

## Quality Review (Academic) V4

The revised Quality Review (Academic) approach, as agreed by the Quality Enhancement Committee, October 2024, is based on 6 domains:



These domains are underpinned by two transversal themes: **Academic/Research Integrity** and **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**.

Overall, the main domains reflect the requirements of existing national (QQI) and quality guidelines for the European Higher Education Area, current Strategic Plan goals and wider higher education performance requirements. The following outlines the scope of each of the domains and the associated criteria which will provide the basis for self-evaluation, the ensuing Self-Evaluation Report and engagement with the Peer Review Panel.

## **1. School Context and Overall Profile**

The mission and objectives of the School and the effectiveness of its contribution to achievement of the overall University strategy.

- a. Mission and objectives
  - i. School mission statement.
  - ii. Principal academic, research and third mission objectives.
  - iii. Extent of alignment of mission and objectives to overall University Strategy.
  - iv. How well do the current mission and objectives relate to current or emergent disciplinary developments.
- b. Organisation and management
  - i. School rules and organizational structure.
  - ii. Roles and responsibilities for managing the full range of the School's activities.
  - iii. Effectiveness of current organization and management structures to enable communications, prioritisation and workload allocation, staff engagement and representation.
- c. Planning and performance
  - i. Process for formulation and implementation of School plan.
  - ii. Localisation of the University strategic objectives within School plan and planning process.
  - iii. Approaches to managing, monitoring and reviewing School performance.
- d. Equality, diversity and inclusion
  - i. Plans for, or arising from, Athena Swan accreditation.
  - ii. The range and effectiveness of EDI approaches within the School<sup>1</sup>.
- e. External engagement with business and society
  - i. Significant stakeholder groups and engagement practices.
  - ii. Societal engagement and contributions.
  - iii. Intersection with business for education, training and research (e.g WIL/ Consultancy/ employment-based PhD's/ training provision).

## **2. Academic Standards and Programme Quality**

The effectiveness of processes for the quality assurance and enhancement of programmes offered by the School.

- a. Taught programmes portfolio offered
  - i. The overall portfolio of programmes offered inclusive of taught, online, collaborative and transnational, credit and non-crediting bearing provision.
  - ii. Alignment of programme portfolio with University Strategy and School mission and objectives.

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<sup>1</sup> In alignment with "Belonging at UCC: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 2025 – 2028.

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/edi/edidocuments/EDIFrameworkENGFINALWebVersion13Nov2024.pdf>

- iii. Monitoring and review of the quality and standards of the awards to ensure that programmes provide relevant knowledge and skills that allow the qualification to be included on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- b. Research and programme links
  - i. Overall effectiveness of the School's approach to research-based learning, teaching and assessment
  - ii. Integration of research in teaching
  - iii. Incorporation of research in the learning outcomes of programmes.
- c. Arrangements for access, transfer and progression
  - i. Current arrangements and pathways for access, transfer and progression including collaborative programmes with ACE/further education<sup>2</sup>
  - ii. Provision for and application of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) approaches.
  - iii. Effectiveness of current approaches for access, transfer and progression and any future development plans.
- d. Programme monitoring and review outcomes (including professional accreditation as relevant)
  - i. Overview of the accreditation status of relevant programmes and progress of any ongoing monitoring requirements.
  - ii. Overview of the outcomes of programme review with summary of key themes arising.
  - iii. Effectiveness of processes for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programme quality and standards.
- e. Programme enhancement activity
  - i. Based on the outcomes of accreditation, monitoring and review what programme enhancement activities are currently underway or planned for the future. *Indicatively: curriculum development and revision; learning activities such as Final Year Project or Work Integrated Learning activities; learning resources; student support.*
  - ii. Planned enhancements to programme portfolio, including programme rationalisation or new programme development, partnerships or modes of delivery as applicable.

### 3. Student Learning Experience

The effectiveness of academic approaches, learning resources and support to enable a high-quality student learning experience.

- a. Learning and teaching approaches
  - i. School learning and teaching ethos and approach.
  - ii. Outline the characteristic outcomes of the student learning experience.
  - iii. Outline the range of pedagogical approaches adopted, including digital education, and their alignment with discipline-specific needs.
  - iv. Reflection on how these approaches promote student engagement, success, and employability.
- b. Assessment practices

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<sup>2</sup> QQI Access, Transfer and Progression <https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/qqi-awards/access-transfer-and-progression-provider>

- i. Overview of how School assessment practices are aligned in an effective and visible way with module and programme learning outcomes, graduate values and attributes.
  - ii. Overview of how assessment practices are reviewed and enhanced to ensure continued alignment with learning outcomes and adoption of accepted good practices in assessment.
  - iii. Effectiveness of the diverse types of assessment used within the School, in terms of fairness, transparency and consistency.
  - iv. Reflection on how assessment and feedback is and will be used to empower students to become self-regulated lifelong and life-wide learners.
- c. Specific provisions for academic integrity
  - i. Arrangements in place to assure the integrity of teaching, learning and assessment practices.
  - ii. Monitoring and review of academic integrity practices, including developments within disciplinary field (teaching, learning, assessment and research).
  - iii. Approaches to managing the use of AI in teaching, learning and assessment and research.
  - iv. Processes in place to deal with alleged academic misconduct.
- d. Learning resources and student support
  - i. Overview of the learning resources and learning supports available to enable students to achieve module and programme learning outcomes.
  - ii. Outline of the pastoral supports available to students.
  - iii. Arrangements for student and staff interaction for academic and learning purposes outside timetabled classes.
  - iv. How supports are integrated into the overall student experience and how their effectiveness is assessed.
- e. Student Voice
  - i. Outline the mechanisms within the School for engaging with students both formal and informal
  - ii. Describe how the School facilitates student representation on committees and groups within the School.
  - iii. Effectiveness of the School approach to gathering, analysing and responding to student feedback.

#### **4. International Student Experience (to meet IEM)**

The effectiveness of School-based supports and services available for international students enrolled on programmes inside or outside Ireland.

- i. Arrangements to support the well-being and integration of all learners into the student body.
- ii. The availability and effectiveness of local induction arrangements.
- iii. The accessibility of information on specific programme learning activities including placement and any associated additional costs for programme materials.
- iv. Staff intercultural training and development.

## **5. Research activities**

The effectiveness of the School's management, planning and outcomes of research activities.

- a. Research management and planning
  - i. Development and Implementation of School Research Plan and prioritization.
  - ii. Achievements and outputs of research activity, including any awards and/or specialist centres.
  - iii. Engagement in inter-disciplinary and transdisciplinary research activities, including UCC Futures and external collaborations with other institutions.
  - iv. Linkages between research areas and research-based teaching.
- b. Research students' learning experience
  - i. Profile of research programmes available within the School and overall research student profile including future targets.
  - ii. Arrangements for supervision, including supervisor training, and allocation of supervisory workload.
  - iii. Research training and development provision for research students.
  - iv. Research students' engagement in teaching activities and support for their academic development.
- c. Staff research activity and development
  - i. Initiatives and supports for staff research career development including any leadership, mentoring and support initiatives.
  - ii. Overview of School research groups and dissemination activities (internal and external)
  - iii. Availability and uptake of research sabbaticals.
- d. Research integrity
  - i. Policies and practices in place to ensure responsible conduct of research, training of researchers and research data management.
  - ii. Awareness and training for research integrity.
  - iii. Effectiveness of the Schools' overall implementation and monitoring of these policies in practice.
- e. Research charter implementation<sup>3</sup>
  - i. An overview of how the Research Charter is being implemented including specific actions and timelines for embedding its principles within the School's research activities.

## **6. Staffing**

The effectiveness of the School's activities for supporting and enabling staff development and performance in a progressive and inclusive way.

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<sup>3</sup> Once the Research Charter is agreed.

- a. Staff Development
  - i. Identification of staff training and development needs and participation of staff in development activities.
  - ii. Alignment of staff development with career pathways and overall aims and objectives of the School.
  - iii. Management of any barriers to participation in staff development activities.
- b. Equality, diversity and inclusion
  - i. Effectiveness of EDI policies for the staff experience focusing on recruitment, retention, career progression and creating an inclusive work environment<sup>4</sup>.
- c. Staff Communication and Engagement
  - i. Structures for staff communication and engagement.
  - ii. Availability of opportunities for staff participation in School activities, inclusive of planning, development, review and external engagement.
  - iii. Enabling staff participation in committees, working groups and development fora within the University.
- d. Planning and Performance
  - i. Implications of the staff profile for planning and performance of the School's activities into the future.
  - ii. Management of the staff profile in terms of demographic attributes and succession planning.
  - iii. Operation of Performance and Development Review System

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<sup>4</sup> In alignment with UCC's Framework and Action Plan for EDI 2023-28