strong focus on attributes required by engineers including research, communication, teamwork, ethics in addition to application of engineering, engineering problem solving and design skills.

The development of new programmes continues to be strongly, but not exclusively driven, by HEA initiatives namely Springboard calls and also this year by the Human Capital Initiative (HCI). The Regional Skills Forum influence the identification of key skills gaps in addition to national and regional reports and organisations such as the Irish Medtech Association. There is evidence of continued development of postgraduate programmes and CPD programmes, with less development of new undergraduate programmes targeted at the traditional CAO cohort.

2. Online Learning

The Institute's emphasis on developing an online environment to support teaching and learning continues apace with an increasing number of new programmes validated for online or blended delivery. GMIT's involvement in the CUA iNote project has been instrumental in the upskilling of staff in relation to pedagogic and technology upskilling, particularly through the digitaled.ie platform where staff can assess their digital capabilities and access a range of resources and courses to support their online teaching.

A customised version of the OSCQR Course Design Review scorecard was developed to provide a course-level quality rubric for reviewing and improving the instructional design and accessibility of online courses based on online best practices. The rubric includes 50

instructional design and accessibility standards to cross-check against course design to aid to identify and target aspects of online courses for improvement. The GMIT tool is packaged as an interactive traffic light checklist and includes embedded links to video explanations and tips for each standard within the rubric. The Teaching & Learning Office has established a Digital Academic Champion network. The Digital Champions undertook a digital training programme to enable them to mentor their colleagues in online delivery in each academic department. 18 champions across 14 academic departments are established and are currently funded under the iNOTE project.

The closure of the college in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic escalated the development and use of resources related to online teaching and assessment. This is dealt with in more detail later in this report.

The Academic Writing Centre provides one on one writing support sessions for students. Given the increasing number of online and blended programmes the Centre began a pilot of online delivery to extend the reach of the service. In semester one of the academic year 2019/2020, the normal operation of the Academic Writing Centre was onsite; however, in response to a request that the services of the Academic Writing Centre be also made available to students of blended learning programmes who were rarely onsite, the Centre adapted and extended its provision, and initiated a pilot of online delivery (via Teams) in addition to the existing onsite delivery. Because of this, the Centre was well-placed to transition smoothly and readily to full online functionality in March 2020. The service offered by the Centre, then, rather than become compromised by the impact of the pandemic expanded to counter it, and students were able to continue to benefit from the support of the Academic Writing Centre through the disruptive early period (and beyond) of the migration of third-level education to online delivery.

3. Employability and Professional Practice

Many new programmes have embedded professional practice through work placement or applied projects. An Institute wide Work Placement Team worked throughout the period on the development of guidance, templates and forms to assist those involved in the management of work placement. The work placement team also acts as a supportive network for sharing of experiences and good practice.

In 2020 GMIT launched a new Online Careers Module which aligns with the Institute's Employability Framework (click HERE). The module develops the learner professionally and personally and equips them with the skills and knowledge to enable them to plan for and achieve their career goals.

An online video interview service for GMIT students was introduced which allows students undertake a mock interview and receive a comprehensive review report from a career's professional with individual feedback and pointers on interview performance. Students are tutored by the careers service through the process of preparing for Interviews prior to completing their online mock interview.

The Careers Service initiated a new innovative Strengths Profiling Programme of Development (SPMD) for GMIT students in 2020, matching student's identified strengths to a range of employment sectors. To date 478 GMIT students have completed their Strengths Profile. The careers service administered and delivered interactive workshops using of innovative online assessments and a variety of reflective and engaging activities bringing students through a SELF model of Self- awareness, Exploration, Launch and Flourish. The aim of the programme was to allow GMIT students the opportunity to identify their unique strengths and explore how their strengths align with a career sector and employment.

GMIT developed an Employability Statement (Click HERE) using the six key components set out by the Higher Education Authority. The Integration and embedding of the Institutes Employability Framework includes five key elements: Career Development Learning, Experience, Degree Subject Knowledge, Generic Skills and Emotional Intelligence. GMIT aims to ensure that students have developed long-term employability skills so that they can become the best prepared graduates in the region. The employability statement was completed by a team of internal and external stakeholders chaired by the GMIT Careers Adviser. Work has also been completed on an CUA employability statement based on the GMIT model. This CUA employability statement was developed in conjunction with CUA Careers Officers and CUA Heads of School and now forms part of the application document for a new Technological University.

GMIT participate in the annual HEA "Graduate Outcomes Survey" which is used to improve higher education policy and outcomes for future graduates from all higher education institutions in Ireland.
The data is obtained through a survey, centrally defined by the HEA in consultation with HEIs, and locally managed by HEIs. The Graduate Outcomes Survey provides consistent data across institutions in the following areas:

- Data on graduate qualifications and employment both within Ireland and overseas
- Relevance of employment to area of study
- Data on graduate further study
- Data on graduate unemployment and unavailability for work

- Graduate perceptions of the quality and relevance of their higher education experience

The GMIT Careers Service manages the project and they produce a similar report to provide an indication of the destination of Graduates of GMIT following graduation. The report includes analysis of those employed and those seeking employment, in addition to levels of participation in further study and training. The survey gives information concerning the salaries, region of employment and migration patterns of graduates. It also provides feedback on the student experience at college and course level. This report is presented annually to Academic Council and published for Schools and programme boards to consider and make improvements as relevant. This year, the collection of this data was undertaken by the HEA which will allow for improved benchmarking. A dashboard to display GMIT output from the survey has been developed. Data from the survey is decoded and displayed in a dashboard accessible by all staff via the Office of the Registrar SharePoint site.

The Education and Work-Integrated Learning (eWIL) project utilises HEA multi-campus funding to to prepare the necessary pedagogic and infrastructural support systems to transition to year-long industry placements for students in stages 3 and 4 of furniture degree programmes (approx. 50 students per year) run from the Letterfrack campus, part of the School of Design & Creative Arts. During the industry placement, students will predominantly be based within partnering SMEs and be able to take any remaining modules through an online / blended format. The project aims to support staff in transitioning to blended learning, develop infrastructure to manage placements, develop strategies to monitor learning, develop strategic partnerships and provide mentor training with host companies. It is envisaged this will open new markets for life-long, flexible and work-based learning within the wood and furniture manufacturing industries. In 2019-20 much progress was made on researching best practice, stakeholder engagement, staff training and adoption of tools. Formal links were established with the industry representative body, Irish Wood and Furniture Manufacturing Network (IWFMN). Following research, it was decided to adopt PebblePad for Higher Education ePortfolio platform to support students and supervisors in managing industry placement. A tailor-made version of the platform for GMIT Letterfrack industry placement students called LEAFS (Learning, Experience and Assessment of Furniture Skills) is currently being developed by the project team. While COVID-19 impacted the progress of the eWIL Project, particularly from March-July 2020, the project team was ideally placed to support the necessary rapid transition to online delivery by GMIT. The Project Manager and Educational Technologist also supported the institute-wide transition project called the BOLT initiative (Blended Online Learning Transition) and provided a range of supports for academic staff across the school of Design and Creative Arts.

The degree programmes that serve the furniture industry have been redesigned to accommodate students spending stages 3 and 4 in industry. This enhances the attractiveness of the programmes for students and unlocks new work-based markets which will be engaged during the coming year to recognise prior learning and provide bridging studies where required.

4. Innovation in Teaching

   Staff are continuing to engage with Teaching and Learning programmes within the Institute with 60 staff enrolled on elements of the Masters in Teaching, Learning and Assessment in 2019-20. Over 100 workshops/seminars have been delivered on Teaching, Learning and Assessment development supporting the academic community professional development and programme design strategies. These included workshops on gamification, digital open badges, creating videos, online learning employability toolkit, UDL, H5P, visual pedagogies in addition to a Microsoft Digital Discovery Day to learn about the suite of applications available from the Microsoft Education (e.g. Flipgrid for Assessments/MS Whiteboard for Collaborative Learning, Teams, Sway, Planner, Video Editing, Data Visualisation for Power BI) and how to support students online with accessible content.

   The Institute's annual teaching and learning showcase continues to highlight innovation and good practice and acts as an effective vehicle to disseminate same.

   Assessment guidelines for lecturers were approved by Academic Council in November 2019 and communicated to staff. The guidelines were designed with both new and existing staff in mind and provide guidance for development of programme and module learning strategies as well as dealing with a range of implementation issues.

   The Teaching and Learning Office developed a dedicated staff portal (SharePoint site) and launched the service in January 2020. The site is a gateway to resources and updates on teaching, learning and assessment; digital capabilities; student engagement and leadership; innovative projects such as iNOTE Digital Teaching and Learning; strategic HE partnership developments; postgraduate HE teaching development courses; the National Forum publications; and links to a range of online CPD courses and toolkits to enhance teaching and the student learning experience. New guides for staff were developed on Online Assessment; Alternative Assessment Strategies and Writing Learning Outcomes.

   A series of Learning Enhancement Projects (LEP) for GMIT under the SATLE National Forum for Teaching and Learning Enhancement were undertaken including the following:

   - An online Careers Module – rollout and embedding in GMIT.

- The development of the Professional Development Framework (PDF) Portfolio module (5 ECTS) that aligns with the national badge on PACT.
- Research and design stage of a Civic Engagement online course for all GMIT students.
- Design Thinking Resources to support a MSc degree programme.
- A visual pedagogy online learning resource.
- A Learning Analytics online course.
- Peer learning/student engagement strategies resources/online guide.

Projects supported by the National Forum funding 2019 include:

- NutriPD: Growing Professional Competence in Nutrition – aligning Nutrition Educators in HEIs in Ireland to the national professional development framework and developing graduate competencies to meet accreditation standards. https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/project/nutripd-growing-professional-competence-in-nutrition-aligning-nutrition-educators-in-heis-in-ireland-to-the-national-professional-development-framework-and-developing-graduate-competencies/
- Embedding Sustainability across the Curriculum and Beyond - Stimulating Active Citizenship for Possible Sustainable Futures. https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/project/embedding-sustainability-across-the-curriculum-and-beyond-stimulating-active-citizenship-for-possible-sustainable-futures/
- Data Analytics to Inform and Enhance Learning (DAnIEL) https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/project/data-analytics-to-inform-and-enhance-learning-daniel/

5. Coherent Research Themes

Strategic objectives to identify and cultivate emerging research activity, and to encourage and support staff engagement in the teaching and supervision of post-graduate students have been well advanced. The first President's Award for Research Excellence was presented at the conferring ceremony in 2019. Dr Sharon Duffy, a PhD graduate of Medical & Engineering Technologies Centre now employed by Cerenovus, won the GMIT Presidents' award for research excellence.

The President's Awards for Research Excellence and Impact have since been expanded to more broadly recognise the outstanding contributions of GMIT staff to the achievement of GMIT's mission and the commitment of our research community to excellent, relevant, innovative and impactful research in all disciplines.

Categories of Award now include Early Career and Established Researcher Awards, each recognising research excellence commensurate with career stage, and a Postgraduate Research Supervision Award, recognising excellent postgraduate research supervision and contributions to the early career development of postgraduate research students.

Development of more structured Masters programmes that meet TU criteria for research designation has been majorly advanced by the validation of two new programmes in GMIT and more at development stage.

Expansion of Level 10 Delegated Authority will now focus on the autonomy and authority arising from designation as a TU.

6. Collaborative Culture

GMIT continues to work towards its goal of becoming a Technological University (TU) with its Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA) partners of IT Sligo and LYIT. Significant progress was made towards achieving the criteria necessary for designation during 2019-20. In addition, a group to draft the submission was established and held a number of meetings. Specific details on progress is contained HERE.

Over the course of the 2019-2020 academic year the CUA appointed a new firm of consultants, who have previously worked with TU Dublin, to assist in progressing towards a TU.

The first colloquium of the three Governing Bodies was held in Donegal in November 2019. The agenda included Presentations from the three Presidents on

- Progress since 2012
- Impact of TU on the region
- Governance and Management

  The keynote address was provided by Mr William Beausang, Assistant General Secretary, Department of Education and Skills. An outcome from the colloquium was the commitment to establish a sub-committee of the three Governing Bodies.

A mechanism for Trade Union engagement has been agreed, and the steering group is being restructured to reflect union representation. The CUA steering group convened a meeting with senior members of DKIT executive as part of their strategic planning process. Research and Online Teaching symposiums were held with attendance and input from across the CUA.

The Thrive Award was developed and launched in September 2019 to recognise and acknowledge the valuable contributions students make to their communities whether that is

their home community, the community where they live whilst at college or within the college community. All these voluntary roles are in addition to the workload of the college course they are studying and to recognise these contributions to civic society GMIT launched in the Thrive Award in September 2019.

The Access and Participation Office has actively engaged with local structures and NGOs such as the Ballybane Taskforce, LCDC Unemployment Taskforce Group and Galway City Partnership to promote access to GMIT. Furthermore, GMIT has developed a strategic partnership with Foróige in relation to the implementation of an evidence-based College Mentoring Programme targeting students experiencing disadvantage. GMIT has been an active member of the West-North West Cluster and participated in regional forums and symposiums relating to PATH. In 2019-20, 16 students were supported through the PATH II 1916 Bursary with over 150 second level students participating in pre-access PATH III programmes during the same period. GMIT has hosted visits on Campus from 30 young people and parents from local communities through partnerships with Foróige, Galway City Partnership and the Ard Family Resource Centre during 2019/20.

The GMIT Careers Service developed an Innovative Transitioning to College initiative in collaboration with the Access, ATS (Attract Transition and Succeed) Coordinator and Schools Liaison Officer. This new Transitioning Programme used the Online Strengths Profile psychometric assessment tool which involved matching a student's identified strengths to a range of third level courses available within GMIT. This innovative online strength assessment tool was further enhanced using customised reflective and engaging worksheets which allowed the secondary school students the opportunity to identify their unique strengths and explore how their strengths align with a career sector and college course. The students had a follow-up workshop which consisted of working in small groups with a GMIT group leader where they completed a model of development activity worksheet, listing three strengths, three career sectors and three possible GMIT courses that might suit their strengths. The students then were introduced to a panel of current GMIT student speakers talking about their courses. The panel highlighted the importance of researching courses / modules, key motivators, interests, and student life.

The Teaching and Learning Office and the School of Science were awarded Vietnam Ireland Bilateral Education Exchange (VIBE) funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Irish Embassy in Vietnam to deliver a teaching and learning development programme to Nong Lam University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and to provide consulting and guidance on the development of a Female Food Entrepreneurship programme for Nong Lam University. An MoU was finalised with the University in January 2020.

Established in 2019 and emerging from CCAM School of Design and Creative Arts, the *Radius Project* engages with a variety of community and social organisations within a 2km radius of the Centre for Creative Arts and Media (CCAM) campus. The project aims to identify how GMIT can become more relevant to and be a creative catalyst for community engagement in the surrounding area, and how can GMIT and local bodies and communities, collectively and creatively build trust and working relationships to develop and sustain change within these communities. In 2019-20 fourteen community working partners worked on four 'live' *Radius Projects* working with specific community groups.

- An MA student worked with the That's Life community in the Brothers of Charity, developing a collaborative project on identity and portrayal of people with Intellectual Disability. Jill's project was the overall winner of the 2020 RDS Taylor Art Award. Click HERE for details.
- Working closely with the East Galway branch St Vincent de Paul and shop staff in the former furniture shop Merchants Road Galway the *Radius Project* created a platform to reimagine and design this former commercial space into a more contemporary retail and social space. Issues such as sustainability materials and 'upscaling' were central to the design process. 3rd Year Students from Industrial, Graphic and Textile Design, supported by academic staff engaged in a series of consultations and conversation with the many stakeholders in this project and these have shaped and formed the final design for this project. Work was expected to be completed by June 2020 but has been postponed due to Covid.
- Two MA students creatively engaged with the Transition year students/community at Galway Community of College to explore through creative means the ideas of diversity, inclusion and challenges to access higher education in this diverse and disadvantaged community.
- Saolta Arts, based in University Hospital Galway aims to support arts programming at seven hospital sites across five counties, along the western seaboard with view to developing a fully inclusive Arts and Health service. Working closely with the board at Saolta the *Radius Project* is building trust, connections and partners to develop sustainable arts and health related projects with Merlin Park Hospital.

During 2019-20 a number of MOUs were signed deepening relationships with international colleges, student placement sites and local industry (See Table 2).

MOU	Type
Durban University of Technology	Educational/International
Lingnan Normal University, China	Educational/International
Maejo University (Thailand)	Educational/International

MOU	Type
School of Visual Arts, New York.	Educational
The Partner Services – BOC Roscommon	Educational
The Partner Services – Central Mental Hospital	Educational
Community Care PHN	Educational
Cuan Caithriona	Educational
Galway Hospice	Educational
RUH	Educational
Marian House – West of Ireland Alzheimer Foundation	Educational
Maryfield Nursing Home, Athenry	Educational
HSE Mayo Mental Health Service	Educational
Bon Secours Galway	Educational
Galway Clinic	Educational
HSE Linn Dara CAMHS	Educational
The Mac Bride Unit	Educational
CAMHS Inpatient Unit, Merlin Park, Galway	Educational
Mayo University Hospital	Educational
Ballina District Hospital	Educational
Peter McVerry Trust	Educational
Sacred Heart Hospital, Castlebar	Educational
St. Augustine's CNU	Educational
Swinford District Hospital	Educational
Western Care Association	Educational
Thermoking, Galway	Educational

Table 2 MOUs signed 2019-20

7. Infrastructure and Facilities

During 2019 to 2020 significant progress was made across a number of large- and small-scale projects in GMIT managed via the Buildings and Estates function.

- Planning permission was received for the new €25m PPP STEM building which was progressed from client briefing stage through statutory certification stage through to tender preparation stage.
- The €4.25 million Enterprise Ireland iHub extension was started in 2019 and safely and successfully completed in Q4 2020.
- Approximately €0.8m was spent in 2019 and again in 2020 on minor works improvements across the Galway, CCAM, Mayo and Letterfrack campuses.

- Considerable work was undertaken implementing Building and Estates physical responses to Covid-19.

A 'Cubbie Sensory Hub' was installed by Student Services to promote participation and inclusion for all students with sensory processing needs. This recognised the fact that some students including those with autism may experience sensory overload in a busy college environment and provides an opportunity to retreat and recharge.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the Computing Service function successfully provisioned & distributed over 1200 laptop/mobile devices to staff and students, ensuring all devices were managed and protected using GMIT's device management portal. All modules were linked automatically through Moodle and MS Teams for live online video delivery. Complementing that, services to support staff to work remotely were launched and a solution was provided for student remote access to over 1300 on campus labs PC's no matter the power or type of their computing device. In addition, numerous bespoke and course specific systems were integrated to accommodate the sudden shift to online learning.

The Academic Affairs Systems & Reporting Office continued to develop and improve academic information systems and their use. Two GMIT staff members participated on the User Requirements group as part of the sectoral SRMS Banner 9.0 upgrade project. The nomination of External Examiners via the Guru system was implemented. Version 3 of Academic Module Manager was implemented which included a content management system allowing greater control over the development of documentation for validation panels.

The library continued to improve its ICT infrastructure and services. Additional wi-fi points, improved bandwidth, and additional PCs were installed. Study rooms were improved with a renovation in Mayo library and additional study rooms with LCD screens and wireless connectors on Dublin Road. A new self-issue unit purchased for Dublin Rd campus and a touchscreen kiosk and recording booth were installed in Letterfrack library. Support tutorials were turned into podcasts, and LiveChat was instigated to provide for instant for instant responses to queries from staff and students. Lecturers can now use Reading lists to update all their reading material for all their modules. The library collaborated with the Green Campus to host a series of Sustainability lunchtime talks and to celebrate Galway 2020 the library also arranged and hosted a series of lunchtime talks.

8. Communications and Outreach

As part of a widening access initiative GMIT re-introduced 'Enabling Maths', which is a maths entry exam for students who haven't achieved the required grade in maths for admission to

GMIT programmes. This provides students, who have otherwise achieved the entry requirements to GMIT, with a 'second chance' opportunity to achieve the grade required in maths. GMIT worked with Galway-Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) on this initiative with GRETB offering a preparatory course for the examination and a careers service to all participants. The initiative was unsuccessful on this occasion, given that the traditional Leaving Certificate was replaced by predicted grades, but it is planned to offer the facility again in 2020-21.

GMIT's annual engagement with GRETB also resulted in the provision of an open evening specifically targeted at Further Education Students. The format and content of the evening was collaboratively agreed, and the evening proved successful.
The bilateral relationship with local ETBs and the Institute continues to deepen as evidenced by:

- The CEOs of the GRETB and the MSLETB as members of GMIT's Governing Body;
- The GMIT Registrar as a member of the GRETB Board and the recently formed Quality Council;
- The Head of Department of Biopharmaceutical & Medical Science as a member of the Board of Galway Technical Institute and
- The GMIT Head of Academic Quality as a member of the FET Committee.

The Institute developed an Open Day platform **openday.gmit.ie** to replace the Spring open Day in early 2020, and a 9-week programme of weekly online Q&A sessions was held to support students and parents in the run up to the CAO deadline. This online platform provides easy access to relevant information for prospective students on an ongoing basis.

9. Health and Wellness

GMIT is committed to the implementation of the consent framework. Active consent workshops were delivered by a team of trained staff and student facilitators to certain tranches of first year students on all campuses. In the Galway campus they were delivered during the Learning & Information Skills module for many programmes and the Active Consent team from NUIG delivered them in Letterfrack and Mountbellew. In Mayo they were delivered as part of induction.

GMIT unveiled a new identity for its sports activities across all campuses, bringing student teams and individuals together under the one sports brand, 'GMIT Falcons', for the first time in the history of the college. Central to the new identity is the falcon bird of prey, conveying elements of agility, grace, speed and ferocity while the predominant shades of blue echo the

traditional blue of the Connacht coat of arms. All new GMIT team kits use the GMIT Falcons logo (see figure 3) and colours.

Figure 3 GMIT Falcons Logo

GMIT signed up for inclusion in the Healthy Ireland Healthy Campus Charter and Framework by which GMIT agrees to promote health and wellbeing throughout the Institute's mission, strategy and policies, wherever possible. By appointing a working group and providing funding to the group GMIT has adopted a strategic approach to achieving this on campus. The Healthy Campus Committee consists of representatives from various departments, from GMIT's remote campuses, and students. The committee aims to combine resources and expertise from within GMIT with external partners to make GMIT a healthier and happier place to work and study. On 23rd September 2019, GMIT Healthy Campus was officially launched by Minister for Health Promotion Catherine Byrne. Some of the initiatives of the Healthy Campus committee include a Clean Air policy, student and staff choirs, running social club for staff and students and a variety of fitness activities.

10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Manager was appointed in September 2019. The initial focus has been on building awareness of EDI amongst GMIT Governing Body members, managers, staff and students with a range of workshops and information sessions provided throughout the year. These consisted of a series of guest lectures from external speakers along themes of gender underrepresentation, building awareness of LGBT+ communities and organisational approaches to embedding the EDI agenda within GMIT. Training in Unconscious Bias, Transgender awareness and Dignity at Work was also offered.

An EDI subcommittee of Governing Body was established in February 2019 and has met quarterly since. In September 2019, an EDI Steering Group (consisting of twelve members

from Management Group and Executive Board) was established to support EDI work and specific initiatives such as Athena SWAN.

Academic Council elections took place in 2019 for male and female constituencies with a view to increasing female representation. In advance of this information sessions were held for those interested in running for election, in an effort to increase the number of female candidates. On foot of these measures, composition of Academic Council has increased to 49% female and decision-making bodies in the Institute, with the exception of the Executive Board, have gender-balanced representation.

In October 2019, GMIT became a member of the Athena SWAN Charter with the aim of submitting an application for Athena SWAN bronze award in November 2020. In November 2019, a representative and cross-institutional Self-Assessment Team was established and met monthly thereafter to progress this work on Athena SWAN. An annual EDI budget was allocated for the progression of Athena SWAN work and implementation of the resultant Action Plan. The self-assessment process involved administration of an extensive survey in April 2020 (59% response rate) and a series of six focus groups across various themes and staff groups, which were facilitated from May-September 2020. Data collected was analysed and used to inform the identification of actions for the Institute Gender Action Plan.

GMIT has successfully run an alternative entry scheme for students experiencing socio economic disadvantage or disability for a number of years. In 2018/2019, GMIT further increased access routes and joined the HEAR and DARE entry schemes. Students were supported through the Student Assistance Fund, the Fund for Students with a disability and were offered a staff mentor in addition to the extensive range of support services available.

GMIT worked with the Irish Refugee Council Education Manager to introduce two Sanctuary Scholarships for those in the International Protection System living in Ireland who are not eligible for state supports and are progressing to undergraduate higher education for the first time.

11. Staff Expertise and Development

The Institute continued to encourage and support staff development. Some of the formal opportunities for CPD included:

- In 2020 GMIT Staff Development supported 30 staff undertaking PhDs and a further 7 undertaking level 9 studies.
- 60 workshops/training courses were provided through the Staff Development Office in response to identified needs.

- The DigitalEd Knowledge Platform at https://DigitalEd.ie was launched across the CUA providing a range of resources for those involved in online teaching and learning. It includes a discovery tool to establish to identify digital training needs. Over 3,000 unique users have engaged in the platform to date, since launching online on March 12th. 60+ staff have completed courses and gained digital badges.
- DigitalEd Development Series (April-May) for GMIT and CUA partners LYIT and IT Sligo: A programme of specialist digital teaching and learning workshops and seminars (30+ and 1,100 registrations) ran from April 27th to May 11th to support the iNOTE project and DigitalEd knowledge platform launch. It played a key role in supporting staff in the COVID crisis that emerged. A range of topics were covered including Technology Enhanced Learning, Alternative Assessment Strategies, MS 365 teaching and learning online Apps, Online Student Engagement Strategies, Recording Lectures for Online Delivery, Visual Pedagogies, Curriculum Design for Online and Blended Learning and a range of Q&A 'ask me anything' clinics in teaching online.
- GMIT offers a masters, postgraduate diploma and certificate in teaching and learning with approximately 60 staff undertaking some element during the year 2019-20.
- Certificate in Digital Teaching and Learning (L9, 10 ECTS) started in April. This forms part of the Digital Champions education programme and 20 staff are currently participating. They will showcase their newly designed 5 ECTS online/blended modules in December 2020 to GMIT and CUA partners.
- Certificate in Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) (L 9, 15 ECTS) ran from February to June. 18 staff have recently completed this development programme and it is having a positive impact on teaching remotely and designing for online and blended learning.
- GMIT established BOLT (Blended Online Learning Transformation in response to COVID and following a survey to establish staff needs in relation to teaching and learning online and for working remotely it offered 31 online workshops in June 2020 with over 2,500 registrations recorded. One on one mentoring was provided for those that sought it.

A HR Strategy for the institute was approved to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan. Human Resources aim to support the achievement of the Institute's vision, mission and values by focusing activity on the following work themes/objectives:

- Business Planning and Continuous Improvement
- Effective Communication and People Engagement
- Leadership and People Management
- Learning and Development
- HR Systems and Employee Wellbeing

B. QA Framework Updates

Academic Code of Practice No. 1: The Academic Council was amended to reflect the two gender constituencies for Academic Council elections to provide for equal representation of females and males.

Minor amendments to Academic Code of Practice No. 5: Research were approved. These related to the pre-assessment responsibility of supervisors, the Roles and Responsibilities of Independent Chairs and the addition of new approved disciplines and explanation of delegated authority in relation to approval of new discipline areas at level 9.

A new Learning and Teaching Strategy 2019-2023 was approved setting out the key priorities for the coming years. It was noted that students were involved in the development of the strategy.

Minor amendments were made to the Code of Student Conduct, the most significant of which involved the removal of appendices so that students' focus would be on a smaller more digestible code. The regulations and procedures previously contained in the appendices are to be published on the new 'Student Hub' the redesign and population of which took place from June to September 2020.

A review of literature relating to student attendance was presented to Academic Council and discussed. It was decided that the work group should develop a set of principles relating to attendance and bring same back to Academic Council.

The difficulties presented by the current pandemic for international students seeking to undertake the normal tests approved by GMIT to ascertain English language ability was recognised. It was agreed that Duolingo and TOEFL iBT (Special Home Edition) be adopted by GMIT as a temporary measure for the duration of the pandemic, using agreed score comparison bands presented.

The following themes were agreed as the priority themes for the Programmatic Review scheduled for 2019-20:
i. Towards Year-long delivery
ii. Online/Flexible/Blended Delivery
iii. Professional Practice/Employability
iv. Assessment (Over Assessment/Programme Assessment Approach)
These themes align with the Strategic Plan which has as its main focus the aim to diversity the student cohort. It was also agreed that the gender and diversity theme should also be considered by Programme Boards.

C. GMIT's QA response to COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic presented and continues to present unprecedented challenges to all aspects of society in Ireland and globally. The priority of Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) was for the safety and welfare of our students, staff and community. Therefore, in line with government direction the Institution ceased all onsite classes and all but essential activities on 12th March 2020. GMIT's second priority was to minimise disadvantage to students through the changes necessary to normal activities to comply with public health directives.

Since mid-March there were significant changes and challenges for Learning, Teaching and Assessment in GMIT. Lecturing staff swiftly pivoted their delivery mechanism to finish out curricula as fully as possible using online delivery mechanisms. The Institute sought to identify the issues posed by the new environment, recognising the challenges faced by both students and staff as they worked to finish the remaining four weeks of the 13 week semester and began to plan for a new academic year operating in a socially distant environment. The responses of the Institute to the crisis fall into the following broad categories of actions:

- Academic Policy Changes and Approvals
- Staff Upskilling and Supports
- Student Communication and Supports
- Blended and Online Learning Transformation
- Return to Campus
- Systems Transformation

Lecturers engaged new modes of delivery to complete modules and programmes recognising the need to ensure continued focus on enabling students to realise module and programme learning outcomes. Academic Council and its Standing Committee discussed how best to protect the integrity of GMIT awards whilst also considering the duty of care to student welfare. A key consideration was to ensure that students would not be disadvantaged because of any necessary changes to the Institute's Quality Assurance Framework. Their deliberations resulted in the approval of a 'Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Continuity Framework in Response to the COVID-19 Emergency' which was issued to all staff on 31st March. The Framework provided for quality assurance relating to the delivery and assessment of the remainder of semester 2.

Programme Boards were asked to develop contingency plans which were reviewed by Quality Assurance Evaluation (QAE) Committees. It was recognised that irrespective of the delivery and assessment contingency that some students due to their personal circumstances would have difficulty engaging. In response to this a Mitigation Policy was developed and approved

by Academic Council on 1st May and issued to all staff thereafter. Similar arrangements were approved towards the end of the academic year for the forthcoming year (2020-21).

GMIT had been engaged in upskilling staff and supporting them in relation to online teaching and learning in line with GMIT's strategic plan. These activities, coordinated by the Teaching and Learning Officer, became more important and were prioritised as staff pivoted to online delivery for the last few weeks of the semester and made the parallel move to alternative and online forms of assessment. Opportunities for the teaching community ranged from accredited learning pathways, online courses with digital badges, teaching and learning clinics, to flexible online professional development sessions.

GMIT recognises that the announcement on 12th March of immediate closure of all campus and cessation of onsite activities represented unprecedented interruption of studies for students. Lecturers and professional, management and support staff immediately began work on adjusting pedagogy, QA and support services to meet students' needs in an online environment. However, naturally students were concerned at the disruption, uncertain about the future and anxious for answers. Cognisant of this, immediate and ongoing efforts by staff at all levels of the organisation were made to keep students up to date with what was happening and the steps that were being undertaken to allow them to continue their programmes of study.

Supporting students, both academically and personally has been a key ongoing activity. The Student Services functions adapted their services to the evolving environment as outlined below. The Access and Disability Service moved all academic tutoring and learning support online. The Student Health Unit provided a mobile phone number to facilitate access with the nurses providing medical advice to callers. The GP service continued to be available to students in their private practices. The Careers Service offered many services online. The Counselling Service offered therapy to students over the phone and online. The service was heavily advertised to students and in addition promoted general advice and reassurance. The library was well positioned to offer a 24/7 virtual service offering online access to a wide range of electronic resources. See HERE for some of the changes the library instigated.

Student feedback on their experiences, and particularly in relation to the barriers they faced, in completing the 2019-20 academic year was solicited on a local and Institute wide level. Most students had the technology required to engage with online delivery and assessments, although some experienced significant difficulty in this regard. Others, with caring duties, also found it difficult to continue engaging with their studies.

The 'Blended and Online Learning Transformation' (BOLT) initiative was established in May to manage all aspects of online lecturing and remote working. A senior manager was appointed to coordinate the BOLT initiative, a steering group was established. Relevant Institute resources were redirected to the work of BOLT, with a commitment to additional resources necessary to ensure that GMIT is well positioned to engage in blended teaching providing students with a positive experience in the next academic year. BOLT have initiated several major ongoing projects including the following to enhance online LTA and working for next semester and beyond relating to staff upskilling, developing reusable resources, improving the VLE interface, development of an online charter, online induction and the recruitment of graduate mentors.

The sudden end to onsite work has meant that GMIT has had to adapt its activities to occur remotely, with the development of supporting protocols and procedures. Activities undertaken included guidelines for online Progression and Award Boards, piloting of e-proctoring, moving forms online, online admissions and registration, and the redevelopment of student portal.

Further details of the Institute's response to COVID are available HERE.

1.2 Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

No.	Planned objectives (Previous AQR) Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Update on Status Provide brief update on status, whether completed or in progress. If an action was planned in the previous AQR, but not completed, provide reasons/short reflections for the delay/non-completion.
1	Focus on EDI, Appointment of EDI Manager, Formation of Athena SWAN Self-assessment Team.	Complete. EDI Manager in situ, consultation and information activities, active Athena SWAN SAT.
2	Employability statements for all disciplines.	Incomplete. Was to be undertaken as part of Programmatic Review process, and this was postponed due to COVId-19. Programmatic Review rescheduled to the 2021/2022 academic year.
3	Assessment Guidelines for lecturers.	Complete. Approved by Academic Council and published and available for all lecturers.
4	Piloting Academic Writing Centre online.	Complete. Commenced on pilot basis in early 2019-20 and moved fully online in March 2020 as Covid-19 response.

5	Introduce Sanctuary Scholarships for those in direct provision system to widen access.	Complete. Launched late for the academic year which limited awareness, but one student awarded a scholarship.
6	Enhanced supports for HEAR students.	In progress. Launched a staff-student mentor scheme on a limited basis. This is to be expanded and further supports implemented.
7	Enhanced supports for management of work placements.	In progress. Network of work placement coordinators established and work placement management forms and templates developed and published.
8	Development of awards policy.	Incomplete. Not commenced due to COVID-19.
9	Development of policies for microcredentials and digital badges.	In progress. Work group established and work ongoing.
10	Development of attendance principles.	Incomplete. Not commenced due to COVID-19.
11	Development of Student Success Strategy.	In progress. Complete on behalf of the CUA by the Teaching and Learning workgroup.
12	Implement National Framework for Consent in Higher Education.	In progress. Working with NUI Galway to implement consent workshops for students. Institute working group in place.
13	Develop HR Strategy.	Complete. HR Strategy approved. Implementation ongoing.
14	Launch volunteering awards.	Complete. THRIVE awards launched.
15	Pilot student co-creation of the curriculum through N-Step project.	Incomplete. N-Step needs to be resourced and nourished to have consistent impact.
16.	Develop Common Marks and Standards for CUA.	In progress. Initial comparison of Marks and Standards in each of the CUA Institutes undertaken. Work interrupted by COVID-19.
17	Instigate a shadow Governing Body for the CUA.	CUA Governing Body sub-committee established.
18	Develop student charter.	Incomplete. Not commenced due to COVID-19.
19	Develop GMIT International Strategy	In progress. International Strategy Framework also under development at the CUA level.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 QA Governance Meetings Schedule

Body	Meeting dates
Governing Body	26th September 2019 31st October 2019 28th November 2019 12th December 2019 30th January 2020 27th February 2020 26th March 2020 28th May 2020 25th June 2020 27th August 2020
Academic Council	16th September 2019 1st November 2019 6th December 2019 7th February 2020 27th March 2020 1st May 2020 15th May 2020
Academic Council Standing Committee	17th January 2019 13th March 2020 20th March 2020 23rd April 2020 1st May 2020 8th May 2020 27th May 2020
Academic Standards	No in person meetings, but some online discussions.
Programme Amendments Committee	14th October 2019 27th April 2020 8th June 2020
Research Committee	23rd January 2019 1st March 2019 14th June 2019 4th September 2019 10th October 2019 5th February 2020

	7th May 2020 10th June 2020 14th September 2020 22nd October 2020
Collaborations Committee	No meetings convened
Retention Committee	No meeting held due to COVID-19.
Disciplinary Committee	6th September 2019 4th December 2019 16th December 2020 21st January 2020 6th March 2020 5th May 2020 5th June 2020 19th June 2020
Exam Appeals Board	2nd July 2019 2nd October 2019 3rd October 2019 21st October 2019 10th July 2020

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

New Academic Council

A new Academic Council was elected in October 2019 to serve for the period 2019-2022. As mentioned previously separate male and female constituencies were adopted to ensure gender balance. As one staff member is occupying two ex officio posts it was agreed to co-opt the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager onto the Council. b) Academic Council Questionnaire.

A survey was issued to members of 2016-19 Academic Council to establish perceptions of how that Council functioned, and what changes should be considered by the new Council. Issues that arose included the importance of managing meetings to reach conclusions/action points, setting manageable agendas to ensure effectiveness of meetings, extending awareness of the QAF, the need to take corrective actions when appropriate, improvement of student feedback forms, and consideration of a theme for each year of the Academic Council should be adopted.

New Appointments and/or Roles

- GMIT appointed a new President who took up position on 18th March 2020.
- The post of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager is a new post and the first appointment was made in September 2009. The EDI Manager is a member of Management Group. The role is in line with the Institute's strategic plan which seeks to foster an inclusive community, where all staff and students feel and have equal opportunity to succeed. Key initial foci include coordinating the development of an EDI plan and working towards an Institute submission for an Athena SWAN bronze award.
- A Human Capital Initiative Coordinator was appointed to manage the Institute's HCI submissions and work with academic units and industry in relation to same. The HCI Manager is a member of Management Group.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Institute seconded a Covid Officer, which is a senior appointment and sits on the Executive Board of the Institute.
- Whilst not leadership/management positions, it is worth noting that the Institute made several appointments in respect of the unique challenges posed by the impact of COVID-19. It made three appointments related to instructional design and educational technology both in response to the immediate challenges of operating offsite, but also in pursuit of the Institute's longer-term ambitions vis a vis online and blended delivery. The challenges of students being based entirely or primarily offsite was recognised and the Institute appointed 14 graduate mentors to support students as they navigated through the administrative, academic and support services related to the student experience.

Changes to Organisational Structure

The Blended Online Learning Transformation (BOLT) steering group was formed in June 2020 as it was recognised that the COVID-19 Crisis accelerated the need for GMIT to enact its strategic recommendation 'to develop an online environment which will support staff and students in using technology in their teaching and learning' (GMIT Strategic Plan, 2019). To support staff on the transition to the various models of blended/online learning and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity and pedagogical practices, GMIT needed to ensure that staff have the appropriate technology and are provided with the necessary training, time and support to engage with these resources (GMIT Strategic Plan, 2019). To achieve and support that objective there is a need for a co-ordinated approach to utilising, organising and maximising existing and new resources

The Return to Campus (RTC) group was established to implement the necessary procedures to ensure a safe working environment for staff and students in the new academic year.

1.4 Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of review for which report has been published during reporting period	Date of completion/reason for conducting review (if not planned) or non-completion (if planned but not conducted)	Links to relevant publications
School of Engineering	20th September 2019	https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/apply/docs/engineering-review-report-final.pdf
School of Business	31st January 2020	https://www.gmit.ie/sites/default/files/public/apply/docs/business-review-report-final-003.pdf
All other Academic Unit Reviews	Not Complete due to COVID-19	
Function Reviews – All Functions	Not Complete due to COVID-19	
Programmatic Reviews – All Programmes	Not Complete due to COVID-19	

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels[3] involved in IQA

(i) Expert Review Team/Panel Size and Related Processes

	Total	Academic Schools/ Department	Professional Services/Support Unit	Approval/Review of Linked Provider	Programme Approval	Programme Review	Other
Number of review/ evaluation processes		2	-	-	18	-	-
of those:							
On-site processes		2	-	-	13	-	-
Desk reviews		-	-	-	-	-	-
Virtual processes		-	-	-	5	-	-
Average panel size for each process type*		7	-	-	5	-	-

* excluding secretary if not a full panel member

[3] QQI acknowledges that the terminology used to describe the groups of individuals that conduct peer review/evaluation varies from institution to institution.

(ii) Composition of Expert Review Teams/Panels involved in IQA

	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
Type of Expert/ Role on Panel		*Male*	*Female*	*Other, or unspecified*			*UK, incl. NI*	*Other European*	*Outside of Europe*	*Similar*	*Different*
Chair	20	13	7		6	13	1			16	4
Secretary	20		20		20					20	
Academic/Discipline Specific	43	23	20		10	29	3	1		31	12
Student Representative	2	1	1			2				2	
QA	1	1	20		20	1				21	
Teaching & Learning	1		1		1					1	
External Industry /Third Mission	17	14	3			17					17

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

Programmes of Education and Training

18 programmes went through a validation process during 2018-19 as shown in Table 3.

Type of Validation	Level 9	Level 8	Level 7	Level 6
Major Award	2	5	1	-
Minor Award	1	1	1	-
Special Purpose Award	-	3	-	3
Differential Validation	-	-	3	1

Table 3 New Programme Approvals 2019-20

Two of the level 8 awards aimed to provide progression opportunities for existing cohorts, with two targeting new CAO intakes and one a work-based learning programme. Three programmes were developed at postgraduate level, one being a Higher Diploma and the other two masters level programmes. The special purpose awards were developed largely in response to the Springboard call, except for one which independently targets a specific industry need. Four of the validations were differential validations (DV). GMIT has a rigorous internal process prior to programmes being validated by an external panel. Programme proposals are initially scrutinised by the Executive Board and if given approval to proceed, major awards proceed to an internal validation panel. This internal panel provides feedback and advice to the programme proposers, which results in better quality programmes and documentation being presented to external panels if approved to progress to this stage. In 2019-20 one programme had to represent to the internal panel due to extent of work deemed necessary by the initial panel. The result of this thorough scrutiny prior to external panel phase means that programmes generally succeed at validation, albeit with conditions and/or recommendations. This was the case in 2019-20.

The programmes validated are as follows:

- BA (Hons) in Community Development and Youth Work
- BEd (Hons) in Art, Design and Graphics
- BEng (Hons) in Industrial Engineering (Add-on)
- BEng (Hons) in Manufacturing Engineering Design
- BEng in Automation and Robotics
- Certificate in Blockchain for Business
- Certificate in Climate Resilience for Business
- Certificate in Digitalisation for SMEs
- Certificate in Family Enterprise
- Certificate in Greening Enterprise Skills

- Certificate in Building Healthcare Communities
- BEng in Agriculture Engineering (DV)
- BEng in Manufacturing Engineering add-on (DV)
- BEng in Manufacturing Engineering (Apprenticeship) (DV)
- Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (DV)
- Higher Diploma in Engineering in Civil Engineering
- MSc in Digital Media and Marketing
- MSc in Strength and Conditioning

All 18 reports are published on the GMIT public website and are available HERE. In total the programmes received 16 commendations, 29 conditions and 120 recommendations. Commendations which were only introduced as part of the template midway during the year typically related to the responsiveness to an industry need and engagement with stakeholders in developing the programme.

Common themes emerging in the conditions and recommendations are:

- Module learning outcomes should be written at the appropriate level.
- Booklists and other resources should be appropriate and up to date.
- Assessment strategies should be well thought out and articulated in the documentation.
- The fundamental premise of the programme should be clearly and consistently articulated in a manner that can be communicated to potential applicants.
- The teaching, learning and assessment strategy for blended or online programme should reflect the delivery mode.
- The volume, level and wording of Programme Learning Outcomes should be appropriate in all instances.
- The management and assessment of work placements should be clearly explained.
- The support and assessment of applied projects/dissertations should be clear in the documentation.
- The documentation submitted to panels should be carefully edited to remove typos and inconsistencies.

Some of these issues are perennial and are regularly the topic of training. Work will continue in this regard, particularly as they pertain to Programmatic Review. Over-assessment and by implication the development and articulation of programme assessment strategies has been identified as a priority topic for Programmatic Review. Given the increase in programmes with work placements and programmes at postgraduate level further support is required for the management and assessment of same.

Staff Development

A wide range of staff development opportunities are offered to staff by the Staff Development Office and the Teaching and Learning Office among others and there is good engagement with same. However, given there is no central recording of this activity it is not possible to definitively establish the level of same. Anecdotally, there are several staff who engage very heavily with staff development opportunities, and others who do not engage at all. The Institute has recently expanded its use of the CORE HR system and how this system can be utilised to manage Staff Development bookings and reporting is to be investigated.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Table 4 describes the performance of students over the five-year period from 2013-14 to the 2018-19 cohort who graduated in November 2020. The percentage of awards is very consistent for level 8 students and broadly consistent for level 7 students. There is more variation in the level 6 awards which represent a small number of students annually and can be skewed by the number of exit awards applied for in a given year.

Level 8 Undergraduate Honours Degree Awards	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
First Class Honours	22%	22%	22%	22%	19%	23%
Second Class Honours Grade 1	46%	45%	39%	45%	42%	41%
Second Class Grade 2	25%	24%	28%	24%	30%	26%
PASS	7%	10%	11%	9%	10%	9%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Level 7 Undergraduate Ordinary Degree Awards	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
Distinction	24%	20%	25%	22%	20%	17%
Merit 1	29%	35%	35%	32%	33%	34%
Merit 2	28%	26%	23%	28%	26%	28%
PASS	19%	19%	17%	18%	21%	21%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Level 6 Undergraduate Higher Certificate Awards	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
Distinction	31%	24%	27%	16%	26%	18%
Merit 1	32%	23%	28%	28%	21%	26%
Merit 2	26%	21%	16%	29%	24%	31%
PASS	12%	32%	28%	28%	29%	26%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4 Student Performance 2013-14 to 2018-19

Retention

In GMIT, at institute level, first year retention is measured as the presence of students on March 1st, excluding those who re-entered via CAO, who were registered, full-time, new first time, in year 1 on the March 1st census date in the previous year. This is aligned to the non-progression rate included by the HEA in its sectoral and institutional profiles. GMIT was broadly in line with average non-progression for the 2016-17 intake (see Table 5), which is the last published statistics. In that year, GMIT had higher non-progression for Level 6 and Level 7 programmes and was broadly in line with the Institute of Technology average for L8 awards. GMIT admit very few students onto level 6 programmes, so maximum impact will be on targeting those students admitted onto level 7 programmes.

Year	L6 GMIT	L7 GMIT	L8 GMIT	Total GMIT	Average Total IoT
2016-17 into 2017-18	33%	26%	16%	20%	19%
2017-18 into 2018-19	26%	32%	15%	21%	Not available
2018-19 into 2019-20	31%	33%	16%	21%	Not available

Table 5 GMIT, National and Institute of Technology Non-Progression 2016-17 to 18-19

StudentSurvey.ie

GMIT takes part in the annual national student survey – studentsurvey.ie. In the 2020 survey GMIT had a response for undergraduate students of 40%, compared to 31% nationally. GMIT showed an increase in all indices between the 2019 and 2020 surveys other than one (Quality of Interactions) where the score remained static (See Table 6).

In the 2020 survey GMIT scored higher than the national average (all colleges) and the Technological Higher Education Institutes (THEI) in five indices – Quantitative Reasoning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Effective Teaching Practices, Quality of Interactions and Supportive Environment, and higher than THEIs in Learning Strategies. GMIT is rated more poorly than the national average for Higher Order Learning but are on par with the THEI average and less well than both national and THEI averages in relation to Reflective and Integrative Learning and Collaborative Learning.

GMIT has undertaken considerable work into increasing the number of respondents so that the data will be useful at School as well as Institute level and in developing useful visualisations of the outcome of the survey. However, there remains limited use of the data in the Institute to identify strengths and weakness, and to inform direction. Further consideration of how this can be altered is required.

Indicator Scores

	Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology 2020	Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology 2019	All SS.IE	Universities	Technological Higher Education Institutions	Other Institutions
Higher-Order Learning	34.8	33.9	36.4	37.7	34.9	36.7
Reflective and Integrative Learning	29.0	28.0	31.5	32.7	30.0	32.8
Quantitative Reasoning	22.9	20.7	21.1	21.6	20.6	20.1
Learning Strategies	30.8	29.1	31.7	32.6	30.6	32.1
Collaborative Learning	30.7	31.4	31.3	30.5	32.1	31.8
Student-Faculty Interaction	17.0	16.8	13.9	12.6	15.3	14.3
Effective Teaching Practices	36.7	34.7	34.9	34.5	35.6	33.9
Quality of Interactions	40.0	40.0	38.5	38.1	38.9	39.1
Supportive Environment	28.2	28.6	28.0	29.0	27.1	26.9

Table 6 StudentSurvey.ie Indicator Scores for 2020

External Examiner Reports

A review of External Examiner annual reports for 2019-20 were, as can be expected, dominated by Covid and the Institute's reaction to same. Generally, the feedback was very positive with praise for the Institute and individual lecturers in relation to the actions taken in trying circumstances. It was acknowledged that the actions taken were student focussed and upheld the quality of awards. A very small number of externs did express concern about the impact on academic standards, but all acknowledged the challenges posed by the environment. In the main lecturers were praised for their professionalism, enthusiasm, the quality of information provided and linkages with industry. The move to alternative assessments was commended as being well thought out, with some descriptions of specific examples of innovative assessment. In a couple of instances externs expressed concern about scaling up assessment and gave suggestions as to how to improve open book exams or proposed alternative assessment modes.

Institute initiatives including GURU and the training session provided for External Examiners was viewed positively, but in a few instances there was concern at communication at a local level, for example not receiving the start-up documentation that should be provided to new externs or externs on new programmes/modules. There is scope for improvement of communication at Department level, with some externs suggesting the appointment of a key contact. One programme has introduced a module handbook for each module, and this was viewed as helpful, giving structure to modules.

Given COVID-19 the way in which the college and staff interacted with external examiners changed. Many welcomed the use of Teams calls to engage with individual lecturers and attend Progression and Award Boards. There were variable experiences in relation to accessing

assessment materials to review, and among the suggestions for improvement were the use of consistent methodologies across all modules and a single repository for each programme where the lecturer can upload their material. A more structured approach to providing scripts to externs was a strong theme in the reports. A few externs welcomed or expressed a desire to meet with students as part of the external examining process.

It was suggested that rather than simply providing external examiners with results and assessment materials to review that the internal examiner should provide an examiner's report to include how the module operated, the assessment methodology and how it addressed learning outcomes, the lecturer's reflections and suggestions for the future and a breakdown of marks by grades.

There were also a wide range of non-COVID suggestions for improvements. In relation to assessment lecturers were asked to consider whether they were over assessing and the value of examinations, and whether alternative assessment modes would be better. A number of externs, across disciplines, suggested that the use of rubrics would improve marking to improve feedback to students and reduce time correcting. It was suggested that training should be provided in this regard. Marking scheme should be provided to students in advance as should grading descriptors. A few externs commented on student feedback suggesting a more structured, standard feedback format e.g. standardised marking sheets. The use of group assessment also arose, with recommendations relating to the maximum percentage that should be used, and the visibility of individual student contribution.

GMIT have discipline externs as well as programme externs and this was the subject of some comment. Some had difficulty getting a 'helicopter view' of the programme, and would have liked a mechanism, for example meeting the Programme Chair, to see how the modules they were examining fitted into the larger programme.

A number of external examiners suggested that GMIT should consider retaining some of the new ways of working we have adopted over the past year, once the current pandemic ends. For example, online meetings with lecturers, online Progression and Award Boards allowing External Examiners attend more easily, and some of the new assessment methodologies.

GURU provides some statistics on External Examiners, their engagement and an overview of their report findings. As illustrated in Figure 4 GMIT's external examiners are predominantly Irish, and work for an Irish HEI.

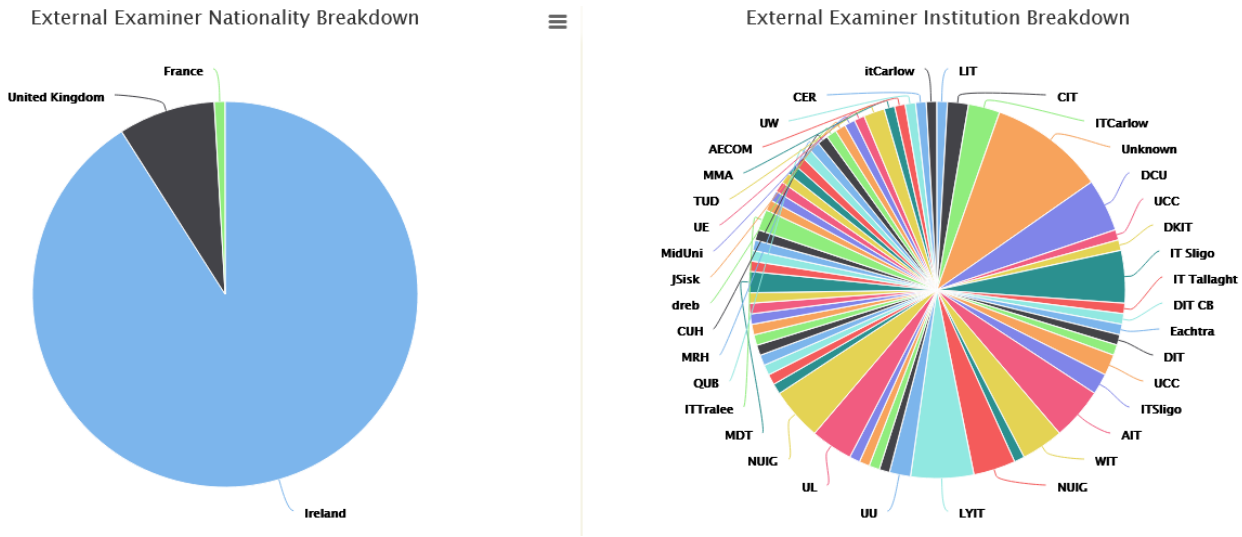


Figure 4 External Examiners by Nationality and Institute

A small number of papers each year are not submitted for review or are not reviewed (Figure 5). The reasons for this should be investigated to ensure that our QA system is working as it should. The move to alternative assessments for 2019-20 due to COVID is reflected in the total number of examination papers in 2019-20, with many of these submitted and reviewed prior to the start of the pandemic.

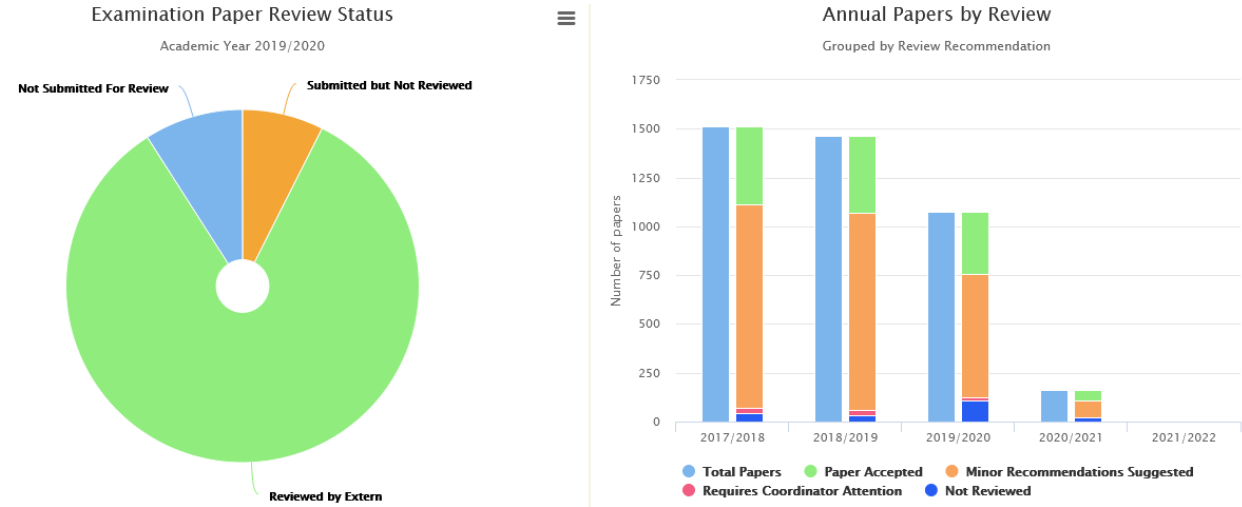


Figure 5 Examination Paper Review Status 2017/18 to 2019/20

Figure 6 shows that almost half of external examiner reports have not received a response from the Institute. This is something that is being addressed as the Institute acknowledges the importance of the role of the external examiner and closing the loop on their reports. As can be seen in Figure 6 the average response rating received across all questions is satisfactory, which provides assurance to the Institute as to the quality of our assessment.

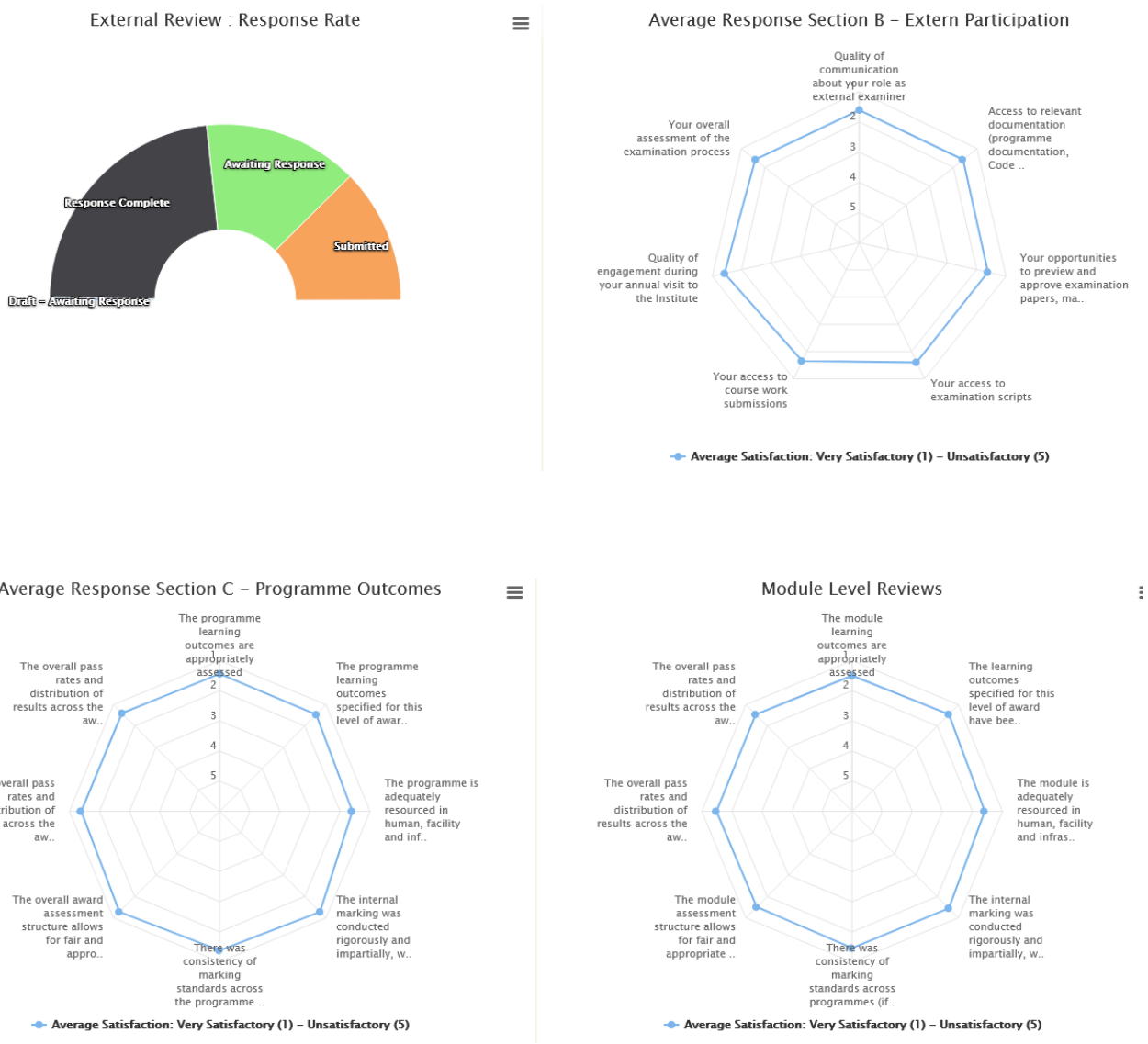


Figure 6 Overview of External Examiner Reports and Responses from GMIT

Annual Programme Board Reports

A review of Annual Programme Board Reports for 2019-20 were dominated by the response to COVID-19 and preparations for Programmatic Review in many instances. Many Programme Boards reported considerably more meetings than normal as they dealt with both issues. Detail in reports varied with some very scant and others a very comprehensive and reflective review of the year. The types of issues arising included:

- Poor student attendance – causes, implications and required solutions.
- Timetabling – students requesting more student friendly timetables
- Continuous assessment – volume of CA and spread of CA over the semester/year
- Programme structure – subject choice, duration of work placement, programme restructuring proposed for programmatic review
- Resource requirements – equipment, software

- Physical environment – standard, requirements for additional space
- Retention – actions being undertaken, increased retention due to new assessment strategies and COVID and resultant concerns about academic integrity
- Accreditation/Professional Bodies
- Promotion of programmes with declining numbers
- Delay in permission to proceed decisions at the start of the year for CPD programmes.

Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes

GMIT's Code of Practice is reviewed during the 3-year term of each Academic Council via that Council's Research Sub-Committee. A review did not fall due during the most recent reporting period.

GMIT monitors and reports on its research activities through formal quarterly and annual reporting to Knowledge Transfer Ireland and biannual reporting to the HERD survey. KTI reports monitor GMIT's activity against knowledge transfer metrics such as the number of collaborative research agreements with industry, the number of innovation voucher project agreements with industry, and commercialisation metrics (e.g.: the number of licenses, options and assignments executed, and the number of spin-out companies developed).

These metrics are compiled by the HEA with reported Research Graduate Numbers (from the SRS), and financial reports on GMIT's Research Income to assess GMIT's overall research and innovation performance in comparison to other Institutes of Technology. The HEA use these data to allocate research support funding to the sector. Since 2019 GMIT has experienced extremely rapid growth increasing its share of the national funding allocation made by the HEA from 3.4% to 6.1%.

The HERD survey collates information on direct research income and its expenditure on Pay, Non-pay and Capital expenditure. Income is further categorised by Public Research Income (Irish public income and EU public income), Industry Funding (Domestic and Foreign), and other funding (own institutional funding, private Irish funding, and other sources). Sources of Irish public research income is further disaggregated by funding agency. Staff and student engagement in research are also surveyed. Each statistic is reported by Department/Research Centre.

The HERD survey results reiterate the rapid expansion in GMIT's research activity. The complement of funders supporting GMIT's research activities differs from that of other Institutes of Technology. GMIT has the highest proportion of funding derived from "other State funding", i.e.: Departments and agencies such as the Marine Institute, National Parks and Wildlife Service. A

deficiency in funding from agencies such as the SFI and HRB is also evident. Correcting this remains a strategic imperative.

Integration of UN sustainable development goals (SDG)

Sustainable development is defined by the United Nations as:
'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. *Education for sustainable development* applies transdisciplinary educational methods and approaches to develop an ethic for lifelong learning, fosters respect for human needs that are compatible with sustainable use of natural resources and the needs of the planet and nurtures a sense of global solidarity.' (UNESCO 2002, 1)

As part of the planning process for programmatic review which was due to happen in 2019-20 a discussion on priorities for the review was held at Academic Council. A paper was presented on Sustainable development. It was agreed that during Programmatic Review, GMIT has an opportunity, perhaps a responsibility, to include sustainable development principles and ethos as one of the parameters by which we review and develop programmes. This will allow Programme Boards to consider reviewing programme and module learning outcomes and syllabi, and where appropriate, to highlight relevant skills, knowledge and competencies required by graduates to deal with these immediate challenges and those they will face in their lives in the future. In doing so, GMIT will communicate a clear message to students, staff, industry partners and the wider community as to how it promotes the interdependence of society, the environment and the economy in fulfilling its own remit in striving to support sustainable regional development in the west of Ireland.

There is growing momentum in the Institute in relation to this topic, and work is ongoing in relation to how this agenda can be furthered within the college.

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

GMIT has a range of policies and regulations to support academic integrity in respect of both taught and research programmes:

- Research
- Research Ethics
- Taught Programmes Research Ethics Committees
- Plagiarism Policy
- Code of Student Conduct
- Exam Regulations

All first-year undergraduate students undertake the Learning Innovation Skills module which includes a mandatory online unit on academic integrity. This helps students understand what academic integrity is and why it matters. They explore plagiarism and how to avoid it through learning how to reference. All students are assessed on this element as part of the module.

There are also a wide range of resources available to students relating to academic integrity. The library has an extensive Libguide on the topic covering academic integrity, plagiarism, referencing, copyright, information literacy, research skills and evaluating information. In addition the library provides various referencing guide and a guide to URKUND, the text matching software used by the Institute. The StudentHub also has information for students on the topic and it deals with current issues such as academic integrity in open book examinations and essay mills. The Institute has undertaken a campaign to promote academic integrity among students branding it with our own logo as illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7 GMIT Academic Integrity Matters Logo

Given many students are undertaking alternative assessments in the current environment, all have been provided with a Student Guide to Academic Integrity and are encouraged to watch the video produced by the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) #myownwork Students are required to sign a plagiarism disclaimer when submitting assignment work.

An online course for staff titled 'the Academic Integrity Hub' developed by the Teaching and Learning Unit in DCU is available to GMIT staff on Moodle.

Staff involved in postgraduate supervision have two resources available to them, both of which cover the topic of academic integrity

- An online self-directed course on Supervising Masters and PhD students
- A level 9, 5 ECTS module – Postgraduate Supervisory Skills.

GMIT are members of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) and engaged with the work of that group. Internally GMIT has established an academic integrity work group which is identifying a roadmap to building a culture of academic integrity among GMIT staff and students.

Academic Integrity

In 2018-19 there were 64 reported instances of breaches of academic integrity. The majority (59) of these related to examination infringements, and of these 46 related to the confiscation of mobile phones in exam halls. Table 7 shows a marked decrease in exam infringements which can be explained by the absence of traditional examinations in summer and autumn 2020.

2019-2020	*REPORTED INCIDENTS*	*PANELS HELD*	*INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED*	*SANCTIONS IMPOSED*
Examination Infringement	*9*	*2*	*2*	*2*
Plagiarism	*3*	*0*	*0*	*3*
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	0
Infringements of Work-Based Placement	0	0	0	0
Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	*5*		*3*	*3*
2018-2019	***REPORTED INCIDENTS***	***PANELS HELD***	***INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED***	***SANCTIONS IMPOSED***
Examination Infringement	59 *	5	13	59
Plagiarism	5*	2	5	5
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	0
Infringements of Work-Based Placement	0	0	0	0
Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	64	7	18	64

Examination Infringement: Possession of book(s), notes, or electronic storage and retrieval devices; possession of writing on his/her person upon entering the examination hall; use or attempted use of books, memorandum, notes or paper; aiding or attempting to aid another candidate; obtaining or attempting to obtain aid from another candidate; communication, or attempted communication, in any way, with another candidate; removal of answer books from the examination hall whether used or unused (1).
Plagiarism: the practice of taking another person's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own (2)... the inclusion of another person's writings or ideas in any formally presented work (including essays, theses, projects, laboratory reports, examinations, oral, poster or slide presentations) which form part of the assessment requirements for a module or programme of study, without due acknowledgement, either wholly or in part, of the original author or source of the material through appropriate citation. Plagiarism occurs where ideas are presented falsely, either implicitly or explicitly, as being the original thought of the author's(3).
Contract Cheating: Usage of an essay mill; submission of an assessment that is not the original work of the student; when a person uses a third party service(s) to help them produce academic work where such input is not permitted and whether or not payment or favour is involved (4)
Research Misconduct: Unacceptable or improper behaviour in any part of research. (4)

Table 7 Academic Integrity Reported Incidents in GMIT 2018-19 and 2019-20

3.0 QA Improvement and Enhancement Plans for Upcoming Reporting Period

3.1 QA and QE supporting the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

No.	Relevant objectives Note: Include reference to the relevant section of the preceding AQR, where applicable	Planned actions and indicators *Note: Include details of unit responsible, and how planned action will address the relevant strategic priority and/or reengagement advice/CINNTE recommendation.* *If the institution is preparing for cyclical review, include how the planned actions will address the relevant review objective(s).*
1	Continue to evolve QA in response to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic	Development of LTA framework, Mitigation Policy and assessment guidelines (VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar/Academic Council) Support staff in relation to online/blended teaching and assessments (BOLT/TLO) Support student transition to and engagement with online/blended learning (BOLT/Student Services, Computing Services) Enhance online student supports, particularly those most vulnerable, considering COVID (Student Services) Approve a work placement alternative framework. (VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar/Academic Council) Develop and approve a Recording of Lectures policy.
2	Complete planning for Programmatic Review considering learnings from COVID-19 pandemic	Identify priorities for Programmatic Review (Registrar/Academic Council) Continue preparatory work for SER (Programme Boards).

3	Submit Athena SWAN application and achieve Bronze Award.	Develop and submit Athena SWAN Application and Action plan for review. (EDI Manager/EDI Self-assessment Team)
4	Further academic alignment of Connacht Ulster Alliance.	Facilitate further discussion of CUA at Academic Council. (President) Develop Exam Regulations as the basis for a common Marks and Standards for CUA. (VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar) Form Governing Body sub-committee for CUA. (President/ VP for Finance and Corporate Services) Form Academic Council sub-committee for CUA. (President/ VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar) Develop and approve common CUA online/blended policy framework. (VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar/Academic Council) Develop CUA common Student Success Strategy. (VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar/Academic Council) Develop CUA common Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy. (VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar/Academic Council/TLO) Develop a draft Research Code of Practice for the CUA (VP for Research and Innovation)
5	Publish a quality of service charter outlining the nature and quality of service which students and stakeholders can expect.	Develop, approve and publish a quality of service charter. (VP for Finance and Corporate Services/VP for Academic Affairs & Registrar) Develop, approve and publish a student charter. (VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar/Academic Council)
6	Review policies in the Quality Assurance Framework.	Review and amend as necessary the following codes: • CoP2 Validation and Monitoring • CoP4 Access, Transfer and Progression • CoP3 Marks and Standards

		• Code of Student Practice (VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar/Academic Council)
7	Engage in academic planning in response to environmental demands.	Develop a range of programmes in response to Springboard and HCI (Heads of Academic Unit/Programme Boards) Develop a policy on microcredentials. (VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar/Academic Council)
8	Redevelop the student intranet populating with relevant and accessible resources.	Develop and launch the Student Hub. (VP for Academic Affairs and Registrar)
9	Enhance the protections and supports available to students.	Provide additional mental health supports for students. Develop plans to further support students with a disability. Expand activities to promote access and participation. (Student Services) Develop a Consent Framework Action Plan. (EDI, Student Services, Steering Committee)

3.2 Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
School of Science	Q2 2021	2014
School of Design & Creative Arts	Q2 2021	2014
Galway International Hotel School	Q2 2021	2014
Mayo Campus	Q4 2021	2014

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Computing Services	Q3 2021	
Buildings & Estates	Q3 2021	
International Office	Q3 2021	
Student Services	Q3 2021	
Marketing & Schools Liaison	Q3 2021	
Finance	Q3 2021	
Academic Affairs	Q3 2021	
Human Resources	Q3 2021	
Research	Q3 2021	
Graduate & Professional Development	Q3 2021	
All Programmes	Q1 and Q2 2022	2014

Note: This is the first time we are conducting a comprehensive review of all functional areas.

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Institutional Review	Following TU designation	2010

4.0 Additional Themes and Case Studies

Case 1

Strengths Profiling Programme of Development (SPPD)

Introduction

An analysis of withdrawal forms completed by students leaving their course in GMIT revealed that a large proportion noted the reason that their 'course was not suitable'. This suggested that in addition to retention initiatives in place for registered students that the college needed to take further steps to assist students in making the right course choice in the first instance. The GMIT Careers Service developed a Strengths Profiling Programme of Development (SPPD) matching student's identified strengths to a range of employment sectors and third level courses.

The Tool

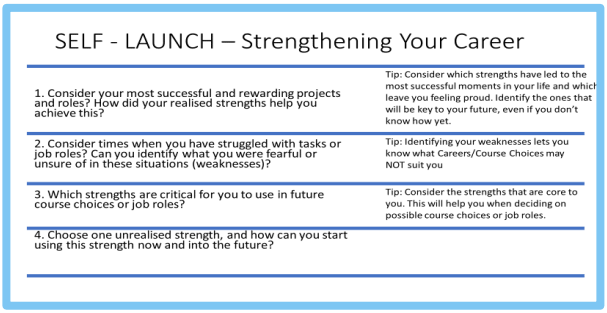
SPMD uses innovative online psychometric tool not previously used at second level and a variety of reflective and engaging activities bringing students through a SELF model of:

a) Self-Awareness: Strengths Spotting
b) Exploration: Understanding their unique strengths and why they are important to them.
c) Launch: work on aligning their strengths to a career sector and GMIT course
d) Flourish: The journey of choosing a college course and careers, whilst exploring their unrealised strengths.

The Programme

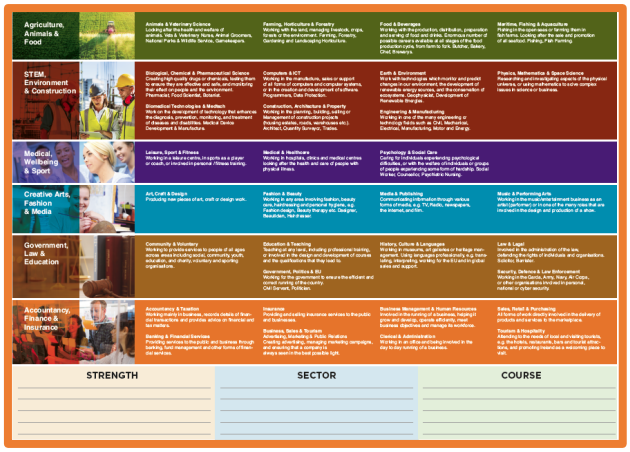
Second level students were invited to complete the online psychometric tool. Then the GMIT Careers Office, ATS Coordinator and School Liaison Officer worked with Guidance Counsellors to conduct follow-up workshops with groups of students. Students completed a programme of development activity worksheet listing strengths, career sectors and possible courses matching their strengths.

The



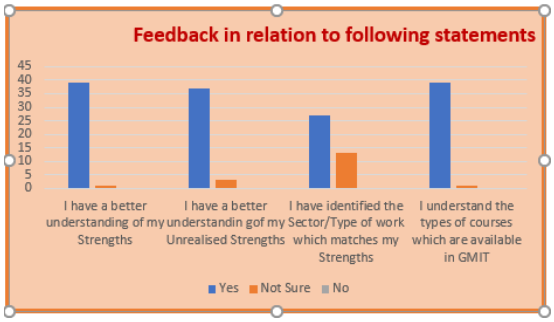
students then were introduced to a panel of current GMIT current student speakers talking about their specific courses. The panel highlighted the importance of researching courses / modules, key motivators, interests, and student life.

A New Strengths Profile Programme of Development worksheet was developed by the GMIT Careers Department (The Strengths Wheel) to match student's identified strengths within the relevant *Strengths Families, Communicating, Thinking, Relating, Being and Motivating* and hence allowed them to make more informed decisions about their future career choice. This practical worksheet also featured a range of employment sectors and GMIT courses. From this exploration, the students opened their eyes to various potential career areas and GMIT relevant courses.



Student Feedback

40 secondary students took part in this workshop, with 95% of students finding the workshop either very useful or useful. The involvement with school principal and guidance counsellors, in terms of promoting the programme and bringing students through the SELF model was key. The result was increased self-confidence and communication skills amongst the students



Conclusion

This pilot delivery of the SPPD has proved very successful and the programme is being delivered again this year remotely with second level schools. Future evaluation of the programme will track the numbers of students that enrolled onto GMIT programmes as a result of completion and whether it impacts on student programme choice and retention.

	Case Study CUA iNOTE Project Innovative OpportunitiesTransforming Education (2019-2022)
Keywords/Project Theme	**The keywords that best describe this project:***#DigitalTeachingandLearning* *#DigitalTransformation* *#BuildingDigitalCapbilities* *#StudentSuccess* *#OnlineStudenS* *upports*
Project Objective and Description	The main objective of the iNOTE project is to build digital capability for flexible learning delivery in the West/North West region. This Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA) project is having an impact across each higher education institute by implementing new methodsof delivering digitally enhanced learning through shared approaches. The project is providing an opportunity to transform the higher education experience in the CUA institutes. The project includes five work packages: **Work Package 1:** The development of quality assurance policies and procedures toenable digital learning (Project Lead Letterkenny IT, Dr Simon Stephens) **Work Package 2:** The development of a digital teaching and learning training programme and online education courses for all staff to build digital capabilities and pedagogic expertise, in order to design, deliver and support flexible, distance and e-learning programmes. This work package will also include consultation and mentoring from an international partner (NY State University/SUNY) with a focus on replicating best online and flexible delivery practice. (Project Lead GMIT, Dr Carina Ginty) **Work Package 3:** The development of an online learning student support services model. (Project Lead IT Sligo, Prof. Jacqueline McCormack) **Work Package 4:** Design and development of three online learning programmes inGalway-Mayo, Sligo and Letterkenny. **Work Package 5:** Evaluation and dissemination of all project outputs across the CUA.
Work Package 1LYIT Lead **Developing an Online Learning Policy**	In this work package key members of the quality offices in each of the three partner institutions worked together to prepare a policy framework to guide the development, design and delivery of blended and online programmes across the CUA campuses. The initial stage involved a desk-based review of policy documents covering the 3 CUA institutions; and HEIs in the UK, USA and Europe. The allocation of time and a budget facilitated: attendance at a number of workshops and seminars. Once an initial draft document was prepared the team engaged with external advisors from QQI, the Teaching and Learning Forum and THEA. Subsequent drafts were reviewed by an external expert Dr Jim Murray (March 2020); the three Executive Boards (June 2020); and the three Academic Councils (September 2020). A final document was submitted to the three Registrars on November 2020 and it will then move on to be formally adopted by the three Academic Councils.
Work Package 2GMIT Lead	The focus of work package two, led by GMIT's Teaching and Learning Office is buildingdigital teaching and learning capabilities in the CUA, including online teaching development, learning technology services and pedagogic expertise on the design anddelivery of flexible, distance and online learning programmes.

Building Digital Teaching and Learning Capabilities across the CUA with https://DigitalEd.ie	This work package is developing the Teaching, Social and Cognitive Presence required tocreate a rewarding educational experience for educators teaching online and students learning online and flexibly. A CUA Digital Education platform (see https://DigitalEd.ie) has been created, an online home for digital teaching and learning development. This new knowledge platform is providing access to: • a digital resources directory; • a suite of online courses and learning pathways for academics and professionalservices. • digital workshop/webinar series/ masterclass events; • a digital capabilities self-assessment discovery tool; • digital resources in teaching, learning and assessment; • a digital champions network; • a digital blog/research knowledge space; • and a CUA digital education community. In addition, the team has established a suite of online student services and resources to support online and blended learners in the 'Student Hub' environment including outputs from Work Package 3 outlined below.
Work Package 3IT Sligo Lead **Developing a Student Online Support Model**	The objectives of WP3 are centred on student support for online & flexible leaners across the CUA. Following a series of focus groups with stakeholders across the 3 institutes, the requisite supports were mapped onto the student journey (draft infographic). Gaps in the current provision of services have been identified and a series of digital products were evaluated and rolled out in September 2020. Each service will be available across the CUA. These include: **Accessibility to digital material** - *Blackboard Ally* **Online counselling services** – *SilverCloud Health* & Epigeum *Living Well Being Well*. AMasters by Research project to evaluate counselling services began Q3 2020 **Academic Writing** - module developed over Summer 2020. *Studiosity* - Pilot service 24/7 assistance for academic writing **Online Student Advisor** – pilot expanding and continuing in IT Sligo **Remote labs** – rolling out in Faculties of Science and Engineering at IT Sligo initially **Student Union Representation** - SU surveying online student body Q4 2020 regardingpreferred services. **Mini projects - UDL** training for staff and **Module Manager** upgrade to improve userexperience for new programme creation. The next phase of WP3 will continue to develop learner supports in: Learning analytics, RPL for access, online etiquette, library and careers mini-projects. The student services and supports are being reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis.

Work Package 4 Developments	LYIT: MSc in Innovation in FinTech The focus is on developing a skillsetthat supports T–shaped experts, byproducing a transversal set of knowledge and competences, coupled with enhanced tacit knowledge. This focus is on understanding key trends, impacts and the future of the hyper competitive FinTech arena. IT Sligo: BEng in Mechatronic Systems This programme is a full-time, level7, work-based course in Mechatronic Systems Engineering where students will be placed inthe workplace for three years working for three days per weekand studying online for 2 days. GMIT: Level 7 BSc in Quality forIndustry and Level 8 BSc (Hons) in Qualityfor Industry (add-on degree) The Level 7 is made up of 3 SPA's, Certificate in Science in Quality (20credits at Level 7), Certificate in Science in Quality Management & Regulatory Affairs (20 credits at Level 7), Certificate in Science in Quality for Industry (20 credits at Level 7). The Level 8 provides year 1 modules and year 2 modules (note-the year 1+project is packaged as a SPA called Quality for the Medical Device Industry.
COVID experience and benefits delivered by the project to date	The main objective of the iNOTE project is to build digital capability for flexible learning delivery. Initially, the outcomes of this project will impact the CUA institutes in the West/North West region. The learning and outcomes from this project will be disseminated to the broader Higher Education community, and will have an impact across the higher education system, by providing new methods of delivering digitally enhanced learning. The lock down resulting from the pandemic and consequent move to remote teaching and learning gave the iNOTE teams the impetus to accelerate the launch of the DigitalEd Knowledge Platform (https://DigitalEd.ie); led by GMIT teaching and learning team under Work Package 2. DigitalEd is a Digital Teaching and Learning education platform, providing access to digital learning pathways, online teaching courses for academic staff,a discovery tool, digital stories, a digital resources directory, a digital champions networkand a digital education forum, and it is available to all CUA staff to collaborate on developing teaching and learning. The platform and training supports have provided valuable online resources, to support staff and students in terms of delivering remote teaching and learning. The launch of the new platform was supported by an online training programme that commenced in April 2020 and runs monthly. The programme includes a range of specialist digital teaching and learning workshops and seminars. DigitalEd has played a key role in supporting staff during the Covid-19 crisis. A sample ofthe events programme can be accessed here https://digitaled.ie/webinars-events/ In addition, work package 3, online student support model led by IT Sligo has resulted ina suite of services being rolled out to all students in the CUA. Access to Studiosity onlineacademic writing and maths support, online counselling and well-being modules are providing much needed supports during the COVID remote teaching and learning experience. The iNOTE work package teams and communication systems are providing a greatsupport network and opportunities for engagement and sharing amongst peers.