TUS

**Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest**
Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir

www.tus.ie

Annual Quality Report

Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS)

Reporting Period 2021-2022

TUS 2023

Annual Quality Report

Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS)

PART A: INTERNAL QA SYSTEM

Reporting Period 2021-2022

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.

CONTENTS

Links to Reference Documents Cited in this Template¹

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](#)

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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

The Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (hereafter referred to as TUS or the Technological University) is an independent autonomous Designated Awarding Body (DAB) with powers to make awards from Level 6 to Level 10 of the National Framework of Qualifications. TUS was designated a Technological University on October 1st 2021 and was founded on the merger of two well established and prestigious Institutes of Technology, Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) and Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT). As a new TU, TUS has significant scale with over 15,000 students and 1,400 staff located in its vibrant campuses in Athlone, Limerick, Thurles, Clonmel and Ennis as outlined in Figure 1.0.

Figure 1.0. Geographical Profile of TUS Campus Locations.

TUS is unique in its geographical reach and regional composition, bordering almost half of Ireland's 26 counties. Thus, TUS has the potential to transform the availability and accessibility of university level education in the region it serves and provides leading student-centred higher education that is research-informed, regionally relevant and accessible to all. To this end, TUS offers a diverse portfolio of programmes in areas including science, engineering, health, business, hospitality, social sciences, informatics, sport, teacher education, and art and design, *inter alia*. TUS is committed to student engagement through active and applied learning to enable all of its students to realise their full potential. In this regard, the development of access and progression pathways for students is a core consideration. In addition to a range of Access initiatives, TUS is proud to have been designated a *University of Sanctuary* in June 2022.

The research activities of TUS span the entire RDI continuum and support regional and national industry and other stakeholders. This provides progression opportunities for students and staff, enables research collaboration and provides world-leading facilities for the research community. The collective research capacity across TUS includes research areas of strength such as the social sciences, art and design, microbiology, toxicology, bioanalysis, biotechnology, sensor technology, manufacturing technology, ICT, sustainable energy, and mechanical and polymer engineering, *inter alia*. TUS joins its Regional University Network - European University (RUN-EU) partners in creating one of several new European Universities capable of transcending languages, borders, and disciplines and enables the consortium to have influence and impact at regional, national and international levels.

The preparation of this Annual Quality Report (AQR) has been co-ordinated by the Quality Office with contributions from a broad cross section of the TUS Community. It has been presented to both Academic Council and Governing Body and is endorsed by the President and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Registrar.

1.0   Internal QA Framework

The Internal Quality Assurance framework adopted by TUS is consistent with the *QQI Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines, QQI Core Quality Assurance Guidelines (Sections 2.1, Governance and Management of Quality; 2.2 Documented Approach to Quality Assurance; 2.10 - Other Parties involved in Education and Training)* and *ESG 1.1 (Policy for Quality Assurance).*

TUS is committed to academic quality (assurance) and continuous improvement (enhancement) and is cognisant that the twin purposes of accountability and continuous improvement are at the core of all quality assurance activities. Taken together, these are fundamental in creating trust and public confidence in the Technological University's performance.

The TUS Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026 provides the fulcrum for all activities of the Technological University and quality assurance and enhancement plays an important and integral role in delivering on the *Values*, *Purpose* and *Vision* of TUS as outlined in the inaugural strategy. The TUS Strategic Plan states as an overarching value that

"*We operate in an agile manner where integrity and excellence underpin all we do. We are honest, fair and ethical in our focus on doing the right thing through our words, actions and beliefs.*"

This is supported by the following TUS Value Statements relating to specified themes including:

INCLUSIVE	AMBITIOUS	SUSTAINABLE
SUPPORTIVE	INNOVATIVE	COLLABORATIVE

Figure 1.1. TUS Values

Table 1.1. TUS Value Statements

	Value Statements
Inclusive	We embrace diversity as a key strength where everyone is included and has an equal opportunity to progress and achieve.
Supportive	We care about our people and their well-being, and we maintain a student centred ethos in all we do.
Ambitious	We set high standards and are courageous in our actions to deliver impact and achieve our potential.
Innovative	We are forward-looking and encourage creativity and exploration that fosters unique ideas and inspires transformative change
Sustainable	We are thought leaders and adopt a whole of institution approach to the challenges of sustainable development.
Collaborative	We are open, connected and engaged in bringing people together to develop, co-create and share knowledge for the benefit of our region and beyond.

The Values of TUS are supported by the TUS *Purpose Statement*, *Vision to 2030* and *Strategic Priorities* and *Enablers*.

Purpose Statement

"The Technological University of the Shannon provides leading student-centred higher education that is research-informed, regionally-relevant and accessible to all."

Vision to 2030

"To be a catalyst for sustainable change through education that transforms lives, our region and the world beyond.

The Strategic Plan sets out how the TUS strategy will be achieved through a series of specified Strategic Priorities and Enablers

Table 1.2. TUS Strategic Priorities

	Priorities
Education	*Provide a relevant high-quality education offering, focused on interdisciplinarity, delivered in a flexible way to cater to a diverse cohort of students, across multi-campus locations.*
Research	*Deliver impactful applied research, growing the research community, engaging in next generation thinking and tackling issues at a regional, national and global level.*
People and Organisation	*Operate as an integrated organisation, where everyone's potential can be realised, and where all individuals are provided with equal opportunities.*
Connecting Communities	*Build and enhance relationships and partnerships to drive the sustainable development of our region and make an impact nationally and internationally.*

Table 1.3. TUS Strategic Enablers

	Enablers
Leadership & Resources	*Lead to embrace opportunity, navigate challenges and optimise use of university resources through a highly effective organisational structure.*
Reflective Practice & Continuous Improvement	*Embed reflective practice to build a culture of continuous improvement throughout the university.*
Governance & Policy	*Govern and operate in a manner that is transparent, manages risk, ensures accountability, optimises performance and aligns with policy.*
Communication, Technology & Digitisation	Communicate and connect with stakeholders through practices, technologies, and digitisation methods that achieve impact.
Campus Development & Facilities	*Invest in and develop our infrastructure to enable our ambitions.*
Sustainable Development	*Support sustainable development and embed UN SDG integration across all activities to generate positive impact.*

The TUS Strategic Priorities and Enablers are carefully linked to an associated series of Strategic Objectives and Expected Outcomes to 2026. TUS will draw upon these core enablers to deliver on its priorities. Performance against the enablers will be tracked as part of the broader implementation framework. Full details of the strategic plan are available at: TUS Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026

1.1 Governance and Management of Quality

TUS is cognisant of its obligations under the Technological Universities Act (2018) as a designated awarding body up to Level 10 of the National Framework of Qualifications and is committed to national and international best practice in its governance and management. TUS recognises that a quality culture is supported by strong academic and corporate governance and a commitment to accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement with a collaborative and collegiate approach to quality assurance and enhancement.

TUS takes a multi-layered approach to the governance of quality management, with fora such as *Governing Body, Academic Council* and their associated *Sub-committees* and *Working Groups*, in addition to the TUS VP and Deans Councils and Technological University Management structures. These fora and committees play a lead role in reviewing and designing Technological University-wide strategies and processes to maintain and continuously improve academic quality. The TUS Interim Code of Governance was approved by Governing Body in October 2021 shortly after designation and is available at: TUS Interim Code of Governance
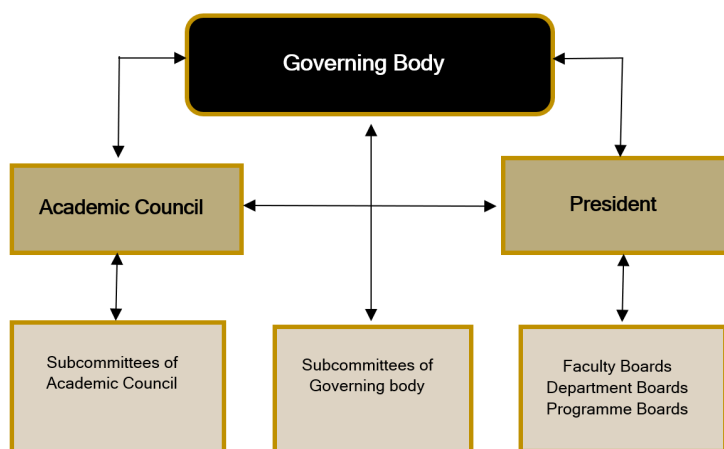
Figure 1.2. Representation of Overall TUS Governance Fora

Governing Body has a statutory responsibility under Section 16 of the 2018 Act to approve the election process and composition of Academic Council and to review its functions. Accordingly, TUS Academic Council Documentation has been developed and approved by both Academic Council and Governing Body. It specifies the Constitution, Composition, Membership, Standing Orders and Bylaws of Academic Council. The Bylaws of Academic Council includes details of its Subcommittees, Board of Appeal and Standing Committee. The documentation is available at TUS Academic Council Documentation 2022 - 2025

TUS complies with statutory and regulatory requirements relating to quality assurance and quality improvement under the Technological Universities Act (2018), the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) as amended (2019) and the Standards and Guidelines for the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) and with national statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. TUS Academic Council, by statute, maintains academic standards within the Technological University. The Academic Council is committed to continuous improvement with new initiatives being continuously designed and implemented to embed quality policies and practices throughout its

operations. Faculty/School Boards, Department Boards, and Programme Boards play a key role in the quality assurance and enhancement and in implementation in line with statutory requirements. Students are considered academic partners at TUS. Student representatives are full members of Governing Body, Academic Council and Academic Council Subcommittees and are also represented on a range of other fora including Working Groups and Programme Boards. Their input and counsel is respected and valued to ensure comprehensiveness and equity for learners.

TUS appointed an Interim Senior Management structure upon designation as a TU. This included a Vice Presidents (VP) Council and a Deans Council. Details of the associated management responsibilities and reporting structure are outlined in Figure 1.3. This interim organisational and reporting structure is currently under review.
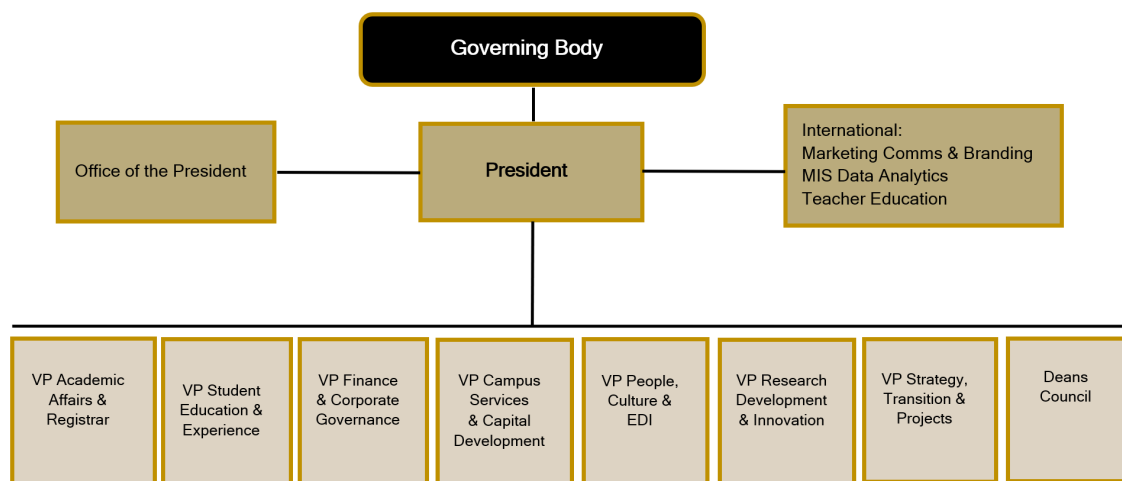
Figure 1.3. TUS Senior Management & Organisational Structure.

1.1.1   TUS Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework

The approach of the Technological University to the development and implementation of Quality Assurance and Enhancement systems and processes is effective, accountable and robust. TUS's Quality Assurance is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015), and with national guidelines and criteria for QA procedures, as overseen by the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) authority. TUS's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures are implemented in its campuses and learning centers across the counties of Athlone, Limerick, Tipperary and Clare. These policies and procedures govern the design, delivery and review of its academic programmes on the NFQ framework from Level 6 to Level 10, whilst also assuring quality across its craft apprenticeships, and adult and continuous education programmes.

As an autonomous designated awarding body, TUS operates a consolidated quality framework that is built on a set of overarching guiding principles. TUS draws on eight guiding QAE principles established by the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) in its Technological Higher Education Quality Framework (THEQF). TUS has adopted and adapted the Principles for its Internal QAE and these are illustrated in Figure 1.4

Figure 1.4. TUS Principles of QAE (adapted by TUS from THEQF)

The TUS Policy on Quality Assurance and Enhancement 2022 - 2025 outlines the TUS Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework. Guided by the overarching principles outlined in Figure 1, the TUS Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework involves a holistic cross-organisational approach. The approach of TUS to the development and implementation of Quality Assurance and Enhancement systems and processes is effective, accountable and robust, and meets with statutory obligations. The QQI Core Statutory Guidelines (2016) stipulate that the Quality Assurance System is embedded and maintained on a cross-organisational basis, including all levels of management, administration, teaching staff and learners. To achieve compliance and have a fit for purpose quality assurance system the overarching components include:

1) developing and implementing a comprehensive suite of TU-wide policies and procedures;
2) establishing and conducting a broad range of internal reviews; and,
3) participating in annual monitoring and reporting to QQI (through AQR and Dialogue Meeting), in addition to participating in external Cyclical Review.
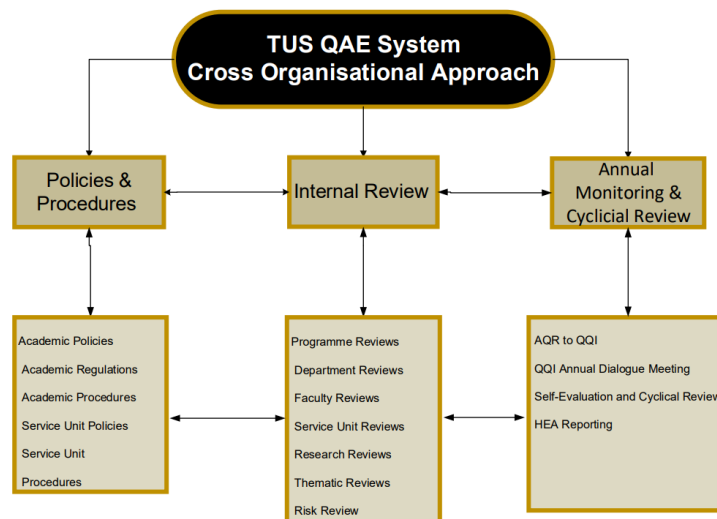
Figure 1.5. Overview of the Cross-Organisational Approach to QAE

1.1.2   TUS Stakeholder Engagement

TUS engages a broad range of stakeholders, internal and external as appropriate, at all levels of governance and in the design, development and validation of its teaching, learning, research and related activities. Both academic and industry stakeholders are engaged to review both new and existing academic programmes and research activities. External Examiners and Professional Accreditation Bodies are examples of critical stakeholders who formally quality assure the nature, content, teaching and assessment academic programmes, both taught and by research, on the National Framework of Qualifications.

As outlined in Section 1.1. student representatives are constituent members of all Governing Fora including Governing Body, Academic Council and its Subcommittees, Programme Boards and in various Working Groups. The student voice is represented on programme boards with regular feedback provided to enhance the quality of the programme content, and the teaching, learning and assessment of programmes. The class representation system plays an important role in this aspect. The Student Union representatives work closely each year with the Quality Office to promote and encourage student participation in the annual Student Survey.ie campaign.

TUS partakes in a range of industry fora across its broad region. It also works with the educational sector to ensure that eligible students can readily and efficiently access programmes in TUS. This includes a wide range of marketing activities within the region and structured engagement programmes with second level schools and further education providers. Through its student outreach programme prospective students learn about TUS and the academic opportunities available.

1.1.3   TUS Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook

TUS Quality Assurance documentation has been collected and collated into the TUS Quality Assurance Handbook. The handbook is maintained by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Subcommittee and its content is reviewed annually by Academic Council. Consequently, relevant content areas are continuously improved through periodic reviews to assure their comprehensiveness, adequacy, and completeness. The handbook is published in full on the TUS website (www.tus.ie). The handbook contains a TUS European and National Quality System Resources document that contains ready access to relevant Legislation, Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, Award Standards and IHEQN Documents. The constituent documents, regulations, policies and procedures provide a systematic approach to govern quality assurance and to promote and enhance quality.

The TUS Guide to Effective Practice that Supports Equity in Technological University Communications is a constituent document of the Handbook. This serves as an approved reference point and guidance for Technological University Staff and assists in producing Technological University documentation, including Policies and Reports, inter alia, that take account of accessibility principles and supports inclusivity. Accordingly, all documents in the handbook are formatted with consistency while aligning to the guidelines.

A systematic document naming system is used to identify documents which refer to TUS policies and procedures. In this context, policies are preceded by 'TUS' title to enable clear differentiation between TUS and external documents. They also include the in-date period after the document title indicating

when next revision is due. The handbook is divided into a range of Volumes in different thematic areas for ease of access and reference:

Volume 1: Overarching System of QAE
Volume 2: Governing Body & Academic Council
Volume 3: TUS Strategies
Volume 4: Academic Regulations, Policies & Procedures
Volume 5: Student Support Policies & Procedures
Volume 6: Quality Enhancement Resources
Volume 7: Appendix

TUS's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures are implemented in all campuses and learning centers. These policies and procedures govern the design, delivery and review of its academic programmes on the NFQ framework from Level 6 to Level 10, whilst also assuring quality across its Craft Apprenticeships, and Adult, Life-Long Learning and Flexible Education Programmes. At TUS, all Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes come within the authority of Academic Council including procedures, standards, and academic content. TUS operates mutually supporting processes and procedures to promote and maintain high quality research and these are described in detail in Section 4.0 of this AQR.

1.1.4 TUS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Governance Structure

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is a key priority for TUS. An Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) Steering Committee was established in 2022 to oversee and provide guidance and direction for the achievement of equality, diversity, and inclusion objectives across TUS. This committee, which is chaired by TUS' President, includes representatives from Faculty, Human Resources, Student Support Services, EDI, RDI and Student's Union. A number of sub-committees report to the EDI Steering Committee. An EDI Sub Committee of Governing Body has also been formed and provides updates to Governing Body on EDI related initiatives underway in TUS. The committee structure through which the EDI strategic goals are achieved is illustrated in Figure 1.6.

EDI Committee Structure

Governing Body

VP / Deans Council | EDI Sub Committee of Governing Body

EDI Steering Committee

Interim SAT (new SAT to be formed in 2023) | University of Sanctuary Sub-Committee | Promoting Consent & Ending Sexual Violence Sub-Committee

Policies & Procedures WG | Staff Working Group | Student Working Group

Staff Networks

● First Responders to Disclosures of Sexual Violence and Harassment Community of Practice
● LGBT+ & Allies
● Women's Network
● Parents & Carers (in process)

Figure 1.6. Overview of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Structure

1.2 Linked Providers, Collaborative and Transnational Provision

The QA procedures for collaborative provisions are consistent with ESG 1.1 and 1.2, QQI Core QAG, IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision; QQI's Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes, and Joint Awards, 2012, the European Approach to the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

TUS Policies for Collaborative and Linked Provision ensure that learners enrolled on collaborative or transnational programmes (whether at home or overseas) which lead to a TUS Award receive an equivalent learning experience to that of learners studying at TUS. Academic Council has approved a number of collaborations with national and international agencies, bodies and providers including:

- Equal Ireland, Tuam Road, Galway.
- Gurteen Agricultural College, Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary.
- Pallaskenry Agricultural College, Co Limerick.
- Atlantic Aviation, Shannon, Co Clare.
- Atlantic Air Adventure Centre, Shannon, Co Clare.
- SOLAS
- University of Limerick
- Yangzee University, China

The Technological University is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of its policy suite in this area in the context of Designated Awarding Body status and a *draft TUS Policy on Collaborative Provision (National and Transnational)* is currently processing through Academic Council. The interim policies in this area are available as follows:

TUS Midwest: Collaborative Provision and Joint Awards (National and Transnational)

TUS Midlands: Supplementary QA Procedures for Collaborative Provision to include National and Transnational Programmes

All collaborative programmes are subject to annual monitoring and periodic review (programmatic review) as outlined in Section 1.9.

TUS is currently undertaking a review of its collaborative provision as a designated awarding body and in light of its Linked Provider Framework. The TUS Policy on Linked Provision and Linked Provider Framework has been approved by Academic Council. The purpose of the policy and framework is to set out the approach of TUS to linked provision and to specify the approach to:

a) meet its statutory obligations as a Designated Awarding Body;
b) articulate an Institutional Framework in respect of its Linked Providers;
c) present procedural documentation that facilitates the implementation of this framework;
d) clarify governance and oversight responsibilities in relation to linked provision;
e) provide information in a transparent manner to interested parties, internal and external to TUS, in relation to its linked provision policy and procedures;
f) provide assurance to interested parties that TUS's linked provision arrangements are in line with national statutory requirements.

The Policy is available at: TUS Policy on Linked Provision and Linked Provision Framework

2.0 Programme Development and Delivery

As a Designated Awarding Body, subject to the Technological Universities Act (2018) and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012), as TUS is a self-accrediting institution and responsible for the validation/re-validation of programmes leading to awards in its name, including joint awards. It is also responsible for monitoring the quality, and academic quality assurance, of those awards. TUS policies and procedures for programme development and delivery are consistent with QQI Core QAG, the ESG and IHEQN Guidelines on Collaborative Provision.

A particular function of TUS Academic Council under Chapter 5 (17) (3) (a)(b) of the 2018 Act is designing and developing programmes for the technological university and supporting the implementation of those programmes) [1]. The Academic Council subcommittees on *Programme* Provision and Review, *Flexible Learning* and *International and RUN-EU* play a particular role in advising Academic Council on matters relating to programme development and portfolio provision. Their Terms of Reference can be accessed at:

[Terms of Reference: Academic Council Sub-Committee on Programme Provision and Review](#)

[Terms of Reference: Academic Council Sub-Committee on Flexible Learning](#)
[Terms of Reference: Academic Council Sub-Committee on International and RUN-EU](#)

The TUS approach to academic quality assurance for programme validation/re-validation ensures that a learner may attain the knowledge, skill or competence for the purpose of an award which is consistent with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and fulfils requirements in relation to Technological University and national policy on access, transfer and progression.

TUS offers a range of awards in accordance with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) from Level 6 to Level 10 of the framework and including both taught and research programmes. The NFQ is an explicit reference point for the TUS Policy and Procedures for New Programme development and validation. The awards offered by TUS are accordance with the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Designated Awarding Bodies (2016) and the *[Joint-Sectoral Protocol between Designated Awarding Bodies and Quality and Qualifications Ireland for the Inclusion of Qualifications within the National Framework of Qualifications (2022)](#)*.

TUS operates systems for ECTS credit accumulation and credit transfer consistent with the Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Credit in Irish Higher Education and consistent with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation Scheme (ECTS). TUS observes norms and practices to ensure that it is appropriate that its awards be regarded as awards included within the NFQ at the appropriate respective levels. This enables the statutory inclusion of relevant TUS qualifications within the NFQ, in a consistent, transparent manner, in line with the *Joint Sectoral Protocol between DAB's and QQI for the Inclusion of Qualifications within the National Framework of Qualifications (2022).*

Major awards
The TUS Major Award Types are presented in Table 2 and include the typical credit volume or credit ranges for each major award type from Levels 6-9 in the NFQ.

Table 2.1. TUS Major Award Types

NFQ Level	Award Type	ECTS Credit Volume/Range
Level 6	Higher Certificate	120
Level 7	Bachelor Degree	180
Level 8	Honours Bachelor Degree	180-240
Level 8	Higher Diploma	60
Level 9	Postgraduate Diploma	60
Level 9	Masters Degree (Taught)	60-120
Level 9	Masters Degree (Research)	120
Level 9	Doctor of Philosophy	-

TUS Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards

TUS Special Purpose Awards are stand-alone awards with a distinctive identity reflecting a clearly defined purpose. While Special Purpose Awards are stand-alone awards their ECTS Credits can be derived from a Major Award. Supplemental awards are for learning which is additional to a previously completed award and are not at a higher level than the initial award. The volume of learning for TUS Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards is between 10 and 60 ECTS credits

TUS Microcredentials

TUS Microcredentials are developed in accordance with the *TUS Policy on Microcredentials 2022 - 2024* at NFQ Level 6 - 9 of the NFQ and carry an ECTS Credit range of 1 - 9. Upon successful completion a Certificate of Completion is issued for the Microcredential. Academic recognition for completion of the Microcredential will be added to the European Diploma Supplement for TUS Graduates.

All programmes offered through collaborative provision, nationally and transnationally, require full validation in line with TUS Policy for Collaborative Provision.

2.1 Programme Development and Approval

The validation processes operated by TUS ensure that its academic programmes are robustly and successfully validated, and revalidated, thereby achieving adherence to statutory requirements including: 1) the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act* (2012), and 2) the *QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (for all providers)* (2016)[]. They also align with the European Standards and Guidelines (2015), including the Standards; 1.2 Design and Approval of Programmes, 1.3 Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment; 1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification; 1.6 Learning Resources and Student Support; and 1.9 On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes.

The following distinct Validation Processes operate at TUS:
1. Validation and approval of new Programmes leading to Major Awards;
2. Validation of Programmes including Minor/Special Purpose/Supplemental Awards and Microcredentials;
3. Revalidation of Existing Programmes (Programmatic Review);
4. Modification of an Approved Programme in advance of Programmatic Review.

The development, validation and approval of new programmes and programme revalidation is conducted in TUS in accordance with relevant policies and procedures as follows:

TUS New Programme Validation Process Outline Academic Years 2021 - 2023

TUS Programmatic Review Process Outline

Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Academic Year 2020/2021, Part 1, Chapter 3, Development and Review of Programmes & Modules.

Procedures and Guidelines for the Design, Development, Evaluation and Withdrawal of Taught Programmes and Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes

A rigorous, systematic, and consistent process for the design and development of programmes is implemented at TUS with all the relevant stakeholders included. External expertise and reference points are an integral part of programme design and a core element of all programme validation events.

There are five overall stages within the programme development process and these are summarised as follows.

Table 2.2. Stages of New Programme Development

		Overall Stages of New Programme Development at TUS
1	Preliminary Scoping and Academic Council Approval to Develop	This phase marks the genesis of programme development and usually occurs within the relevant Faculty. The primary step within this phase is the securing of preliminary approval for the development and submission of an application to the relevant subcommittee of Academic Council.
2	Preparation and Development of New Programme Document	This occurs within the appropriate Faculty and involves detailed discussion at New Programme Board meetings. An evidence base is generated from appropriate research and comprehensive internal and external stakeholder engagement. This phase results in the development the draft New Programme Document.
3	Internal Review	An Internal Review process is conducted by an appropriately constituted panel including membership from TUS and potentially including external stakeholders.
4	External Review and Validation	The External Review includes the review of the proposed programme by the External Panel on behalf of Academic Council. The Panel makes a recommendation to Academic Council with respect to the Validation outcome. The New Programme Board responds to the External Panel Report and actions the findings as appropriate.
5	Academic Council Approval of New Award	This phase involves the Academic Council consideration of the Validation Panel Report and Programme Board Response following by Academic Council Approval of the New Award, as appropriate.

TUS continues to develop links and to consult with the community, and with industry and professional bodies, to inform the development and review of programmes and modules, to ensure that they are responsive to existing and emerging stakeholder needs. TUS is committed to making a regional impact and works closely with industry and community stakeholders to support sustainable development. Working with Regional Skills Fora, TUS combines the capacity to audit regional skills needs, identify

gaps and respond proactively. The resulting applied focus of programmes ensures that TUS graduates will continue to be highly sought after and recognised regionally and nationally as having a high level of expertise, skill and competency with multiple career opportunities.

In an approach that underpins the *Values* and *Purpose* of TUS, the University is committed to enabling the development of robust Graduate Attributes which have been purposefully formulated to elucidate the key commitments TUS makes when preparing graduates for work and life, irrespective of discipline area. Accordingly, the TUS Graduate Attributes Framework informs programme design resulting in a broader interpretation of the knowledge, skills, and competences which students are required to develop in higher education in keeping the NFQ. This is particularly relevant to the demand for non-routine, creative problem solving, and the requirement to be able to cooperate, collaborate and communicate with others as global citizens in a digital world. The framework is available at: TUS Graduates Attributes Framework

Apprenticeship Programmes

The Academic Council Subcommittee on Apprenticeship is responsible for advising Academic Council on matters relating to Apprenticeship, having regard to Chapter 9 (1)(i) of the Technological University Act (2018) in supporting the development of a skilled labour force including, where appropriate, engaging in the education and training of apprentices. The Terms of Reference can be accessed at: Terms of Reference: Academic Council Sub-Committee on Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship education remains an important part of the education provision of TUS. A range of Craft apprenticeships are offered across TUS including, Carpentry and Joinery, Electrical, Heavy Vehicle Mechanics, Motor Mechanics, and Plumbing. Apprentices earn while they learn and build valuable work-ready skills in a chosen occupation.

Table 2.3. Profile of Craft Apprenticeship Provision at TUS

Craft Apprenticeships	Number of Blocks	Number of Blocks (2021/2022)	Number of Students (2021/2022)
Carpentry and Joinery	TUS Midwest	3	81
Electrical	TUS Midwest	3	384
MAMF (Fitter)	TUS Midwest	3	96
Heavy Vehicle Mechanic	TUS Midlands	9	143
Light Vehicle Mechanic (Motor)	TUS Midwest & TUS Midlands	6	139
Plumbing	TUS Midlands	12	172

The learning offered by TUS in collaboration with SOLAS, is grounded in the academic and practical experience needed to enable graduates to undertake a qualified craft apprenticeship role. The quality assurance of Apprenticeship programmes in TUS are governed by similar processes, procedures and policies that govern TUS taught programmes. TUS also maintains close on-going links with SOLAS. The

apprentice is fully supported by the academic staff during the apprenticeship and has full access to all the facilities and supports of the Technological University. Apprentices are employed by a SOLAS-approved employer for the duration of the programme which is generally between 2-4 years. Apprenticeship programmes provide at least 50% workplace-based learning. There is a dedicated Apprenticeship sub-committee of Academic Council which meets several times throughout the academic year in order to ensure continued progress and quality. TUS is also playing a significant role in the development of New Generation (Post 2016) Apprenticeships under the Statutory Apprenticeship model as both a Coordinating and Collaborative Provider with approval for the delivery of 6 programmes.

TUS is committed to achieving excellence in apprenticeship and skills education. Progression from all levels of apprenticeship is encouraged in related cognate areas through flexible learning and advanced entry to full-time programmes. In TUS, students from apprenticeships have successfully progressed from Level 6 through all levels of the NFQ including up to doctoral level.

Postgraduate Research Degree Provision
The Quality Assurance Procedures for Postgraduate Research Degree provision are outlined in Part A, Section 4.0.

2.2 Admission, Progression, Recognition & Certification

TUS procedures for admissions, transfer, progression, recognition, and certification are established and implemented in a transparent manner and in accordance with ESG 1.4 and the *QQI Policy on Access, Transfer and Progression (revised 2015)*. Cognisant of the national policy on Access, Transfer, and Progression, TUS is committed to fair, transparent and consistent access, transfer and progression opportunities for all students. TUS welcomes applications from people from every background and endeavours to make the application process as transparent, applicant focused, efficient, and effective as possible.

TUS offers learners access and (ladders of learning) progression pathways into and along the National Framework of Qualifications from Level 6-9 and Level 10. Within these pathways, flexible modular options are available for learners and include different entry points, part-time and flexible study options, electives and embedded awards. Procedures for learner admission, progression, and recognition include:

- Fit-for-purpose admission, progression, recognition of prior learning, and completion policies and procedures;

- Comprehensive Student Induction;

- Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on learner progression and completion rates;

- Recognition of prior learning, including the recognition of formal and non-formal learning such as experiential and certified learning.

Admissions

The Admissions criteria for each programme are provided in the TUS Prospectus and are consistent with national norms and requirements for entry. They are available at:

TUS Midlands Undergraduate Prospectus 2021 - 2022
TUS Midwest Undergraduate Prospectus 2021 - 2022

Policies and procedures for student access, transfer and admission are managed by the TUS Admissions Office. These outline the operational admissions procedures and the various categories of students entering TUS. TUS Midlands Admissions Office Policies and Procedures are available at TUS Midlands Admissions TUS Midwest Admissions Office Policies and Procedures are available at TUS Midwest Admissions and Admissions Office Policies and Procedures. TUS provides all students with an online registration facility. Application to TUS for Year 1 programmes is through the Central Applications Office (CAO) system. TUS recommends those eligible for offer and instructs the CAO to make the appropriate offer. Application to second and subsequent years is managed directly by TUS. FETAC Level 5 and Level 6 award holders are eligible for advanced entry to 2nd and subsequent years of approved programmes in cognate areas.

To assure the quality of TUS's engagement with students during their transition:

1. A Student Handbook is provided to all new entrants for ease of entry to third level education. Available at TUS Student Handbook

> The Student Handbook provides details related to:
> - Campus Life Information
> - Student Experience
> - Library
> - Computer Services
> - Examinations and Assessment
> - Research Development and Innovation
> - Data Protection and Freedom of Information
> - Health and Safety
> - Study Guide
> - Student Policies
> - Student Insurance
> - Public Information and Acts
> - Campus Maps.

2. The TUS Connect and Engage Programme. TUS have developed a comprehensive student induction and progression programme called Connect and Engage. This structured, activity-based programme is geared towards getting new students settled in and acquainted with other students and their campus. It provides students with the opportunity to actively engage in college life, get to grips with your course, join a club or society and develop a personal toolkit to live a healthy balanced and enjoyable lifestyle. The schedule includes an array of events and activities ranging from support services to essential information for progressing students, first year induction together with 8 themed weeks of activities to help students enjoy a positive student experience. supports the transition of all students to TUS. Sample schedule available at: Connect and Engage.

Transfer

TUS accepts transfer requests from students who have completed a discrete element of a programme of study. The applicant must have successfully completed an award stage and have sufficient credits and attained the learning outcomes from the modules on that stage to enable transfer into TUS. Students may apply to transfer to the second or subsequent year of a cognate programme and the transfer will be subject to places being available in TUS. Internal transfers will take place with due regard to equity of treatment of students, including current school leavers and in accordance with the Technological Universities commitments to the CAO process. As a participant in the CAO process, TUS abides with agreements with the CAO which govern the admission of first year students. Transfer criteria are specified in TUS Admissions Office Website and in the Internal Transfer Policy and in the of the Admissions Office Policies and Procedures, Chapter 11, Internal Transfer for TUS Midlands and Midwest respectively.

Progression:

TUS is guided by the principles of progression as outlined in it's academic regulations available at: TUS Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes. Section 4, titled Progression, details all aspect of student progression including programme level and credit, workload, stage progression, award level progression, limitations of progression, compensation, failed elements, deferral, aegrotat award and posthumous award. Data is collected, monitored and acted upon with regard to learner progression and completion rates and relevant statistics are presented to Academic Council, annually. Such information is used to inform the quality assurance of programmes through Programme Boards, Programmatic Reviews, and programme portfolios managed by Departments and Faculties, and the TUS Strategic Plan.

Recognition of Learning (RPL):

TUS recognises the importance of providing access to education and providing lifelong learning opportunities. The philosophy underpinning the Recognition of Prior Learning is to enable and encourage people to enter or re-enter formal education, leading to qualifications, by awarding exemptions or recognising credit for what they already know from the programme curriculum. TUS recognises the qualifications and prior learning of students and recognises Prior Certificated Learning and/or Prior Experiential Learning. The related regulations and procedures are outlined in the: TUS Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning. The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate the prior learning, by preparing and submitting adequate evidence, under the guidance and advice of the institution.

Certification:

The regulations and procedures for certification are outlined in the academic regulations available at: TUS Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes Section 3, Award Classification. And Section 3.4, Standards for Awards at Different Classifications.

Access Programme

TUS plays a pivotal role in educational provision in the regions it serves including the Midlands and Midwest and in fulfilling this role contributes to the creation of access pathways to the Technological University. The provision of the one-year programme for mature students, designed to equip candidates with the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to progress to third level education supports this objective. Details of these Access programme are available at:

TUS Midwest: Access Programme

TUS Midlands: Access Programme

2.3 Procedures for Making Awards

As a Designated Awarding Body, TUS Academic Council had adopted the QQI Award Standards. TUS has robust procedures for ensuring that its awards are consistent with the relevant award standards and that programme development and validation procedures ensure that graduates of awards at the cognate levels of the NFQ will have attained the requisite standards of knowledge, skills and competency. The procedures are consistent with QQI Sector-specific QAG for Designated Awarding Bodies, Section 6. Thus, the NFQ is a core reference point during programme design and the specification of programme learning outcomes that align to award standard at the respective levels is a central element. Module learning outcomes and module assessment strategies are in turn aligned. The associated procedures are detailed in TUS procedures for programme development and review. These procedures assure that TUS Awards are consistent with awards of the NFQ at the respective award levels. The procedures are available at:

- TUS New Programme Validation Process Outline Academic Years 2021 – 2023
- TUS Programmatic Review Process Outline
- Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Academic Year 2020/2021, Part 1, Chapter 3, Development and Review of Programmes & Modules.
- Procedures and Guidelines for the Design, Development, Evaluation and Withdrawal of Taught Programmes and Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes

The use of Academic Module Manager software for programme development supports the alignment of programmes to the NFQ levels and the TUS adopted award standards. This software used for programme development requires extensive mapping to ensure that: a), Programme Learning Outcomes map to the relevant Award Standards, b), Module Learning Outcomes map to the Programme Learning Outcomes and c), the module assessment strategies are mapped to individual module learning outcomes. Ensuring that the standards of knowledge, skill and competency are appropriately articulated is a key part of programme validation.

Programme validation includes an assessment of the following criteria:
  a) the minimum intended programme learning outcomes are specified in a manner consistent with the relevant TUS Awards Standards and with the NFQ Award-type descriptors;
  b) the Module Learning Outcomes are specified at the appropriate level of the NFQ and use measurable active verbs;
  c) the programme's prerequisite learning specification includes the knowledge, skill and competence specified at lower NFQ levels.
  d) the programme is designed to enable learners to move from the minimum access standard to the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and that this is explicit, realistic and viable.
  e) learners who are judged qualified to access the programme should be able to graduate from that programme subject to their making a reasonable effort and complying with the programme's conditions.

To assist programme teams a guide for Academics in writing and using learning outcomes, available at: Writing and Using Learning Outcomes, A Guide for Academics

2.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

TUS has a range of QAE procedures for assuring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. These policies and procedures are consistent with QQI Core QAG Section 2.5 - Teaching and Learning; ESG 1.3; Assessment: QQI Core QAG Section 2.6 – Assessment of Learners.

A key priority of the TUS Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026 is to "provide a relevant high-quality education offering, focused on interdisciplinarity, delivered in a flexible way to cater to a diverse cohort of students, across multi-campus locations". In delivering high quality education, the strategy is supported by the Putting Learning First, TUS Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2022 - 2025. The strategy sets out an Educational Philosophy that *"that co-creates an inclusive learning experience through leadership in teaching, active learning, research, scholarship, industry and civic collaboration"*. The strategy commits TUS to a framework for an internationalised curriculum that is values-driven with overarching principles and a focus on knowledge creation, co-creation and intellectual leadership. In addition, the University is committed to providing an inclusive approach to curriculum design which is based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a framework that allows educators to apply a flexible approach to learning, teaching and assessment, for a diverse student population. A direct result of a UDL approach is accessibility for all learners, with more student-centred learning experiences. TUS is also cognisant that at a national and European level, the enhancement of digital skills for staff and students is a key factor in the provision of an enriched learning experience in higher education.

The *TUS - Putting Learning First Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy* is comprised of three interconnected elements, namely a TUS Graduate Attributes Framework, TUS Curriculum Design Approaches and seven key pillars that support excellence in learning, teaching and assessment. The TUS Graduate Attributes have been developed from the educational philosophy and are the overarching components that inform the principles and approaches for curriculum and programme design in the Technological University. These in turn inform the goals and objectives of the seven complementary pillars, designed to support excellence in learning, teaching and assessment (Figure 2.1).
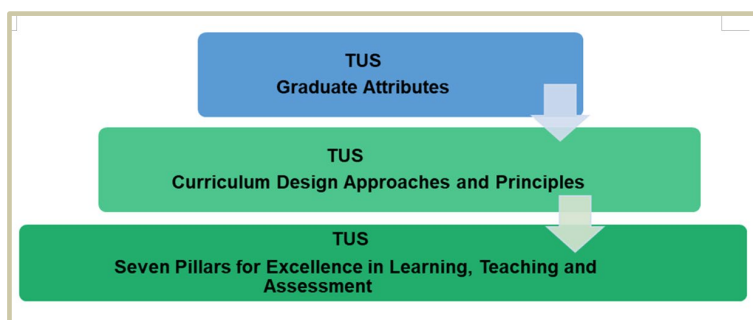
Figure 2.1 TUS Positioning of Graduate Attributes in Curriculum Design

TUS Graduate Attributes inform programme design resulting in a broader interpretation of the knowledge, skills, and competences which students are required to develop in higher education in keeping the National Framework of Qualifications. This is particularly relevant to the demand for non-routine, creative problem solving, and the requirement to be able to cooperate, collaborate and communicate with others as global citizens in a digital world. The TUS Graduate Attributes Framework is available to programme design teams and is included in Module Manager for programme mapping.
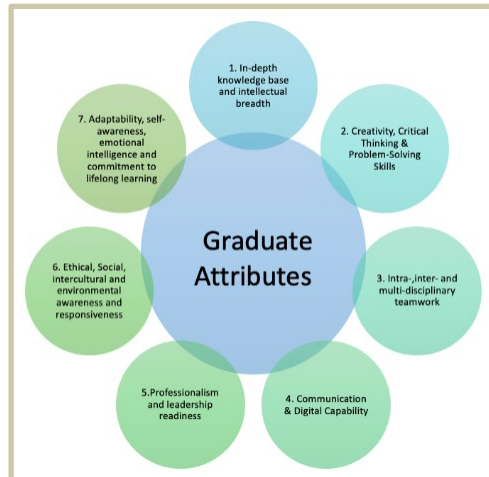
Figure 2.2 TUS Graduate Attributes

The Graduates Attributes Framework is complemented by a TUS Curriculum Design Approach. In this, TUS commits to a framework for an internationalised curriculum that is values-driven with overarching principles and a focus on knowledge creation, co-creation and intellectual leadership. It further commits to inclusive and student-centred models of curriculum design.
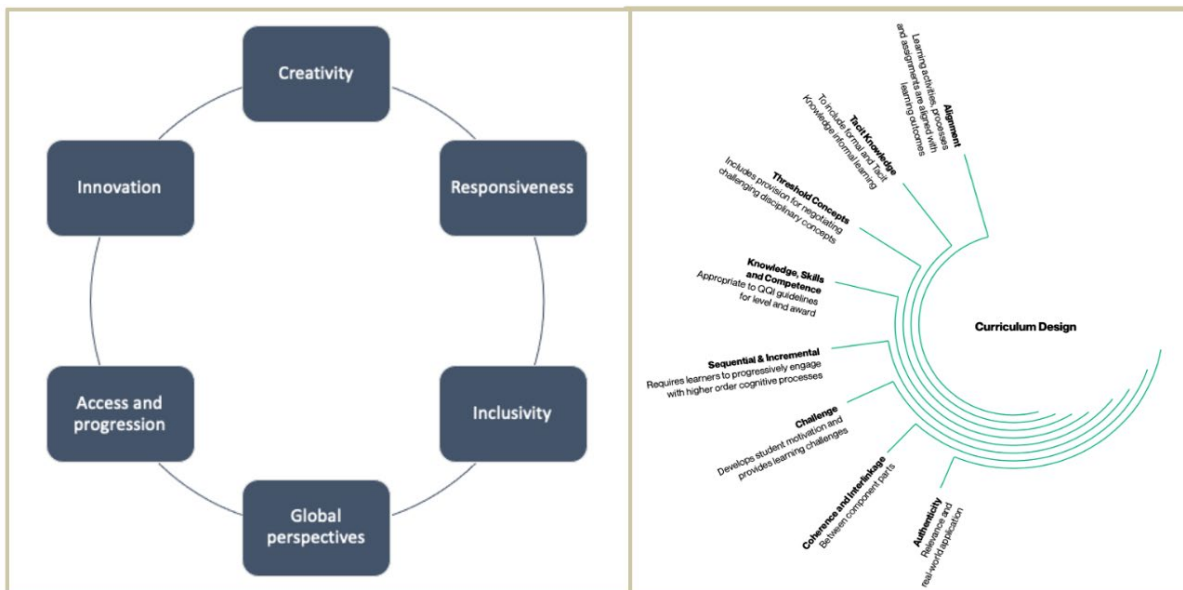
Figure 2.3 TUS Curriculum Design Principles and Approaches

The Graduates Attributes Framework Curriculum Design Approach are further supported by seven pillars supporting excellence in Teaching, Learning and Assessment. Each of the pillars support the pursuit of excellence and the enrichment of the learning experience of all learners and are further supported by a set of goals for development and implementation.
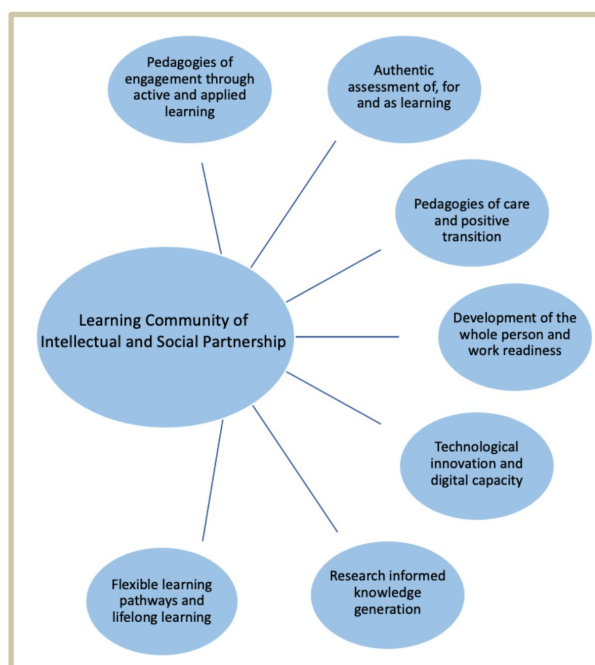
Figure 2.4. Seven Pillars Supporting Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learners are at the core and focus of activity in TUS and the increasing diversity of the learner population and the diversity of learner needs are recognised and valued. Student centred learning is characterised by pedagogies of care and positive transition, engagement through active and applied learning coupled with an emphasis on deep and authentic learning and assessment. The student centred learning approach is further supported by the use of constructive alignment in which excellence is facilitated in a system where all aspects of delivery, and assessment of learning activities, are aligned to the intended learning outcomes. Constructive alignment to learning outcomes places the learning process at the centre of all activities while the active learning pedagogy places student centred learning firmly at the core and this dual emphasis fosters deep authentic learning. Student engagement in the learning process is stimulated by their direct involvement in discussion, debate dialogue, teamwork, presentations, project work, and work placement. It is complemented by other higher cognitive learning activities such as analysis, enquiry, exploration, evaluation amongst others in all the different contexts they emerge during a programme.

Assessment

Assessment is widely recognised as a key driver of learning in Higher Education and, in Ireland, there is now a significant focus on the authenticity of assessment and on academic integrity. This coincides with a focus on the continuum of Assessment OF/FOR/AS learning by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. Effective and authentic assessment has the potential to positively influence student engagement across five key domains of; cognitive, social, behavioural, collaborative and emotional development. Assessment can therefore be a key enabler of 21st century graduate attributes such as; critical thinking, creative problem solving, effective team-work, collaborative decision making and inter-disciplinary thinking. There is a commitment to continually review assessment practices in TUS to ensure they correspond to best practice nationally and internationally. The TUS procedures for assessment are outlined in detail in the TUS Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes. These regulations and procedures are consistent with the QQI

Assessment and Standards (Revised 2022). Overall procedures for the assessment of students regulate the authority, role, responsibility and accountability of all persons and committees involved with assessment procedures. Such persons may include: Students; Internal and External Examiners; Department, Faculty/School Deans and Heads of Department; Department, Faculty/School Boards; Programme Boards; Boards of Examiners; Appeals Boards; the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar; Assistant Registrars, Academic Council; Governing Body and President.

External Examining:
External examining verifies that the content, teaching and assessment methods and their standards are appropriate for the nature and level of the academic award being reviewed. The selection, approval, and appointment of external examiners is central to the quality assurance practices of TUS as it invokes the support, guidance and insights from recognised professionals in various disciplines. The main purposes of External Examining at TUS are to ensure that:

a) the academic standard for each award and award element is set and maintained by the Technological University at the appropriate level and that student performance is properly judged against this;

b) the assessment process appropriately measures student achievement against learning outcomes, and is fair and fairly operated;

c) the Technological University is able to ensure that the standards of its awards are comparable with those of peer Higher Education Institutions.

Feedback is provided annually on the quality of learning via external examiner reports. External examiner reports are issued to department management and to relevant staff members for action and response. All reports and indicated consequent actions noted are reviewed by the Academic Council Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance and Enhancement. Full details of the TUS External Examiner Policy are available at: External Examiners Policy and Procedure for Taught Programmes

Academic Integrity
Responsibility for demonstrating academic integrity lies with the enrolled learner and this "includes compliance with ethical and professional principles, standards, and practices by individuals or institutions in education, research, and scholarship". Academic integrity is relevant to all areas of academic endeavour undertaken by the enrolled learner. This includes, but is not limited to, all activities related to the achievement of academic credit for awards; all methods of learning practice including in the classroom; research; online, distance and work-based learning; in all methods of assessment; and in academic scholarship. TUS places significant emphasis on academic integrity and is represented on the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) established by QQI. TUS considers the NAIN forum an important instrument for the sharing and dissemination of information relating to the current issues, initiatives and best practice in the academic integrity sphere. From the TU perspective, academic integrity is nurtured through academic leadership which embeds the principles of academic integrity in its teaching, learning and assessment policies and practices. The TUS approach to academic integrity is outlined in TUS Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes.

3.0 Learner Resources and Support

The TUS approach to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Learner Resources and Support aligns with QQI Core QAG 2.7 - Supports for Learners; ESG 1.6 and the QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners. TUS has established an *Academic Council Subcommittee on Student Experience and Access* which provides governance for a broad range of areas to support the student experience including learner resources and student supports.

TUS is a dynamic and vibrant multi-campus community with a student-focused educational experience that fosters a culture of academic excellence. A supportive learning environment has at its core, a warm and welcoming ethos, where student well-being is cultivated and prioritised. Students are at the heart of our collaborative learning community which fosters diversity, inclusion, and social integration. TUS encourages student engagement outside the formal learning space where students may avail of the many opportunities to participate in activities that support their academic, cultural, social and sporting interests and preferences. This extra-curricular engagement contributes to student development and ultimately an optimal third level experience which will enable students to maximise their potential. By being an active participant in college life, students not only position themselves for their career but as the architect of their own future.

3.1   Policies and Procedures

TUS Academic Council has approved a range of Student Support Policies and Procedures as follows:

TUS Student Code of Conduct and Discipline

TUS Student Policy on Dignity and Respect Dealing with Harassment and/or Bullying among Students

TUS Student Complaints and Problem Resolution Procedure

TUS Student Reasonable Accommodation Policy

TUS Policy and Procedures on the Provision of References for Students/Graduates of the Technological University

TUS Student Death Protocol

TUS Child Protection Policy

TUS Child Safeguarding-Statement

These policies play important roles in supporting students as they progress through the student lifecycle. The Reasonable Accommodation policy outlines the TUS commitment to take all reasonable actions to support students across the full range of their disabilities/specific learning difficulties/ongoing health conditions, including but not limited to: sensory and physical disabilities, specific learning difficulties, mental health conditions, significant ongoing illness, and students with Autism.

3.2   Learner Resources

General Resources and Support

Within budgetary requirements, TUS is strongly committed to the provision of appropriate resources for all programmes. During programme validation and revalidation, resources are considered, in line with the validation criteria for a programme to be viable. Any deficit is identified and reported to Academic

Council. The use of Academic Module Manager software for programme development supports the identification of resource requirements for the delivery of each module and each programme. During module definition and validation these requirements are explicitly listed and reviewed. TUS endeavours to continuously improve available resources. The academic, social and cultural experience of the student is central to the ongoing development of learner resources.

TUS is multi-campus Technological University and is growing with major capital investment in campus development and in new buildings/building upgrades. These buildings will accommodate science laboratories, flat teaching facilities, computer labs, tutorial rooms, 'break-out' and meeting spaces inter alia. Such infrastructural developments will also provide for the expansion and improvement of the learning resources available to TUS students.

Campus Development

- TUS is currently constructing a major new campus at Coonagh near to its Moylish, Limerick campus. Primarily focused on engineering, the €14m facility is expected to open to students in 2024.
- TUS has secured a €20m investment for the construction of a new Applied Science and Information Technology building on the Moylish campus as part of the Higher Education PPP scheme.
- TUS has also secured a multi-million funding for a new STEM facility in the Midlands campus as part of the Higher Education PPP scheme.
- A circa €5m extension and refit of the Applied Polymer Technology building in the Athlone campus is at the construction stage and is due for completion in August 2023.The project will create new, expanded and refurbished facilities and infrastructure totalling 1,330sq.m. for the Applied Polymer Technology (APT) Gateway to increase capacity for applied polymer research and related activity.
- The development of a circa €4m Campus Incubator in the Athlone Campus is ongoing and due for completion in June 2023. It is comprised of a new two storey building containing office accommodation, meeting rooms, circulation space, social space, toilet facilities, plant rooms and service risers, and rooftop plant area. Additional floor area of circa 800sq.m will be provided.
- A summer works programme will see a significant investment allocated to a wide variety of works project in the summer of 2023 and beyond. This investment is in response to a call for capital investment applications in a wide number of academic, research and support areas, areas including works to enhance teaching and learning spaces, upgrade and modernise existing spaces and to generally improve campus environments.

TUS Library (Space, Services, Collections, Skills & Expertise)

The library is central to the intellectual and academic life of TUS, where students and staff needs are the top priority. TUS Library leads through the provision of knowledge collections and learning services, training for information, digital and media literacy skills, and systems and expertise supporting scholarly communications and research. The TUS Institutional repository is hosted and managed by the library to make TU research available and accessible to the public. The library focuses on wide engagement with the TUS learning community at all levels from undergraduate programmes through to academic research, and collaboration across the organisation for the benefit of all learners. The Library endeavours to ensure provision of learning spaces onsite and online that are suitable for personal and

collaborative learning. Staff in these spaces are committed to fostering learning, creativity, and innovation through ensuring access to quality library resources and services, through the expertise and commitment of our library staff and by safeguarding a library environment that is both supportive and engaging for all learners. Alongside quality information resources, the library is committed to ensuring that students possess the core skills to locate and access the correct information when and where they need it and have the supplementary skills to know how to evaluate and use the information effectively and ethically. These goals are met through the library's annual library induction programmes and information and library skills sessions which cover learning to learn, information literacy and research skills across all libraries and in collaboration with academic departments. The Library have developed LibGuides, a collection of specialised research and subject guides and how-to tutorials which inform our learners about various library facilities and services, subject specialist guides for academic departments, as well as information resources to support learning and research. Library staff are trusted and proud colleagues and partners in TUS collaborating with all stakeholders in the wider TUS learning community from students to academic staff, postgraduates, researchers, alumni and our wider communities.

3.3   Learner Supports

Students in TUS have access to many supports and services outlined in this report including an induction and orientation programme 'Connect & Engage', Access, Disability, Student Counselling, Student Health Service, Learning Support, Careers and Employability, Pastoral Care, Peer Assisted Student Support, Mentors, Laptop Loan Scheme, and Societies. TUS also has a vibrant Sports Office and an active Students' Union who work collaboratively with student services in supporting students. The comprehensive Student Induction Programme 'Connect and Engage' is detailed in Section 2.2.

Access Service
TUS Access Service is committed to promoting access to higher education for under-represented groups and the TUS Access agenda flows from a philosophy of equality and social inclusiveness. TUS Access Service operates initiatives in partnership with schools, community organisations, and Further Education providers. The aim of the service is to support widening access for under-represented students by delivering targeted strategies to promote, facilitate entry to and participation in the academic programmes and student life of the Technological University for students who are currently under-represented in third-level education. These students include:
- Students who experience socio-economic disadvantage;
- Students with Disability and/or Specific Learning Difficulty;
- Mature Students;
- Irish Travellers and other Ethnic Minorities;
- Lone Parents;
- QQI Entrants;
- Part-Time Students.

For further information: TUS Access Service (Midwest)   TUS Access Office (Midlands)

Disability Service
The Disability Service provides a range of supports and services to students with disabilities/specific learning difficulties/ongoing health conditions, to enable them to become independent learners and skilful graduates. Students are encouraged to contact the service as early as possible to discuss, in confidence, any facilities and supports they may require during their course of study. Supports are

determined through the completion of an individual needs assessment which informs an individual learning plan for the student. Types of Disability/Specific Learning Difficulties/Ongoing Health Conditions include:

- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD);
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD);
- Blind/Vision Impaired;
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing;
- Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) - Dyspraxia /Dysgraphia;
- Mental Health Difficulty;
- Neurological Conditions (including Epilepsy & Brain Injury);
- Physical Disability;
- Significant Ongoing Health Condition;
- Specific Learning Difficulty (including Dyslexia & Dyscalculia);
- Speech and Language Communication Disorder.

For further information: TUS Disability Support (Midwest)   TUS Disability & Learning Support (Midlands)

Student Counselling Service

TUS Student Counselling Service provides free, confidential professional psychological counselling, available to all registered students of TUS. The service is staffed by professional, qualified, and experienced psychologists, psychotherapists, and counsellors. The service aims to provide accessible, available, and student-friendly support for students when a personal issue or crisis arises which affects their wellbeing, happiness, their capacity to cope, relationships, or learning. The service also provides daily crisis and emergency appointments. The work of TUS Student Counselling Services (TUS SCS) is best described with reference to the four foundational pillars as identified by the Comprehensive Student Counselling Service Model (PCHEI 2022).

1. Clinical Services: TUS SCS provide direct, specialised, culturally appropriate and trauma informed individual and group counselling/therapy, tailored to our higher education context. We also provide risk assessment, intervention, and management.

2. Consultation and Collaborative Services: TUS SCS provides crisis management and postvention expertise, we provide departmental consultations, and serve on a range of institutional, regional, and national committees. SCS offers inclusive and diverse services to the TUS community.

3. Outreach, prevention, and early intervention: TUS SCS offers workshops and groups. Psychoeducation and prevention programmes; psychological and emotional development; and campus community development. Psychoeducation is also provided through social media channels. TUS SCS is engaged with ending sexual violence and harassment, providing education, training, and supporting Speak Out. Speak Out is an anonymous online reporting tool for students and staff to report incidents of violence, sexual violence and rape, coercive control, harassment, bullying, cyberbullying, hate crime, and stalking.

4. Training and Education: TUS SCS are involved in the training, development, and continuing education of internal stakeholders including campus staff, student representatives, (such as Student Union Officers, class representatives, and peer mentors), as well as the broader student population. SCS has a central role in empowering the campus community to support and intervene

with distressed students, training staff/peers in identifying and responding to distressed and at-risk students.

For further information: TUS Student Counselling (Midwest)   TUS Counselling (Midlands)

Student Health Service

Whether students are sick or injured, managing a chronic health condition, or working to develop a healthier lifestyle the Student Health service is available to support. Student Health provides confidential, professional medical care to registered students. Our nurse led service is free and confidential and operates as an addition to a student's own family doctor or specialist medical service. Student Health services are available from Monday to Friday throughout the academic year. A GP service is available to all students within 3km of their campus and GP services are available on site in our Moylish and Athlone campuses to cater to the larger numbers of students. Doctor visits are subsidised, costing only €15 to the student and free for medical card holders outside a 5km radius of the relevant campus.

In addition to providing medical care and emergency attendance on campus, the Student Health service is committed to facilitating health promotion activities and delivering supportive measures to assist students in ways that keep them committed to their studies, including referral to wider services such as counselling, access, and disability support. Our ethos is centred around the premise that students who develop a healthy lifestyle in an environment that supports healthy choices are likely to have the best academic outcomes. The Athlone campus also offers am award winning, HSE funded nurse led sexual health, contraception and health promotion service to students on site. This confidential, self-referral service tailored to students' requirements provides comprehensive care including testing, treatment and follow up of sexually transmitted infections, vaccinations, contraception services, pregnancy care, referrals, health promotion and education. For Further Information: TUS | Student Health (Midwest)   Your Health and Wellbeing (Midlands)

Learning Support

Learning Support is available to all students with approximately 20% of students availing of support every year. We promote a supervised self-help model to empower the student and to focus on building their skills and confidence in a supportive and encouraging environment. This process is underpinned by the principles of active learning, with the student leading the process. Students experience challenges with different areas of their study. During their time in TUS students can avail of one-to-one consultations, group workshops and seminars to help improve their academic skills. Students who may have always struggled with writing or perhaps want to improve their writing skills, for the level of writing required at 3rd level, can avail of writing skills resources. Free tuition is available to all registered students, who self-refer or are referred, across a range of subjects. The Learning Support delivery model in TUS Midlands and TUS Midwest currently but it is noteworthy however the key deliverables outlined above apply across all campuses. For further information: TUS Learning Support Unit (Midwest)   Disability & Learning Support Service (Midlands)

Careers and Employability

The TUS Careers and Employability Services support students and graduates to identify, develop and enhance their employability skills toward realising their career objectives and maximising their personal and professional potential. Our services are available to all students in the form of one to one and group career and educational guidance, workshops, seminars and events. The services work in partnership with academic and professional services in support of students toward enhancing their discipline specific competencies, graduate attributes and employability. TUS graduates are highly sought after and are

recognised regionally and nationally for having a high level of technical and commercial expertise. In this reporting period it is notable that our Midlands and Midwest services differ in terms of structures and scope. A strategic review process will be undertaken in the coming year with a view to recommending a more aligned TUS approach. For further information: TUS Careers & Employability (Midwest) TUS Careers Office (Midlands)

Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Care Service works across our six campuses to create a caring and supportive community for our students. A Chaplain, from the Diocese is based in Midlands while a staff appointed, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, is based in TUS Midwest campuses. This service plays a significant role in delivering a person-centred supportive environment while engaging with our students in times of need. The Pastoral Care service, by its nature, works quietly and often unseen, but provides a very effective bridge to other services and supports both within the Technological University and locally within the communities TUS serves. Reflection rooms are available for prayer and meditation to students on our Moylish and Athlone campuses to cater for our larger student populations on these campus. For further information: TUS Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care (Midwest) TUS Pastoral Care (Midlands)

Peer Assisted Student Support Programme

On the Athlone campus, the Peer Assisted Student Support (PASS) operates as a formal peer to peer academic mentoring programme where second year students, known as PASS Leaders, are trained to facilitate PASS sessions with first year students. This programme grew out of a joint collaboration with GMIT made possible through Dormant Account Funding and was mainstreamed in AIT following the conclusion of the funding stream. PASS was built from a leading mentoring programme, the PAL Programme which was originally developed at Bournemouth University and made freely available for adaptation. PASS at TUS is now part of an international community of best practise. Student peers (PASS Leaders) from 2nd year are trained to help first year students from undergraduate full-time, part-time, flexible learning, apprenticeships or further education transition into education and support them in their learning in their first semester at University. Our PASS Leaders are recruited and trained to work almost exclusively in pairs (or threes) to facilitate timetabled collaborative groupwork sessions. PASS sessions are held within course cohorts, e.g., a Veterinary Nursing Leader facilitates sessions exclusively for Veterinary Nursing first year students. PASS Leaders are eligible for +5 credits as part of their voluntary work with their peers. For further information: Peer Assisted Support Programme

Mentors

All the Midwest first year students are assigned a Mentor. The administration support for the provision of the Mentoring Programme is facilitated by the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator. Mentors are comprised of staff from across the TU. The supportive relationship between Mentor and Student enhances the learning environment and encourages students in reaching their full potential.

TUS Students Union

The Students' Union is the representative body for the students of TUS and represents student views at an TU wide-level, on various committees and bodies throughout TUS and communicates them to management in TUS. The Students' Union works actively to resolve student issues and acts as a channel of communication to bring student issues to the attention of Management. The Students' Union acts as a voice for every student to enhance the college experience by providing social, academic and cultural support that is effective, reliable and inclusive. The Students' Union is dedicated to providing a multidisciplinary service of advice and understanding. For further information: TUS Students Union

4.0 QA of Research Activities and Programmes

The TUS approach to the Quality Assurance of Research Activities and Programmes is consistent with the *QQI Topic-specific QAG for Providers of Research Degree Programmes; Ireland's Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes (2019); HEA National Framework for Doctoral Education, The 'Salzburg' Principles, The 'Salzburg II' Recommendations*; and the *National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland.*

Research activity is a defining hallmark of higher education, informing teaching and learning, and adding to the global body of knowledge. It is the ambition of TUS to grow postgraduate research activity and develop its research activities in line with the TURN Report. At the heart of TUS's research activity is the ambition to be a strategic knowledge generator and technology transfer partner of choice for companies and organisations facing the challenges of achieving sustainable competitive advantage in their marketplace. The 'knowledge square' of research, innovation, education and society are the drivers of knowledge-based research at TUS delivering impact, value and innovative solutions for our society and economy. TUS operates mutually supporting processes and procedures to promote and maintain high quality research. In TUS 'research' covers a wide variety of activities but always represents a careful study or investigation based on a systematic understanding and critical awareness of knowledge. It covers innovative work in the whole range of academic, scientific, technological and professional fields, business, humanities, and creative and digital arts. In all of these contexts, 'research' is understood to involve the integration of rigour, reflection and critique.

In the provision of research, TUS aligns with the relevant statutory guidelines and with the TURN Report.

a) The provision of opportunities to students to progress to research degree programme of study is a key aspect of the TUS approach to its overall Access, Transfer and Progression agenda and signifies an important progression opportunity for students. It also contributes significantly to research informed teaching at TUS and helps academic activities to remain at the forefront of the disciplines offered in addition to maintaining links with industry and wider society.

b) The development of Research Degree Programme (RDP) provision is an integral element of supporting TUS ambitions in line with the TURN Report.

c) At TUS, each Research Degree Programme (RDP) is distinct and is considered individually beyond the point where the thesis/exegesis (or equivalent) has been submitted. This is because for a supervised RDP, unlike a taught programme, a specific learning outcome can only be determined after the programme is complete.

d) Supervised RDPs at Level 9 and at Level 10 are assessed in accordance with the *QQI Topic-specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Research Degree Programmes (2017).*

e) Principal supervisors are drawn from an extensive panel who are themselves engaged in advanced study and research, and other activities relating to practice in the subject or discipline area concerned.

4.1   Governance of Research Degree Provision at TUS

Academic Council is responsible for overseeing all aspects relating to the academic activities of the Technological University. As such, all Research Degree Programmes come within the authority of

Academic Council including procedures, standards, and academic content. In accordance with Section 17 (3) (d) of the Technological Universities Act (2018) Academic Council is responsible for *"making recommendations to the technological university on programmes for the development of research"*. To assist in fulfilling this function, TUS Academic Council has established a subcommittee titled *Postgraduate Studies & Research* and its Terms of Reference are available at: [Terms of Reference Postgraduate Studies & Research](#)

The subcommittee is responsible for ensuring coherence and complementarity between the Research Development and Innovation (RDI) functions of the Technological University and its graduate research agenda through the provision of Research Degree Programmes, advising Academic Council on all matters relating to the quality assurance, development, structure, delivery, assessment of such programme. In this regard, the subcommittee has the following general responsibilities:

a) Developing and monitoring of the Technological Universities Research strategy, policies and regulations and reporting to the Academic Council on matters related to postgraduate research degrees.

b) Recommending approval of postgraduate research degree programmes, supervisors and examiners to Academic Council.

c) The responsibility of this subcommittee includes the annual monitoring of progress of postgraduate research degree students. The Postgraduate Studies and Research subcommittee is provided with review a progression status report following annual progression reviews.

d) Developing and monitoring of the Technological University's RDI strategies, policies and regulations and advising Academic Council on activities and matters related to RDI.

The TUS Research Ethics Committee is an integral part of the overall TUS research governance ecosystem and is tasked with the maintenance and oversight of the TUS Research Integrity Policy and TUS Ethics Policy. Communicating to Academic Council via the Postgraduate Studies and Research Subcommittee, the Research Ethics Committee is responsible for ensuring the performance of research at TUS to the highest standards, and for ensuring the accuracy and authenticity of the research record in publications and elsewhere. Decisions of the Research Ethics Committee are conveyed to the Academic Council for noting, rather than approval, and simultaneously disseminated to Faculties.

4.2   Qualification Requirement and Award Standards

<u>Masters</u>
The qualifications available to research students are Master of Arts (MA) / Master of Science (MSc) / Master of Business (MBus) / Master of Engineering (MEng), Master of Law (LLM).

TUS's Generic Standards for the Masters Degree sets the standard (of knowledge, skill and competence) to be acquired for the Masters Degree by research. The Masters Degree is awarded to a research student who has carried out a programme of research and has attained the standard specified by TUS in accordance with the level indicators and award-type descriptors of the National Framework of Qualifications. Research Master's graduates should have a mastery of principles and theory of their discipline, competence in appropriate research methods, an ability to manage complexity, integrate knowledge and may contribute to the literature in a field. Required taught modules must also be completed.

Examiners are required to assess the student using the thesis as evidence and satisfy themselves that the student has attained the standard. The examiners are required to assess under each of the eight learning outcome strands (knowledge, skill and competence) described in the award standard. The examiners may request a viva voce. To recommend the award the examiners must be convinced that the student has attained the learning outcomes.

Doctor of Philosophy

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Level 10 in the National Framework of Qualifications is available to research students who successfully complete a Research Degree Programme (RDP). To be eligible for consideration for the award of a Level 10 (Doctoral) degree, the learner must accumulate the requisite credits as specified in the Academic Regulations for Research Degree programmes.

The Doctor of Philosophy award is made on the basis of knowledge, skill and competency normally gained through a validated supervised RDP resulting in the production of a thesis/exegesis and artistic/creative work/product (where appropriate). The Doctor of Philosophy award is conferred for advanced levels of achievement, in which the research student demonstrates outstanding scholarship and ability. The research student must demonstrate that they have conducted original, independent research, have a broad knowledge of a particular field of study, a comprehensive knowledge of the specialist area upon which their research is focused, and have made a novel contribution to knowledge in their field. TUS offers a Structured PhD programme incorporating elective modules complementary to the field of research and where required taught modules must also be completed. Examiners are required to assess the student (*viva voce*) using the thesis as evidence and satisfy themselves that the student has attained the standard for the award. The examiners are required to report under each of the eight learning outcome strands (knowledge, skill and competence) described in the standard.

4.3   Quality Assurance of Research Activities including Policies and Procedures

Oversight of the development and implementation of the policies and procedures relating to the quality assurance and enhancement of research degree provision is entrusted by Academic Council to the Subcommittee on Postgraduate Studies and Research. Overall management responsibility is entrusted to the VP of Research, Development and Innovation. TUS operates transitional arrangements reflecting legacy structures in its TUS Midlands and Midwest campuses as it develops its integrated approach to Quality Assurance and Enhancement. All proposed research candidates are considered for registration, progression and completion through the Academic Council Sub-Committee for Postgraduate Studies and Research on their academic merits. The research proposal, resource deployment and supervisory arrangements should be sufficient so that the Research Candidate has a reasonable expectation of successfully completing their Research Degree Programme. The following provides a summary of the academic and governance arrangements for research activities and programmes to ensure their quality across its campuses.

In TUS Midlands the VP of Research, Development and Innovation is supported by the Dean of Graduate Studies. A variety of research functions support postgraduate students and their Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) from registration right through to graduation. This includes the Graduate School, Graduate School Research Committee (GSRC) and the Faculties and Faculty Research Committees. In TUS Midwest the VP of Research, Development and Innovation is supported by the

Head of Graduate Studies and Head of Research and Technology Transfer. The Graduate Research Office (GRO) supports postgraduate students and their Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) from registration right through to graduation. Research activity within TUS is conducted in accordance with relevant academic regulations, policies and procedures as follows:

TUS Midlands	TUS Midwest
• Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations • Research Degree Forms • Research Integrity Policy • Research Ethics Guidelines • Intellectual Property Policy • Research Governance	• Research Degree Programme Regulations • Research Degree Forms • Research Integrity Policy • Ethics Policy for Researchers • Intellectual Property Policy • Research Publication Policy

4.4   Supports for Research Students at TUS

A very thorough induction programme has been developed for new research students and supervisors to train them in postgraduate policies and procedures and support them in their research projects. Taken together, a comprehensive range of services are available including training courses and administrative services organised by the Graduate School and Graduate Research Office. Candidates and their supervisors are supported through all stages of the research degree programme. The programme of support offered broadly aligns with the principles enshrined in the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter and Code). Based on demand, a broad range of workshops may be facilitated under the following broad areas:

1. Research Skills and Techniques;
2. Research Environment;
3. Research Management;
4. Personal Effectiveness;
5. Communication Skills;
6. Networking and Teamworking;
7. Career Management.

Bursaries are offered on a competitive basis annually from seed funds. All postgraduate students are encouraged to present at relevant conferences both nationally and internationally.

4.5   Emerging/Planned Structures for Research Degree Provision at TUS

TUS was designated a Technological University on 1st October 2021 and as a designated awarding body, is responsible for organising an integrated system for managing and quality assuring its research activities. As outlined in Section 4.1 Academic Council established a Subcommittee on Postgraduate Studies and Research. This subcommittee in turn established a Working Group to develop an integrated TUS approach to the management and quality assurance of Research Degree Provision in TUS including the development of *TUS Research Degree Regulations* which will be considered by Academic council in June 2023.

5.0 Staff Recruitment, Development and Support

TUS has a range of policies and procedures for Academic Staff Recruitment, Development and Support which are consistent *with QQI Core QAG 2.4 - Staff Recruitment, Management and Development; ESG 1.5; Teaching Staff* and the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, *National Professional Development Framework for All Staff Who Teach in Higher Education.*

5.1   Staff Recruitment

HR recruitment policies are consistent with the approved norms for the sector, including the conditions laid out in applicable circular letters relating to recruitment and selection. All recruitment is supported by the definition of job specifications. Selection and recruitment practices are regulated and controlled in line with the State's governance requirements. Successful candidates are selected based on merit following a fair, consistent and equitable process. TUS is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to developing, maintaining and supporting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion in employment in which staff are treated equitably and where they can realise their potential. It is committed to equality of opportunity for existing and potential employees and to promoting a work environment free from discrimination on the grounds of *Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Age, Disability, Race or Member of the Travelling Community*, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Following the interview process, the successful candidate is offered the position pending receipt of satisfactory references prior to taking up an offered position, the successful candidate must submit evidence (original copies) of academic, professional or technical qualifications. The TU's recruitment and staff development procedures for academic staff are designed to ensure that teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced for their teaching and research roles. Newly recruited members of staff participate in an intensive induction programme delivered by HR and supported by the relevant hiring Department/Faculty.

General induction includes reference to web-accessible HR employee policies and procedures, including the following policies which are under review in TUS context:
- TUS Midwest: Code of Conduct
- TUS Midlands: Code of Conduct
- TUS Midwest: Policy on Dignity and Respect
- TUS Midlands: Policy on Dignity and Respect

Local induction in Faculties/Department is also provided to familiarise new staff with their designated roles and responsibilities.

5.2   General Staff Support

TUS has developed and approved a range of policies to support Staff including:
- TUS Adoptive Leave Policy
- TUS Annual Leave Policy
- TUS Bereavement Policy
- TUS Career Break Policy
- TUS Garda Vetting Policy

- [TUS Marriage and Civil Partnership Leave Policy](#)
- [TUS Maternity Leave Policy](#)
- [TUS Force Majeure Policy](#)
- [TUS Parental Leave Policy](#)
- [TUS Carers Leave Policy](#)
- [TUS Equal Opportunities Policy](#)
- [TUS Parents Leave Policy](#)
- [TUS Paternity Leave Policy](#)
- [TUS Workshare Policy](#)

5.3   General Staff Development

TUS recognises that staff are vital and valued and encourages and enables everyone to develop their potential. Support for professional development encompass' staff at all levels and in all categories of the organisation. TUS offers Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to staff which is formalised in its *Continued Professional Development Policy*. The policy approach enshrines TUS's commitment to supporting staff to develop their skills and competencies through the acquisition of academic qualifications, in line with the needs and objectives of the Technological University. The Staff Development Policies can be accessed at: TUS Midlands: [Professional Development Policy](#) TUS Midwest: [Continuous Professional Development Policy](#) The CPD Policy identifies the various types of development for staff and how TUS can support these. Regular internally run training workshops are made available to academic staff to support their day-to-day activities. All staff have unlimited access to [LinkedIn Learning](#) which gives them an opportunity to supplement existing skills and learn new ones.

5.4   Staff Development in Teaching and Learning

TUS Academic Council has a dedicated *Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning* with specific [Terms of Reference](#) to assure the Quality of its teaching and learning policies and practices. TUS works closely with the HEA National Forum for Teaching and Learning. The National Forum highlights that CPD of staff should facilitate "meaningful personal and professional development in a variety of ways". Therefore, it is important that TUS ensures that the CPD training and supports for staff are flexible and suit the needs of staff collectively and individually. Best practice suggests that they should be inclusive, promote peer collaboration and be underpinned by the scholarship of quality teaching and learning. TUS is committed to supporting and investing in its staff to facilitate their development. Staff support and training are aligned to both TUS and National teaching and learning principles. These include [TUS's Putting Learning First, TUS Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy 2022 To 2025](#) and the [National Professional Development Framework](#) for all Staff who Teach in Higher Education which was published by the National Forum in August 2016.

A review of the structure required to support staff development in learning, teaching and assessment practice led to the development of a proposal to establish a *Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development (CPID)*. Taking a pan-university approach, CPID, in collaboration with key stakeholders, will oversee the implementation of the teaching and learning strategy. Both the strategy and framework went through extensive consultation and review processes in preparation for approval by the TUS Academic Council. These documents provide a strong basis for staff development activities across the

university. All staff development activities are aligned with the strategy and are informed by the key themes of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, in addition to the TUS Future Advanced Skills Academy (FASA) established under the RUNEU project, and other HEA-funded initiatives focusing on increasing access to higher education.

Non-Accredited CPD

TUS offers dedicated Staff development Days to all Staff that have a strong focus on Teaching and Learning. A theme for staff development is identified that ties with key TUS strategic priorities and each day includes keynote speakers followed by a range of bespoke workshops for skills development. The CPID Centre work closely with their colleagues in the Teaching and Learning Centres in Regional Consortium partner organisations including UL & MIC. Lunch time sessions, regional workshops, seminars as well as Regional Teaching Awards are some of the joint activities that are organised and offered to TUS staff. The collaborative partnership extends the range of non-accredited CPD offerings for TUS staff and provides an opportunity for staff to meet and discuss with peers in the regional partners. This National PD Framework also highlights the importance of "personal and professional digital capacity and the application of digital skills and knowledge to professional practice". Academic staff need to be supported in developing confidence in using digital technology as part of their professional practice. Approaches for improving digital skills and capacity with TUS have focused on two main areas, putting technology in place that is accessible to staff and providing support and training on how to implement digital tools in the classroom.

Accredited CPD

TUS has a comprehensive suite of accredited CPD opportunities in Teaching and Learning available to Academic Staff.

> Accredited Programmes
>
> - Master of Arts in Academic Practice (90 ECTS Credits)
> - Postgraduate Diploma in Learning, Teaching and Assessment (60 ECTS Credits)
> - Postgraduate Diploma in Academic Practice (60 ECTS Credits)
> - Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (30 ECTS Credits)
> - Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice in Higher Education (30 ECTS Credits)

These programmes contain a rage of embedded Special Purpose Award Certificates which range from 10 to 15 ECTS credits. Many of the programmes are delivered in the evenings online to provide flexibility for participants.

5.5   TUS Academic Staff Research Doctoral Write Up Award

To help increase the number of academic staff holding doctoral degrees, the President's Office has developed an award for academic staff to buy-out of teaching duties to support thesis completion and submission. This award is available to TUS academic staff who have reached the final write up stage of their doctoral degree. Applicants should be able to demonstrate that the award will facilitate the submission of their thesis within the given time period.

6.0 Information and Data Management

The QA procedures for collecting, analysing and using relevant information about TUS's programmes and its activities are consistent with QQI Core QAG Section 2.8 and ESG 1.7 *Information Management.*

TUS strives to ensure that all of its decision making is achieved through reflection, evaluation and confidence. To achieve this, where possible its decision-making processes are data driven and evidence based. TUS collects and analyses relevant information for the effective management and operation of its diverse functions as a modern Higher Education Institute. This includes information for Governance and Management, Learner Information and Data and Academic Information Management. Some systems are part of a collective suite of systems managed by Educampus, a company set up to provide IT system support to the HEI sector. These include:

- DXC Banner Student Record Management System
- Agresso Financial Management System
- CoreHR – Staff Record Management System
- Koha – Library Record Management System

Supplementary systems include an Academic Programme/Module Planner and a facility which allows students to download their examination transcripts and European Diploma Supplements. This is a requirement of the Bologna Process for European higher education. An overview of Information Systems in TUS is presented in Table 6.1.

6.1 Integration of Information and Data Management Systems

TUS has initiated extensive work to enable effective integration Information and Data Management Systems to enable collation, maintenance and utilisation of data consistently across the TU and to inform its decision making and operations at all levels. Projects to merge systems such as CoreHR; DXC (Banner); and the overall IT infrastructure have been initiated.

A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) has been conducted in parallel with each project, in compliance with Article 25 of the GDPR. DPIA's assist in the identification of risks to the data, and the Technological University, and ensure that the risks are mitigated appropriately. A number of other DPIAs have also been carried out on new and existing processes within TUS. These include discussions to determine the nature, and scope of processing, and requirements for consent forms, agreements, and privacy notices.

The Record of Processing Activities (ROPA) required under Article 30 of the GDPR are effectively the structure through which the majority of compliance actions are identified and all current ROPA's are in line with the existing rolling review process. The process to merge ROPAs in similar areas will commence in September 2023.

Table 6.1. Overview of Information Systems in TUS

Information System	Brief Context
TUS Website	Website Context / CAO Micro Site / SharePoint / Staff Portal etc
Banner System	Banner manages student information throughout a student's interaction with the TU, from initial contact through to graduation and alumni services.
GURU	GURU, a secure examination management system, has been implemented across all TUS campuses, most recently in the Midlands campus in 2020/2021. GURU's functionality securely supports the implementation of business processes across the range of examination management activities of the TU. It communicates securely and adequately with relevant stakeholders, both internal and external to the Technological University
Module Manager	Curriculum and syllabus management software system.
Library - KOHA	Millennium is an integrated library system that supports teaching, learning and research services by providing prompt and comprehensive delivery of information, both on and off campus.
Power BI	Power BI provides an analytics tool by Microsoft that supports evidence-based decision making.
Agresso	Agresso is the financial management system covering budget management, transactions, procurement, asset management and reporting, integrated across TUS campuses in the current reporting period.
CORE HR	CoreHR manages employee resources, automates time recording and processes the payroll. Staff can view payslips, manage expenses and apply for annual leave online.
Syllabus Plus	Syllabus+ is the timetabling system providing programme planning, exam scheduling and reporting and a web interface for querying timetables. Reporting is available through Enterprise, a subset of Scientia. Appropriate metrics are identified and used to ensure class schedules are efficient, effective, maximise resource utilisation.
Moodle	Moodle is the TUS virtual learning environment (VLE). This application supports staff and students in blended and online programmes. Moodle provides students with a central space to access all of their coursework and additional learning resources.
MS Teams	MS Teams allows for meetings and file sharing among staff who are across the organisation and in external organisations. Files share applications that is used by academic staff to distribute class notes and documentation to students related to their modules.
OneDrive	Files share applications that allows staff and students to store and share files and coursework. Allows staff to share and collaborate on files synchronously online.
Socrates	Student Medical Record Management System
Digitary	Student result (post-graduation) online access system.
Yellow Schedule	Counselling appointment booking system
CoreNet	Counselling Student Record IMS
MyClinic 365	Online medical booking and assessment
MindaClient	Disability Office Record IMS
Docuware	Cloud Document Management System
Course Planner	Course Timetabling System
Exam Scheduler	Exam Management System
Clearbookings	Event Scheduling System
MiVoice	Electronic Voting System
Target Connect	Careers Record IMS
I.D.	Card Record system
INPLACE	Placement System
ARC	Nursing Placement System
Metacompliance	Training System
RSA	Bespoke Build

6.2   TUS IT Decision Making Strategies

Decision making strategies are more and more formulated on electronic data and rely on comprehensive quality data. Statistical data from the information systems form the basis for educational and financial decisions at executive and middle management levels. Extracts from information systems are also used to supply reports and statistics to various external agencies such as the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Education and Science. Data is also provided for freedom of information requests, press reports and in-house annual reports. Data protection guidelines are strictly followed when providing data to external bodies.

Management use Power BI and Server Reporting Services (SSRS) for reports to ensure that consistent data is used. The MIS function utilises such Information Systems to provide information to management to support service delivery; analyse information in the context of University Objectives and to support Future Planning. The reporting platforms allow for more effective and efficient access, extraction, interrogation and interpretation of data including the export of data to excel files to enable management to interpret and inform operational, tactical and strategic decisions, actions, and activities based on trend data profiling. The objective is to improve use of data and to optimize the availability to internal stakeholders of all TUS reports, and to assure its evidence/data-based decision making.

Student data is collated and submitted to the HEA twice annually for statistical purposes in November and March. These extracts are used to analyse trends and student numbers by the University, Faculty, Department and Programme teams. Such data is used to inform strategic discussions and decisions including: (i) programme portfolio planning; (ii) programmatic reviews; (iii) student engagement initiatives; (iv) student retention; (v) student performance reviews.

6.3   Academic Information Management

The Quality Assurance procedures for collecting, analysing and using relevant information about TUS programmes and its activities are consistent with ESG 1.7, Information Management. TUS compiles and analyses a comprehensive range of statistics and analytics with respect to students and student progression. This quantitative data can be used as benchmarks and key performance indicators. Programme related issues including examination statistics and completion and retention rates are reviewed by Academic Council Subcommittees and Programme Boards and actioned, as appropriate.

TUS participates in the annual, nationwide survey in the higher education sector entitled the *Student Survey* (www.studentsurvey.ie). The survey is targeted at First Year and Final Year students of taught programmes annually and postgraduate research students bi-annually. In this reporting period TUS conducted its first annual student survey as a newly established Technological University and results were analysed and utilised for the first time at a Technological University and campus level to inform Quality Enhancements. Annual results are notified to TUS Academic Council and issued to relevant subcommittees of Academic Council and Faculties/Departments to address the results reported, where appropriate, in their policies, initiatives, and activities.

TUS also participates in the annual *Graduate Outcomes Survey* and analyse and utilise this information as key performance indicator of the Careers and Employability Service. TUS Library systems provide access to search and retrieval of books, journals, dissertations, reports and other materials which have

been purchased or subscribed to by the TU, as well as open access and material created by library staff. These materials support teaching, learning and research. Library systems also provide regulated access to computers, study rooms and, currently, to study spaces in the library. The system analytics and statistics provide management with insights to allow decision-making and strategic planning of resources and services in response to, and in advance of the requirements of students, researchers and staff.

6.4   Freedom of Information Processes

The Freedom of Information process is led by requests from members of the public under the Freedom of Information Acts, as amended. The fundamental requirement, in respect of each request individually, is to vindicate any public right of access that there may be to records under the control of TUS (as a public body) and to do so within statutory timelines. The Department of Public Expenditure & Reform (DPER) is charged with oversight of the process, with the Office of the Information Commissioner acting as an appeal body.

TUS is required to make a return on an annual (calendar-year) basis to DPER setting-out the number of requests received, the sources, (by type), of those requests and the decision-status of each. Data Protection and Freedom of Information are now combined under the Information and Data Compliance Office. Joining the two under the auspices of the Data Compliance Officer has proved to be useful from the perspective of managing data access requests and the consideration of the release of information. In relation to personal data, there is potential for different interpretations around what should be released, depending on which of the Acts the data is requested under. TUS redacts any non-essential personal data from records requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

Model Publication Scheme
Under Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, FOI bodies are required to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in Sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act. The Department of Expenditure and Public Reform has issued guidelines for a Model Publication Scheme, which outlines the kind of data which public bodies should publish through a medium available to the public. TUS complies with this publication scheme.

6.5   TUS Information and Data Management Policies

TUS provides resources and policies to staff, students and external parties to assist them in performing their duties. It is envisaged that these resources will be used only for activities directly associated with the work of the Technological University. A review of all policies is underway but with interim policies in place until TUS Versions are approved.

Data Protection Policy
The Data Protection Policy outlines the requirements that "Schools, Faculties and Functions should identify the minimum amount of personal data needed for a particular purpose, and then align collection volumes and associated retention to this purpose.

TUS Midlands: Data Protection Policy TUS Midwest: Data Governance Policy

Data Records Maintenance and Retention

The respective Midlands and Midwest Data Retention Schedules provide assistance in determining specifics for the period for which data must be recorded and kept. All personal data held should be subject to regular review to ensure adherence to the retention period." PWC in consultation with THEA developed a suite of key GDPR policies to be adopted/adapted by individual Institutes, this includes a Data Retention Policy.

TUS Midlands: Data Retention Policy TUS Midwest: Record Management and Retention Policy

Acceptable Usage Policy

The purpose of the Acceptable Usage Policy is to indicate the requirement for responsible and appropriate use of information and communications technology (ICT) resources. It is envisaged that these resources will be used only for activities directly associated with the work of the TU. The Policy is available at:

TUS Midlands: One Device Per Person Policy TUS Midwest: Acceptable Usage Policy

IT Security Policy

The IT Security Policy indicates the requirement for responsible and appropriate use of the TU's information and communications technology (ICT) resources. The IT Security Policy defines the security controls necessary to safeguard information systems and ensure the security, confidentiality, availability and integrity of the information held therein. The policy is available at
TUS Midlands: Data Handling and Clean Desk Policy TUS Midwest: IT Security Policy

Mobile Device Policy

This policy outlines the procedures regarding eligibility and provision of mobile devices in support of its administrative and service functions. The University recognises that mobile devices are an important ICT tool that can improve the availability, and increase the productivity of its staff. The policy is available at:

TUS Midlands: Mobile Device Policy TUS Midwest: Mobile Device Policy

The Social Media Management Policy

Social Media management provides direction for the creation, management and moderation of social media presence on appropriate websites including social media platforms. The scope of this policy also extends to the management and moderation of online communications on internal and external forums, wiki's, blogs and web technologies yet to become available. The policy is available at:

TUS Midlands: Social Media Policy TUS Midwest: Social Media Management Policy

7.0 Public Information and Communication

The TUS approach to Public Information and Communication is consistent with *QQI Core QAG Section 9, Public Information and Communication* and ESG *1.8 Public Information*. TUS engages internal and external stakeholders through a variety of media, including print, broadcast, online and social. The goal of such activity is to ensure the Technological University achieves brand salience regionally, nationally and internationally with the goal of boosting student numbers and attracting and retaining top talent – ultimately ensuring the continued prosperity of the Midlands and Midwest region.

7.1   TUS Effective Communication Practice

TUS is increasingly diverse and it is vital that all members of its community and external stakeholders are supported through accessible documentation that supports equality diversity and inclusion. The Technological University is cognisant of its obligations under the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018, and the Disability Act 2005 identifies the requirement to provide information in an accessible format. Mindful of its statutory obligations under these Acts, TUS developed a guide designed to align to national and international effective practice that supports equity in communication particularly in its written documentation. This is consistent with the EU directive requiring public bodies to ensure their content is accessible to everyone. It is also in line with the Technological Higher Education Quality Framework principle "*consistency with policy and international effective practice*", which has been adopted by TUS. The Guide is available at: TUS Guide to Effective Practice that Supports Equity in Technological University Communications

7.2   TUS Logo

As a newly established Technological University designated on 1 October 2021, the TUS logo and brand was launched shortly after. Our logo represents the heritage and connections between the Midlands and Midwest regions. The symbol of the bridge represents the connections held between our regions and communities either side of the River Shannon. The water below the bridge represents the vital resource the Shannon has provided us through the years. The TUS brand symbolises our identity, heritage, and uniqueness. Further details available at: TUS Brand - TUS

7.3   TUS Website

The primary source for stakeholders to source information relevant to them is the developing TUS website. TUS publishes information about its activities that is relevant, easily accessible and accurate in line with the principles set out in ESG 1.8, *Provision of Public Information*. All approved TUS policies are published through the TUS website and are subsequently notified to staff. The website www.tus.ie remains a vital source of public information for the large and diverse audience. It plays an integral role in the life of those in the TUS community such as current students and staff, providing up to date information on activities, news and events, academic information, timetables etc.

7.4   TUS Learner Information

TUS ensures that all information about its activities including education and training programmes is clear and readily accessible for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public. For current and prospective students, the online prospectus for TUS provides clear and transparent information on the University's undergraduate programme offerings including the

Admissions criteria for each programme. The Award criteria for all programmes delivered by TUS have identified:

- The award that is provided on completion of the programme;
- The award recognition on the NFQ and the level on the NFQ;
- The TUS Award Standard (QQI Adopted Award Standard Equivalents).

The information is published through the various communication channels that provide programme information including. The principal TUS publications include:

- TUS Student Handbook
- TUS Midlands Undergraduate Prospectus 2021 - 2022
- TUS Midwest Undergraduate Prospectus 2021 - 2022
- TUS Study With Us Weblink
- TUS Postgraduate Prospectus
- TUS Study With Us Postgraduate Programmes Weblink
- TUS Flexible and Online Learning Prospectus
- TUS International Student Handbook
- TUS Quality Assurance Handbook

Other information on short programmes related to upskilling or reskilling across the NFQ in responses to Government initiatives, such as bespoke programmes offered as part of the Human Capital Initiative or Springboard, are published on the respective faculty website areas and notified on social media and media channels.

7.5 Public Information and Freedom of Information

TUS is committed to the principles described in the Freedom of Information Acts. Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014 requires public bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis outside of FOI, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency, and accountability. Accordingly, TUS provides information on its website in the following key areas:

- General information about TUS;
- Information on the functions and services provided by TUS;
- Information on TUS's decision-making procedures;
- Financial information;
- Procurement information;
- Disclosure log and other relevant information deemed appropriate to be published routinely.

7.6 Governance Information

The public can access information on the Governance structures of TUS. The publications available on the website include:

- TUS Interim Code of Governance
- TUS Academic Council Documentation 2022 - 2025

TUS publishes a range of information on its Quality Assurance and Enhancement activities including evaluations and findings from quality reviews:
- TUS Quality Assurance Handbook
- TUS New Programme Validation Reports
- TUS Programmatic Reviews
- Annual Quality Review (AQR)

Available at: TUS Midlands Quality and TUS Midwest Quality

7.7　TUS Communication Activities

As a newly established Technological University TUS communicates across several communication platforms. At the launch of TUS on 1 October 2021, President, Professor Vincent Cunnane outlined that "*deserved recognition as a TU is testament to the passion, collaborative effort and ambition strengthened by significant stakeholder engagement which has been instrumental in shaping this exciting new university. It's fitting also how technology played an important role in enabling the collaboration and extensive planning and research required to launch TUS despite 18 months of remote learning and work as a result of the pandemic*"

Social Media
TUS have a presence on the following social media platforms; Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn and Snapchat. The official TUS social media accounts are managed by the Marketing & Communications Office. The main aim of our social media accounts is to communicate with all our stakeholders both internally and externally regarding different activities, news and updates about TUS. Each social media platform has its own distinct audience, meaning that messages and communications are tailored for each specific platform.

Links available at:
- TikTok: https://www.tiktok.com/@tus_ie
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/tus_ire/
- LinkedIn: https://ie.linkedin.com/school/tus-ie/
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/TUS_ie
- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/TUoftheShannon
- Snapchat: https://www.snapchat.com/add/tus_ie

Open Days
Autumn open days, across all campuses, give career guidance counsellors and prospective students an opportunity to speak to lecturers, current students and industry partners about course content, placement opportunities, and career trajectories. The Spring open day has a specific focus on career and future employability and gives parents and prospective students the chance to mingle with industry professionals, including engineers, accountants, graphic designers, hotel managers, marketers, scientists and more.

Annually, TUS hosts a guidance counsellor briefing session with the view to sharing recent TU achievements and developments. Guidance counsellors will also glean some insight into the

admissions process and get a feel for the friendly, welcoming campus environment. As a result, guidance counsellors are better positioned to advise prospective students and their parents on CAO programme choices and Apprenticeship options

Outreach and Engagement

TUS engages in school outreach throughout the year to inform and encourage students to attend third level education. Visits are tailored to the requirements of the school with a view to satisfying the interests of students, guidance counsellors and teachers alike. The student recruitment teams in TUS Marketing Department also organise campus tours for individuals and schools. During these taster days, students get a flavour of college life, subject offerings and demonstrations of lab and sports facilities.

Career and Further Study Expo

TUS hosts the Career and Further Education Expo annually, showcasing some of Ireland's leading employers in areas including Engineering, ICT and Medical Technology. Attendees learn about the demands of the jobs of the future and the soft and hard skills necessary to succeed in a digital, networked world that is constantly in flux. Over the course of the Career and Further Study Expo, students' network with some of Ireland's leading employers. The expo provides industry partners with a gateway for identifying and recruiting talent.

8.0 Monitoring and Periodic Review

TUS implements a variety of processes to enable ongoing monitoring and periodic review and these are consistent with *QQI Core QAG Sections 2.1, Governance and Management of Quality, 2.2, Documented Approach to Quality Assurance and 2.10.3 - Expert Panellists, Examiners and Authenticators, and 2.11 - Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review.* They are also consistent with *ESG1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance and 1.9 Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes.*

To enable ongoing monitoring, self evaluation and review, a range of formal governance and management fora are utilised in this context including; Academic Council and its Subcommittees, Faculty and Department Boards, Programme Boards, Staff and Student Liaison Groups, External Examiner Meetings and Reports and Industrial Liaison Committees *inter alia*. The outputs of New Programme Development and Programmatic Reviews also play an important part.

8.1   Self Evaluation

TUS implements a robust, self-evaluative and peer to peer approach to ensure that quality standards, assurances, and areas for improvement are identified for:
- the suitability, validity, currency, and consistency in the implementation and operation of the policies and procedures of TUS to support its operations;
- the consistent and appropriate implementation of the policies and procedures of TUS;
- the programme award standards applied appropriately post designation as a DAB;
- the validation and revalidation of its suite of academic programmes and the actioning of the areas noted as conditions and/or recommendations during these validation processes.

This is further supported through evidence-based reporting at discrete stages of the academic year to include:
- monitoring of student success including their successful retention, progression, and completion of stages of their programme and the achievement levels of their awards
- the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment activity
- the monitoring of student support services, their usage, and the performance outcomes associated with such usage.

There are a variety of discrete Self Evaluation processes in TUS:
- Policy Reviews;
- Module evaluations;
- External Examiner reports;
- Research Reviews;
- Professional accreditation of programmes;
- Annual Student Surveys,
- Programme Reviews;
- Programmatic Reviews;
- Support Unit Reviews;
- External Review (Cyclical Review).

The use of focus groups provides a fundamental tool in self-evaluation exercises. The production of a Self-Evaluation Report is a frequent output of such quality assurance processes and, in this context,

the deliberative and discursive aspect of focus groups have the potential to provide valuable inputs to such self-evaluations and the resulting reports. To enhance self evaluation processes and professionalise approaches, a Guide has been created as a resource to support staff who are running focus groups as an approach for self-valuation exercises, information gathering and collation. This Guide is available at: TUS Guidelines for Conducting Focus Groups for Quality Assurance Processes

8.2 Annual Monitoring

A Faculty/School Board exists within each Faculty/School, whose function is to advise the Head of Faculty/School at strategic level, the academic and resource requirements of all its programmes/modules. Similarly, Department Boards exist for each department and their function is to advise and assist the Head of Department at tactical and operational levels with regard to the academic and resource requirements of programmes/modules within the department. In order to provide regular academic quality assurance for each TUS programme, annual monitoring and programme reporting is carried out by the Programme Board. Programme Boards monitor the effectiveness of the delivery, assessment and quality for all programmes and also report on risk factors which are actioned appropriately. The programme board meets at least once each semester with student representatives being constituent members.

Any proposed changes to existing programmes outside of programmatic review requires Academic Council approval. Major changes may require revalidation of the programme if the nature and scope of changes significantly change the award. A change of award title or discipline requires a new validation. Changes to the programme learning outcomes and other minor changes to existing programmes are addressed through Academic Council and are reported through the appropriate Subcommittee structure..

External Examiners
As outlined in Section 2.4, the External Examining of programmes and their related modules forms a central pillar in the quality assurance of the programmes delivered by TUS. It enables the verification by independent third parties annually that assessment methods allow for the evidential demonstration and achievement of the learning outcomes to the relevant standard and level being reviewed. External examiners submit a report annually via the Examinations Management System and issues raised are responded to and actioned by Programme Boards. The reports and their responses are monitored by the Academic Council Subcommittee on Quality Assurance and Enhancement. Further detail are available at: TUS External Examiners Policy and Procedure for Taught Programmes.

Programme Boards
The operation of programme boards within the academic departments of TUS is a crucial part of annual monitoring and programme quality assurance. Some of the roles of the programme board relevant to annual monitoring include:
- assessing the progress of students;
- reviewing student feedback and recommend appropriate action;
- reviewing the reports of external examiners and proposing appropriate action;
- reviewing the operation of the programme and considering enhancement initiatives;

- considering from time to time the need to revise the programme in the light of prevailing circumstances and preparing appropriate proposals;
- making recommendations, as appropriate, on the resource and staff development requirements of the course

Annual Student Survey (Studentsurvey.ie)

The annual, Student Survey, is designed to seek students' views on their experience of higher education. TUS is committed to the survey and traditionally has high student participation rates. The data from survey is analysed at institutional, faculty and programme level in TUS. The survey facilitates:

- increased transparency in relation to the student experience;
- direct student input on levels of engagement and satisfaction;
- identification of good practice that enhances the student experience;
- identification of areas for improvement and enhancement;
- identification of the issues and challenges affecting the student experience in TUS;
- documentation the experiences of the student population, thus enabling year on year comparisons of key performance indicators;
- comparison with other higher education systems internationally.

8.3   Programmatic Review

All programmes are periodically reviewed in accordance with TUS Academic Council regulations during formal Programmatic Review processes. Details are described in:

TUS Programmatic Review Process Outline

Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Academic Year 2020/2021, Part 1, Chapter 3, Development and Review of Programmes & Modules.

Procedures and Guidelines for the Design, Development, Evaluation and Withdrawal of Taught Programmes and Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes

The Programmatic Review is carried out by an External Programmatic Review Panel. In order to make its judgements, the Programmatic Review Panel review the Programmatic Review Documentation, discuss the programmes/modules with the Programme Boards, students and graduates of the programmes and review the facilities provided by the provider for the delivery of the programme(s).

a) The typical Programmatic Review Panel includes representatives from Industry and Academia, capable of making national and international comparisons with regard to the specific suite of programmes. An enrolled or formerly enrolled student may also be included. Normally, panel members are drawn from prestigious higher education and awarding institutions, professional bodies, regional and national industry representative and multinational corporations.

b) The output of the external panel results in a Programmatic Review Report which may include conditions and recommendations as deemed necessary by the panel. The Faculties then provide a response to this report and both the report and responses are published on the TUS website

8.4   Strategic Review of Service Delivery Units

TUS is committed to broadening the range of reviews to include all Support Units in line with national policy and its obligations as a Designated Awarding Body. To this end the TUS Governing Body has approved the TUS Policy on Strategic Review of Technological University Support Units to facilitate these reviews with an approved framework. The policy is available at: TUS Policy on Strategic Review of Technological University Support Units

The purpose of this policy is to outline the TUS approach to quality review of Support Units and to describe the process as it applies to individual services. The reviews aim to:

a) provide a systematic and structured opportunity for the service to engage in periodic and strategic evidence-based self-reflection and self-assessment of the quality of its activities and processes;

b) self-identify opportunities for quality enhancement and the improvement of the service for its stakeholders;

c) provide a framework by which external peers, in an evidence-based manner, can independently review, evaluate, report upon and suggest improvements to the quality of the unit's activities and processes;

d) provide a framework by which the service can implement quality enhancements in a verifiable manner;

e) provide stakeholders with independent evidence of the quality-of-service activities and processes;

f) satisfy best practice (national and international) in the context of quality assurance in higher education and meet statutory QA requirements as enshrined in national law.

Under this policy, the review and self-evaluation include a broad range of considerations within the context and culture of the individual Service Delivery Unit. These considerations are broadly informed by the management principles specified in the ISO9001:2015 Quality Management Standard. This standard specifies seven quality management principles and these include:

- Customer Focus (Stakeholder focus);
- Leadership;
- Engagement of People;
- Process Approach;
- Continual Improvement;
- Evidence Based Decision Making;
- Relationship Management.

8.5   External Review (Cyclical Review)

QQI has established a policy for the Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions. Cyclical Review takes place on a periodic scheduled basis. The next external review of TUS via Cyclical Review is due to take place a part of the CINNTE Schedule during the 2022/2023 academic year with self-evaluation activities currently underway.

9.0 Details of Arrangements with Third Parties

9.1 Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies

Type of arrangement	Total Number
PRSBs	32
Awarding bodies	1
QA bodies	0

1. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Association of Chartered Certified Accounts (ACCA)
Programme titles and links to publications	B. Bus (Hons) in Business Computing. https://lit.ie/courses/lc330
Date of accreditation or last review	04/11/2022
Date of next review	

2. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Accountants Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	B. Bus. (Hons) in Accounting & Finance. https://lit.ie/courses/lc224
Date of accreditation or last review	30/05/2023
Date of next review	

3. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Chartered Accountants Ireland
Programme titles and links to publications	BBs (Hons) in Law and Taxation. https://lit.ie/courses/lc223
Date of accreditation or last review	30/09/2022
Date of next review	

4. Type of arrangement	PRSB
Name of body:	Irish Tax Institute
Programme titles and links to publications	BBs (Hons) in Law and Taxation. https://lit.ie/courses/lc223
Date of accreditation or last review	25/06/2022
Date of next review	

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	0
Joint/double/multiple awards	2
Collaborative programmes	10
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	0

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	250

1. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Durham College
Programme titles and links to publications	BSc in Creative Broadcast and Film Production. https://lit.ie/en-IE/Courses/CAO-Courses/US702 BSc in Music Technology and Production. https://lit.ie/en-IE/Courses/CAO-Courses/US703
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	08/04/2022
Date of next review	08/04/2025
Detail of the agreement	Pathway from Durham College 2 year Diploma in Broadcasting - Radio and Contemporary Media and Diploma in Video Production to Year 3 TUS programme in BSc in Creative Broadcast and Film Production Pathway from Durham College 3 year Advanced Diploma in Music Business Management to Year 4 TUS BSc in Music Technology and Production

2. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	New Brunswick Community College (NBCC), New Brunswick, Canada
Programme titles and links to publications	BA (Honours) in Animation and Motion Design. https://lit.ie/en-IE/Courses/Add-Ons/A8117 BSc (Honours) in Games Design and Development. https://lit.ie/en-IE/Courses/CAO-Courses/US828 BA (Honours) in Graphic Design Communication. https://lit.ie/en-IE/Courses/Add-Ons/A8118
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	04/07/2022
Date of next review	04/07/2025

Detail of the agreement	Pathways: Animation and Graphics Diploma to BA (Honours) in Animation and Motion Design Game Development Diploma to BSc (Honours) in Games Design and Development Graphic and Communications Design Diploma to BA (Honours) in Graphic Design Communication

3. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Dr. Vishwanath Karad MIT World Peace University
Programme titles and links to publications	Transfer of Students to a range of Programmes at TUS
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	24/08/2022
Date of next review	24/08/2027
Detail of the agreement	MOU for transfer of students, exchange of staff and research collaboration

4. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	College of the Canyons
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Arts Hotel and Leisure Management (Level 7) https://www.ait.ie/courses/US794
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	10/01/2022
Date of next review	10/01/2025
Detail of the agreement	Transfer of students from Associate degree at College of the Canyons to Year 3 of Bachelor of Arts Hotel and Leisure Management

5. Articulation agreement	Articulation agreement
Name of body (/bodies):	Luoyang Institute of Science and Technology
Programme titles and links to publications	Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering https://www.ait.ie/courses/US761
Date of agreement/arrangement or last review	22/07/2022
Date of next review	22/07/2027
Detail of the agreement	Transfer agreement for students to Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering Year 4 and Year 5 (2 years in China and 2 years at TUS)

Annual Quality Report

Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS)

PART B: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ENHANCEMENT & IMPACT

Reporting Period 2021-2022

1.0 Quality Implementation and Developments

1.1   Strategic QA Updates

From Designation as a Technological University to Inaugural TUS Strategic Plan

This AQR constitutes the first Annual Report to QQI for the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS) for its inaugural year as a new Technological University. TUS was designated a TU on October 1st 2021, the beginning of the reporting period for this AQR. In the previous reporting period, Athlone Institute of Technology and Limerick Institute of Technology had formed a TU Consortium and submitted an application to the HEA in November 2020, in accordance with the Technological Universities Act 2018. The expert international panel was held online during the period from 27th January to 5th February 2021, and Mr. Simon Harris, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, announced the approval of the application on 4th May 2021, with a designation date of 1st October 2021.

Thus, the new Technological University began its journey on 1st October 2021 as the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest. The inaugural Governing Body of TUS convened on 1st October 2021 and approved the Interim Code of Governance. A launch event was held at 2pm in the International Arena of the Athlone campus, with the official opening carried out by Mr. Niall Collins TD, Minister of State at the Department of Further and Higher Education. The inaugural Chair of the Governing Body, Ms. Josephine Fehily, President of TUS, Professor Vincent Cunnane and President of the Students Union Ms. Aine Daly contributed to the event. TUS Inaugural President, Professor Vincent Cunnane noted that the name TUS "*speaks to the connecting force of the River Shannon, which joins the Midlands and Midwest*" and "*to our shared geography and shared history, and to the connection and flow of people, knowledge and ideas that will be the lifeblood of the new university*".

An Interim Academic Council was established and convened for the first time on the 15th October 2021 approving its Constitution, Composition, Membership and Bye-laws. The Interim Academic Council established seven subcommittees to further the work of Academic Council. These included subcommittees on Apprenticeship, Postgraduate Research Studies, Programme Provision (including Flexible Learning), Quality Management: Assurance Enhancement & Integration, Student Experience: Management & Services, Student Success: Access, Transfer & Progression and Teaching, Learning & Assessment (embedding Digital Capacity). Details of the AC Constitution, Composition, Membership and Terms of Reference of the Subcommittees can be found at the following link: Interim Academic Council Constitution, Composition and Membership 2021-2022.

An interim senior management structure was established comprising a Vice Presidents Council and a Deans Council. In this interim model, 7 Vice Presidents and 8 Faculty Deans report to the President enabling focus on key development areas for the new TU, in the context of its mission as outlined in its application for designation (C.f. AQR, Part A, Figure 1.3. TUS Senior Management & Organisational Structure). This included the aspiration "to be a contemporary and engaged University distinguished by outstanding learner experience, international focus and impactful and applied research. The Technological University strives to be a leading provider of higher education that is student-centered, research informed, industry-relevant, and accessible to all".

A key priority for TUS since its establishment has been the development of the inaugural TUS Strategic Plan. This has been a collaborative and collegial process involving all staff across TUS. In September 2022 staff were invited to participate in the TUS Community Survey for the Strategic Plan. The survey and analysis were undertaken by Mazars on behalf of TUS and this data built on significant stakeholder consultation and analysis already conducted as part of the strategic planning process. The survey focused on the values and aspirations of staff for TUS going forward as a new Technological University. The survey was also circulated to the TUS Governing Body and Students' Union Representatives for their participation. Taken as a whole, the collective findings were central in establishing the views of the TUS Community for the first time. A summary of the findings was communicated to staff by the President as part of an all-staff briefing on December 8th. In January 2023 the main points of the Strategic Plan were formally approved by Governing Body and a subsequent update on the latest phase of the Strategic Plan was presented to staff by the President on February 4th. The inaugural TUS Strategic Plan was launched by the Minister of State at the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Mr. Niall Collins, on March 10th, 2023. It is available at: TUS Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026. This Strategic Plan will be a key driver of Quality Assurance and Enhancement activity for the upcoming reporting period as TUS aligns to deliver on the Values, Purpose, Vision, and Strategic Priorities detailed therein.

Membership of the Regional University Network - European University (RUN-EU Network)

The European Universities Network is part of an EU-wide ambition to create a centralised European Education Area and will enable students to obtain a degree by combining studies in multiple EU countries. The network, which is expected to increase the competitiveness of European Universities, will be integral to promoting the kinds of future and advanced skills necessary for social transformation across the European Union.

The Regional University Network- European University (RUN-EU) funded under the European University programme of which TUS is a co-coordinating partner brings together seven like-minded, regionally focused Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) committed to societal transformation in their regions in the context of both new and emerging regional and global challenges, in particular, sustainable regional development and regional needs. The RUN-EU network consists of Polytechnic of Leiria (Portugal), Polytechnic of Cávado and Ave (Portugal), TUS: Midlands Midwest (formerly LIT and AIT) Széchenyi István University (SZE) (Hungary), Häme University of Applied Sciences HAMK (Finland), NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands), and FH Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences (Austria).

RUN - EU Alliance Members

The University of Burgos, Spain and Howest University of Applied Sciences, Belgium, will join the RUN-EU alliance in 2023.

TUS joins its RUN-EU partners in creating one of several new European Universities capable of transcending languages, borders, and disciplines. Membership of the European Universities initiative and RUN-EU aligns closely with the TUS's ambition to develop a Technological University which reflects the educational demands and economic needs of Ireland's Midlands and Mid-West regions and contributes regionally, nationally and internationally. It represents an important step forward in progressing the Technological Universities internationalisation strategy. The RUN-EU alliance contributes to the European Higher Education Area goals of enhanced mobility opportunities and recognition of qualifications across the EU through design and delivery of Collaborative European Degrees, inclusion of all in educational opportunities and the promotion of a strong sense of European identity, culture, and citizenship. To achieve this collective mission, RUN-EU focuses on the delivery of collaborative, future and advanced skills-based teaching, learning, research and engagement activities across the network. Partner Institutes have a regional as opposed to a city focus and also have a proven track record in the delivery of future and advanced skills activities in teaching, learning, research and engagement relevant to future societal challenges.

The RUN-EU Mission is supported through the development of:
- Future and Advanced Skills Academies (FASA), which promote and develop joint student-centred, challenge and work-based flexible learning activities, including Short Advanced Programmes and European Degrees, through collaborative and pedagogically innovative inter-university and interregional approaches to higher education.
- European Innovation Hubs (EIH), which will stimulate and create joint interregional research, innovation and regional stakeholder engagement projects and activities across the alliance.
- European Mobility Innovation Centre (EMIC), which will build and share expertise in innovative physical and virtual mobility initiatives and will assess the quality of new mobility activities.

RUN-EU supports the TUS internationalisation agenda and provides a coherent umbrella that nurtures existing and new relationships to stimulate break-through, cross-disciplinary research themes and

reinforce our culture of dynamism, diversity and resilience. Critical to our international research strategy is the European Universities Initiative envisaging Europe as a global hub and a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international co-operation and academic exchange. RUN-EU will deliver on the core objectives of the European Research Area by "*fostering the free movement of researchers, scientific knowledge and innovation, and encouraging a more competitive European industry*."

TUS coordinates RUN-EU's 'Discovery Research Programme', through the implementation of a common research and innovation agenda focussed on strengthening the research and innovation activity across the RUN-EU alliance. The initiative supports the creation of international research collaborations within the RUN-EU alliance with co-supervision of projects from academics across university. It introduces new international research teams with skill sets to complement existing supervision and management capacity ensuring a common and shared learning practice. Furthermore, it facilitates international advanced inter-laboratory access to specialist equipment for the doctoral student candidates and allow the project research teams to build new international collaborative bids to the Horizon Europe research and innovation, Creative Europe and the Erasmus+ programs. It aims to provide a strong talent pipeline combining research and innovation knowledge, skills & employability which responds to the needs of our enterprise, public service, and community sectors, both regionally, nationally, and internationally.

A. <u>RUN-EU PLUS Focuses on Practice-based Research for Regional Development</u>

The Horizon 2020 RUN-EU PLUS project (grant agreement 101035816) supports the RUN European University in its regional development goals by focusing on the strengthening of regional business and society partnerships in research and innovation across our RUN network. PLUS stands for 'Professional Research Programmes for Business and Society'. RUN-EU PLUS is developing professional practice-based research master's and doctoral programmes for business and society which will complement the existing RUN- EU strategic vision for teaching, learning, research, and engagement activities thereby delivering institutional and societal trans- formation in our regions. In addition to delivering a common research and innovation agenda, RUN-EU PLUS is mainstreaming open science skills and practices among the RUN research community and has developed a Researcher Career Development Programme and a Research Career Evaluation system to support RUN-EU researchers in identifying clear personal career paths which will encourage intersectoral and international mobility during their careers. Participants of the annual RUN-EU PLUS ICARUS conference (International Conference on Applied Research with Business and Society) obtain insight into the research and innovation collaborative opportunities available through the RUN-EU PLUS project and the international mobility opportunities available to researchers. In addition, they hear the personal collaboration and mobility experiences of researchers at all career stages including post-graduate researchers, academic research supervisors, research leaders and business partners.

RUN-EU research masters and PhDs developed by RUN-EU PLUS are unique programmes which are:
- focused on Sustainability, Digitalisation and Social Innovation themes, in line with the strategic regional development plans of the RUN-EU alliance regions.

- co-designed with business/social organisation partner to ensure alignment with partner strategic goals.
- practice-based to maintain relevance, transfer of knowledge to partner and develop appropriate applied research skills of the learner.
- structures are designed in collaboration with regional businesses and organisations to ensure that programme graduates possess the future skills they need (both technical and generic).
- international supervision panels across the RUN-EU partners to ensure that they are compiled of discipline-specific experts in the chosen field of research.
- taught modules delivered in a blended fashion (online and in-person) with an international mobility placement to ensure that participants have the flexibility of online in addition to peer-to-peer learning and interaction. In-person bootcamps will be run by RUN-EU Research Cluster leads in discipline specific areas.

The Researcher Career Development Programme developed by RUN-EU PLUS is designed for researchers at all career stages and supports the development of skills and competencies which will allow them to have successful careers in their chosen field. The programme will develop skills to: build bridges between different actors in collaboration; undertake transnational cross-networking between researchers and stakeholders, ability to construct knowledge and research practices in different environments; integrate the knowledge from different sources and communicate it to different kinds of collaborators; and identify and understand context in business and innovation practices. The programme also aims to provide RUN-EU researchers with tools which support them in facing uncertainty in certain professional environments and to pay attention on the wellbeing of themselves and others. It will also increase in awareness of good practice in promoting equality in the research community (C.f. Section 4, Case Study 4).

B. <u>National Technological University TransfOrmation for Resilience and Recovery (NTUTORR)</u>

In collaboration with the TU sector, TUS is a project partner on the NTUTORR project. This is an innovative collaboration across the Technological University sector that allows TUS to implement transformative change, innovative practice and enhance the student experience.

The NTUTORR Programme is an element within Ireland's allocation from the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) funded by the European Union under the NextGenerationEU initiative. The NTUTORR project aims to deliver transformative change for the Technological Higher Education sector and is an innovative collaboration across the Technological Universities focused on transforming the student experience. NTUTORR was awarded €32 million of which TUS was awarded an initial allocation €5 million. TUS will work with staff and students on a number of projects that focuses on enhancing digital capabilities and will provide quality and equality of access to students within TUS, and in so doing will also support access for vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Reporting to the Vice President Student Education and Experience, an NTUTORR Project Co-ordinator has been assigned to work on co-ordinating projects that support the three streams within TUS. Projects in TUS will align back to the following streams: Stream 1 (Enhancing Student Capabilities), Stream 2

(Enhancing Student Opportunities) and Stream 3 (Enhancing Digital Infrastructure and System-wide Capability).

The project will further promote students as partners in TUS to enhance the student experience. Activities will include establishing student champions within TUS to promote digital literacy skills and will involve running series of activities that provide students with leadership and employability skills. A fellowship initiative that supports collaboration and partnership between staff and students will be established in TUS. Staff and students collaborating can apply for funding for research projects. To support staff capabilities within stream 2, TUS will establish a number of communities of practice. Working closely with the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development (CPID), activities will be designed to further advance the skills and knowledge of staff with TUS in relation to digital transformation, academic integrity and other related areas.

In addition to promoting staff and student involvement, the funding will be invested in infrastructure and systems that will further enhance the student experience and facilitate innovative teaching, learning and assessment for staff and students across the different campuses to ensure consistent access to digital infrastructure. The three pillars have been developed coherently, with linkages between them, so that the proposed infrastructure and capacity building is in place to enable the work packages described in the staff and student pillars.

C. TUS Cyclical Review Schedule

As part of the QQI CINNTE Cycle of statutory external Institutional Review, TUS is scheduled to undergo its first Cyclical Review as an autonomous Designated Awarding Body in the 2023/2024 academic year, with a main review visit by an international panel tentatively scheduled for Quarter 2 2024. Accordingly, during the current academic year, a programme of self-evaluation and critical review is being conducted to enable submission of an Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) to QQI in Quarter 1, 2024. A core steering group with staff from the Registry/Quality Office has been established to plan for the self evaluation. Members of this steering group met throughout the academic year to plan and implement data gathering activities as part of the self-evaluation process. As part of the initial phase of the self-evaluation process, a series of TUS-wide Faculty and Student Focus Groups have been carefully planned and implemented. A detailed analysis of the focus group data has been undertaken to identify key themes and findings which will contribute to the self-evaluation report. From this a series of reports have been collated summarising the outputs initially at Faculty Level and then collated at TUS Institutional Level. Planning is currently underway for the next phase of the self-evaluation process to determine the additional work required for institutional profiling and the preparation of a comprehensive ISER as a critical element of the preparative phase for Cyclical Review.

1.2   Update on Planned QA Objectives identified in Previous AQR

1	Initiate and progress the development of a new Strategic Plan for the Technological University	
	Planned actions and indicators	Progress during 2021/22
	1. Consult with key stakeholders in the planning phases of the development of the inaugural Strategic Plan of the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest.	1. There has been extensive consultation undertaken for the development of the Tus inaugural strategic plan in a collaborative and collegial process involving all internal stakeholders across TUS and external stakeholders. The Executive Management of the Technological University engaged management consultants Mazars to consult with all relevant stakeholders, internal and external. Staff consultation was facilitated through the offices of the VPs and broad staff engagement was achieved. The approach included macro analysis through group and/or individual inputs for all of TUS. In September 2022, staff were invited to participate in the TUS Community Survey for the Strategic Plan and this data built on significant stakeholder consultation and analysis already conducted as part of the strategic planning process. The survey was also circulated to the TUS Governing Body and Students' Union Representatives for their participation. Taken as a whole, the collective findings were central in establishing the views of the TUS Community for the first time.
2	Further the goal of the development of an integrated Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook for the Technological University	
	Planned actions and indicators	Progress during 2021/22
	1. Develop a project plan to guide the development of a complete Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook for the Technological university, 2. Consult widely and facilitate broad stakeholder engagement and consultation in the development of the Quality Assurance documentation. 3. Develop key Policies, Procedures and Guides for the Technological University in a phased manner.	1. In October 2021, a mapping exercise was completed outlining the various policies in existence on respective campuses. A plan was created to develop and approve the various chapters of the QAE Handbook. 2. The Interim Academic Council established a sub-committee structure consisting of 7 sub-committees. Each sub-committee has an approved Terms of Reference relevant to the scope of the work and areas of responsibility under each sub-committee. Under the auspices of each sub-committee, relevant working groups are established, as necessary, to consult on the development of the Quality Assurance documentation and policies and processes relevant to the sub-committee. The Interim Academic Council were responsible for approving all policies extending the input and consultation to respective members. The approach included broad stakeholder engagement to ensure that resulting policies and processes are agreed, robust and meet the needs of relevant stakeholders. 3. A broad range of TUS Policies and Procedures were developed during the reporting period with a full a list of those approved is available at the following link: Policies Approved in the Reporting Period The work prioritised the development of a suite of key policies and procedures relevant to the work of TUS. The full list of policies and procedures is now contained in 7 volumes of the TUS Academic Quality Assurance Handbook

3	Develop a new Teaching and Learning Strategy for the Technological University	
	Planned actions and indicators	Progress during 2021/22
	1. Consult widely and facilitate broad stakeholder engagement and consultation in the development of the Teaching and Learning Strategy. 2. Develop the Teaching and Learning Philosophy of the Technological University and identify the key pillars of the Teaching and Learning Strategy. 3. Align the Teaching and Learning Strategy with the Graduate Attributes Framework of the Technological University.	1. The 'Putting Learning First' TUS Learning and Teaching Strategy went through an extensive review and consultation process which was managed through the Teaching and Learning Sub-Committee of the Academic Council. The strategy incorporates the TUS Educational Philosophy and the seven pillars to support excellence in learning, teaching, and assessment: Pillar 1 - Pedagogies of Engagement through active and applied learning Pillar 2 - Authentic Assessment of, for and as Learning Pillar 3 - Pedagogies of Care and Positive Transition Pillar 4 - Development of the Whole Person and Work Readiness Pillar 5 - Technological Innovation and Digital Capacity Pillar 6 - Research Informed Knowledge Generation Pillar 7 - Flexible Learning Pathways & Lifelong Learning In addition, it includes the TUS Graduate Attributes Framework which is supported by a guide for implementation.
4	Develop the assessment and examination regulations of the Technological University	
	Planned actions and indicators	Progress during 2021/22
	1. Develop an integrated version of TUS Marks and Standards 2. Develop the Assessment Regulations of the Technological University	1. TUS Marks and Standards was approved on 15 October 2021. The Marks & Standards specify the regulations of the TU in determining student academic standing, eligibility for progression, eligibility for an award and award classification. The regulations form part of TUS Academic Quality Assurance & Enhancement Handbook (Volume 6) and are consistent with the framework established by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. 2. During the academic year 2021/2022, a Working Group was established to develop the assessment regulations for the TU. This Working group was guided by an external facilitator and was comprised of members from all campuses and disciplines, including both the academic community and professional services. The work centred on the aforementioned approved Marks and Standards document and the regulations were expanded to include regulations on examiners and assessment, extenuating circumstances, infringement, results and review. The TUS Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes 2022 - 2023 was approved by Academic Council on 20th June 2022.

5	Support Quality Enhancement initiatives in Teaching and Learning	
	Planned actions and indicators	**Progress during 2021/22**
	1. Support and implement a range of opportunities for Staff CPD across TUS in both the Accredited and non-accredited domains. 2. Develop a range of Best/Effective practice Guides for the Technological University in areas such as Active Learning, Assessment, Digital Enhanced Learning and Teaching and Universal Design for Learning. 3. Utilise the SATLE Funding of the National Forum to promote and support innovation in teaching, learning and assessment. 4. Engage a broad range of staff across the Technological University in collaborative work with the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Centre.	A full range of staff CPD activities was provided across TUS, both accredited and non-accredited. Non-accredited programme available at: Non Accredited Staff Development Programme 2021-2022 These were informed by national policy and initiatives, in addition to European research projects. SATLE 2019 funding was used effectively to produce a range of multi-modal resources across each of these key themes for both staff and students. These included short guides, videos and digital tutorials and scholarly publications. The resources were made available through a variety of channels including the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), the Learning and Teaching Hub, or published. In addition, the funding was used to support the provision of a variety of professional development activities ranging from in-person sessions, webinars, seminars, and an international symposium. Examples included: • UDL guides for students and staff • Guides for digitally enhanced assessment • Guides for Academic Integrity • A guide for internationalising the home curriculum • Compendium of Active Learning and Assessment, taking a Community of Practice (CoP). This publication alone involved 48 academic staff from across the university developing case studies of excellent practice. The compendium was published and each case study was made available as an Open Educational Resource (OER) from the TUS library. Through SATLE Learning Enhancement Project and Learning Enhancement Initiatives staff from across all faculties and functional areas that support learning, engaged collaboratively to enhance practice and student education and experience. Staff were supported in developing resources and engaging in scholarly activity. They were also supported in sharing and showcasing excellence with colleagues across TUS, through professional networks and through dissemination at conferences. Initiatives also included a partnership approach between students and staff.

6	Support the new structural organisation for Student Support Services under the new Office of VP Student Education and Experience	
	Planned actions and indicators	Progress during 2021/22
	1. Work collaboratively across campuses in the Technological University to build partnerships and work towards the development of a consistent, equitable and positive student experience across all campuses.	Three workshops were conducted by the Vice President for Student Education and Experience (VPSEE) in the 2021/2022 period across all functions and campuses reporting to the VPSEE. The purpose of these workshops was to address the initial *strategic analysis* phase of a structured strategic review approach to analyse all work conducted by functions reporting to the VPSEE. This was to ensure the development of a consistent, equitable and positive student experience across all campuses. The next phase of work to be completed, using the strategic review process, is the strategy formulation phase which will be completed in the 2022/23 period.
7	Further develop the Technological University goals in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion including Implementing the TUS Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP).	
	Planned actions and Indicators	Progress during 2021/22
	1. Development of a TUS EDI Vision & Strategy.	1. Draft strategy developed through support of the TUS EDI working group. This will be finalised upon finalisation of the TUS Strategic Plan.
	2. Apply for an Athena SWAN Legacy Bronze Award, to be submitted to Advance HE by March 2022.	2. Legacy Bronze Award achieved in May 2022.
	3. Prepare an application for TU University of Sanctuary Status, for submission in early 2022.	3. University of Sanctuary Accreditation achieved in June 2022.
8	Further Develop Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) across the Technological University	
	Planned actions and indicators	Progress during 2021/22
	1. Scaling up of EmpowerEco initiative which is a joint initiative across all TUS campuses and funded through the Just Transition Fund 2. Encouraging lecturers and programme teams to evaluate their	1. The EmpowerEco initiative had to be paused due to contractual issues. TUS is reviewing the appropriate mechanisms to develop this concept but is still committed to the concept. 2. Relevant tools which have been developed Nationally have been shared with TUS Staff e.g. UCC SDG mapping tools and staff encouraged to map their modules, programmes and research against SDGs. This initial step will be developed further in 2022/23.

modules and programmes against the SDGs so that we build a profile of impact across the organisation 3. Secure funding for Community Resilience capacity building via the Erasmus Innovation Alliance programme	3. While an application was made to the Erasmus funding call it was not successful. However, additional resources have been secured to enable allocation of staff time to engage with regional partners to develop a funding application to separate funds. A call for two postgraduate students is due to be launched in January 2023. There were some administrative delays in launching the call.

9	Initiate the critical self-study and self-evaluation for the QQI CINNTE Review of the Technological University	
	Planned actions and indicators	**Progress during 2021/22**
	1. Develop a Project Management Plan and Engage a wide variety of stakeholders. 2. Conduct Student Focus Groups 3. Conduct Faculty Focus Groups 4. Initiate appropriate Working Groups	1. A project management plan for the completion of the QQI CINNTE review was agreed during the Annual QQI Dialogue meeting in June 2022 attended by Executive Management and representatives from the Quality office with QQI members. 2. Student Focus Groups were conducted, under the auspices of the Quality Office in 2021/2022. The purpose of the focus group was to provide an opportunity to hear from students about their student experience in TUS. The focus group aimed to discuss how the student viewed the experience as a TUS student and how engagement and use of the services provided by TUS impacted that experience. The student focus group will contribute to (i) the development of the Self-Evaluation Report (ISER). These may include recommendations for areas of enhancement and for the improvement of the quality of the services delivered to support individual students. 3. Faculty Staff Focus Groups were convened in respective campuses during the academic year 2021/2022 and were facilitated through an external facilitator. The focus group was conducted with a view to reviewing the effectiveness and implementation of TUS Quality Assurance procedures using relevant criteria from the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015), the National QAE Framework and QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines, also reviewing the enhancement of quality through governance, policy and procedures. The focus group was comprised of staff from academic departments in each Faculty with academic and non-academic staff invited. A project plan working group was established to conduct baseline work and set the trajectory for the collation of the data for the TU profile and for the completion of the ISER. This group met regularly during 2021/2022 and will be expanded as required.

1.3 Governance and Management

Body	Meeting Dates
Governing Body	01/10/21, 12/10/21, 27/10/21, 11/11/21, 01/12/21, 15/12/21, 24/1/22, 14/2/22, 7/3/22, 28/3/22, 11/4/22, 16/5/22, 20/6/22, 18/7/22
Academic Council (AC)	15/10/21, 03/12/21, 25/02/22, 29/04/22,17/06/22,
Academic Council Standing Committee	11/7/22, 29/8/22
Quality Management: Assurance, Enhancement and Integration AC Subcommittee	10/9/21, 08/11/21, 01/02/22, 08/03/22,10/05/22, 09/06/22.
Teaching and Learning (embedding Digital Capital) AC Subcommittee	19/11/21, 11/02/22, 29/03/22, 31/05/22.
Programme Provision including Flexible Learning Sub-Committee	13/09/21, 05/11/21, 28/01/22, 04/03/22, 06/05/22.
Student Success - Access, Transfer and Progression AC Subcommittee	16/11/22, 08/02/22, 22/03/22, 24/05/22,16/06/22.
Apprenticeship AC Subcommittee	23/11/22,15/02/22, 05/04/22, 07/06/22.
Postgraduate Research Studies Sub-Committee AC Subcommittee	26/11/21, 25/01/22, 01/03/22, 03/05/22.
Student Experience - Management and Services AC Subcommittee	12/11/21, 04/02/22,15/03/22,17/05/22.

1.3.2 QA Leadership and Management Structural Developments

Role Title	Appointed
President	Professor Vincent Cunnane
Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar	Dr. Terry Twomey
Vice President Student Education and Experience	Ms. Frances O'Connell
Vice President Finance and Corporate Governance	Mr. Bill Delaney
Vice President Campus Services and Capital Development	Mr. Jimmy Browne
Vice President People, Culture and EDI	Ms. Marian Duggan
Vice President Research Development and Innovation	Dr. Liam Brown
Vice President Strategy Transitions and Projects	Mr. John McKenna
Chair of Technology Education	Dr. Niall Seery
Head of International	Mr. Donnacha McNamara
Assistant Registrar	Dr. Carole Glynn
Head of Department of Flexible Learning	Dr. Orlaith Borthwick
Dr. Carmel Kealy	Head of Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Biotechnology
Mr. Alan Duffy	Head of Dept. of Civil Construction and Mineral Engineering
Dr. Cormac O'Shea	Head of Dept. of Bioveterinary and Microbial Sciences
Dr. Alison Sheridan	Head of Dept. of Business and Management

1.4   Internal Monitoring and Review

1.4.1 Overview of Periodic Reviews

Unit of Review	Date of completion	Links to Relevant Publications
Faculty of Engineering and the Bult Environment - Department of Built Environment	09/02/2022	Report
Faculty of Engineering and the Bult Environment - Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering	30/03/2022	Report
Faculty of Engineering and the Bult Environment - Department of Mechanical and Automobile Engineering	28/04/2022	Report
Faculty of Applied Sciences and Information Technology - Department of Applied Science	24/03/2022	Report
Faculty of Applied Sciences and Information Technology - Department of Information Technology	15/03/2022	Report
Faculty of Business and Humanities Technology- BA in Early Childhood and Care	12/05/2022	Report
Limerick School of Art and Design: Department of Fine Art and Education; Department of Design; and Department of Digital Arts and Media	12/05/2022	Report
Faculty of Business and Hospitality, Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure	26/04/2022	Report

An overview of the Programmatic Review Panels Composition, Profile and Membership is provided at the following link:

Programmatic Review Panels Profile

1.4.2 Expert Review Teams/Panels[2] 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	19	9	0	0	9	1	0
of those:		–	–	–	–	–	–
On-site processes	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Desk reviews	0	–	–	–	–	–	–
Virtual processes	18	–	–	–	–	–	–
Average panel size for each process type*	7	–	–	–	–	–	–

Explanatory Notes:

List of Existing Collaborative Programmes available in AQR Part B Section 2.2. (Page 75)
List of all Transnational Articulation Agreements available in AQR Part B Section 2.2. (Page 75)

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[2] 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

Type of Expert/ Role on Panel	Total	Gender			Internal	National	International			Institution Type	
		Male	Female	Other, or unspecified			UK, incl. NI	Other European	Outside of Europe	Similar	Different
Chair	_	14	4							18	
Secretary	_	12	6		18						
Academic/Discipline Specific	—	46	21				8	7	1	83	
Student Representative	—	10	11								
QA	_	14	4								
Teaching & Learning	_		4							4	
External Industry /Third Mission	—	31	18				1			50	

2.0 IQA System – Enhancement and Impacts

2.1 Initiatives within the Institution related to Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is acting in an honest, moral and fair way to complete any academic tasks in an academic setting (QQI, 2020). It is at the heart of all activity in the technological university and depends on individuals approaching any academic task or research in an honest and moral way. This is guided by the TUS Marks and Standards for the academic year 2021 - 2022, which outlines academic misconduct and which applies to all learners at all levels in the university who are undertaking any academic work contributing to an award, or credits.

National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN)

TUS places significant emphasis on academic integrity and is represented on the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) established by QQI. TUS considers the NAIN forum an important instrument for the sharing and dissemination of information relating to the current issues, initiatives and best practice in the academic integrity sphere   NAIN's work is ongoing, supporting both students and staff, and is focused on preventing academic fraud and misconduct though the development of a positive culture of academic integrity in higher education. The network also develops national resources and tools for higher education providers to address the challenges presented by academic misconduct. In addition, several national workshops presented by NAIN were promoted throughout the university.

TUS Initiatives related to Academic Integrity

TUS promotes a strong university-wide culture of academic integrity and awareness, keeping academic integrity central to all learning, teaching, assessment, and research activities.   The campus libraries and the Midlands Academic Writing Centre (AWC) provide ongoing support to both students and staff. In addition, events were held to mark National Academic Integrity week in October 2022.
As well as promoting access to events organised by NAIN, local activities and workshops aimed at increasing awareness of academic integrity for both staff and students were presented on campus and were well supported and provided a focused awareness of academic integrity across the faculties. The availability of national resources on the academic integrity page of the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development (CPID) supplements activities within the university for academic staff.

Technologies

There has been continued support for students and staff in using academic integrity resources to ensure there is greater understanding of the role they play in enhancing academic work. The learning supports developed include:

- How to use Turnitin videos and text documents. Turnitin is widely used by the academic community in monitoring the assessment work completed and submitted by students.

- Assessment work is submitted to Moodle which enables the review of submissions via this application. As a result, there is strong evidence amongst the student community that the tools for the detection of plagiarism are used systematically across the University.

- Support materials for students and staff on Academic Writing Skills Moodle page

- General information on academic integrity for staff and students is available on the Learning and Teaching hub website: https://www.ait.ie/learning-and-teaching-unit/academic-integrity

Academic Integrity Week

National Academic Integrity week was held in October 2022. Planning for campus specific events was at an advanced stage before the establishment of TUS. Throughout the week, awareness was raised through quizzes on elements of academic integrity. These were shared with students via social media platforms, and on the Digital Signage screens on campus. An Academic Integrity Resource Pack was developed and shared with lecturers teaching the Learning and Development in Higher Education module with first year students. This included teaching resources and activities on four topics: Recognising Plagiarism, Paraphrasing Skills, Using Turnitin, and Avoiding Contract Cheating.

The schedule of staff events can be accessed at: Academic Integrity Week Staff Events

The schedule of student events can be accessed at: Academic Integrity Week Student Events

TUS Plagiarism Report

Where academic misconduct is detected, it is the policy of the Technological University that it be dealt with fairly, consistently and in accordance with the principles of natural justice, which ensure that a person receives a fair and unbiased hearing before a decision is made that will negatively affect them. TUS continued to convene as per the plagiarism policy during the reporting period and all cases were fully investigated and relevant penalties were applied.

2.2 Programmes of Education and Training

<u>Major Awards</u>

There was a total of 8 new programmes (postgraduate and undergraduate) presented and successfully validated in the reporting year of 2021/2022.

Department	Programme Title(s)	Link to Reports
LSAD- Digital Arts and Media 16/6/22	Master of Arts in Creative Leadership Practice Postgraduate Diploma in Creative Leadership Practice. Certificate in Facilitating Collaboration and Change. Certificate in Leadership Communication and Digital Transformation. Certificate in Leadership Inclusion and Action Research.	Report
LSAD- Fine Art 12/10/21	Master of Arts in Fine Art	Report
LSAD- Design 15/2/22	Master of Arts in Enterprise for Creative Industries Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Enterprise for Creative Industries	Report
Department of Applied Science 22/3/22	BSc (Hons) in Agricultural Science & Sustainability Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Science and Sustainability Higher Certificate in Science in Agricultural Science and Sustainability	Report
Department of Applied Social Science 29/3/22	BSc (Honours) Applied Psychology BSc Applied Psychology Higher Certificate in Psychology L8 BSc (Honours) Applied Psychology (add-On)	Report
Department of Built Environment 25/4/22	Higher Diploma in Residential Energy Retrofit Management Certificate in Residential Energy Retrofit Fabric Certificate in Residential Energy Retrofit Systems Certificate in Residential Energy Retrofit Management	Report
Department of Marketing, Enterprise and Digital Communications 22/2/22	Bachelor of Business in International Business Studies	Report
Department of Civil Engineering and Trades	Higher Diploma in Engineering in Virtual Design and Construction Level 8 with Embedded Awards	Report
Department of Polymer, Mechanical and Design 9/05/2022	Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Music and Sound Engineering Bachelor of Science in Music and Sound Engineering Higher Certificate in Engineering in Music and Instrument Technology	Report

Structured Doctorate Programmes	Date of Approval
Doctor of Philosophy in Business Computing	03.05.2022
Doctor of Philosophy in Business	03.05.2022
Doctor of Philosophy in Tourism	03.05.2022

New Programme Validation Panels Profile

Thematic Analysis of Validation Panels

An external validation panel makes an independent impartial judgement on a programme proposal and in accordance with TUS Academic Regulations can recommend approval of a programme subject to Conditions and Recommendations. Conditions are obligatory and must be implemented, and while Recommendations are advisory in nature, there is full consideration given to their implementation by the respective programme boards and the majority of these were implemented. An overview of some of the common themes emerging during external validation panels is available at the following link.

External Validation/Revalidation Panels - Common Themes

Special Purpose Awards Approved During the Reporting Period

Department	Programme Title(s)
Department of the Built Environment	Certificate in Residential Energy Retrofit Management (25 credits) Certificate in Residential Energy Retrofit Systems (15 credits) Certificate in Residential Energy Retrofit Fabric (20 credits)
Department of Nursing and Healthcare	Certificate in Advanced Health Assessment (10 Credits)
Department of Flexible Learning	Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (30 Credits) Certificate in Learning Design and Curriculum Frameworks (10 credits) Certificate in Digital Enhanced Learning and Teaching (10 credits) Certificate in Assessment for Engaged Learning (10 credits) Certificate in Research and Innovation Management (10 credits) Post Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice in Higher Education (30 Credits)

Programme Modification in Advance of Programmatic Review

Programme Boards engage in ongoing monitoring, programme reporting and continuous programme review as outlined in AQR, Part A, Section 1.8. As a consequence of this activity programmes may be adjusted on a continuous basis and this ongoing quality enhancement activity is reflected in the range of changes to Approved Programme Schedules for the reporting period.

Academic Council approved changes to Approved Programme Schedules in 2021 - 2022 as detailed here:

Changes to Approved Programme Schedules

2.3 Flexible Learning

TUS designed and delivered relevant up-skilling part-time flexible programmes across all academic disciplines, delivering on the objectives of the SpringBoard+, HCI, and ICT initiatives, while supporting their respective regional stakeholders. TUS demonstrates that it continues to provide a strong talent pipeline combining knowledge, skills and employability that responds effectively to the needs of our industry, enterprise, public service and community sectors within the Midlands/Midwest region and beyond. Since 2018, across SB+, HCI, July Stimulus and ICT initiatives, TUS has supported 5,263 full time equivalent part-time flexible learners at both undergraduate and postgraduate level to acquire new skills (Figure 1), representing a 400% increase in part-time flexible learner student numbers over the period (Figure 2)

Figure 1: TUS FTE Part-Time Flexible Learners by Region
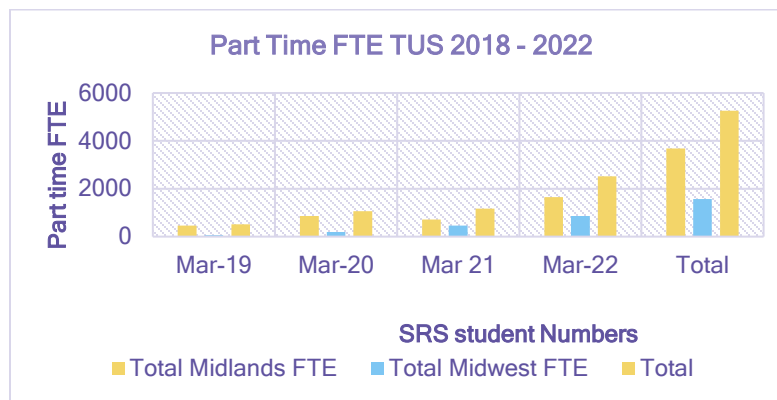
Figure 2: Total TUS FTE Part-Time Flexible Learners
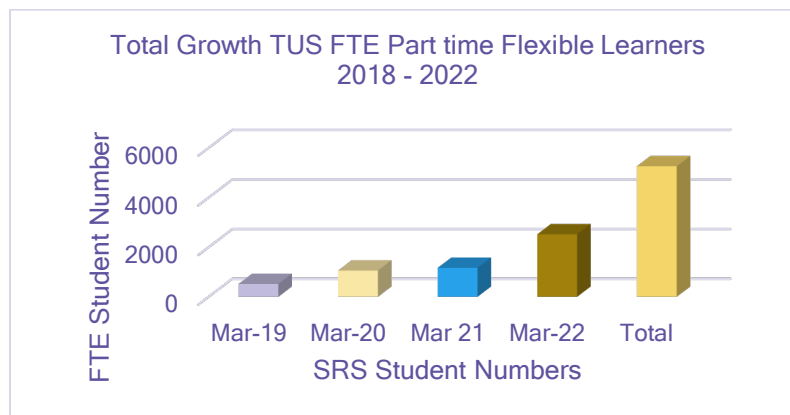
The commitment to part-time programmes is currently driven through two Faculties (Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning (TUS Midlands) and the Faculty of Flexible and Work Based Learning (TUS Midwest), thus providing the structures and frameworks to respond rapidly and with agility to regional needs. TUS is committed to supporting and providing high quality services to:

- the part-time student (flexible learner) via new flexible delivery models, access routes (RPL), induction and virtual learning environments, including a range of other administrative supports

from initial contact to online registration, to new engagement and communication channels;
- the academic (lecturer) via training, teaching, learning, assessment and support structures to enhance their engagement with the student and the university.
- the industry partners via collaborative groups, clusters, regional meetings, work placements, skills audits, research, bespoke training culminating in a range of new programs, progression paths, flexible online and blended learning delivery modes, the promotion of transversal and industry specific skills.
- the regions (Midlands and Midwest) and beyond via effective communication and dissemination channels, demonstrating the importance of working collaboratively to ensure regional growth, delivering on regional enterprise plan objectives and disseminating best practice via National and International Fora.

The successful growth in students' numbers was enabled through the design and delivery of industry relevant new programmes, across all academic disciplines, in collaboration with various stakeholders including Regional Skills Managers and industry clusters operating within and across both regions. There has been continued growth in the number of programmes delivered on-line. This was driven by a strategic response to industry demand, but also in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Blended or on-line delivery is now the main mode in which new flexible part-time programmes are being developed, in response to stakeholder feedback and supported by investment in people, infrastructure and supports for students

Provision of support to part-time flexible learners across the entire student life cycle has been a priority for TUS. We have developed the organisational structure and internal systems to enable the part-time flexible learner to access all services including application, registration, induction, lecturers, tutorials, assessment through to graduation using a range of virtual and digital tools.

Engagement and research on skills needs has been a core component of the development of new programmes and expansion of delivery. Engagement with Regional Skills Managers (Midland and Midwest) has been critical and mutually beneficial. This was particularly important for Springboard+ responses. Other regional stakeholders, forums and clusters informed development and was supported by competency and skills audits.

The impact of free and part-funded upskilling opportunities for the individual learners available via the SB+, HCI, July Stimulus and ICT initiatives have been vital components of the recent growth achieved. Working with industry it has been possible to design new programmes that meet the sectoral needs, while also complying with the relevant programme requirements. Industry has thus benefited from the free/part-funded programmes but has also gained deeper insights into the programme development processes within the University

Other key outcomes in the period include:
1. Enhanced focus on Teaching, Learning and Assessment research across the Faculties with a view to optimizing student experience.
2. Enhanced industry engagement through collaborative groups and clusters e.g., Midlands Industry Collaboration group, Explore Engineering etc.
3. Design and administration of part-time programmes, in line with Springboard+ initiatives

> requirements and incorporating work-based learning

4. An agile program development model to support the development and delivery of part-time flexible online learning ensuring access, progression and success.
5. Research and collaboration internally and externally delivering projects in conjunction with National Fora.
6. Dissemination of best practice, internally, nationally and internationally via conferences and RUN-EU Network.
7. National Partnering with other HE providers and private industry towards the delivery of national strategic priorities e. g., REAP Project, DASBE project.
8. Design, development and delivery of various online supports and services for the part-time flexible online learner.
9. Design, development and delivery of various online supports and services for the part-time flexible online academic lecturers (both F/T and P/T)

The part-time flexible higher education learning domain represents a continually changing discipline requiring an agile operational model to adequately respond to the industries, organisations and individuals it seeks to support and serve. Indeed, the learning model being delivered today needs development and improvement given the pace of technological advancements and increased research in the field. Future developments will see improvements in technologies and systems e.g., use of VR/AR, increased internationalization focus e.g. RUN-EU, creation of micro-credentials e.g., 2 ECTS programmes, streamlined processes to improve the student experience as well as a focus on quality of the teaching and learning through the use of Communities of Practices of Academic Staff.

The DASBE initiative, funded through the HCI Pillar 3 programme, has developed a wide range of new programmes during 21/22 including a new Higher Diploma in Residential Energy Retrofit Management, Certificate in Energy Renovation of Traditional Buildings, Certificate in Community Energy and others. It is working closely with industry to respond to skills needs while also developing new training solutions including the use of VR.

2.4 Quality Enhancement of Research Degree Provision

Research Activity and Quality Enhancement

TUS Research activities have grown substantially at TUS during the reporting year and continue to have a strong applied focus, delivering specific innovative outputs in partnership with industry, community and other external stakeholders. TUS's key strategic areas of focus and growth for the future aims to connect relevant faculties, departments and academic staff with research Institutes and Centres and Groups within the TU. This will help to ensure that RDI activity is transferred to taught programmes given our TU ethos of research informed teaching. A comprehensive range of supports and services are available including training courses and administrative services organised by the Graduate School and Graduate Research Office in TUS Midlands and Midwest, respectively

The Graduate School and Graduate Research Office facilitate a comprehensive programme of training and support including general and transferable skills workshops. Research postgraduates, research supervisors, and staff all have access to these supports. All new research postgraduate students attend a Research Postgraduate Induction which provides an overview of governance and compliance structures within TUS, as well as an introduction to the researcher support services and the research community. Research supervisors are also invited (but not obliged) to attend. TUS also provides formal Research Integrity Training through the Epigeum training platform. General and discipline specific training in health and safety protocols is provided by the TUS Health and Safety Officer in collaboration with the Graduate School and Graduate Research Office.

TUS Library provides research skills instruction, access to scholarly knowledge resources and 1 to 1 consultation to postgraduate students and supervisors, and provides access to the scholarly collections supporting postgraduate teaching and research. Postgraduate students and supervisors can avail of training and advice on publishing and disseminating their research, managing their academic profile and engaging in best practices in Open Research. Other training and development opportunities at other institutions/organisations over the course of the research degree programme are identified jointly by the student and their Supervisory Panel. The opportunities identified are then prioritised and submitted to Graduate School and Graduate Research Office who provide support to attend where possible. A summary of the support activities offered during the 2021 – 2022 Academic Year are presented in the following Table.

Summary of Support Activities Offered During the 2021 – 2022 Academic Year

Title	Date	Type of Activity	Attended by:
Research Postgraduate Induction (in person)	12th November 2021 (4 sessions)	Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Research Postgraduate Induction (online)	14th December 2021	Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Transfer to PhD Process (online)	31st March 2022	Information Session	PG Researchers & Staff
Advanced Degrees at TUS (online)	5th April 2022	Information Session	Undergraduates
Surviving the Viva (online)	6th April 2022	Training	PG Researchers

The Research Institutes and Centres continue to be aligned with key themes and priority areas that evolve and change over time. Continuous horizon scanning and engagement with stakeholders has the potential to identify other areas and themes, which can be incorporated into the RDI portfolio. A number of the themes and areas are interdisciplinary in nature and this approach is supported by many of TUS's Research Institutes and Centres. The primary purpose of designating Research Institutes, Centres and Groups is to enhance focus and recognition on specialist research areas and expertise within TUS. The progressive nature and scale of these 3 designations demonstrates a growth path for new research specialisms, growing numbers of researchers and funding and a thriving research culture at TUS. The Academic Council Subcommittee on *Postgraduate Studies and Research* oversees their designation and operation to ensure that quality standards are being maintained and that the research activity remains an integral part of the development of the TUS strategic policy in terms of research.

The designated Research Institutes and Groups encompass a wide variety of disciplines, from Fine Art and Design to Social Sciences, Biotechnology, Interactive Systems. The primary purpose of designating Research Institutes, Centres and Groups is to enhance focus and recognition on specialist research areas and expertise within TUS. The progressive nature and scale of these 3 designations demonstrates a growth path for new research specialisms, growing numbers of researchers and funding and a thriving research culture at TUS, Energy Management, and Sustainable Development. The Research Institutes and Groups all have a focus on developing niche areas of expertise to attract international researchers and external funding to provide innovative products and processes for industry partners and to develop postgraduate research opportunities. The following provides a high-level overview of the designated Research Institutes.

The following is a summary of Research Institutes and Nationally Funded Technology Gateways in TUS Midlands and Midwest is available at the following link: TUS Research Institutes

2.5 International Education

TUS through the TUS International Office working with the University Faculties are embedding global perspectives in all of the University's activities. Our communities are working on the development of an internationalised curriculum, further growing international research, widening our partnership collaborations and extending our transnational education network as we grow mobility for both students and staff. Historically, our students and staff have participated in the European Union-funded Erasmus+ programme and have established a wide range of trans-European contacts. Many programmes now offer semester of study abroad or international placement opportunities across our network of 230 global partners. TUS is pleased to welcome students from our international partners including our RUN EU partners for short term study, one semester or a full academic year of study.

Main Activities of the International Office

- Enhancing and developing international student and staff mobility and reviewing existing relationships with international partner universities including members of RUN-EU network
- Assessing opportunities for international collaboration and establishing relationships with appropriate international partners
- Promotion of TUS and the range of programmes to students in international markets
- Management of applications and monitoring of incoming international students
- Management and monitoring of outbound students undertaking a period of study at partner Universities or international placement
- Promotion of international mobility opportunities to students, staff and researchers with particular emphasis on EU programmes and RUN-EU opportunities
- Administration and co-ordination of EU projects (e.g., Erasmus+) and reporting (financial and qualitative) of EU-funded programmes to the Higher Education Authority and ensuring compliance with EU regulation
- Management of joint programmes with partner universities with particular reference to partnerships in Asia and management of representative offices in China, Malaysia and India. Plans are at an advanced stage to open a representative office in Africa with particular focus on the Nigerian market.
- Providing advice to international students on services available to them on registering at TUS and liaising with services such as Students Resources, Counselling, Careers Office, Chaplaincy, Health Centre and Students' Union. International office staff also provide advice on registering at local immigration services, opening bank accounts and applying for PPSN on arrival in Ireland.

International Student Exchange Activity

The International Office at TUS promote mobility opportunities to students and staff, administer the Erasmus grant, manage transfer of students and international partnerships in priority markets of Europe, China, Canada, USA, Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia, Nigeria, Ghana, and India. There were over 100 nationalities represented across all campuses during academic year 2021-22. Despite global challenges in 2021-2022. TUS has seen a steady increase in numbers during the past year. A total of 93 students, drawn from all faculties undertook Erasmus+ work placements or study abroad during academic year 2021-2022. Students have completed placements with Erasmus+ funding in countries such as The Netherlands, France, Spain, Germany, Portugal and Belgium. During the academic year 2021-2022, Erasmus+ study mobilities were undertaken with partner institutes in France, Germany, France,

Belgium, Spain, Croatia, Italy and Austria. There had been a decline in numbers of outgoing study mobilities due to global challenges, but that number has seen a rise during academic year 2021- 2022 with growing interest in mobility to our RUN-EU partners. The International Office carried out a review of current Erasmus partnerships and ceased institutional agreements where there was little or no exchange activity for the past three years. The plan is to promote increased mobility opportunities to our RUN-EU partners with new partner universities joining from Belgium and Spain.

TUS has also been successful in securing ongoing funding within the Erasmus+ KA171 International (Non-EU/EEA) mobilities project which came into effect in 2015. The countries with which TUS have secured competitive funding to date include Brazil, Canada, Malaysia, China, Iran, Iraq and Georgia among others. All the funding achieved has been crucial in enabling the development of international partnerships and the Institutional pathways for international students to study in TUS.

The following provide vital supports to International Students in TUS

Support	Detail
Support Services to International Students	International Office staff are committed to supporting our international students in their transition from their home country to their studies at TUS. International students benefit from having an international office with staff dedicated to supporting them during their studies based in Athlone & Limerick but servicing all campuses. The following support services are of particular relevance to international students:
Orientation programme	An orientation programme is organised by the International Office staff in September to familiarise new students with student regulations, immigration procedures, IT, Library and other facilities and supports available at TUS as well as excursions to local amenities and tourist sites.
English language, Academic Writing and Tutorial Support	English language classes are organised to assist international students during their study, particularly during Semester One of their programme. Once students are assigned projects/assignments they can seek an appointment at the Academic Writing Centre. Students who are experiencing difficulties in their programme of study can arrange an appointment with a tutor to aid outside of normal class contact hours or seek support from counselling services.
International Student Ambassadors	TUS liaise with Education in Ireland on selection of student ambassadors. A team of international student ambassadors is organized by the international office to check if any International students require support during the period that they are settling in to life and study in Ireland during September/October period. Additional supports are available from Student Resources, Institute Nurse, Chaplaincy and Counselling when international students require support

International Partner Engagement

During the Covid-19 pandemic, TUS engaged with international partner universities and agents virtually. Education fairs and events shifted to virtual interactions and when travel was safe again, TUS received positive feedback from our international partners for this continued engagement which led to great interest in physical mobility again. Faculty and international office staff organised webinars and participated in multiple virtual education fairs and forums in Europe, China, India, Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Canada, USA, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Brazil, and wider regional events for LATAM, MENA, Sub Saharan Africa, East Africa, Asia and South-East Asia Fairs.

Virtual events centre around TUS values and mission, as well as re-iterating the importance of each partnership to our new TU. The events encompassed a variety of speakers including the President, a range of Faculty members and international student representatives. The key message from our

President is that TUS is committed to our international partners and there is excitement about our new strategic planning phase. The introductory talks by Heads of Department, Deans of Faculty, student representatives from Students Union and the International Society are very much valued by our international partners to connect new students with TUS and to prepare students for life and study in a vibrant new TU.

Transnational Education
TUS is committed to developing Transnational Education by designing and accrediting programmes with our international partner universities. TUS has one of the highest approval ratings amongst Irish HEIs for Ministry of Education approved undergraduate level programmes in China. There are eight programmes approved in disciplines of Software Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Pharmaceutical Science, Graphic Design, Hotel Management, Civil Engineering, Business and Accounting at Chinese partner universities. Wuxi Institute of Technology received approval from the Ministry of Education in China to launch a joint school in 2019 with the first intake of students to programmes in Computer Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Robotics, Graphic Design and Software Engineering. TUS was pleased to welcome the first cohort of students in September 2021 to third year. Students follow two years of the TUS curriculum as well as their Chinese curriculum and have the option of transferring to the third year of the programme at TUS. During academic year 2021-22, there were 211 learners studying on programmes at the Sino-Irish School in Wuxi.

TUS delivers a programme in Engineering Management with Yangtze University whereby students have the opportunity to study for three years in China and then transfer to the final year of the Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering Management. During academic year 2021-22, there were 230 students studying on this programme at Yangtze University. TUS is committed to its relationships with international partners and expanding cooperation to other disciplines to attract high calibre students to pursue postgraduate and Masters/PhD programmes by Research through its network of university partnerships.

International Alumni
International Office staff keep in touch with our Alumni and particularly when they travel to education fairs and events in priority markets. Graduates were delighted to be able to attend in person graduation ceremonies at the TUS Athlone and Limerick campuses in line with Covid restrictions in place during October-November 2021. This presents a wonderful opportunity to gather information on career opportunities for international students and to promote graduate employability on social media channels. The international office assisted international students to apply for their graduate extension visas to avail of job opportunities in Ireland following their graduation.

New Developments
The TUS International Office leadership team include Donnacha McNamara, VP International, Mary Simpson Director International Relations and Cliona Campbell Director of International Affairs are engaged in a new strategic plan and organising its structure to promote TUS in priority markets to attract high calibre students to programmes across all faculties on our six campuses. New programmes are being planned for the upcoming academic years with support from Deans, Heads of Department, Faculty and Programme Directors.

2.6 Staff Development/Teaching and Learning

Non-accredited professional development

A comprehensive suite of non-accredited CPD events were provided across TUS with excellent participation by Staff. The details of these events can be accessed at the following link:
Non Accredited Staff Development Programme 2021-2022

The programme included themed events, an international symposium, and ongoing professional development workshops and seminars. Although in-person sessions were provided, the functionality of digital platforms to support opportunities for the provision of professional development online enabled an inclusive and extensive approach across the TUS community. The range of activities focused on areas such as the development of digital literacies, in addition to pedagogies for active learning and student engagement. In particular, post-Covid-19, design of assessments to motivate students, especially through the use of digital technologies, was a key theme, as was building on the knowledge and skills developed during the transition to emergency, remote online learning provided the opportunity to increase capacity further. Addressing the topic of academic integrity in terms of empowering staff and students and awareness raising was an ongoing activity with key events also planned during National Academic Integrity Week 2021.

Supporting staff in implementing Team Based Learning (TBL), a unique student-centered pedagogical approach, involved offering a range of events which culminated in the Midlands hosting the first European Team Based Learning Symposium in Ireland. This international event included a multiplier event for the TUS Midlands ERASMUS+ TALENT project, which involves introducing TBL to local secondary schools.

The Midwest continued its successful collaboration with the University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College, offering a series of lunchtime conversations about learning and teaching sessions in addition to supporting the annual Regional Excellence in Teaching and Learning award.

Internationalising the Home Curriculum was a theme of a specific Learning Enhancement Project (LEP) in the Midlands involving the development of a programme approach to embedding internationalisation across a programme. The aim of the LEP was to ensure that students who do not study abroad still have the opportunity to engage with international and intercultural perspectives whilst completing their programme of study. The innovative approach piloted in this LEP can also be replicated in other programmes. Intercultural awareness sessions were also run with students and staff.

Accredited CPD Offerings Midwest and Midlands

In the Midwest, the Quality, Teaching and Learning Centre in partnership with the Department of Flexible Learning offered the following modules:
- Reflective Academic Practice (10 ECTs)
- Assessment for Engaged Learning (10 ECTs)
- Digital Enhanced Learning & Teaching (10 ECTs)
- Research Methods (10 ECTs)
- Research Innovation and Management (10 ECTs)

In the Midlands, the Certificate in Inclusive Practice for Learning, Teaching and Assessment (15 ECTS at level 9) was offered for the first time. In addition, a process, called 'RPL for TEL', was devised to enable staff to gain recognition for prior accredited learning through the development of a portfolio of evidence which captured their use of digital technologies in their learning, teaching and assessment practice during emergency remote teaching. Successful applicants were awarded an exemption from the Certificate in Technology Enhanced Learning (15 ECTs) which can be used towards the award of the Postgraduate Diploma in Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

In November 2021, the Learning and Teaching Hub web presence was launched in the Midlands, which was designed as a space to provide accessible information, support and resources to staff. This will be developed further as required and shared across the TUS community with the establishment of the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development.

Compendium of Active Learning and Assessment for Student Engagement

This TUS Compendium of Active Learning and Assessment for Student Engagement was published during the reporting period and represents a significant resource for Staff Development in Teaching and Learning. The compendium includes the twin themes of Active Learning and Innovative Assessment for Student Engagement. This publication is the first official, collaborative TUS publication in Learning, Teaching and Assessment and contains 44 submissions from academic practitioners across TUS. It includes twenty one submissions on active learning, reflecting diverse strategies including: visuals and Infographics, technology enhanced learning, e-tivities, clinical simulations and group-work learning processes. There are an additional thirteen submissions on innovative assessment, covering a diverse range of individual and group assessments using different pedagogical approaches and ten significant theory-practice reflections on a range of scholarly themes relating to active learning and assessment initiatives. The compendium reflects the TUS commitment to developing and enhancing a TUS Community of Practice in Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

2.7 Supports and Resources for Learners

TUS is a dynamic and vibrant multi-campus community. The investment by TUS in high quality student supports ensures that student success and a positive student experience is a key priority.

Whether students are new to TUS and need help getting started or in an advanced year of study, student supports play a critical role in ensuring students have access to learning in a student-centred supportive environment and which positively contributes to student access, retention, success, and progression. TUS has a vibrant Sports Office and an active Students' Union who work collaboratively with student services, in support of students.

A TUS student has access to many supports and services including:

1. TUS Student Induction and Orientation programme: 'Connect & Engage'
2. Access Service
3. Disability Service
4. Student Counselling Service
5. Student Health Service
6. Learning Support Service
7. Careers and Employability Service
8. Pastoral Care
9. Peer Assisted Student Supports
10. Mentors
11. Laptop Loan Scheme, and
12. TUS Societies.

A comprehensive account of the extensive work of each service in supporting the student experience of TUS students, in the reporting period, is available at the following link:

SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES FOR LEARNERS: 1ST OCTOBER 2021 – 31ST AUGUST 2022

The following provides an introduction and overview of the ethos and principal focus of each support service and is complimented by the overview of the services provided in AQR Part A, Section A3.0.

1. TUS Student Induction and Orientation programme: 'Connect & Engage'

Connect and Engage is our eight-week Induction and Orientation programme. The programme includes an array of curated events and activities ranging from support services to essential information, all created to support students' transition to college and towards a positive student experience. The programme is delivered in a blended format both onsite and online across all TUS campuses and has 8 themed weeks.

2. Access Service

The TUS Access Service is committed to promoting access to higher education for under-represented groups. The Access agenda flows from a philosophy of equality and social inclusiveness and is informed by the HEA National Access Plan. TUS Access Service operates initiatives in partnership with schools, community organisations, and Further Education providers. Staff of the Access Office are members of

relevant TUS committees and advise on policy, procedure and best practice on issues relating to our commitment in TUS towards the Access Agenda.

Diversity of Access Initiative during the Reporting Period

RANGE OF ACCESS INITIATIVES	
Entry Routes	Higher Education Access Route
	Access Courses
Student Financial Supports	The Student Assistance Fund
	1916 Bursaries
	Covid Contingency Fund
	Traveller Dormant Account Supports
Pre-entry initiatives	Saturday Mathematics Programme
	Go4IT
	Business in the Community
	Engage in Education
	Limerick Jobs Fair
	Guided Initiative in Voluntary Engagement (GIVE)
PATH 3	The College Connect programme
	Mentoring programme
	Pathways
	Kick Start Scholarship Fund
	All island Research observatory (AIRO)
	Destination College
	Traveller Education Programme
	College4Kids

3. Disability Service

TUS Disability Services provide a range of supports for students across the full range of their disabilities/specific learning difficulties/ongoing health conditions, including but not limited to sensory and physical disabilities, specific learning difficulties, mental health conditions, significant ongoing illness, and students with Autism. Services include facilitating individual learning support, dyslexia screening, assistive technology training, alternative assessment formats, examination supports and provision of transport. Educational Support Workers deliver appropriate learning and personal support to students registered with the service. Each student's needs are assessed on an individual basis and in accordance with the evidence presented. In some cases, and in accordance with the presenting need, one to one personal and academic assistance is provided by Servisource who are tendered by TUS for the provision of same.

TUS is fully committed to supporting people with disabilities meet their academic potential. TUS is mindful of its statutory obligation under the Disability Act 2005 to support access to services and facilities for people with disabilities. Students who are registered with the Disability Service can self-refer throughout their time at TUS or may be part of the DARE entry scheme. In 2021-2022 there were 958 students registered with TUS Disability Services.

4. Student Counselling Service

The TUS Midlands Midwest Student Counselling Service provide confidential student-centred, accessible, psychological, mental health and wellbeing support to students across six campuses in the Midlands Midwest. The counselling service actively promote positive mental health and wellbeing using a range of focused strategies including workshops, webinars, social media, counselling service newsletters and engaging psychoeducational resources and helpline numbers on the TUS student counselling webpages. Student counselling service collaborate and liaise with community, local and regional mental health services, and agencies to provide best care for students and is committed to the ongoing development of out of hours supports for students of the TUS community. TUS is a keyword partner with Text 50808, a free, anonymous, 24/7 text support service available to students. Text TUS to 50808 has become an integral element of safety planning with students who indicate risk to self or who may need out of hours support.

During this reporting period additional funding provided by DFHERIS through the HEA in 2021 supported recruitment of additional posts to core counselling teams and development of new posts including Assistant Psychologist, Mental Health & Wellbeing Project Officer and Frameworks Implementation Manager. This allowed for expansion of services and, critically, supported the implementation of the National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework and the Framework for Consent in HEIs. As a result of additional funding, there was an expansion in counselling provision to students and engagement with students across all campuses, including the following:
- A total of 6,253 direct counselling hours were provided to students of TUS Midlands Midwest during the period 1st October 2021 to 31st August 2022.
- 915 students availed of support from the TUS Midlands Midwest Counselling Services during this period, a 24% increase in the number of students engaging with student counselling services the for the same reporting period last year.
- 37% of students indicated risk to self on the pre-therapy outcome measure.
- The average number of sessions provided to students was 5. The average wait time from registration or first contact to assessment was 10 days.

5. Student Health Service

The TUS Student Health Service provides a confidential and caring Health Service to all full-time registered students and apprentices throughout the academic year, with an emphasis on preventative medicine and health promotion, whilst responding to the needs and concerns of all students. The service operates as an addition to a student's own family doctor or specialist medical service. The Nurse-led service is free and confidential. A doctor's service is provided within a 3km radius of each of the 6 campuses in the Midlands and the Midwest. The student fee for the doctor is €15 for registered students and free for Medical Card holders outside of a 5-mile radius of the relevant campus. Students are also informed of the Out-of-Hours Doctor Service for evenings and weekend cover.

A total number of 8,409 nursing appointments took place across TUS with 4,296 in the Midlands and 4,113 nurse appointments in the Midwest. These figures represent onsite consultations and have been increasing on a year-on-year basis since 2017. The main age profile for students attending the Student Health Service is 18 – 24-years, with a slightly higher proportion of females attending. There is a diverse number of medical illnesses encountered, and treatment plans and care are provided in both nursing and doctor clinics to suit the requirement of each patient.

6. Learning Support Service

The TUS Learning Support Service is available to all students on a no-cost basis with approximately 20% of students availing of support every year. The primary aim of the service is to promote retention through progression. Supports are aimed at;

- students struggling to pass assessments,
- students achieving high continuous assessment marks and who are aiming for First-Class Honours / Higher Merit as appropriate.

TUS promotes a supervised self-help model to empower the student and to focus on building their skills and confidence in a supportive and encouraging environment. Support can be organised via referral from lecturers and professional services or more commonly, self-referral by the students individually or through their class reps for group support. In group settings, the speed of progression through the topic is determined by the student struggling the most. The TUS Learning Support Service stick with a topic until everyone "gets it". The support delivered is underpinned by the principles of active learning, with the student leading the process. Students can experience challenges with different areas of their study. During their time in TUS students can avail of one-to-one consultations, group workshops and seminars to help improve their academic skills.

7. Career and Employability Service

In the reporting period, the Midlands and Midwest Careers Services provided careers and employability guidance through a variety of activities, events and supports. These are further detailed in AQR, Part B Section 2.9.

8. Pastoral Care

A Chaplain, from the Diocese is based in Athlone while a staff appointed, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, is based in TUS Midwest campuses. Pastoral Care service works across the campuses to create a caring and supportive community for our students and plays a significant role in delivering a person-centred education for our students. This service, by its nature, works quietly and often unseen, but provides a very effective bridge to other services and supports both within the TU and in the communities TUS serves. During the academic year 2021-2022, the provision of care and support to our students and staff was delivered through face-to-face meetings, emails, telephone calls, written correspondence, the in-house website and through Teams meetings.

9. Peer Assisted Student Supports

As part of the Peer Assisted Student Support (PASS) programme and during this reporting period the following activities were completed:
a) 36 PASS Leaders were trained to run timetabled peer-led sessions at the end of August 2022, in readiness for the arrival of first year students towards the end of September.
b) TUS Midlands PASS Leaders facilitated 17 PASS sessions on 27 first year programmes.
c) PASS was available to approximately 597 first year students. The average attendance rose this year from 26% to 33%. PASS returned to in-person sessions while Leaders respected COVID-19 safety guidance (wearing masks and social distancing).

d) A PASS Programme Board was established in 2021. All aspects of the programme are regularly reviewed, and changes are made in response to feedback and in line with evolving technology and best practice.

10. Mentors

During the academic year 2020-2021, there were 58 mentors who are academic staff from across the Midwest campuses. Mentors are nominated by their Head of Department. Each Mentor is allocated to approximately 40 first year students with agreement by their Head of Department. Mentors sign a 'Memo of Understanding' at the beginning of the academic year, which is approved by the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar.

A summary of benefits for the students include:
- ✓ Students have a supportive person within their own School/Department;
- ✓ Students have increased access and referral to services with the aid of their Mentor;
- ✓ Students who present in crisis within each School/Department are managed more efficiently by the cohort of Mentors.

11. Laptop Loan Scheme

The Government Laptop Scheme is administered by the Library in TUS Midlands and the Access Service in TUS Midwest. A total of €325,646 was allocated to TUS for ICT devices. TUS Midlands received €129,381 and purchased an additional 155 Dell laptops (i5s) and 15 Macbooks for the academic year 2021/2022. TUS Midwest was allocated €196,265 of which a portion was used to purchase a further 150 Dell laptops (I5s) for the 21/22 academic year.

12. TUS Societies

In January 2022 a Societies officer was appointed for the Midlands and Midwest. Life on TUS campuses are marked with numerous ceremonies, occasions and community programmes that are an integral fabric of the TU – new students are welcomed, graduates are celebrated, exemplary academic achievement is honoured, losses are shared, innovative thoughts on creativity are shared, and the doors of the university are opened for all to explore. TUS Societies forms a central pillar of life in TUS for students.

Comprehensive details for the reporting period available at:
SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES FOR LEARNERS: 1ST OCTOBER 2021 – 31ST AUGUST 2022

13. National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)

TUS is one of the 24 participating institutions in the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP). TUS works with NStEP to embed the student voice and to actively create initiatives that support a vision of a learning community where students are partners in the decision-making process. TUS engages with NStEP to enhance student engagement across four domains: (i) governance and management, (ii) quality assurance and enhancement, (iii) teaching and learning, and (iv) student representation and organisation.

In the context of teaching and learning, NStEP principles informed the development of the first TUS Learning and Teaching Strategy, *Putting Learning First,* particularly the graduate attribute framework

outlined in this strategy, when considering the contribution students make whilst studying in the university. The *Graduate Attribute Framework* enables TUS to consider in programme design and delivery: What do we want our graduates to know? What do we want our graduates to be able to do? And What difference do we want our graduates to make?

NStEP has trained several TUS students in the following areas: Representing Diversity, Institutional Review training, Introductory and Advanced Class Rep Training. Recently, TUS academics on the Higher Certificate Pharmacy Technician programme benefited from NStEP's student engagement in terms of involving student assessors in their 3rd year on structured practical and clinical assessments. This offered an opportunity to further deepen their own clinical knowledge, while providing 1st year students with a chance to learn from their peers. The project outlined a methodology for increasing students' understanding of assessment and feedback for increased contribution to and influence on further change in assessment practices. Patterson-and-Dillon.pdf (studentengagement.ie)

2.8 Library and Information Services

Library: Space, Services, Collections, Skills & Expertise

The academic year 2021/2022 saw TUS Library come together as a single entity with 5 libraries and 35 staff covering almost all of TUS campuses (Athlone, Moylish, LSAD, Clonmel & Thurles). While all systems and processes are still being integrated over the first few years of operation, TUS Library uses the Midlands (Athlone) and Midwest (Moylish, LSAD, Clonmel & Thurles) designations to indicate differences from former AIT and LIT libraries during this period of transition. The work of the team to manage the merger continued through this period with a new cross-team structure for merger work established in Sept 2022 including themed TU Teams and stand-alone transition projects on website & branding, policy and induction.

This year also saw the continued adaption and innovation of library spaces, services, and engagement for the first full academic year returning to on campus delivery as much as possible post Covid-19. Lessons learned from 2020/21 year were absorbed and led to further iteration of services, skills instruction, space enhancements and supports offered by the team to students, researchers, staff and the wider TUS learning community. From January 2021 the library collaborated with units across TUS to ensure rapid distribution of antigen tests to students.

Library Supporting Learners Onsite & Online

- *Accessible Learning Spaces & Facilities:* Across Library branches, opening hours were maintained to include over 50 hours per week in each site. All library spaces include staffed issue-desk, printing & photocopying, computers and onsite collections access. The majority of library spaces have group study spaces, new spaces in being planned for Thurles library in this period.

- *Library Skills/Information Literacy Sessions:* During this period, all libraries aligned systems for offering training sessions to students to offer full online booking. These sessions give students independence in their learning to identify what skills they need at the right time for them. These sessions are offered throughout the academic year, picking up on different skills

depending on the time of year. Some onsite sessions provided, but timetabled use of the library computer room in Moylish have impacted onsite delivery on that campus.

- *Curated online learning:* During the 2021/22 academic year, the Library continued to update and expand online subject and skills guides in key TUS subject areas and library/information expertise areas for independent learning and including recordings of skills sessions on Moodle.

- *Accessing Collections Remotely:* New collection access services developed in response to Covid-19 such as Click & Collect, Scan & Deliver and contactless book returns continued throughout this academic year. These services were developed to improve contactless access to physical library materials, but they also provide convenience for users as learning and studying evolves in new blended environments.

Library Collections & Systems

Digital first acquisitions, particularly e-books with multi-user licences, continued to be prioritised during the period and aligned with academic curricula continued to drive collections development in the reporting period 2021/2022, to ensure resource availability for increasing remote learners through programmes like Springboard. Regular updating of core physical and textbook collections also continued throughout the period. New collection areas across the library's repository this period included cyber security, cyber psychology, IP Law, Product Design Control, EDI, positive living and teacher education. This period has seen continued engagement with academics to iterate and improve the development of reading lists. Sustainability for expanding collection demand is being addressed through advancing IReL membership at the sectoral TU level and the expansion of Open Educational Resources within the library's collections, platforms and expertise.

The Library's OER project includes extensive academic engagement with lecturers to build awareness of how these resources can support curriculum learning. Alongside promotional and 1:1 sessions with academics to review and add OER to reading lists, the OER team developed staff workshops as well as library guides to support staff and students' understanding of open licensing and copyright in general. The library is advising staff on choice and suitability of licences when publishing or sharing work. An open publishing tool and platform for OER (Pressbooks) was added to the library's range of resources in December 2021. An initial pilot of ten publications was chosen. The OER index per faculty was updated on a regular base to reflect the creation and availability of new resources.

The Library Management System, Koha, was upgraded to version 21.11 from May – September 2022 and the wider suite of systems were maintained by the Systems Librarians throughout the year. RFID technology for collections management was introduced for the majority of collections in the Midwest campus libraries and will be extended to the Midlands in 2023. News of new collections were disseminated through library communications channels, LibGuides, social media promotion and collections displays aligned to thematic or activity weeks.

Activities for Learner Success & Curriculum Engagement

- *Embedded Curriculum Library Skills Sessions:* In the academic year 2021-22 the library teams consulted directly with academics to schedule information/library skills sessions into class timetables to ensure that the skills are embedded into the curriculum for students. Academics could choose from a menu of session titles and get bespoke topic coverage for their subject area. For example, first year sessions could focus on referencing skills, search skills and avoiding plagiarism. Sessions for 3rd and 4th year undergraduates can focus on advanced research and search skills.

- *Laptop On Loan Initiative, Athlone:* Under the Office of the Registrar, and with funding from the Department of Further and Higher Education, the library continued to collaborate with colleagues in the Access Office and IT Department to distribute 100s of laptops to students to support with their successful engagement with the blended learning model for TUS this academic year. From March 2021, the library hired a dedicated role to manage the whole process from end to end ensuring that students had a single point of contact to support with their engagement with this initiative for the success of their studies. The Midwest Laptop initiative is managed through the Access Office.

- *Academic Engagement for Reading List Guide & Workshops:* Athlone campus continued the development of workshop for lecturers to support the development and updating of Reading Lists. The step-by-step guide, group sessions and 1:1 meetings are available to academic staff/programme/module leads to ensure that students are getting the best from library scholarly collections and a mix of resources including OERs to fully engage with their subject learning.

Enriching Research Culture in TUS

- *Researcher Expertise & Support sessions:* The library continues to offer detailed research expertise and advanced search led sessions for undergraduate research projects, taught and research postgraduates, researchers and any staff doing research across TUS.

- *TUS Research profile:* During the period, the library worked to align ORCID membership and other research profiles for the new TU and delivered workshops and 1:1 sessions on academic profiling for all TUS researchers/academic staff.

- *TUS Institutional Repository:* 2021/2022 was the third full year of the library Repository which hosts open access full-text copies of TUS research outputs including journal articles, posters and other written outputs as a copy of record and to allow public engagement with research.

- New Research LibGuides updated on the National Open Research Forum and updates to the Open Access and Publication Strategy guides.

- Working through the Academic Council sub-committee, the library brought forward the TUS Affiliation and Funder Acknowledgement policy.

- Access to research tools Scopus and Scival extended across all campuses and certificate training completed by many library staff on both.

Library Without Borders: Outreach & Collaboration
The 2021/2022 Library outreach and collaborative efforts included a wide variety of campaigns led with energy and a collaborative spirit by colleagues across the library. Further Details are available at: Library: Outreach & Collaboration

Library as a Sectoral Voice for Academic Libraries in Higher Education
Alongside internal TUS committees, staff represent the library nationally and internationally which provides a voice on sectoral, national, and international library and library related committees. For example, TUS Library's Deputy (Athlone campus) chairs the Western Regional Committee of the Library Association of Ireland with multiple library staff on the Committee. Other staff are on the Library Association of Ireland's Library Ireland Week Taskforce, Professional Standards Committee, Health Sciences Libraries Group, Academic & Special Libraries Group and Open Scholarship Committee. More broadly Library staff are represented on the HEANet's LIR committee for Library technology which includes Library Carpentry and the Acquisitions Group of Ireland. Within the TU sector the library is represented on TUNet, the research group covering the IoTs and TUS and library staff contributed to the sub-groups of NORF, the National Open Research Forum in the period and joined the inaugural Irish Open Access Publishers committee. Internationally library staff are engaged in the European Network of Open Education Librarians (ENOEL) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Associations (IFLA).

At the annual Education Awards 2022, TUS Library was nominated in the Best Library Team and Best Research Project categories and was successful in the Best Research Project category. At the annual CONUL Conference for National and University Libraries, TUS Library was placed second and third in the annual poster competition.

2.9 Career Development

Careers Office

The TUS Careers Service supports students and graduates to identify, develop and enhance their employability skills and career objectives. Fundamentally, the service supports students to implement successful career plans and manage the transition from study to the working world to maximise their personal and professional potential. The Careers Service is available to students and staff in TUS and works in partnership with Academic and other TUS Departments to support students in the attainment of real-life work experiences where they can apply their academic and technical skills and enhance their discipline competencies and employability. TUS graduates are in high demand and are recognised regionally and nationally for having a high level of technical and commercial expertise with multiple career opportunities.

The Careers Service has the responsibility for conducting the annual Graduate Survey which forms part of the First Destination Report- Graduate Outcomes Survey. It gives valuable information in relation to those employed, seeking employment and those engaged in further study. A detailed report is used by management & academic staff for programmatic reviews and other TU reporting. The main focus of the service includes the provision of student career guidance and employability including:

Career Guidance	Detail
Employability Skills	A module develops the student both professionally and personally and equips them with the skills and knowledge to enable them to plan for and achieve their career goals. In addition, the inaugural Employability Plus Award was launched in Sep 2021 and recipients received their award in May 2022.
Employer Liaison	Facilitating industrial recruitment - organising employer presentations, career fairs, advertising job vacancies, employer networking sessions, site visits, with key employers assisting with student mock interviews. Employability workshops in collaboration with employers has proved successful, for example workshops in Personal Branding and Preparing for Virtual Assessment Centre's.
Career Workshops	Workshops and webinars are held on general topics such as CV preparation, interview skills, preparing for postgraduate study and effective job search. A series of Careers Workshops in Spring 2022 consisted of panel discussion events including Exploring Science & Engineering Careers, Exploring IT Careers, Explore Social Care Careers & Exploring Business Careers. Participating employers included Regeneron, Fiserv, Suir Engineering, Irish Water, PM Group, Ardmac, EM3, TTM Healthcare & Focus Ireland. The Careers Service also supported students on the first Access to Apprenticeship programme in the Mid West region, providing one-to-one mentoring and employability workshops to the group.
One to one consultation and mentoring	Individual appointments are very popular amongst the student population. Consultations relate to general career directions, job search, interviews, UCAS applications, CVs, career options, postgraduate applications, difficulties with course, electives, and internal transfer mechanisms.
Interview Preparation - Mock Interviews	Annually, the Careers Service organises hundreds of online mock interviews for students from all disciplines within TUS. Relevant employers, academic staff and careers staff participate in these. Two Mock Interview weeks take place in the academic year, one per semester.
Psychometric Testing	The Strengths Based tests package has proved very successful with students in terms of: (i) career exploration; (ii) personal career development, and (iii) the preparation for testing at an assessment centre. It is also used with potential students at Open Days in advance of their pre-booked careers appointments.

Annual Autumn Careers Fair

The annual in-person TUS Autumn Careers Fairs returned to both the Moylish campus on 11th October 2022, and Athlone campus on 12th October 2022 hosting the regions largest employers. These events provided employers and students with a unique space to connect with students at scale and in person, offering an ideal opportunity to engage with a talented pool of students. It created a visible presence for employers on campus shining a spotlight on employability skills for the regions as well as showcasing organisations and the range of graduate roles, industry placements, part-time roles and internships opportunities to offer across all disciplines. The annual autumn careers fairs ensure that there is a collaborative and effective synergy with industry and TUS across regions. This enhances the overall student experience as well as providing highly skilled, work ready, graduates to support the region's economy.

TUS Careers Fair 2022

Work Placement

The Careers and Employability Service at TUS (Midwest) also supports students with Work Placement and works in partnership with academic departments and placement providers to support students with work placement opportunities. Currently 1,260 students go on work placement annually. The Careers Services has an active role in preparing students for their work placement by providing CV review, interview preparation and mock interviews before the commencement of their placement.

Induction

The Careers Service in TUS Midlands is involved in the management of first year student induction each September. In TUS Midwest, the Careers Services is an active participant in the First Year Connect & Engage programme as well as the Mature Student Induction Programme and Welcome Sessions.

2.10 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in TUS is directed by VP for People, Culture and EDI. The EDI office has three members working across multiple campuses including an EDI Manager, Senior EDI Officer and EDI Administrator. The EDI Office oversees TUS Equality related action plans including the TUS Gender Equality Action Plan and our TUS Promoting Consent and Ending Sexual Violence Action Plan. TUS has a draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which will be finalised following the completion of the overall TUS Strategic Plan.

Athena Swan Legacy Bronze Award and Gender Equality Action Plan

In late 2021 - early 2022, the TUS EDI office, in collaboration with the EDI Working Group, developed a TUS Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP). This Action plan is a merged plan of the previous AIT and LIT Bronze Award Action Plans, and formed the basis of the TUS application for an Athena Swan Legacy Bronze Award. TUS successfully achieved an Athena Swan Legacy Bronze Award in May 2022.

Progress analysis on the GEAP in Dec 2022 showed that of the 95 actions due to be underway by end of 2022, 41% are completed or on-track, 42% in progress but delayed, and 16% off track. While the majority of actions are underway, some are marginally behind schedule due to the need for more detailed consultation (for example with policies and procedures and in establishment of some staff networks) and some technical challenges which have delayed the streamlining of data collection and provision of online trainings across campuses. Actions which are off track are as a result of changing context resulting in the need for an amended timeframe, the need for further analysis to progress certain actions in an appropriate manner and short-term personnel gaps within teams. Delayed and off-track items will be discussed at Vice Presidents and Deans Council in Q1 2023.

Actions completed include establishment of EDI structures within TUS, establishment of TUS LGBT+ & Allies Staff network, TUS Community of Practice to support disclosures of sexual violence and harassment, provision of EDI related trainings (EDI in Higher Education, Unconscious Bias training, Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence, Gender Identity and Expression Training, Aurora Women's Leadership training), publication of regular EDI newsletters, multiple EDI related events on campus and online for both staff and students. Actions in progress relate to development of EDI related policies and procedures, establishment of TUS Women's Network and TUS Parents and Carers Network.

University of Sanctuary

The Sanctuary Award is an initiative of University of Sanctuary Ireland to encourage and celebrate good practice of universities, colleges and other education institutes welcoming refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants into their university communities and fostering a culture of welcome and inclusion for all those seeking sanctuary. TUS was designated a University of Sanctuary in June 2022, becoming the first Technological University in Ireland to be given the award. For further details refer to Section 4.0 Case Study 2.

TUS will also further embed intercultural and anti-racism training for staff and deepen engagements with local community groups working to support refugees and asylum seekers.

<u>Promoting Consent and Ending Sexual Violence</u>

The TUS Promoting Consent & Ending Sexual Violence Sub-Committee reports to the EDI Steering Committee and oversees the implementation of the Framework for Consent in TUS through an institutional 4 year [Action Plan](#).

TUS launched its anonymous violence and harassment reporting tool – Speak Out – on November 1, 2021. This is available on the TUS website and on Staff & Student Portals: https://tus.speakout.ie/

A total of 61 Academic, Administrative and Professional Services staff completed training to support disclosures regarding sexual violence and sexual harassment. The EDI Office and Student Counselling have collaborated to establish a Community of Practice of First Responders to disclosures of sexual violence and harassment. TUS Webpages and Moodle sites with information regarding promoting consent and ending sexual violence have been developed.

<u>Collaborative Projects and Further Information</u>

Through the HEA Gender Equality Enhancement Fund, TUS is collaborating with other HEIs on EDI related projects including:

- Embedding EDI in the Curriculum of Technological Universities.

- Embedding Gender Identity, Expression and Diversity Training and Best Practice into Irish HEIs

- Engaging Men in building Gender Equality

Further details regarding these projects and the ongoing work of EDI in TUS can be found in our EDI Annual Report available [here](#).

2.11 Enterprise and Innovation at TUS

Driven by the 'quintuple helix' innovation model, which focuses on the interactions among five key elements of society: academia, industry, government, culture, and the environment, TUS aims to maximise the impact of our research and enterprise development for social and economic benefit tackling the key challenges connected to the global goals for sustainable development. TUS does this by facilitating and nurturing the advancement of the best ideas of our staff, learners and our engaged external community from discovery to commercial application by providing essential business development supports and environments for early-stage businesses to thrive. A key objective of TUS's enterprise and innovation activities is to turn ideas into innovation and innovation into new knowledge-based companies helping to drive economic and sustainable growth within our expanded regions and across Ireland.

Campus Business Incubation

Business incubation is central to TUS's engagement with industry, operating as a converging hub for innovation, research, and enterprise. TUS has one of the largest programmes of incubation centres in Ireland with 4 campus incubation centres across 2 economic regions as well as supporting 2 more enterprise centres off campus. The centres provide incubation facilities for innovative and knowledge-based enterprises and enterprise programmes for entrepreneurs and start-ups and make available the wider resources and expertise of TUS to support client companies.

In 2022 around 150 entrepreneurs and innovators were supported on programmes and initiatives in the TUS Enterprise and Incubation centres. Companies supported ranged from early and initial stage ventures, right through to Series-A companies with, in addition to Enterprise Ireland, national and international VC partners, such as New Venture Partners New Jersey, ACT VC Dublin, in Deep Tech areas such as AI, Machine learning as well as leading-edge nano tech such as high-density non-volatile memory fabrication and Seroba Life Sciences in innovative oncology treatment. TUS enterprise centres have supported hundreds of companies that have raised well over €100m in investment.

Enterprise Programmes

TUS supports entrepreneurs and innovators development via such programmes as the Enterprise Ireland national Entrepreneur Development Programme, New Frontiers which is run by TUS across two regions; the Student Inc HEI summer accelerator programme, a partnership across 6 universities, and as a partner in ESA Space Solutions Centre Ireland. TUS's Entrepreneurs in Residence and Advisors in Residence programmes of support offering tailored support to innovators and entrepreneurs as they develop their concepts, startups and grow their companies.

Collaborations

Businesses across the TUS network of centres are supported through partnerships and collaboration, helping to create viable routes for translating research and discoveries into products, processes, and services of benefit to society. TUS works closely with agencies, business angel networks and VCs to support the development of the ecosystem. TUS continues to build collaborative opportunities with other partners in Ireland and internationally and a growing network of expertise across professional and academic networks. The Innovation and Enterprise team are engaged in particular in the RUN-EU

Innovation Hubs programme, supporting the development of 3 new Innovation Hubs; the Bioeconomy Hub, the Future and Sustainable Industries Hub and the Social Innovation Hub.

Knowledge Transfer and Commercialisation Office

Knowledge transfer is an embedded and core activity of TUS, developed and supported under Knowledge Transfer Ireland's Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative - *supporting the identification, protection and commercialisation of TUS intellectual property*. TUS is committed to growing internal IP and producing spinouts, licences, and patents and growing the research, innovation, and entrepreneurial ecosystem. TUS is promoting a pro-innovation culture across our campuses, equipping researchers with the skills required to commercialise the outcomes of their research. The KTC Office also reviews and drafts documents in relation to industry Collaboration Agreements, Contracts,, Heads of Agreements, IP ownership arrangements, NDAs etc. All contracts are completed in line with best practice and coherent with TUS's IP Policy and the National IP Protocol.

In Knowledge Transfer Ireland's *Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey 2021*, published in September 2022, TUS ranked fourth among all HEIs in Ireland for total number of collaborations, innovation voucher and consultancy service agreements with Industry. In November 2022, TUS's Governing Body approved TUS's Intellectual Property Policy and Conflict of Interest Policy. A review of TUS's IP Policy by IP Pragmatics concluded that it is comprehensive, is compliant with the requirements of the National IP Protocol, 2019, and is in line with international good practice.

Highlights

Total Number of Enterprise Centres: 6

Owned/Operated:
- Hartnett Enterprise Acceleration Centre (HEAC), Moylish.
- Thurles Chamber Enterprise Centre (TCEC).
- Questum Innovation & Acceleration Centre, Clonmel.
- Midlands Innovation and Research Centre, Athlone. A 950m2 expansion of the MIRC was significantly progressed during 2022, for completion/handover July 2023.
- The Midwest Regional Design Centre (virtual collaborative), RDI / LSAD.

Supporting:
- Croom Community Enterprise Centre (CCEC).
- In addition to the enterprise centres, the team also works closely with The Learning Hub, working in partnership with parents, education providers, statutory agencies, and the wider Limerick community to provide a safe, welcoming and inspiring learning environment where young people can reach their true potential. In 2022 the Learning Hub had more than 35k visits reflecting its importance in the region.

In this Period:

- 71 companies were based in the 4 campus incubation centres (HEAC, MIRC, Questum and TCEC)
- More than 300 people based on and offsite were employed by the TUS incubation centre clients in the reporting period.
- 100+ new entrepreneurs and innovators were supported through our programmes, initiatives, startup clinics, and entrepreneur in residence supports. Programmes included:
- New Frontiers Phase 1 Bootcamps
- New Frontiers Phase 1 – Evening Programmes
- New Frontiers Phase 2 – Entrepreneur development programme (2 regional iterations during 2022)
- New Frontiers Phase 3 – Scale up phase
- Crafting Business (2 programmes run during the period)
- Empower (2 programmes run during the period)
- Student Inc Summer Accelerator Programme

Events and Awards

The Innovation and Enterprise team are a highly engaged team with our key stakeholders in the startup and business ecosystem. Each year the team organizes, partners, facilitates, and collaborates on numerous events to support the continued development of a strong and vibrant startup and business ecosystem as well as supporting social and charitable causes together with the business community in line with our own values at TUS.

The team organised and/or played a leading role in the following major events:

- Fr Peter McVerry Trust Business Breakfast. The largest business event held in the Castletroy Park Hotel Limerick in its history with almost 470 attendees. The event was a fundraiser for the McVerry Trust and emceed by the Head of Innovation & Enterprise, Gillian Barry.
- Startup Grind Limerick https://www.startupgrind.com/Limerick
- Lunch & Learn Innovation & Development Workshop Series, in partnership with Limerick Skillnet https://www.hartnettcentre.ie/events
- ESA SSC Ireland National Networking Event.
- TUS designed, developed and facilitated the awards for the following:
  - The Limerick Chamber Regional Business Awards 2022 – Main Sponsor of the awards. The awards night welcomes around 500 people from the region each year offering a great opportunity for TUS to support and engage with these key stakeholders.
  - The Tipperary County Chamber Business Awards 2022 - Education & Innovation Sponsor. Around 250 attended the awards night offering TUS an opportunity to support and engage with key stakeholders in the Clonmel area of Tipperary and broader region.
  - The Athlone Chamber Business Awards 2022 – TUS supported the judging of the awards and were also a sponsor for the awards which ended in a gala event hosting more than 400 people from the business community on the night.

2.12 Integration of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

During the academic year 2021/2022 placed a particular focus was placed on deepening the understanding and sharing of expertise and knowledge across the organisation in relation to the SDGs and sustainable development in general. Critical steps in relation to strategic planning, funding for integration of SDGs and R&D have been progressed.

TUS Strategic Plan
The development of a new TUS Strategic Plan commenced in 2022 and the theme of sustainability has been integrated throughout the draft plan. Discussions across the Vice Presidents and Deans Councils have considered how to embed and integrate the SDGs within the strategic plan in a meaningful and impactful way.

In August 2022 an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Working Group was established which will report directly to the VP/Deans Council within TUS. This committee is comprised of representatives across all aspects of the organisations and will map existing activities against the new National Strategy for ESD 2030 priorities while also coordinating future activities and actions.

Work has commenced to benchmark progress across TUS using the EUAC Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (SLS) (https://www.sustainabilityleadershipscorecard.org.uk/) which allows for organisational benchmarking against SDGs.

TUS engages in a broad range of engagement and advocacy relevant to SDG goals.

Engagement and Advocacy	SDG Goal
TUS represented on the Shannon Estuary Economic Taskforce seeking to ensure that sustainability, education and R&D is at the forefront of the recommendations emerging from the Taskforce.	SDG 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
Multiple engagements with Regional Skills Forums, Local Authorities, Public Authorities, SMEs and industry on the topic of sustainable development. In particular, TUS appointed a staff member to work with Offaly Development Company, Laois Offaly ETB and others to explore large scale development projects relevant to sustainable development	SDG 8, 10, 11
RUN-EU Network has integrated sustainability across all of its actions (Research, Education, Short Accredited Programmes (SAPs) and student/staff exchanges).	SDG 4
The Development Studies Association of Ireland (DSAI) held their annual summer school in TUS Thurles in May 2022 on the theme of Researching Sustainable Development- Tools for Developing a Critical Perspective.	SDG 17

Programme Review and Development

A wide range of new programmes have been developed and launched during the academic year including the following:

Programme	SDG Goal
Masters in Sustainable Energy System Management	SDG 7, 9, 11
BSc (Hons) in Agricultural Science and Sustainability	SDG 13, 14
Higher Diploma in Residential Energy Renovation Management	SDG 7, 13
Masters in Change Leadership	SDG 8, 11
Certificate in Community Energy Development	SDG 7, 11, 13
Certificate in Energy Renovation of Traditional Buildings	SDG 7, 11
Certificate in Green procurement	SDG 12

- New programmes are currently under development in Sustainable Business Management (SDG 8, 9); Sustainable Development (all SDGs); Sports and Nutrition (SDG 3) and other fields

- Departments across TUS have undergone Programmatic Review and as part of this process taken the opportunity to integrate sustainability topics and themes across their programmes. As this process has concluded and outcomes from the programmatic review process are implemented the SDGs are being integrated across disciplines and programmes. Examples of initiatives taken include:
    - ✓ Challenge Based Learning approaches within Dept of IT (Moylish) where students consider climate action and energy efficiency problems
    - ✓ Department of Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure (Athlone) integrating SDGs into all programmes and address waste management with culinary programmes.
    - ✓ Dept of Science in Moylish involved in Green labs initiative Establishment of an ESD Community of Practice across TUS where academic can share best practice and knowledge of integrating SDGs within curricula.

TUS Teaching and Learning Strategy and Sustainable Development

TUS Teaching and Learning Strategy creates multiple opportunities to support staff and students to integrate various aspects of SDGs into their programmes. Supporting our students to become global citizens and develop transversal, and discipline specific, skills is a core ambition of TUS and the T&L Strategy enables this through the commitment to active learning, use of digital technologies and development of micro-credentials. ESD is also a key focus on SATLE2022 funding.

TUS is a partner in the NTUTORR project (National Technological University Transformation for Recovery and Resilience) funded through the Recovery and Resilience programme/TU Education &

Training Reforms Programme. NTUTORR embeds the SDGs across is activities and the TUS team were actively involved in the proposal development and contract negotiations which were concluded in summer 2022. This multi-million initiative involving all TUs, IADT and DKIT and supported by THEA will enable the partner Institutions to respond to increasing levels of change and uncertainty in the context of the global pandemic and climate change. Higher education plays a key role to increase Ireland's capacity to adapt, build resilience and meet these and future challenges in our just transition to a sustainable future. The proposed programme of work is organised around three connecting streams, each of which has been influenced and informed by the central objective of providing a sustainable pedagogical and learning environment that robustly addresses the SDGs and EDI.

Sample outputs from the project will include:
- HyFlex Access HE initiative will respond to regional SDG needs
- Sustainability Literacy package developed for students along with Sustainability and Global Citizenship badges
- Sustainable Futures Champions network created
- Curriculum framework development tools
- Digital tools to improve student experience and access, while also reducing waste
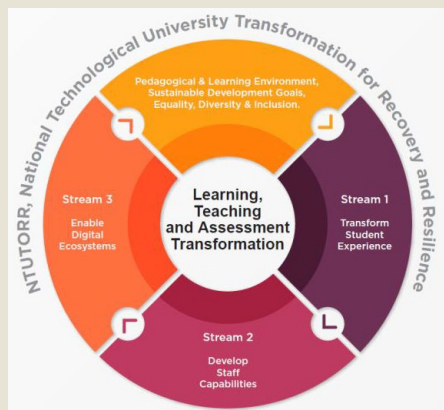
NTUTORR Framework

Estates and Buildings

The following Campus Development initiatives link the specified SDG goals.

Campus Development Project	SDG Goal
The proposed development of a large-scale sports infrastructure project in TUS Thurles plans to achieve BREAMM excellence for the buildings on site (tennis facility, sports lab extension) and engagement with Green Campus Committee to consider site biodiversity	SDG 7, 13, 15
Discussions commenced on establishment of Athlone Campus Green Campus Committee. A working group has been established and it is planned to meet with An Taisce in January 2023 to progress to next stage.	SDG 7, 11, 12, 13
On-going activities across all TUS campuses to improve energy efficiency, waste management and sustainable transport infrastructure and systems.	SDG 7, 11, 12, 13,)

Research and Development

New opportunities for the establishment of a research centre focused on peatland-based aquaculture (SDG 14, 15) are being explored. This would provide an opportunity for multi-disciplinary research across the University to be developed.

The Sustainable Development Research Institute (SDRI) continues to grow and through partnership regionally, nationally and internationally expand its network of collaborators. Key highlights during the period September 21 to August 22 included the following outputs:

Event/Initiative	SDG Goal
Organisation of Energy in Agriculture event (https://energyinagriculture.ie/) in conjunction with Tipperary County Council, Gurteen Agricultural College, Teagasc and Tipperary Energy Agency.	SDG 7, 13, 15
Securing major Erasmus Innovation Action investigating new education and training approaches to sustainable agriculture	SDG 4, 15
Securing ManagEnergy III contract to provide education and training supports to local and regional energy agencies across Europe	SDG 7, 13

2.13 Transitions and Student Success

In June 2021, the Head of Transitions and Student Success was appointed by Athlone IT before the establishment of the Technological University. The appointment of the Head and the establishment of the function were designed to assist academic managers to maximise opportunities related to three broad areas.

1. The First Year Experience for learners with a particular emphasis on Student Completion, Retention, Progression and Student Success.

   The function would seek to implement a TU-wide student Success Model aligned to the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*. Primarily, the focus of the model would be on decreasing the number of formal early withdrawals besides reducing the non-progression rate in stage one of the TU's programme. Increasing completion rates would be a complementary medium-term goal.

   Underpinning the desire to register improvements in key statistical metrics is the establishment of a student performance data hub to provide a platform for all managers with key information to drive student success. A project approach to identifying key statistical sets to be devised would require considerable collaboration between the function and the MIS Unit.

2. Access, Transition, and Progression within and to TUS programmes.

   The function was established to proactively grow the access routes to the TU's portfolio of programmes through the maximisation of feeder channels nationally through Further Education Pathways and through collaboration routes with other national education and training providers either in the public or private sectors.

   Establishing the function was to provide TUS with a central point of contact between the TU and FE providers. Increasing both student numbers and shared provision opportunities was identified as an area within TUS needing an additional level of focus.

   In addition to providing guidance to both internal and external stakeholders regarding academic issues such as curriculum programme mapping from feeder channels, the function would also establish the means to analyse the success of discreet student cohorts entering from such feeder channels to include completion, retention, progression, withdrawals, and academic performance of such student cohorts

3. Collaboration development with a range of partners from European Networks.

   Working in collaboration with the Director of International relations, the function assists in the identification of new opportunities for access, transfer and progression routes with European institutions for inbound students. Providing support in this role includes activities such as acting as the TU representative at international conferences, hosting visits from EU partners, conducting site visits and conducting preliminary academic mapping for potential advanced entry to TUS programmes across all disciplines.

   Activity in an International environment would also provide significant complementarity with the other aims of the function. First, through providing opportunities to evaluate best practice in student success initiatives within various international networks. Such activity feeds into any proposed Student Success approaches for International and domestic students. Second, existing partnerships can be utilised to pursue funding opportunities in the student success area.

Key Activities Undertaken

The publication of the interim TUS organisation in December 2021 placed the Transitions and Student Success Function within the Student Education and Experience Domain. Planning towards a Transitions

and Student Success Strategic Plan began in order to make submission through the TUS academic committee structure in the 2022/2023 academic year.

At the national level, the *National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* launched the Student Success Toolkit during the academic year 2021/2022. The Head of Transitions and Student Success was appointed as the institutional lead. Forming a key component of the Transitions and Success Plan, the toolkit, designed to increase retention and completion rates, will be rolled out across the university once the new organisational structure is embedded in TUS.

A review of retention models and theories has been conducted by the function to build on lessons learnt from other HEI's. Optimising the effort of academic with professional, support and technical staff towards increasing student success is central to the approach undertaken by TUS and will be reflected in the Transitions and Student Success plan. Ongoing consultation and collaboration will shape the institutional response in the coming academic year.

A key component of any student success strategy is an evidence-based approach. This has been identified by the HEA. The priority of focus for the function has been to establish key statistical sets that will guide both professional and academic managers' decision-making regarding improving student performance.

The Transitions and Student Success function collaborated with the TUS Midland's MIS unit to establish a Student Performance section on the report manager platform. This student performance section extracts statistical data sets from banner which are updated with changes to the banner system. Transferability to the banner system for the Midwest needs to be considered.

Seven key statistical sets have been identified to include in the student performance section. The MIS unit successfully migrated the statistical sets for two of those statistical sets during the academic year 2021/2022. Those sets pertain to the first-year withdrawals before March 31st, besides the participation and success rates of the student cohort in the Autumn Repeat exams. These statistical sets have informed the university's plan for transitions and student success.

An initial evaluation of FE provision currently provided by ETBs in the Midlands geographical location was conducted during 2021/2022. A summary of programmes compiled in order to ascertain the potential level of transferability from the FE sector into TUS Midlands. A further exercise gathered the extent of relationships between the FE sector and academic departments in the midlands.

2.14   Third Mission Activities, Societal and Community Engagement

TUS is proud of its society and community engagement activities and these have evolved across a broad sphere of Technological University activities.

A snapshot of these activities is represented in samples of related news items for the reporting period from the TUS website. They illustrate the breath and depth of TUS Societal and Community Engagement.

TUS Societal and Community Engagement - Illustrative Examples

Further examples available at: News & Events - TUS

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	Planned actions and indicators
1	Progress the development of the TUS Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026	1. Develop and Publish the TUS Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026 2. Develop an Implementation Plan for the TUS Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026.
2	Further the goal of the development of a complete and integrated Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook for TUS	1. Identify and prioritise the areas for development of TUS policies, procedures and related documentation to further the goal of a fully integrated TUS QAE Handbook. 2. Consult widely and facilitate broad stakeholder engagement and consultation in the development of the associated Quality Assurance documentation. 3. Develop and present to Academic Council the resulting policies and procedures.
3	Establish a new Centre for Pedagogical Innovative Development (CPID) in TUS as a centre of excellence for learning, teaching and assessment within TUS promoting staff involvement in initiatives focused on the enhancement of teaching and learning and on academic practice.	1. The enactment of the TUS Educational Philosophy: *TUS is a dynamic learning community that co-creates an inclusive learning experience through leadership in: teaching, active learning, research, scholarship, in addition to industry and civic collaboration* 2. The implementation of the TUS Learning and Teaching Strategy: Putting Learning First , including its key three components: Seven Pillars of the Strategy that support Learning, Teaching & Assessment; Curriculum Design Framework, and Graduate Attributes Framework. 3. Supporting Professional Development of TUS Staff through the design, delivery and implementation of both accredited and non-accredited programmes offered through the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development (CPID) and enabling staff build credits towards Postgraduate Diploma/Masters 4. Engagement in educational projects: sectoral, national and international 5. Support staff to further advance their research in the scholarship of learning teaching and assessment by building capacities and capabilities through enhancement projects including: Regional Teaching Awards; SATLE Projects, and NTUTORR Activities 6. Guiding the ongoing development of the Learning Infrastructure of TUS including the digital ecosystem and the physical environment.
4	Further develop the Technological University goals in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion including Implementing the TUS Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP).	1. Formation of Self Assessment Team in preparation for Athena Swan Bronze Award. We aim to apply for a full Athena Swan Bronze Award by June 2024, and will be preparing for this in 22/23. The full Athena Swan Award will build on our Legacy Bronze Award 2. TUS EDI Vision and Strategy finalised. This will articulate ambitions to supporting opportunities for all students and staff to thrive in higher education and in the wider community through the promotion of positive identities and abilities, the celebration of diversity and difference, and the provision of an inclusive, participative culture and environment. The Strategy will outline goals and actions to achieve these ambitions and will align with the TUS Strategic Plan. 3. EDI Policies finalised and shared with staff and students. This will include our TUS Gender Identity and Expression Policy and TUS Policy and Procedure to Address Sexual Misconduct.
5	Further Develop Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) across the Technological University	1. Complete TUS Mapping exercise using SLS. 2. Develop TUS Sustainability Plan, aligned to TUS Strategy.

		3. Formally establish Green Campus Committee on Athlone campus and commence establishment of Moylish Green Campus Committee. 4. Recruit two new Post Grads in the field of sustainability. 5. Establish peatland aquaculture research centre. 6. Scale up activity on ESD Community of Practice (CoP). 7. Mobilise NTUTORR project and deliver on Year 1 targets.

6	Implement the NTUTORR project in TUS which is designed to transform learning, teaching and assessment by focusing:
	
	a) On transforming the student experience through learner empowerment
	b) Transform Learning, Teaching and Assessment by developing the capabilities of staff
	c) Enable a digital ecosystem that focuses on a sustainable pedagogical and learning environment with particular emphasis on Sustainable Development Goals and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
		Implement a series of projects and initiatives that focus on the following key areas:
		1. Transforming the Student Experience through:
		   (a) Sustainable pathways to higher education achieved by:
		     • HyFlex Access HE Foundation Programme,
		     • Micro-credentials (including regional needs),
		     • HyFlex Student Support
		   (b) Empowering students to become change agents achieved by:
		     • Partners in Innovation & Change Fellowships
		     • Digital Literacy &
		     • A Citizenship Student Competency Framework
		   (c) Academy for education for sustainability, leadership and employability achieved by:
		     • TU Student Digital Backpack,
		     • Student Digital & Sustainable Futures Champions Network.
		2. Developing staff capabilities using a sustainable higher education framework:
		   (a) Sectoral Sustainable HE Framework Community of Practice
		   (b) Develop a curriculum framework for digital transformation, resilience and sustainability in higher education
		   (c) Develop capabilities of all staff to support digital transformation, resilience and sustainability in higher education through: staff needs analysis, staff CPD plans, staff development portal, & recognition of CPD.
		3. Enabling a Digital Ecosystems to transform Learning, Teaching and Assessment including:
		   (a) Sustainable Learning & Pedagogical Environment: Digitally Enabled examination and assessment embedding academic integrity and research ethics
		   (b) Digital Campus
		   (c) Improve flexibility and accessibility of learning resource.

7	As a TUS is a partner in the National Tertiary Education Initiative, deepen collaboration with the Further Education Sector to enhance progression opportunities for students.	1. Conduct collaborative scoping exercise to identify innovative tertiary education opportunities for student. 2. Identify and progress integrated Further Education to Higher Education programme offerings for students.
8	Complete the preparatory phase of Cyclical Review for TUS.	1. Complete Institutional Profiling and Critical self Study. 2. Prepare an Institutional Profile and Institutional Self evaluation Report in line with the specified objectives of Cyclical Review.

3.2   Reviews planned for Upcoming Reporting Periods

3.2.1 Reviews planned for Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Department of Business & Management	2022/2023	2014/2015
Department of Accounting & Business Computing	2022/2023	2014/2015
Department of Nursing & Healthcare	2022/2023	2014/2015
Department of Sport & Health Science	2022/2023	2014/2015
Department of Bioveterinary & Microbial Sciences	2022/2023	2014/2015
Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences & Biotechnology	2022/2023	2014/2015
Department of Mechanical, Polymer & Design	2022/2023	2014/2015
Department of Civil Engineering & Trades	2022/2023	2014/2015
Department of Computer & Software Engineering	2022/2023	2014/2015
Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development (CPID)	2022/2023	2014/2015
Service Unit Review: Student Supports	2022/2023	N/A
Service Unit Review: Library & Information Services	2022/2023	N/A

3.2.2 Reviews planned beyond Next Reporting Period

Unit to be reviewed	Date of planned review	Date of last review
Department of Lifelong Learning	2023/2024	2014/2015
Department of Social Sciences	2023/2024	2014/2015

4.0   Additional Themes and Case Studies

1.   Access to Apprenticeship Pilot Programme 2022

2.   TUS University of Sanctuary Scholarship Programme

3.   Integrating Universal Design for Learning in TUS

4.   Researcher Career Development Meets Future and Advanced Skills Requirements of Graduates

Case Study 1

Access to Apprenticeship Pilot Programme 2022

Based on a very successful programme delivered in TUD since 2017, TUS received funding from HEA to pilot Access to Apprenticeship Programme in 2022. This programme is aimed at communities of socio-economic disadvantage, demonstrating high levels of early school leaving and unemployment and low levels of progression. Located on the Moylish Campus, under the Department of the Built Environment, this is a 12-week full time access programme, running 3 times a year (September, January & April). It prepares young people aged 16 to 24 years for an apprenticeship in the trades. The programme is validated by TUS as a QQI Level 6 Continuous Professional Development Certificate.
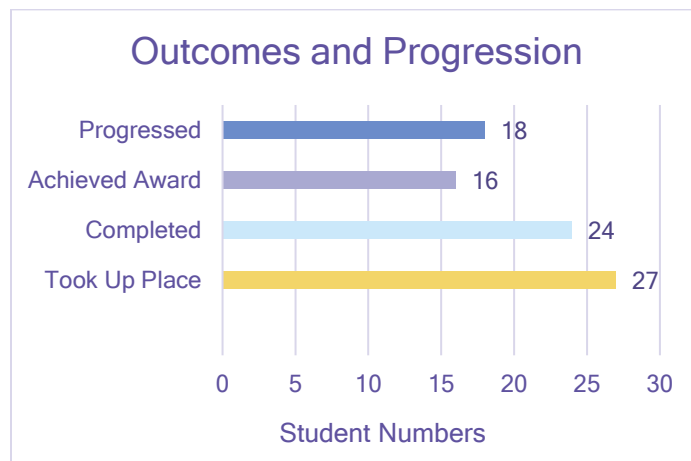
About the Programme

In addition to induction, safe pass and manual handling which take place in week one, three core modules are delivered between week two and week twelve, as follows:

1. Skills Sampling (15 Credits);

2. Personal and professional Development (10 Credits);

3. Work placement (5 credits).

1. <u>Skills Sampling</u>: Sixty percent of the programme is dedicated to exposing students to hands on workshops in Electrical, Carpentry & Joinery, MAMF, Welding, Plumbing, HGV and LVM. By exposing students to practical workshops, they are better placed to make informed decisions about their chosen career.

2. <u>Personal and professional Development:</u> This module focuses on developing the skills, confidence, connections and knowledge of students so that they can positively engage with employers and secure their apprenticeship. It includes interview techniques and practice, support with CVs, communication skills, goal setting and pathway planning, as well as practical job-hunting. Site visits to complement skills sampling and one to one meetings with potential employers are also organised as part of this module.

3. <u>Work Placement:</u> The last two weeks of the programme is dedicated to work placement. As a result of exposure to the trades, employer engagement and improved skills and confidence students are placed with companies who have the potential to provide them with apprenticeship in their area of interest. Many have gone on to secured extended paid trial / internship or apprenticeship with the company who accommodated their work placement.

Summary Profile of the Pilot

A total of 27 Students registered on the pilot programme in the 2021/2022 Academic Year. The outcomes and progression into employment or apprenticeship of the 24 graduates who completed the programme is presented in Figure 1.

Outcomes and Progression

Category	Student Numbers
Progressed	18
Achieved Award	16
Completed	24
Took Up Place	27

Student Numbers

Figure 1. Outcomes and Progression Profile.

In conclusion, while this programme is still in its infancy, early indications demonstrate very positive outcomes for under-represented students, with many progressing to meaningful internships/apprenticeships, thus the potential for breaking historical cycles of familial early school leaving, unemployment, poverty, and socio-economic disadvantage. The programme adds to the suite of opportunities available within the Technological University and beyond, broadening access for all, irrespective of their background. The programme team includes Programme Leader Ms. Susan Meagher and Programme Officer Mr. Pat Galvin.

Case Study 2

TUS University of Sanctuary Scholarship Programme

Definition

The Sanctuary Award is an initiative of University of Sanctuary Ireland, to encourage and celebrate good practice of universities, colleges and other education institutes in welcoming refugee and asylum seekers.

Background

A sanctuary scholarship programme had been in existence respectively in both AIT and LIT since 2015. The proximity to Lissywollen (Athlone) and Knocklisheen (Limerick) direct provision centres, and the desire to engage with residents of these centres, had fostered initial engagement between AIT and LIT with its refugee communities. As the worldwide refugee crisis expanded and the number of refugees increased, the newly appointed Technological University of Shannon, appointed on 1st October 2021, recognised it had an important role to play in responding to the challenges the crisis presented. In January 2022, TUS, and the Office of the Vice President for Student Education and Experience, embarked on the formalisation of an action plan to support a multi-funded sanctuary scholarship programmes as evidenced in its application for University of Sanctuary (UoS) designation and accreditation. TUS established a University of Sanctuary Steering committee in early 2022, engaging staff from all six campuses of TUS. This committee worked on framing an action plan that addressed how TUS would support sanctuary scholars through a set of activities based on the principles of Learn, Embed and Share. Twenty-two activities were defined in the action plan with designated timelines and assigned functional responsibilities for their achievement.

The University of Sanctuary Ireland warmly welcomed the application from TUS to seek designation as a University of Sanctuary and noted that they were encouraged that at such an early stage of the merger of AIT and LIT that the new TU, TUS was seeking to consolidate and elevate the work of inclusion through sanctuary. The application to be designated a University of Sanctuary, which included this outlined Action Plan, was adjudged successful by University of Sanctuary Ireland in June 2022, with TUS becoming the first Technological University in Ireland to be given the University of Sanctuary accreditation.

Since the successful designation, a TUS University of Sanctuary committee meets to ensure that this action plan is realised. To support the application to be designated as a University of Sanctuary, the TUS President and Vice President Council approved the funding of 10 undergraduate and 10 Access Sanctuary scholarships.

Sanctuary support for the enrolment to the Access programme is an integral and key pathway to further study for students from refugee backgrounds. These students are significantly underrepresented at third level and represent less than 1% of the student population in Ireland. The entry route to undergraduate programmes for TUS Sanctuary Scholars, following completion of the Access programme, has been very successful and is a steppingstone whereby students who experience higher education in an engaging and supportive way can subsequently commit to an undergraduate course.

Evidence
In the academic year 2022/2023, TUS is supporting 29 students through its Sanctuary Scholarship programme and will award over 60 scholarships over 3 years through this programme. Achievement of the 22 action items set out in the TUS University of Sanctuary Action Plan are also managed, monitored, and reported on through relevant TUS reporting channels by the Office of the Vice President for Student Education and Experience.

Future Plans
One of the key tenets of the new TUS Strategic Plan is to be a catalyst for sustainable change through education and research that transforms lives, our region and the world beyond. TUS intends to build on its Sanctuary Scholarship programme expanding it to include postgraduate programmes with the assistance of private philanthropic funding from industry and their engagement in TUS's University of Sanctuary Programme through mentoring and financial support activities. This will allow an increase in the number of sanctuary students supported.

TUS will establish its first Sanctuary Student Society and will roll out a mentorship programme for Sanctuary students which will connect Sanctuary students to relevant mentors tailored to meet their needs as they evolve over time from their initial needs at induction through to their needs post-graduation. As part of the TUS wider strategy on equality, diversity and inclusion TUS will promote intercultural awareness among staff, students and the wider community encouraging engagement with people from diverse cultural backgrounds beyond the university campus.

Case Study 3

Integrating Universal Design for Learning in TUS

A collaborative project was initiated between the Access Office, Quality Office, and Teaching and Learning Centre aimed at promoting Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and enhancing its integration in TUS. The work commenced in September 2021 and was completed in November 2022. The principle aim of the project was to further mainstream the integration of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) across learning, teaching and assessment as well as in the wider service provision. To achieve this, three specific objectives were identified:

1. raising staff awareness of UDL through the provision of information sessions and training on UDL to support staff in their academic practice.
2. embedding UDL principles and best practice in assessment and examinations processes in TUS.
3. increasing accessibility and embedding equity and universal design principles into TUS documentation and communications.

The Project was conducted in four Stages as follows:

1. Resources and Analysis

A UDL project officer was appointed to work with staff in Access, Quality and Teaching and Learning. At this initial stage a review of the literature on UDL was undertaken as well as a review of UDL learning resources available across the sector. This research helped to inform the direction of the project and the types of resources and supports that would be most beneficial to staff within TUS.

2. Development of Guidelines/Policy

This stage looked at the development of relevant guidelines and policies that could be used by staff when creating TUS documentation. The TUS Guide to Effective Practice that Supports Equity in Technological University Communications was developed and approved by Academic Council. This document provides a set of guidelines to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted across the TUS in the development of formal University Documentation that is cognisant of the diversity of all readers. A TUS Policy on Accessible Examination Papers 2022-2023 was also developed and approved by Academic Council. The policy aims to incorporate the principles of Universal Design in devising written Examination Papers which make these accessible to all students. The policy outlines requirements for formatting examination papers, framing questions and printing examination papers.

3. Staff Awareness and Training

Planned staff support sessions focused on the integration of UDL into the classroom were delivered by the UDL Project Officer as part of the TUS Academic Staff Development days. One to one support sessions were also provided to staff who are interested UDL and sought advice on how best to integrate this into their academic practice.

4. UDL Resources

A dedicated Staff Resource page for UDL was created in Moodle. The key aim of this page is to have one central space for staff to access relevant material on UDL. A series of resources were developed and made available to all staff from this Moodle page.

The Project has facilitated organisational change by raining awareness, developing capacity ad enhancing staff skills on the integration of UDL as part of practice across the TU.

Case Study 4
Researcher Career Development Meets Future and Advanced Skills Requirements of Graduates

Researcher career development has been prioritised by RUN-EU Plus to meet future and advanced skills requirements of RUN-EU research graduates. The current research environment is constantly evolving with employers placing equal emphasis on the transversal skills and discipline specific skills of their employees. The research process is undergoing digital transformation and is becoming less linear and more collaborative and open, requiring more multidisciplinary with a larger diversity of outputs (EU report Towards a Reform of the Research Assessment, 2021).

There is a large emphasis on knowledge management skills with researchers needing to effectively predict, to understand, critically assess, interpret, and communicate their research findings. Immersion in a business or societal organization may bring unique challenges to practice-based master's or doctoral researchers including previously unencountered organisational cultures and company policies and practices. Many early career researchers lack understanding and knowledge of the research career paths available to them as well as the skills to cope with the uncertainty, uniqueness, and potential conflicts in different environments.

RUN-EU, through the RUN-EU PLUS project, focuses on practice-based research, participatory citizen science, the empowerment of people and development of novel innovations for regional development.

Sample RUN-EU Researcher Career development Programme

The Researcher Career Development Programme developed by the RUN-EU PLUS project is designed to develop in researchers at all career stages the skills and competencies which will allow them to have successful careers in their chosen field. The programme will develop skills in them to build bridges between different actors in collaboration, abilities to undertake transnational cross-networking between researchers and stakeholders, abilities to construct knowledge and research practices in different environments, skills to integrate the knowledge from different sources and communicate it to different kind of collaborators and skills to identify and understand context in business and innovation practices.

The programme also aims to support RUN-EU researchers in how to face uncertainty in certain professional environments, and to pay attention on the wellbeing of themselves others and an increase in awareness of good practice in promoting equality in the research community.