September 2024

Institutional Review Report 2024

Munster Technological University

CINNTE

Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Contents

Foreword

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training in Ireland. One of QQI's most important functions is to ensure that the quality assurance (QA) procedures that institutions have in place are effective. To this end, QQI carries out external reviews of higher education institutions on a cyclical basis. This current QQI cycle of reviews is called the CINNTE cycle. CINNTE reviews are an element of the broader quality framework for institutions composed of Quality Assurance Guidelines; each institution's Quality Assurance Procedures; Annual Quality Reports (AQR); and Dialogue Meetings. The CINNTE review cycle runs from 2017-2024. During this period, QQI will organise and oversee independent reviews of each of the universities, technological universities, institutes of technology, and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI).

Each CINNTE review evaluates the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of each institution. These reviews measure each institution's compliance with European standards for quality assurance, regard to the expectations set out in the QQI quality assurance guidelines or their equivalent and adherence to other relevant QQI policies and procedures. CINNTE reviews also explore how institutions have enhanced their teaching, learning and research and their quality assurance systems and how well institutions have aligned their approach to their own mission, quality indicators and benchmarks.

The CINNTE review process is in keeping with Parts 2 and 3 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) and based on the internationally accepted and recognised approach to reviews, including:

- the publication of Terms of Reference;
- a process of self-evaluation and Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER);
- an external assessment and site visit by a team of reviewers;
- the publication of a Review Report including findings and recommendations; and
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken.

This QQI CINNTE review of Munster Technological University (MTU) was conducted by an independent review team in line with the Terms of Reference in Appendix A. This is the report of the findings of the review team. It also includes the response of MTU to the report.

The Review Team

Each CINNTE review is carried out by an international team of independent experts and peers. The 2024 institutional review of Munster Technological University (MTU) was conducted by a team of six reviewers selected by QQI. The review team was trained by QQI on 23 January 2024. The Chair and Coordinating Reviewer undertook a planning meeting with Munster Technological University on 6 February 2024. The main review visit (MRV) was conducted by the full team between 10 March and 15 March 2024.

CHAIR

Professor Cara Aitchison is an experienced university president and vice-chancellor, non-executive director, and board member. She retired as President and Vice-Chancellor of Cardiff Metropolitan University in Wales in January 2024, having held the post since 2016 and having completed a major programme of transformation recognised when the university was named *The Times and* *The Sunday Times 'Welsh University of the Year 2021', Times Higher Education 'UK and Ireland University of the Year 2021' and People and Planet's* 'Most Sustainable UK University 2022/23'.

She was previously Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Plymouth Marjon University, England (2013-2016), Head of Moray House School of Education and Chair in Social and Environmental Justice at Edinburgh University, Scotland (2010-13), Dean of the Faculty of Education and Sport at the University of Bedfordshire, England (2008-10), Professor of Human Geography and Director of the Centre for Leisure, Tourism and Society at UWE Bristol, England (2003-08), and spent the first 10 years of her higher education career in London.

Professor Aitchison's current roles include Scottish Government Public Appointments to the Board of Visit Scotland, Scotland's national tourism body (2023-), and the Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (2023-), and she is also a member of the Governing Body of Arts University Plymouth (2024-). Previous board and committee roles include: Member of the

Council of the All-Party Parliamentary (Universities) Group (2022-2024); Member and Trustee of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (2021-2022); Member of the Europe Regional Committee of the Commonwealth Universities' Association (2020-2024); Member of Cardiff Capital Region Economic Growth Board (2019-2024); Chair of UUK's Staff-to-Student Sexual Misconduct Advisory Group (2018- 2022); Member of the Council of CBI Cymru/Wales (2016-2023); Member of the Council of the Academy of Social Sciences (2015-2021); Member of the Board of Trustees of the Equality Challenge Unit (2015-2018); Member of Plymouth Culture (2014-2016); Member of Plymouth Area Business Council (2014-2016); Member of the Scottish Government Commission on Rural Education (2011-2013); Chair of the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) Sub-Panel for Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism (2010-2014); Chair of the UN-affiliated World Leisure Commission on Women and Gender (2002-2008); and Chair of the Leisure Studies Association (2001-2004).

Cara was born and educated in Scotland and has now returned to live in Stirling in Scotland. She completed an MA (Hons) in Geography at Edinburgh University, a Postgraduate Diploma in Recreation and Leisure Practice, an MA in Gender and Society, a teaching qualification, and holds a PhD in Social Science from Bristol University. She is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, Royal Geographical Society, Learned Society of Wales, and the Higher Education Academy.

COORDINATING REVIEWER

Professor Brian Bowe is the Head of Academic Affairs at Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin). Brian graduated with a PhD in Physics from Trinity College Dublin in 1999 and a Masters in Higher Education in 2005. In his academic career to date, he has been a lecturer, assistant head of school, and head of learning development. He has facilitated over 300 education development workshops worldwide and consulted for numerous higher education institutes on topics such as problem-based learning, assessment, curriculum development, quality assurance, group learning and peer instruction. His research interests include examining students' approaches to learning within group-based project-driven pedagogies, gender studies in STEM education, cognitive development, conceptual understanding, sustainability, and pedagogical evaluations, employing a wide range of methodologies including phenomenology and phenomenography. In 2000, he formed the Physics Education Research Group and in 2008 he established an Engineering Education Research Group which later evolved into the CREATE (Contributions to Research in Engineering and Applied Technology Education) Research Group.

As Head of Academic Affairs, Brian leads a team responsible for quality assurance and enhancement; learning, teaching and assessment support, development, and innovation; academic information systems; and academic governance and the development of academic policies. Digital education, academic integrity and education innovation projects are also key focus areas for Brian's work in Academic Affairs.

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Professor Jakob Stoustrup has an MSc (EE, 1987) and a PhD (Applied Mathematics, 1991) from the Technical University of Denmark. From 1991 to 1996, he held several positions at the Department of Mathematics at the Technical University of Denmark. From 2006 to 2013 he acted as Head of Research for the Department of Electronic Systems at Aalborg University.

From 2014 to 2016 he was Chief Scientist at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, USA, leading the Control of Complex Systems Initiative. From 2017 to 2023 Stoustrup acted as Associate Dean for Education and as Associate Dean for Research in the Technical Faculty of IT and Design, Aalborg University. From 1997 to 2013, and since 2016, he has acted as Professor of Automation and Control at Aalborg University, Denmark.

Professor Stoustrup has acted as senior editor, associate editor and editorial board member of several international journals. He has served as General Chair, Program Chair, and IPC member for several international conferences and as a member of the IEEE CSS Board of Governors. He has also acted as Chair of IEEE CSS Technical Committee on Smart Grids, and as Chair of the IFAC Technical Committee SAFEPROCESS, as well as being a member of the IFAC Technical Board. He has received several prestigious awards. He received the Chivalric Order of the Dannebrog for his research contributions. Professor Stoustrup has been appointed as a member of the European Research Council as well as of the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish Research Councils. He is a member of The Danish Academy of Technical Sciences, where he has acted as a Board Member.

In his role as an associate dean, Professor Stoustrup has had the responsibility for the quality assurance process at his faculty, which at Aalborg University is a formal QA process based on full documentation of all processes. As part of the institutional accreditation process, Stoustrup was responsible for preparing the self-evaluation report for his faculty, and for preparations in connection with the main review meeting for the accreditation panel. In addition, Professor Stoustrup has participated in formal and informal accreditation panels in several countries.

LEARNER REPRESENTATIVE

Eoin Crossen is in his second term as Vice-President for Academic Life in Dublin City University (DCU) Students' Union, having completed a Bachelor's Degree in Education in Primary School Teaching at the DCU St Patrick's Campus, with a specialism in socially inclusive

music education. Eoin has been an active member of the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) in Ireland, as well as contributing to several QQI events on subjects such as academic integrity, artificial intelligence, and quality assurance. As a student, Eoin was an active class representative, as well as serving as both first-year officer and class representative council chairperson on the DCU Students' Union executive.

QUALITY ASSURANCE REPRESENTATIVE

Yvonne Overdevest is Senior Policy Advisor at NVAO, the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders. In this capacity she coordinates initial accreditation audits, and accreditation activities at both programme and institutional levels. She also manages internal and external professionalisation. Her interests are student involvement, teacher training, and the internationalisation of HE. She is a member of ENQA's working group on academic integrity and has recently been involved in establishing policy and producing a framework for work-based learning.

Yvonne Overdevest worked at universities in various countries for twenty years before moving into quality assurance. She taught intercultural communication and English for specific purposes to students of engineering, healthcare, communications, political sciences, business and marketing, and ICT. Having entered the education field as a lecturer, she also spent some time in management. Though Yvonne now works in QA, she still teaches, when possible, to follow developments in education that can inform her work in QA. She also delivers trainings for the European Student Union and ECA.

Yvonne holds an MA in English literature, an MA in education, and an MA in applied linguistics.

INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE

Sarah Lynn is an accomplished business transformation leader with extensive experience in strategic change management, leadership and business transformation in technology and life sciences industries.

Her unique industry background comes from a diversity of roles and the sectors she has worked in – most recently as Director (Global Product Management) in Novartis and Program Lead (digital sales and online advertising) for Microsoft. She has also worked with SMEs including Eurologic/Adaptec and Celestica/Madge start-ups, engineering in Fujitsu (ICL), and AC Nielsen client management, in addition to working with UK DTI and EU (R&D funding initiatives).

Sarah has led major change initiatives for large enterprises and start-ups with a focus on end-to-end solutions. She has extensive experience of managing teams and a passion for people development and mentoring. She is especially skilled at developing, leading, and coaching diverse teams, managing large scale complex projects/programmes and stakeholder management.

Sarah holds a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering and a Master of Engineering Science from UCD and recently completed a Diploma in Corporate Governance.
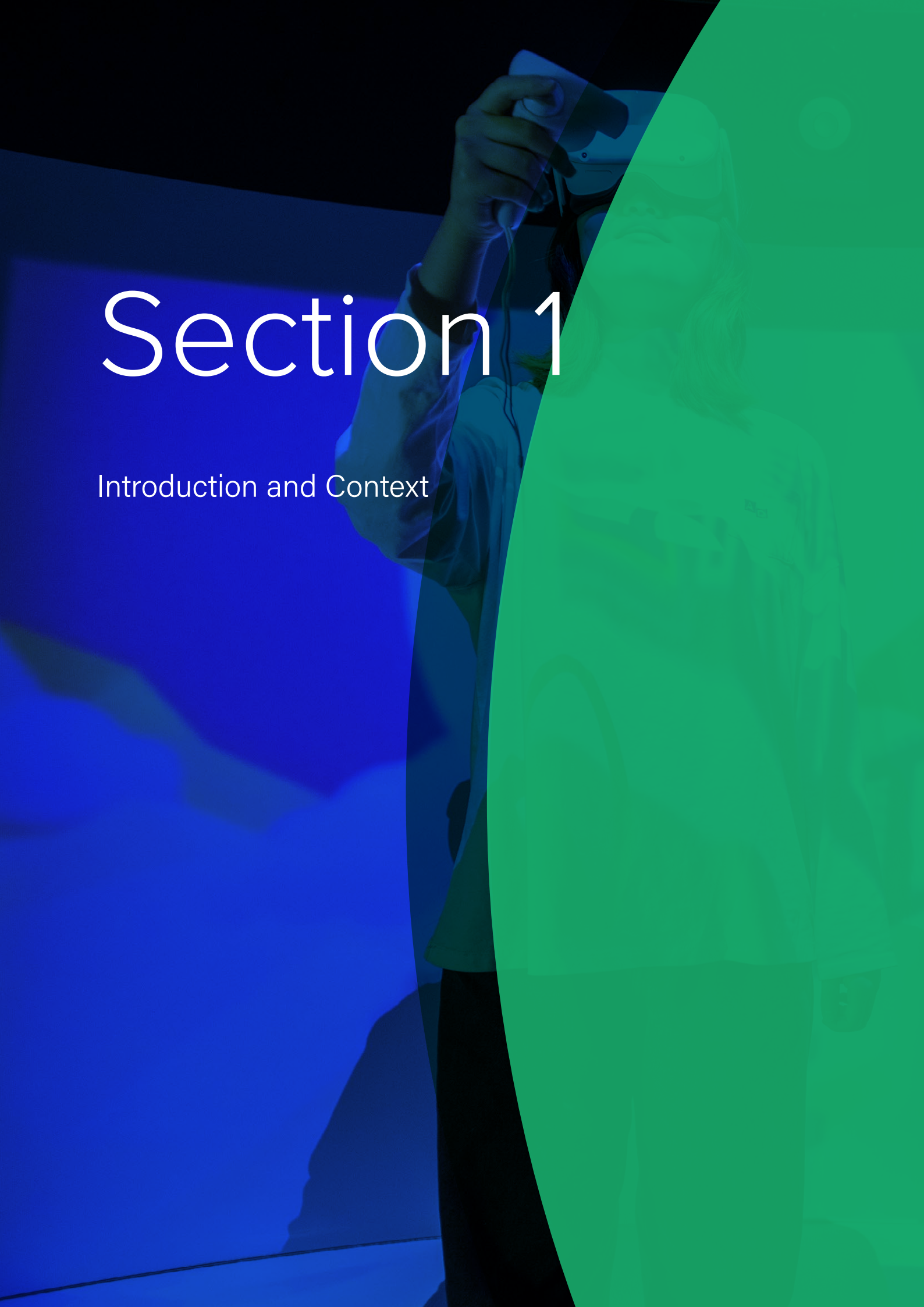
Section 1

Introduction and Context

Introduction and Context

SUMMARY

Munster Technological University (MTU) was established on 1 January 2021 and is the second of Ireland's technological universities to be established in response to The Technological Universities Act (2018). A central aim of the Act was to establish universities of and for their regions. MTU is one of five such universities and is firmly rooted in its region of south-west Ireland, serving the needs of learners, business, enterprise, innovation, the professions and communities across Cork and Kerry.

MTU's vision is 'to lead transformation through education' and its strategic plan, Our Shared Vision 2022–2027, articulates a clear mission and vision. The strategy provides a strong focus on 'Succeeding Together' underpinned by a coherent set of Values, Strategic Themes and Strategic Enablers designed to transform the new university and the region it serves.

Commendation:

The review team commends the development of a coherent strategic plan, Our Shared Vision 2022–2027, that has established a clear mission, vision and set of guiding values for the new university, in which there is a clear shared focus on the transformation journey, 'Succeeding Together', and the role of the university in leading 'transformation through education' to fulfil the HEA Performance Agreement September 2023 – August 2028 in accordance with the *Higher Education Authority System Performance Framework 2023 - 28.*

PROFILE

MTU was formed from the merger of the Cork Institute of Technology (located at its Bishopstown Campus, west of Cork City) and the Institute of Technology Tralee (spread over two sites defined as Kerry North Campus and Kerry South Campus in Tralee). The university has six campuses and is home to the two former institutes of technology and

three further previously autonomous institutions located in Cork and offering specialist education in music, art and maritime subjects: Cork School of Music, Crawford College of Art and Design, and the National Maritime College of Ireland, respectively.

MTU makes higher education awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), from Higher Certificate (NFQ Level 6) to PhD (NFQ Level 10) and offers six joint awards with University College Cork (UCC). By 1 November 2023, the most recent date for which figures are available, MTU had 15,455 students studying on circa 140 programmes with 10,691 registered for undergraduate degrees, 697 for postgraduate taught degrees, and 173 for PhDs. At the same date, the university had 1786 full-time employee (FTE) (1978 headcount) staff of which 1029.8 FTE were academic staff and a further 125.8 FTE were research staff.

In 2021/22, the most recent year for which figures have been audited, there were 542 international students from 48 non-EU countries. The number of international students was approximately equal on the Cork (281) and Kerry (261) campuses, with the six largest intakes coming from India (22%), Saudi Arabia (10%), Malaysia (9%), China (8%), Nigeria (6%) and Oman (6%).

The university's financial summary for 2021/22 showed income of €228,459 million and expenditure of €223,184 million leaving a surplus of €5,275 million, marginally down by €295,000 on 2020/21 when the accounts of the constituent institutions prior to merger are aggregated.

MTU is wide-ranging in its geographical reach, provision of programmes, research specialisations, engagement with industry and impact on the economy and society. Particular strengths in research and innovation that lead to clear economic and entrepreneurial impact include work in the areas of maritime mechatronics and

operations; mechanical and energy systems and applications; cybersecurity and digital systems and engagement; photonic devices and applications; predictive modelling and processing for the pharmaceutical industry; biotechnology and bio-resources; platform technologies in human and animal disease treatment; clean technology; sustainable infrastructure development; sport and exercise sciences; regenerative tourism and the circular economy; and public engagement in astronomy and space science.

Commendation:

The review team commends MTU on the extensive and visible contribution of the university to achieving the primary objective of a technological university in supporting the region's economy, community, and education.

CONTEXT

This review, with the main review visit undertaken in March 2024, was MTU's first institutional review under the CINNTE cycle. The timetable for the review was agreed between QQI and MTU in November 2022, almost two years after MTU was founded and four months after its strategic plan, *Our Shared Vision 2022–2027,* was approved by the Governing Body in July 2022.

The period from the establishment of the university on 1 January 2021 to the main review visit in March 2024 was one of significant change and development. This period was also one of some uncertainty for MTU, having been established during Covid-19 restrictions and then enduring a major cyber attack in February 2023 which, at the time of the review team's visit, was continuing to impact on the university's operations.

The leadership team of MTU, together with the wider staff, approached the review process with enthusiasm and professionalism, seeing the process as a useful milestone on their journey of evolution to becoming a unified university. The review team acknowledges the positive spirit in which all colleagues cooperated fully in ensuring the review was rigorous and evidence-based and that meetings with staff were undertaken in an open and transparent way.

APPROACH

During the five-day main review visit, the review team met with 351 staff and students in 40 meetings. Information gained during these meetings was triangulated with written evidence in the form of, among other documents, the *Institutional Profile*, the *Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER),* MTU's strategic plan, *Our Shared Vision 2022–2027, the HEA Performance Agreement 2024 - 2028, Governing Body Delegated Authority*, Standing Orders, University Policies and Procedures, *University Risk Register*, Annual Quality Reports (AQRs), and the *Postgraduate Research Board Annual Report 2023.*

The merging of the previously separate institutions to form MTU in 2021, and the subsequent work involved in developing unified structures, systems and processes is not underestimated. A significant programme of transformation is required to establish the operating models, policies and procedures that will ensure the coherence of a single institution with a progressive agenda designed to meet the needs of its regional economy and society within a wider, and challenging, global context. The review team finds that this work is well underway.

More fundamentally, a unified organisation requires a unified organisational culture, and the review team was impressed by the extensive work that had been undertaken, and led by the President, in establishing a strong and coherent set of values in consultation with staff and from which the new university would grow into its new identity, vision and purpose.

Commendation:

The review team commends the MTU executive, led by the President, on the extensive work undertaken to date in establishing a strong values-based culture and laying the foundations for the development of a clear institutional identity, vision, and purpose.

Section 2

Institutional Self-Evaluation
Report (ISER)

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)

METHODOLOGY

Munster Technological University (MTU) began preparatory work for the CINNTE quality review in November 2022. The approach taken was to build upon and exploit reflections, analyses, and consultations that had been undertaken to develop the university's strategic plan and vision, Our Shared Vision 2022–2027. Additional work comprised a comprehensive audit and desk review of relevant documentation pertaining to academic policies, regulations, and procedures. The critical reflection required for the completion of the ISER commenced in early 2023 but was significantly slowed and hampered due to a cyber attack on the Cork Campuses in February 2023. The impact of the cyber attack, not only on the CINNTE Review process but on many initiatives and practices across the university, was evident to the review team both from the documentation provided by MTU and the discussions during the main review visit. An initiative that was significantly impacted was the design of the Academic Operating Model, which, as stated in the ISER (p. 5), is a 'fundamental component and critical enabler' of the transformation of the university.

The development of the ISER was undertaken by a small team led by the Registrar and Vice-President for Academic Affairs (Cork Campus). The objective was to ensure that the ISER captured the many ongoing initiatives and projects that will ensure MTU achieves its vision and strategic objectives. Findings from extensive internal and external consultation undertaken in the development of MTU's strategic plan and organisational structure were incorporated into the ISER and provided for critical reflection. In addition, the ISER was informed by reviews of Governing Body digests as well as minutes and reports from governance committees, such as Academic Council and the University Executive. These reviews provided insights into student and staff perspectives on current and planned policies, regulations, and academic practices, and identified areas for development or enhancement. Focus groups with small groups of students and staff also informed the reflections on specific topics and issues.

The structure of the ISER is aligned to the QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (QAG) and to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015). Most chapters in the ISER began with a description of the status at the time of writing followed by a reflection on progress since the establishment of MTU, and closed with an outline of plans and actions for future enhancements. The review team welcomed the progress made in relation to a number of these actions during the time between the submission of the ISER and the main review visit. The review team share the view expressed both in the ISER and throughout many of the discussions during the visit that the establishment of the University Executive is a key to ensuring the success of planned enhancements and transformations. The review team noted the considered approach that had been taken in identifying the organisational design of the new executive structure and welcomed the start of the recruitment process for positions on the University Executive, which commenced shortly before the main review visit.

EFFECTIVENESS

Together with the Institutional Profile and the Annual Quality Reports (AQRs), the ISER provided a comprehensive description of MTU's approach to quality in addition to its plans for future enhancement and new endeavours. The document is well presented, coherent and of a high standard with comprehensive descriptive details of the university. The significant impacts on the university, and specifically on the development of the ISER, of

both the Covid-19 pandemic and the cyber attack, are well documented in the ISER. The description of the process taken to develop the strategic plan, the plan itself and the presentation of the strategic themes and enablers sets the context for the ISER. The main review visit allowed the review team to track ongoing initiatives and activities back to the strategic objectives.

In the 'Evaluation of Quality Procedures' section in the ISER (p. 10), there are twelve chapters, aligned to QQI Guidelines, including 'Governance and Management of Quality', 'Documented Approach to Quality Assurance', 'Staff Recruitment, Management and Development', 'Teaching and Learning', 'Support for Learners' and 'Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review'. As mentioned above, most chapters provide a 'Quality Framework' section, containing a description of current policies and practices, followed by a 'Quality in Action' section and ending with a 'Planning for Quality' section. The ISER concludes with a collation and summary of the enhancements identified within the twelve chapters. In addition, the ISER includes several pertinent case studies illustrating concrete examples of quality in action which the review team found provided additional insights.

The review team, however, agreed that the ISER would have been enhanced though the provision of further detail on the challenges associated with transition to a new institution, together with a greater focus on the change management process, particularly from the perspective of staff across the university.

The review team found that the ISER was not sufficiently reflective and analytical in all its sections and that it lacked the expected level of stakeholder engagement in both the process of developing the ISER and the critical reflection undertaken to inform its development. As stated above, the ISER was informed by the consultative and reflective process that informed the development of the university's strategic plan and organisation design, but it was not clear from the ISER how evaluations were carried out to inform the development of new university policies or quality assurance procedures, and therefore it was not clear how the enhancements included at the end of each chapter were identified. During the main review

visit, many of the review team's concerns regarding the level of reflection were satisfactorily addressed during meetings with staff, students, and external stakeholders. The review team was reassured to learn of the many working groups established to develop unified policies and procedures and reflect on current practices to inform future developments. In summary, the review team concluded that the ISER did not accurately capture the level or extent of the work undertaken, and ongoing, to develop MTU policies and procedures through reflecting on current practices.

ENGAGEMENT

While MTU's extensive and inclusive approach to consultation and collaboration was evident throughout the main review visit during meetings with students, staff and external stakeholders, the level of stakeholder engagement in the development of the ISER was less than expected by the review team. However, this lack of engagement and consultation is acknowledged in the ISER, and two main mitigating factors are outlined. First, the extensive consultation with both internal and external stakeholders that informed the development of the university's strategic plan and vision, was also used to inform the reflections in the key areas described in the twelve chapters of the ISER. Secondly, the original plan for the development of the ISER was significantly impacted by the cyber attack of February 2023. In addition, MTU committed in the ISER (p. 5) 'to broaden and deepen our consultation process and stakeholder engagement for this CINNTE review' and 'to enhance our consultation framework for the CINNTE review ahead of the March 2024 site visit'. The engagement with stakeholders after the submission of the ISER to QQI and prior to the main review visit was evident to the review team during its meetings with a diverse range of stakeholder groups.

RECOMMENDATION:

The review team recommends that MTU engage in a more structured and planned consultation process while undertaking a comprehensive and evidence-based process of reflection and self-evaluation when preparing for the next institutional review.

Section 3

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Quality Assurance/ Accountability

3.1 OBJECTIVE 1 – CURRENT QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

3.1.1 OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

It was evident to the review team that work to establish a unified framework of academic policies and quality assurance procedures commenced prior to the establishment of MTU in 2021 and that this work has continued to date. As stated within the MTU's Annual Quality Report (AQR) from 2023, 'MTU is committed to the highest quality standards, to continuous quality improvement and enhancement and to the creation of a quality culture. The development of an integrated Academic Quality Assurance Framework for the university is being progressed as a matter of high priority' (p.18).

The development of MTU's quality assurance procedures is carried out by Academic Council through its Integration and Development Committee. Where there were differences in policies and procedures from the former institutes, the work has focused on determining how best to address these differences and develop a unified approach. Progress in this regard had been made in relation to the programme validation, management, and review processes. Further work is still required in relation to unit reviews and the annual quality enhancement of programmes, and it is expected that the establishment of the new academic structures and executive will accelerate this.

Responsibility for ensuring implementation of, and compliance with, academic quality assurance policies and procedures is currently in the remit of the two Vice Presidents (the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs on the Kerry Campus, and the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs on the Cork Campus). The review team did note that the structure of the professional services area, which will be led by the new Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs and will be responsible for facilitating and overseeing quality assurance and enhancement within the university, is not yet clear. It will be important that this function be appropriately resourced so that MTU quality assurance procedures are properly facilitated, supported and monitored.

Overall, the review team concluded that there was sufficient evidence to confirm that MTU's quality assurance procedures are effective and appropriately aligned to the requirements of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESGs 2015) and have regard to the QQI *Core Quality Assurance Guidelines* (QAG). The annual quality reports (AQRs) and the quality assurance documentation also evidence that comprehensive procedures are in place for the approval and review of academic programmes and that these are effectively implemented across all campuses.

There are many examples of best practice and exemplars in learning, teaching and assessment across the university and the review team was impressed with the support and leadership provided by the Learning and Teaching Unit and the Department of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) in this regard. The review team was also impressed by the quality of support provided to the academic staff teaching on programmes. The review team noted that the quality of support is consistent with the student-centred approach adopted by MTU and characterised in many meetings during the main review visit as "our open-door policy".

The review team identified several areas where enhancements could be made: the approach to obtaining feedback from students on their learning experiences, the effectiveness of the academic governance structures, and the professional development of academic staff. These areas are expanded upon later in this report.

3.1.2 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

Introduction

The role of governance and management of quality assurance and enhancement in MTU is to ensure high quality standards, that fulfil the requirements of the QQI's Quality Assurance Guidelines (QAG) and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), across the areas of education, teaching, learning and assessment. Appropriate governance and management are also required to ensure that provision at MTU meets the legislative requirements of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012) and the Technological Universities Act (2018), together with specific requirements of professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies (PSRBs).

The Governing Body has overarching responsibility for matters of governance and strategy. The Executive, led by the President who is also a full member of the Governing Body, is responsible for the implementation of the strategic plan and the management of all operations. The Governing Body is responsible for the regulations of the university which are enshrined in a framework of academic and corporate policies that sit beneath an overarching Code of Governance. In line with Section 9.7 of the Technological Universities Act (2018), the Governing Body has delegated approval of academic regulations, policies, and procedures to Academic Council.

The development of a comprehensive and integrated framework of quality assurance and enhancement structures, policies, and procedures remains ongoing as the university merges and adapts the distinct systems belonging to predecessor institutions. The ISER (p. 29) makes

clear that, 'as a general principle, the legacy regulations were to continue in force on the campuses on which they had previously applied until they were amended or replaced by MTU'. In preparation for the development of unified policies, MTU has established a formal policy development framework with appropriate measures to ensure consistency in policy development, approval, document control, and review.

In advance of developing and implementing the necessary structures, systems and processes for quality assurance and enhancement, MTU has focused on the development of its strategy and senior executive structure. The strategic plan, *Our Shared Vision (2022–2027)*, which was approved by the Governing Body in July 2023, identifies an appropriate set of five *Strategic Themes: Learner Education and Experience; People & Community; Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship Ecosystem; Leading Regional Development; and Global Outlook.* These themes are firmly aligned to the university's vision and mission and to the ambitions and objectives of technological universities as set out in the Technological Universities Act (2018).

As mentioned in Section 2, the strategic plan was developed through a process of reflection and consultation, and the review team were particularly impressed with the use of the cultural values survey, which elicited over 1300 responses, to identify existing strengths and to determine the values that will reflect MTU's culture among its staff and students.

Achieving the ambitions of the strategic plan will require effective governance, talented strategic leadership, and appropriately resourced and agile executive functions. Based on evidence presented during the review process, the review team is satisfied that the university's executive leadership team has put in place a framework of appropriate *Strategic Enablers* to guide the delivery of the strategy and that these enablers are closely aligned to MTU's values. The enablers, including *Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Sustainability & the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Collective Commitment to a Multi-Campus Technological University, Digital Infrastructure & Capabilities,*

and *Physical Infrastructure & Capabilities*, are appropriately aligned to the strategic plan to ensure the implementation of the strategic objectives and to fulfil the mission of a technological university.

While the strategic plan was approved in July 2023, the executive structure, developed alongside the strategy, only secured Irish Government approval in the weeks preceding the main review visit. The review team encountered many instances and examples throughout the visit of the detrimental impact that the delay in establishing a new Executive Team was having on the implementation of the strategic plan and the unification of MTU. Without university level leadership roles with responsibility for key areas, these impacts include channels of approval being unclear, uncertain levels of authority, challenges associated with developing and implementing university-wide policies and procedures, and a lack of consistency in student and staff experiences.

Commendations:
- The review team commends MTU for the identification and development of five key *Strategic Themes* to drive the ambitions of the strategic plan in response to internal and external challenge and change: *Learner Education and Experience; People and Community; Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem; Leading Regional Development; Global Outlook.*
- The review team commends MTU for the focus on five key *Strategic Enablers* to guide and support a five-year Implementation Plan: *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion; Sustainability and UN Sustainable Development Goals; Collective Commitment to a Multi-Campus Technological University; Digital Infrastructure and Capabilities; Physical Infrastructure and Capabilities.*
- The review team commends MTU for the adoption of a *Culture Values Assessment* to inform the strategic plan and the ensuing identification of values that prioritise, among others, *Responsibility and Ownership, Teamwork, and Cooperation.*

Recommendation:
- The review team recommends that MTU expedite the replacement of all legacy regulations to form a unified set of policies and procedures covering all aspects of quality assurance and enhancement relating to all students on all campuses.

Governing Body
MTU Governing Body's composition, responsibilities and operation, and its delegation of authority to the Executive, are detailed in the *Munster Technological University Code of Governance,* published on 21 January 2021. Established in line with the legal and governance requirements stipulated in Schedule 1 of the Technological Universities Act (2018), the full Governing Body of MTU meets at least six times a year. The current MTU Governing Body comprises 19 members as follows: Chairperson (external member), President, five staff members, three student members, three external members nominated by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and six further external members appointed by MTU.

MTU Governing Body has seven committees, each chaired by a member of the full Governing Body and with members drawn from the Governing Body: Arts, Sports, and Culture Committee; Audit and Risk Committee; Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee; Finance Committee; National Maritime College of Ireland Committee; Regulations Implementation Committee; Strategic Development Committee.

The review team, in its meetings both with members of Governing Body and members of staff, noted that it was not always satisfied that both parties were fully clear about the purpose and content of the *Record of Delegated Authority* (University's Scheme of Delegation) and the ways in which such a document would differentiate and clarify roles, responsibilities and accountabilities between Governing Body and Executive. Commensurately, the review team was unclear as to how Governing Body would identify clear ownership of strategic objectives, key performance indicators, and risks in alignment with the strategic plan and its current *Record of Delegated Authority*.
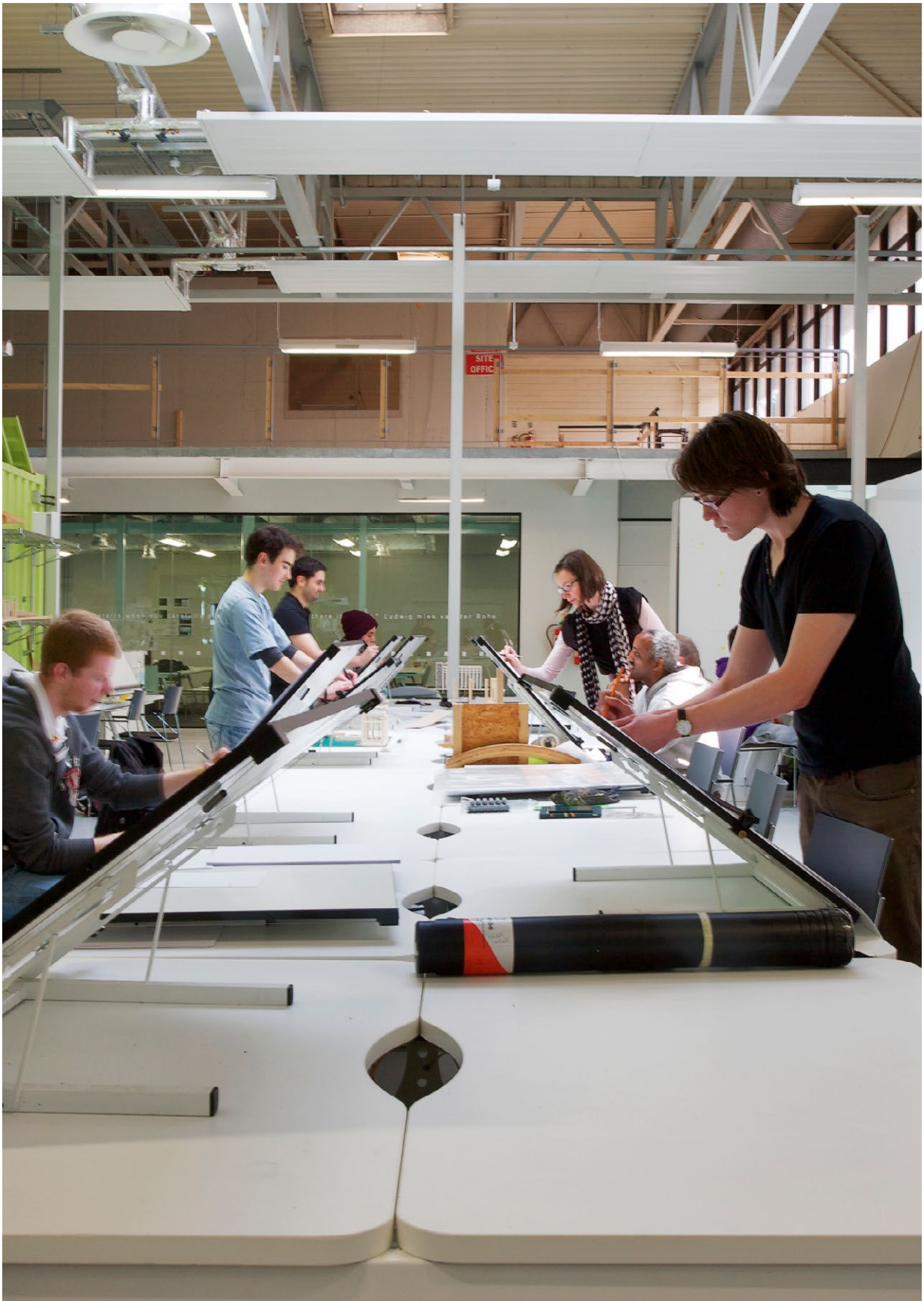
The Higher Education Authority (HEA) *Financial Memorandum (January 2017)* requires, under section 3, 'What the authority can expect of the institution', subsection 7 that, 'the institution is actively engaged in seeking continuously to enhance the quality of its programmes and services and to involve students, students' unions, employers, partner institutions/clusters and other stakeholders in these processes.' The *MTU Code of Governance* (p. 69) requires the university to produce a *Quality of Service Charter* and accompanying action plan, ideally revised every five years, 'setting out the quality of education learners can expect and the level of service the general public and other stakeholders can expect of the organisation'. It is not entirely clear from the Code of Governance or other documents seen by the review team that there is adequate clarification of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for the production, approval, evaluation and review of all matters relating to quality assurance and enhancement. This lack of clarity was evident in several meetings with staff and greater clarity of responsibility, and the locus of decision-making regarding quality assurance and enhancement matters, should be developed in Governance and Executive Committee terms of reference and made clear in a wider *Record of Delegated Authority* (Scheme of Delegation).

In reviewing the role of the Governing Body in relation to quality assurance and enhancement it was apparent, through the review team's meetings with Governing Body members and staff and through a review of Governing Body minutes, that such matters were not addressed with either the frequency or depth required for the Governing Body to fully assure itself of quality or enhancement. Simultaneously, it became apparent through these discussions and review of documents that there was limited strategic oversight of the university's international activities, including areas that carry increasing levels of risk in a volatile global student recruitment market.

Recommendations:
- The review team recommends that MTU improve governance of quality assurance and enhancement by establishing a more comprehensive scheme of delegation in which roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the Governing Body, Academic Council and their sub-committees, together with the Executive, are made more explicit and transparent. This should include clear ownership of strategic objectives, key performance indicators, and risks in alignment with the university strategic plan, *Our Shared Vision 2022–2027.*
- The review team recommends that MTU ensure the Governing Body and its sub-committees adequately challenge and scrutinise the university's international ambitions and activities to enable MTU to fulfil its potential in staff and student mobility, research, innovation and entrepreneurship.

The Executive

The review team noted the strategic planning and restructuring that had been undertaken to establish a single, high-level Academic Operating Model and an aligned single Professional Management and Support Services (PMSS) Operating Model, with both models designed to provide the necessary framework for the creation and management of a unified multi-campus university.

At the time of the main review visit, in March 2024, the university was in the early stages of the recruitment process for the new executive team; the review team was mindful of the timing of their visit and the sensitivities relating to the Executive recruitment process. Given this transitionary phase, the review team navigated several complexities, not least of which were the dual structures and processes which persisted across much of the institution's workings. For example, at the time of the main review visit there were two Registrars: Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs for the Cork Campuses and a Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar for the Kerry Campuses. Each of these Vice Presidents had a separate line of campus-based staff reporting to them in areas including student engagement, student affairs, and library. This was in addition to a small number of institution-wide functions such as 'Graduate Studies' in the case of the Cork-based

vice president and 'Change Management' in the case of the Kerry-based vice president.

The review team was repeatedly impressed by the collegiate way in which staff across MTU's campuses had established positive working relationships in anticipation of new unified structures and processes. Nevertheless, the review team also encountered several instances of colleagues being unclear as to whether the policies and practices they were citing applied to one location or to the whole university. This level of uncertainty potentially weakens staff confidence and ability to scrutinise and challenge new developments or proposed new policies and procedures. Securing appointments to a new University Executive with a single Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs is a vital step on the journey towards establishing an integrated university with a unified set of structures, policies and procedures for quality assurance and enhancement.

While the development and approval of the new executive structure was viewed positively by the review team, reviewers did have some concerns that the new structure could lack capacity to progress the level of ambition expressed by colleagues throughout the visit and reflect the new strategic plan. In particular, the review team was concerned that the new vice-president responsibilities for quality assurance and enhancement, when combined with other aspects of academic affairs, creates a large portfolio. The absence of any detail about the sub-structure that would be developed to support this post meant that the review team could not be assured that an appropriate middle-management structure for quality assurance and enhancement will be available.

Commendations:
- The review team commends MTU on the development of a clear and comprehensive executive structure designed to provide strategic leadership and synergies across the organisation.
- The review team commends the development of a single, high-level, two-tier Academic

Operating Model structured across five faculties, each spanning multiple campuses, and designed to enable cross-campus working and the development of a single Professional Management and Support Services (PMSS) Operating Model aligned to the Academic Operating Model and designed to streamline resource allocation in the pursuit of strategic objectives.

Recommendations:
- The review team recommends the establishment of the new University Executive be expedited and clear responsibilities be identified for the Vice-President together with clear structures, roles and responsibilities at all levels reporting to Executive members. In particular, due attention should be paid to having the capacity and capability to enhance learning, teaching and the student experience, and to ensuring the achievement of the strategic objectives.
- The review team recommends that MTU develop and populate the academic and professional management support services structure, below the tier of the Vice President, to ensure adequate and effective middle management leadership and support for the senior executive to drive quality enhancement initiatives. Furthermore, MTU should monitor the scope and scale of roles relating to and including the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs, making changes where appropriate to ensure there is visible and accountable leadership of innovation and enhancement in learning, teaching, and student engagement.

Academic Council
Academic Council primarily reflects the university in its previous constituent parts with duplicated roles represented on the council. The review team held extensive discussions with staff regarding strategic planning, budgeting and decision-making processes at Faculty/School, department, programme, and module level and particularly relating to the approval of programme

development, suspension, and retirement. The review team concluded that the formal role of Academic Council in relation to the portfolio of taught programmes, its viability and need for continuous review of the portfolio, is not always well defined. For instance, not all decisions relating to the programme portfolio seem to have been considered or taken at Academic Council and while this may be appropriate in certain cases, it is not clear what decisions require Academic Council approval and what decisions can be taken elsewhere, e.g. by the Executive.

Notwithstanding the differing historical practices between campuses, the review team also felt that the large size of Academic Council could, on occasion, mitigate against accountability, agility, discussion, debate, and fully transparent decision-making.

Recommendations:

- The review team recommends that MTU ensure that all decisions relating to programme development, suspension and retirement be taken in line with the university's strategy and formally approved by Academic Council, and that both Academic Council and Governing Body receive, discuss and approve regular reports summarising decisions relating to existing programmes and plans for new programmes within the context of continuous portfolio review.

- The review team recommends that MTU review the size of Academic Council in accordance with Section 16.3 of The Technological Universities Act (2018) to ensure it is sufficiently focused to deliver the functions required of an Academic Council and outlined in Section 17 of the above-mentioned Act.

3.1.3 PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The review team acknowledges the positive efforts made in respect of the development of MTU programmes with regard to content, engagement, and student experience. Given the strong traditions within the constituent institutions, long-term work is needed at the programme portfolio level to ensure a consistent quality experience is offered to all MTU students. The university provides pathways from NFQ Level 6 to NFQ Level 10 and has created opportunities for engagement with industry, through work placements, and supported cross-disciplinary partnerships to deliver multi-disciplinary programmes and modules. To continue its progress to a single institution, MTU must decide on the programme portfolio and the direction that it should take.

The ISER sets out a plan to review the programme portfolio (ISER, p. 42) in the context of the current duplication of programmes across locations and the proliferation of awards (ISER, p. 43): 'MTU is awarding a considerable number of awards at a given level in certain discipline areas. For illustrative purposes, the University currently has eleven NFQ Level 8 awards in the Sports/Exercise/Health discipline area, emanating from the two antecedent institutions.' The review team noted that the number of modules in the institution was high, and the ISER (p. 42) correctly identified that this presents both administrative and financial challenges and affects student choice and experience. The review team endorses MTU's plan to review the programme and module portfolio and encourages MTU to harness the strengths of the legacy institutions when merging duplicate programmes. The review team confirmed that no formal procedure was in place for the retirement of modules or programmes.

The ISER (p. 32) identifies that mechanisms for soliciting student feedback at programme and module levels had been considered, but not advanced. The review team saw evidence of good practice related to the student-centred learning experience in MTU. However, the link with formal feedback mechanisms was not always clear. For instance, many students pointed out during the main review visit that staff members are consistently available and willing to provide advice and engage in dialogue when students actively seek guidance; staff often referred to their "open-door policy". At the same time, the review team saw evidence of an over-reliance on informal feedback, relationships and networks that could, potentially, mitigate against securing robust and reliable feedback from students and from staff. It was reported by undergraduate students, for example, that the feedback channels are not always straightforward and very often several layers of process must be navigated before the matter reaches the appropriate level. However, the review team also heard that once the request or feedback does reach the appropriate level, the matter is actioned appropriately. Based on this feedback it is clear the student experience would be enhanced further by clarifying the escalation processes for student feedback – from programme tutor to lecturer, to programme coordinator and, finally, to head of department. It is important that students are encouraged to provide feedback at module, programme, and university levels and that staff respond in a coordinated way with action plans that are discussed with student representatives and approved by the relevant sub-committee of Academic Council.

During the main review visit, many students when expressing their views of MTU's community, referred to the institution as MTU, and not by the name of the antecedent institution. This indicated to the review team that there is already a perception of substantial amalgamation among students from legacy institutions. However, many anecdotes that students shared demonstrated that more needs to be done in this regard. For example, MTU could identify and implement additional actions to ensure that students feel equally welcome on all campuses and have good and equal access to all services irrespective of their physical location.

The review team saw evidence that MTU has strong channels of engagement with industry, government, and community and that these inform appropriate programme provision and development. For example, the review team were impressed with the work of the Extended Campus and its approach to working with regional and national organisations to develop their workforce and employees' skills through the identification

of learning needs and where possible aligning those needs to existing programme offerings and where necessary collaboratively developing bespoke learning pathways. The review team also saw that these channels tended to be informal rather than formal. It is important to maintain and further strengthen these channels by, for example, ensuring that systems are put in place to formalise partnership arrangements and to enable ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement in such relationships.

The review team also noted the work of the *SOAR* (Inter-Institutional Collaboration for Access) Project (funded under PATH 3) which brings together the South Cluster (MTU, South East TU (SETU)), University College Cork (UCC)) and community partners to collaborate on strategies to increase access to higher education for under-represented groups. This initiative has enabled MTU to build on its existing access practices and to consolidate its community partnerships.

A feature of the strategic plan is the embedding of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the curriculum (ISER, p. 42). Sustainability, and its situation in the curriculum, is a necessity within contemporary higher education and all modern higher education institutions should consider how best to incorporate sustainability within their programmes and research. There are different strategies available to institutions to achieve integration of sustainability within their curriculum and institutions may consider, for example, providing specific programmes and packages of modules (minors). Alternatively, more integrative approaches may accommodate sustainability as a perspective in various learning objectives or outcomes, thus building in a cumulative sense throughout the curriculum. The review team did not gain insight into how much strategic consideration this matter had been given. MTU should reflect on how it intends to progress the ongoing embedding of the SDGs into the curriculum, with consideration of the balance between generic skills (including sustainability) and disciplinary skills (which may link directly or indirectly with sustainability), as well as any impacts on the workload of students.

Commendation:

- The review team commends the establishment of extensive and effective regional, national, and global government, industry and community partnerships that are diverse in nature, and which provide evidence of enhancement of learning, teaching and research and high-level, impactful external engagement.

Recommendations:

- The review team recommends that MTU develop a strategic approach to portfolio management and governance, including programme development, suspension, and retirement, enabling lifelong learning and the sustainability of the university. This approach should include a holistic and objective assessment of the current programme and module portfolio, taking into consideration the duplication of programmes and modules across campus locations. This assessment should be conducted jointly by Academic Council and the University Executive and should introduce metrics for following up the viability of programmes and their lifecycle, as well as creating a formal procedure for retiring programmes and modules.

- The review team recommends that MTU establish more formal, robust, transparent and documented processes and mechanisms to supplement and complement the existing system of networks and relationships upon which the current approach to quality is over-reliant.

- The review team recommends that MTU enhance the student voice at programme level through the development of a uniform system of representation at formal academic decision-making fora, and implement a fit-for-purpose, university-wide system of independent evaluation of the student learning experience at both module and programme levels. Resulting reports should be used as a regular part of Annual Programme Review, Periodic Programme Review and internal Quality Reviews and feedback provided to students. This should include a robust university-wide

mechanism giving opportunities to all students to provide feedback at module, programme and university level with responsive action plans discussed with student representatives and approved by the relevant sub-committee of Academic Council and then communicated to students.

- The review team recommends the development of a more strategic approach to external stakeholder engagement and management at programme, department, faculty, and institution-levels to ensure a co-ordinated approach to relationship-building, the ongoing evaluation of partnerships and their continuous improvement to maximise the potential of external partnerships in line with the university's strategic plan, *Our Shared Vision 2022–2027.*

3.1.4 STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT

Recruitment
The review team appreciates that MTU is affected by national HR policy and agreements and academic contractual obligations. The review team observed that the legacy recruitment and HR policies of Cork and Kerry continued to be applied in anticipation of an aligned process for staff recruitment, development and support. Notwithstanding these legacies, challenges in relation to recruitment and staffing surfaced during the main review visit. An aligned MTU Recruitment and Selection Policy is under development and will draw on legacy policies and include enhancements, such as in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

In accordance with legacy HR processes, posts proposed by Departments or PMSS are approved or otherwise considered by the Executive Team, a position is then advertised internally and externally, shortlisted candidates are interviewed, and the final decision is made by the interview panel. The review team noted that vacancies are advertised on national websites and newspapers but was unable to discern a structured approach or vision regarding international recruitment. The current recruitment practices relating to the advertising of posts could mitigate against the recruitment of international

staff. In addition, the acceptance and application of the national minimum entry requirements for lecturer level, which are below the international norm, might mitigate against the recruitment of well-qualified academic staff with track records in research. In combination, it is possible that MTU may be losing out on the recruitment of highly qualified international staff, many of whom will have relevant backgrounds for the areas of specialist teaching and research offered by MTU.

Recommendations:
- The review team recommends the development of a comprehensive people and talent strategy that ensures recruitment, retention, development, and diversification of staff to drive and deliver the ambitions of the strategic plan, with national and international benchmarking. This should include robust systems to measure and monitor staff profiles and progress towards achieving a more diverse workforce, including through proactive international recruitment.

- The review team recommends the development of more comprehensive, and consistently applied, onboarding package, induction process, and a clear set of processes relating to staff exit to ensure continuous improvement in talent identification, recruitment, reward, and retention.

- The review team recommends the development of clear documentation specifying the requirements for qualifications, skills, and experience in the recruitment of academic staff, with a clear emphasis on increasing the entry level qualifications and research experience of those recruited.

Management
While the ISER shows that MTU invests significantly in staff training, its breakdown per section makes clear that this investment reaches, for the most part, new/early career staff and those in management positions. Each academic unit is also allocated funding for staff development, with a general focus on conference and seminar participation. A lack of progression pathways may become a quality issue if this leads to frequent rotation of

academic or administrative staff. While the review team saw evidence of well-conceived practice, it was not evident to the team that there were systemic mechanisms or policies in place providing opportunities for ongoing staff development.

Dedicated short training activities, such as training for interview and unconscious bias training, can be found in campus specific legacy policies, and informal communities of practice have been established to support staff development. Unfortunately, due to funding issues, many of these training activities are currently suspended.

The Teaching and Learning Unit (TLU) offers individual modules for Continuing Professional Development (CPD). However, it is not compulsory for MTU staff to attend or pass these modules. Also, it is apparent from the review team's meetings with academic staff that it is not always clear to staff where support can be found. Furthermore, this appears to apply to academic staff, with a difference identified in the case of PMSS and technical staff. The review team concluded, based on the documentation and discussions during the main review visit, that there is no one person responsible for staff development at executive level. What further emerged from discussion was that systemic induction and longer-term onboarding, as well as a MTU training handbook, would be particularly helpful for early career staff, especially those coming from industry. Currently, the level of support offered can depend on the manager in that unit or department, although the review team was pleased to discover that new academic staff are allocated a mentor and that a more structured integrated mentorship programme is soon to be rolled out on a pilot basis.

In light of the challenges to academic integrity formed by the emergence and widespread embracing of artificial intelligence (AI), staff members expressed their need for guidance and training in dealing with not only the challenges generative AI creates, but also in meeting industry expectations. Students need to learn how to use generative AI ethically and professionally, but staff members feel ill-equipped for this and desire appropriate guidance and training.

The review team considered MTU's approach to performance management and appraisal. At present, staff feedback mechanisms that might lead to further professionalisation of staff within the institution seem to be dependent upon individual initiatives and lack consistency across MTU. The review team did, however, note several impressive initiatives for professional development both within MTU and in collaboration with other institutions. The review team understands that some departments may have a culture of sharing feedback informally and, during site visit sessions, both academic and administrative staff indicated they would welcome feedback on what they are doing well and what they need to improve. At the time of review, MTU does not systematically use an appraisal process linked to an institutional policy of staff development. However, an MTU Staff Development Policy is currently being developed to unify staff development offerings and ensure all categories of staff contribute to student success and this, of course, is to be encouraged.

Recommendation:
- The review team recommends that MTU develop and implement a comprehensive programme of staff development and support for academic staff delivering learning, teaching, and assessment, and this should include the ethical use of AI.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity
MTU has a strong commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusivity, evidenced by its attainment of Athena SWAN Bronze accreditation as MTU in November 2023, building on a previous Athena Swan Bronze Legacy Award from 2021 (MTU) and 2019 (CIT). Since the first awards, the original charter has been expanded to take a more intersectional approach to gender equality. MTU is also committed to the Advance HE Aurora programme, and data pertaining to the CPD of management demonstrate this further: of the 157 staff members participating in the 2022-2023 Elevate programme, 129 were female. Further, MTU has been awarded funding under the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI) and has a SALI Senior Lecturer III.

However, as the review team observed, and as also noted in the 2023 MTU Athena submission, gender equity remains a challenge. A breakdown of academic staff numbers by grade and gender reveals a significant imbalance. Whereas half of the approximately 250 assistant lecturers are female, at the highest level, Senior Lecturer III, only 8 of the 22 are female. Of the total 1,786 WTE academic staff, only 478 are female. The issue of gender balance seemed particularly acute in research roles and the review team was concerned to see that there was a near absence of women in the role of Research Centre Director.

While the review team recognises the growing momentum around Athena SWAN certification and is cognisant of the challenges of transforming legacy policies, it is recommended that MTU develop and commit to an action plan to address the issue of gender-based under-representation. Such a plan should align with the outcomes of the recommendation cited above relating to the development of a comprehensive people and talent strategy.

Commendations:

- The review team commends the clear prioritisation of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as a key strategic theme within the strategic plan, *Our Shared Vision 2022–2027.*

- The review team commends MTU on the university-wide and individual staff development initiatives in terms of new staff, non-senior management training, student support services, and counselling; especially regarding those individually initiated activities. The team acknowledges and compliments the commitment and engagement demonstrated by those involved.

Recommendation:

- The review team recommends that MTU continue to develop its strategy and accompanying 'smart' targets designed to improve the representation of women among academic staff, particularly at more senior levels. Such a strategy should pay particular attention to developing mechanisms to support women into research leadership roles.

3.1.5 TEACHING AND LEARNING

The review team finds that MTU is clearly committed to providing a high-quality educational experience that is student-centred and responsive to learners' needs and industry requirements. A focus on the 'First Year Experience' is intended to promote and foster engagement and identify student requirements. Students gradually learn to collate their academic and extra-curricular activities, articulate their skills and acquired knowledge, and give form to their individual learning experiences in a manner meaningful to them. As such, MTU has introduced policies and support services to facilitate and support learning, teaching and assessment activities and initiatives across the university.

The review team heard repeatedly from students that MTU fosters a supportive atmosphere on campus. Students spoke of friendly and collaborative classroom settings in which lecturers were open to creating a productive and safe teaching and learning environment in which relationships between staff and students were positive.

The review team was cognisant of the challenges involved in recognising the value of legacy policies and cultures while moving towards a single university-wide culture of teaching and learning, supported by staff and students. The review team acknowledged the strategic policies and procedures developed since the creation of MTU, but also became aware of specific issues and challenges that persist on each campus.

Discussions with students showed that there was a perceived lack of consistency across programmes in relation to the delivery of classes. This was a key issue of concern for students. It was communicated to the review team in multiple meetings that the learning experience could be enhanced if academic staff were better and more consistently equipped with appropriate teaching skills. Dissatisfaction centred mostly on lectures where there was little staff-student interaction. In addition, classes were often characterised by the delivery of static pre-prepared text and PowerPoint presentations. Students expressed concerns relating to the timing and types of assessments as well as feedback on their performance in those assessments. While many students reported examples of best practice, many other students described situations in which the schedule and types of assessment were not made known to them at the start of their modules. It was further noted that schedules concentrated most assessments at the end of term, resulting in significant peaks in workload and bunching of assessments for students.

The provision of feedback on assessment performance was reported by both students and staff to be varied. A lack of a policy requiring the provision of feedback on assessments within specified timelines appears to have resulted in a lack of consistency in practice. Lecturing staff did emphasise, however, a desire to create a more consistent and cohesive culture of feedback. The review team recommends exploring the development and piloting of a system for providing structured formal feedback or feed-forward to students on their progress during the term and academic year. This should be consistent across all programmes, and between all teaching staff to ensure a constructive and fair learning experience for all students, with particular attention to ensuring the provision of feedback within the first few weeks of each module so that students can be assisted in gauging their own performance.

Students consistently reported to the review team that staff were responsive to issues they raised through informal feedback on their learning experience. However, the review team recommends that MTU develop more robust formal systems for module and programme monitoring especially considering the intention to manage the now very extensive academic portfolio of modules and programmes. While students do have opportunities to give informal feedback on their learning experience, some modules receive limited, or no feedback, and students have no real perception of how changes are implemented in response to their feedback or why their feedback may not result in direct changes.

In accordance with national statutory quality assurance guidelines, MTU has a policy in place allowing for recognition of both formal and informal prior learning that can lead to academic

credits or exemption from modules. Applicants can submit a portfolio demonstrating their achievement of learning outcomes of a module within a programme. This portfolio can also be used to demonstrate how an applicant meets entry requirements to a programme. Support systems to assist students and applicants with their application or portfolio are in place, and applications for recognition of prior learning (RPL) are managed on an individual basis.

The review team notes that MTU has taken meaningful steps in teaching and learning, particularly, to provide meaningful staff development opportunities in that area. Through the TLU, lecturing staff can work towards a modular MA in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as well as several offerings involving staff development, learning communities, and networking events. It was clear from discussions with staff during the main review visit that there is openness to, and enthusiasm for, continuous professional development. However, the review team concluded that the provision of staff development opportunities may be further enhanced by more formal strategies, structures and policies to complement and supplement the offerings from the TLU and to prioritise time and resources for staff development. Such needs should be addressed by developing and implementing the comprehensive programme of staff development and support recommended earlier in this report for academic staff delivering learning, teaching and assessment.

MTU is currently building a new 6,660m^2 Learning Resource Centre (LRC) in Cork to provide a teaching and learning space for 1,000 students and 70 staff. The Bishopstown campus LRC is a purpose-built building designed to contribute to students' university experience and is intended to provide students and staff with both learning and teaching facilities and spaces to study and socialise. Furthermore, the building is to provide improved opportunities for student support, industry engagement, entrepreneurship, and research and innovation, as well as host events and conferences, both for the university and wider

community. Construction of a new STEM building is also underway concurrently on the Kerry North Campus in Tralee. Both buildings are part of the Department of Higher and Further Education, Research, Innovation and Science's Higher Education Public Private Partnership programme. As discussed in the 2023 Annual Quality Report, in line with MTU's commitment to Climate Action and Sustainability, and to reach the university's climate action targets, the new LRC has been designed to meet the Nearly Zero Energy Building[1] criteria. The review team was impressed to learn how some lecturers were using the current construction work to create a unique learning environment by exploiting this real-life setting and multi-stakeholder participation in their teaching activities to Construction (Management) students.

A coherent approach to internationalisation across the curriculum was not clear and the review team would welcome a more ambitious approach to internationalisation with clear roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, SMART objectives and appropriate funding to enable greater internationalisation of student learning. Equally, the articulation of university-wide ambitions in relation to outward staff mobility and a strategy and set of policies to deliver this ambition, would enhance the internationalisation of staff.

The review team noted MTU's intention to apply for the International Education Mark (IEM). The application criteria focus specifically on the provision of information to, and support for, international students. In meetings with the review team, the international students praised the support provided on their arrival at the university but noted that increased communication and preparation prior to travel to Ireland would also ease the transition. However, the review team noted MTU provides an online *International Module* to all international students, which outlines practical information on living in Ireland and is also used to communicate with and distribute information to international learners.

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1   Nearly Zero Energy Building Standard | Business & Public Sector | SEAI

Recommendations:
- The review team recommends the development and piloting of a system for providing structured formal feedback and feed-forward to all students on all modules that indicates their progress, together with a policy that stipulates both a maximum time period before formative feedback is received in each module, and a maximum turnaround time for the marking and return of assessed work on all modules.

- The review team recommends that MTU, in order to further its internationalisation agenda, develop an internationalisation strategy for the curriculum with clear roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, SMART objectives and appropriate funding to enable greater internationalisation of student learning, and raise its ambition in relation to outward staff mobility, developing the strategy and policies required to facilitate this ambition, accompanied by the resources to support the internationalisation of staff.

3.1.6 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

The quality assurance of assessment, from its design through to delivery and operation in regard to the evaluation of its outcomes, is critical to establishing and maintaining confidence in the standards of MTU awards. MTU's assessment standards and regulations are rooted in the long-standing sectoral framework for the determination of assessment grades and of progression and award standards set out in QQI's Assessment and Standards (2013, later updated in 2022)[2].

MTU assessment regulations pertaining to taught programmes, as detailed in the *MTU-wide Regulations for Modules and Programmes (Marks and Standards)*[3], have been developed and partially implemented. However, at the time of writing, the separate legacy policies and procedures pertaining to assessment appeals, review of module marks, and mitigation remain in place. MTU-wide regulations specific to the assessment

of postgraduate research degree programmes are set out in the MTU Regulations for Postgraduate Research Study.

ASSESSMENT DESIGN AND REVIEW

MTU's Policy for the 'Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards' emphasises the establishment of fair and consistent assessment procedures to ensure that learners acquire and, where appropriate, demonstrate the prescribed standards of knowledge, skill, or competence. To that end, the format, design, and weighting of continuous assessment tasks and final examinations undergo internal and external quality review when modules and programmes are first developed and subsequently reviewed. The associated procedures for modules and programmes require confirmation by the programme validation panel/module moderator/external evaluator to confirm that the programme outcomes and module learning outcomes are clear and consistent with the award being sought, and that the assessment methodologies are of an appropriate level, standard and quality. In between cyclical programme reviews, assessment design issues identified by the programme boards, through programme monitoring activities, and/or by module lecturers based on experience of delivery and assessment or external examiner feedback, may also lead to assessment design changes between scheduled reviews. All new modules proposed for validation or existing modules for review undergo a moderation process overseen by the Registrar's Office. Major changes to the assessment schema of an existing module may result in a recommendation for the creation of a new module.

EXTERNAL MODERATION OF ASSESSMENT IN TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

A key element of the quality assurance of assessment is the external examiner system which ensures external moderation of both the design and the outcomes of assessment and examinations and supports public confidence in academic qualifications. A common MTU policy and procedure on external examiners in taught programmes is in effect. Under this policy, external

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2   Assessment and Standards Revised 2013.doc (qqi.ie)

3   Policy-Regulations-for-Modules-and-Programmes (mtu.ie)

examining shall confirm that students have achieved the module and programme outcomes, as demonstrated through their assessment submissions, and shall ensure that this learning aligns with comparable modules and programmes within the university, nationally and internationally. External Examiners shall come from the module discipline or the programme's field of learning and have accomplishments that attest to their likely competence to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.

All appointed external examiners perform the role of module external examiner for a defined set of modules. Each module is assigned to a module external examiner. Two module external examiners per programme then perform the additional role of programme external examiner, one coming from the higher education community and one from industry/business/related professions. External examiners moderate at Module Examination Boards (MEBs) and may attend Progression and Award Boards (PABs). The external examiner is required to report findings and recommendations annually to the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs, who will communicate them to faculty. Under the new MTU policy, nominations for external examiners are formally approved by the MTU Academic Council for a four-year term and following vetting by the Registrar's Office, which considers the proposed examiner's experience and expertise as well as any potential conflicts of interest. Re-nomination for one further year is possible, but only in exceptional circumstances. In line with the procedure, examiners are normally expected to attend the university at least once per academic year.

ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

Operationally, the organisation of final examinations and the preparation of stage results, records of achievement and award certificates falls under the remit of the respective Kerry and Cork Examinations Offices. This includes, inter alia, the examination paper review process, scheduling and management of terminal written examinations, recruitment, training, scheduling, and management of invigilators, accommodating disability support service (DSS) students requiring exam supports during assessments and end

of semester examinations, management of the SOLAS examination process for craft apprentices, processing of post-PAB changes, and finalisation of the calling order for graduation and issue of parchments/certificates. This entails regular collaboration with other functions, including Student Records, academic departments, and IT Services. On the Bishopstown Campus, the organisation and support of terminal examinations is very much centralised within the Examination Office. On all other campuses, some duties are shared with the local school/department administrative functions. Policies, procedures, and guidelines for the organisation of the assessment and examination process, the operation and conduct of assessment and examination, and the conduct of examination candidates still come under the separate legacy policies and procedures of the Kerry Campuses and the Cork Campuses.

INDIVIDUAL EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

For students of the Kerry Campuses, the *Policy and Procedure for the Request for an Extension of an Assignment Submission Deadline and Penalties for Late Submission* includes a specific process to apply for an extension which will be carried over into the MTU context. Students of the Cork Campuses are subject to the 'Policy Governing Individual Extenuating Circumstances Relating to Examinations and Assessment'. Students who believe that their specific circumstances constitute individual extenuating circumstances (IECs) may submit an IEC claim using an online form. During the main review visit, students confirmed that they were generally aware of these procedures and how to use them.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

'Headline' standards of good conduct summarising the university's fundamental expectations on learners in relation to academic integrity are set out in the *MTU Student Charter and Code of Conduct (Student).* A new MTU-wide *Academic Integrity Policy* was approved by the Academic Council in May 2023, with the related procedure still being finalised at the time of the visit. Both policy and procedure were developed by the Academic Integrity Working Group of Academic Council.

The policy and procedure have been informed by the outputs of QQI's National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN).

Pending the commencement of the new policy and procedure, existing policies and procedures continue to apply. Minor instances of academic misconduct are dealt with by the individual academic department. Students of the Kerry Campuses are subject to the *Anti-Plagiarism Policy and Procedures*, under which cases may be referred to the Examinations and Assessments Review Committee (EARC) and Examinations and Assessment Appeals Committee (EAAC). Cases of a minor nature are dealt with at department level.

The Cork Campuses' policy and procedures governing Academic Honesty, Plagiarism and Infringements in relation to Examinations and Assessments were reviewed at the onset of the pandemic. Arising from that review, a supplementary policy and procedure were approved and implemented in May 2020 and continue to be in effect. These supplemental instruments include amplified and additional provisions on remote/computer-based assessment and enable infringement hearings to take place remotely. MTU uses plagiarism detection software (currently, 'Ouriginal') which is fully integrated with the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Not least given the variety of assessment types and purposes, use of plagiarism detection software is not mandatory in MTU, although department-level usage policies are in place in several academic departments.

Many academic staff members use plagiarism detection software, not just to support the detection and confirmation of plagiarism in submitted work, but also to prevent plagiarism in written coursework by encouraging students to check drafts for similarity matches and/or requiring submission of assignments through the software.

Learners have their attention drawn to the requirement for academic honesty at various points in their academic journey, starting with the common foundational university-wide academic skills module included in standard undergraduate degree programmes. The key academic integrity principles and procedures are widely and repeatedly disseminated to learners and staff via several sources, including emails from the Registrar's Office and academic departments, communications from the MTU Students' Union, the MTU (Cork) Academic Honesty and Integrity webpage, the MTU (Kerry) Library webpage, and student handbooks. Students submitting final theses/dissertations or projects, whether at undergraduate or postgraduate level, are required to sign a declaration confirming the originality of their work and the absence of unauthorised collusion, however there is no such requirement for the submission of other coursework.

APPRENTICESHIP PROVISION

In the case of craft apprenticeship provision, all assessments are centrally set by SOLAS. While the timing of practical assessments is up to each provider, all written theory examinations are taken at the same time nationwide. Marks are determined by local apprentice examination boards based on a common marking scheme set by SOLAS. Recent adaptations of the scheme now allow providers to return marks which represent a more detailed and accurate reflection of apprentice performance in the theory exam.

Recommendation:
- The review team recommends the development and implementation of a new single MTU policy covering assessment and examination procedures including appeals and mitigation.

3.1.7 SUPPORTS FOR LEARNERS

MTU has developed a range of tailored supports for its diverse body of learners. It was clear to the review team that the institution and its staff has a student-centred mindset. While there were limited details in the ISER, the site visit revealed a multitude of learner supports including but not limited to orientation, disability support, welfare, access, and financial support. These are complemented by other functions such as the Academic Writing Centre and Maths Support Centre. The review team was particularly impressed by the dedication of all staff, both academic and PMSS, to supporting the success of all MTU students. Particular attention

is given to specific cohorts of students, such as mature students who may be returning to formal education after a long break.

Supports including counselling, pastoral care and health services are available to all students. Student counselling has increased its offering to enable students to engage with the service both face-to-face and remotely on all campuses, and with a plan to broaden its services dependent on grant funding. In relation to student wellbeing, the review team noted the continued use of legacy policies, such as the Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy (Cork campuses) and the Substance Abuse Policy (Kerry campuses) while university-wide policies are in development. In that regard, the establishment of the MTU Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Framework Working Group along with a wide advisory group was viewed by the review team as a positive development.

The move to a unitary institution has presented MTU with a challenge in relation to student support, such as the incompleteness of a single website for the entire university, and certain information being available only on the legacy sites. The curriculum management software is also different between the legacy institutions, but the review team acknowledges the institution's plan to move to a unified curriculum management system.

From discussions with PMSS staff, it was clear that MTU services began to work together very early in MTU's development, with strong links developing even prior to the formal establishment of the university. The support services, like the rest of the institution, are currently undergoing organisational redesign and the review team heard that staff considered this to be positive process.

In considering the student experience, the site visit identified that MTU staff believed that listening and responding to the student voice was central to MTU's approach to supporting the learner. Many excellent individual examples of this were conveyed to the review team, such as formative feedback being given to students on work in progress, and evidence of the inclusion of student services' input in decision making in relation to learner support. However, as mentioned previously

in Section 3.1.1 of this report, at the institutional level, it was evident from the review team's discussions with students and staff that there was an incomplete assessment feedback loop between students and academic staff, as well as there being no set period for feedback to be given by staff to students on work submitted.

As discussed in Section 3.1.3, student representation at the programme level also requires attention. At present, there is no unified university policy on student representation at programme level. On the Cork campuses, student representatives are present for only some parts of the Programme Board meetings, with students being asked to leave for other parts of meetings. Hence, the terms of reference for student membership of Programme Boards are not clear. On Kerry campuses, students take part in Joint Academic Workshops (JAWs) with programme staff outside of the programme board structures and staff bring concerns raised to the Programme Boards on behalf of the student representatives. While the intention of this is positive, as per the recommendation in Section 3.1.3, MTU should move towards a model of providing student representatives with the skills and opportunities to be full members at the relevant decision-making bodies and the same system of representation should be developed and implemented across the institution.

The review team noted the absence of a university process that affords opportunities for students to provide anonymous feedback on the learning experience at either module or programme levels. While the university does use the feedback provided through the National Student Survey, the review team noted that, at undergraduate level, this only includes the views of first- and final-year students. Furthermore, the National Student Survey is not being implemented in 2024 and hence there are no mechanisms in place in 2024 for students to provide feedback on their learning experience in a consistent and systematic way that would allow the university to benchmark, analyse trends and identify areas for enhancement. As highlighted earlier in Section 3.1.3 of this report, the review team makes recommendations for enhancing both student representation and student evaluation.

In realising its mission and strategic plan, MTU is actively engaged in making higher education more accessible and inclusive for those who traditionally may not have had the opportunity to engage in it. From the main review visit, it was evident to the review team that those who provide the support to learners are extremely committed to the university's mission of widening access to education for all.

Commendations:

- The review team commends the dedication of both academic and PMSS staff in supporting the success of all students and fostering a student-centred supportive learning environment. This was particularly evident in the high levels of student engagement, recognised nationally and internationally, and supported by extensive personalised student support systems and services.
- The review team commends MTU on the development of extensive policies, training and resources to support student mental health and wellbeing, including the development, in 2022-23, of the *MTU Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework Working Group.*

3.1.8 INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Student and staff records and core learner, graduate, and staff data are consolidated in MTU's Banner Student and CoreHR Staff Records Systems. These systems provide authorised users across faculties, schools and central administration access to manage and quality assure the provision of educational support. A merged CoreHR system is now operational, with the Banner system undergoing upgrades and rebranded as MyBan. An ongoing programme aims to replace standalone systems with integrated processes using the Banner system, streamlining experiences for both staff and students and facilitating the final merger of student records systems across campuses by 2026. Post-TU designation, MTU Governing Body approved a suite of policies related to Information and Data Management, including Information Governance, Data Protection, Retention, Handling, Access Management, and more. Implementation of

GDPR is overseen by a Data Protection Officer, who also handles Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. Policies concerning IT systems management and protection have also been adopted, ensuring a comprehensive approach to data security and management.

The transformation programme for the Banner system commenced before MTU's establishment and is divided into four phases. Phases 1 to 3 focused on system reviews and upgrades, while Phase 4 aims for a merger of the Banner student record management systems across Cork and Kerry campuses. Despite challenges such as the cyber attack affecting legacy systems, the project remains on track, with contingency measures for ensuring minimal disruption. Completion of the Banner upgrade and merger project is critical for enhancing academic governance and improving the student and staff experience. A single system across the student lifecycle will reduce manual processes and improve data quality. Feedback on system changes has highlighted the need for improved communication and user experience enhancements.

The review team was informed during the main review visit that MTU is now using the most up-to-date version of Banner. MTU is currently hiring an Academic Process Alignment Manager who will focus on aligning the academic processes and ensure these are supported by the student record management system.

An IT Transformation Programme aims to merge MTU systems securely and strategically, supporting efficient service delivery and decision-making. A Cloud-First strategy will be implemented, migrating applications and services to the cloud for improved data protection, service availability, collaboration, and user experience. Centralised identity management and enhanced security measures will streamline access to resources and ensure consistent compliance across campuses. The review team found that the merging process is progressing well with significant progress having been made on merging systems, such as HR, Finance, and Offer365 but that work has been impacted by the cyber attack.

The review team was informed that progression and award boards procedures have been adopted and adapted from the Cork campus model but with some challenges persist in relation to issues such as mitigating circumstances and the use of different student record systems. A decision was made 18 months ago to develop a single Student and Staff Record System (SRS) to improve integrity of data and staff and student experience, but this is still in process.

During several meetings with staff during the main review visit, the review team inquired about the access to data for use in the MTU quality assurance system. A general impression among staff was that, for various reasons, several issues prevented easy and flexible access to QA data. As an example, it was reported that it was difficult to obtain reliable retention data. It became clear to the review team that the lack of data feeding into quality enhancement was a broader challenge.

The review team noted that MTU has been applying the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) standards as a formal quality IT framework but is moving towards the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) standard. This is being applied nationally within the public sector and has a greater emphasis on cybersecurity. Using this formal framework will ensure a consistent and transparent approach to identify requirements, risks and dependencies and will also ensure efficiencies and realistic targets are identified.

The review team learned that the MTU's former institutions in Cork and Kerry both developed a digital strategy which has now been linked to the overall MTU strategy. The review team inquired about prioritisation of the overwhelming volume of merger-related activities and tasks and learned that these are decided by overall governance structures. The review team was informed that all the previous IT Departments have been merged

and currently processes and practices are being harmonised. However, the review team also heard from staff during the main review visit that it can be challenging to balance harmonisation requirements with daily operations and other MTU priorities.

The review team observed that the website merger has not yet been completed. A top-level joint webpage has been created, but the former web hierarchies still largely co-exist. The review team recognises the significant workload involved, but also points to the importance of early web convergence, not only as an important signal to external and internal stakeholders, but also for the primary users of the websites to avoid confusion or, in the worst case, the provision of incorrect information.

Commendation:

- The review team commends the use of a formal framework for IT projects and IT operations at MTU, which will provide transparent decision-making and efficient and effective planning.

Recommendations:

- The review team recommends that MTU give even higher priority to the website merger process in order to reduce the risk of providing incorrect information to internal and external stakeholders and to avoid any confusion that may be caused by the continued provision of legacy websites.
- The review team recommends making central unified access to QA-related data at all levels a priority to ensure the consistent implementation of quality assurance and enhancement processes and to allow for accurate and reliable data analysis and data-informed decision making.

3.1.9 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

MTU has a clear focus on communication of information to a broad set of target audiences, namely current and potential students, staff, alumni and business partners. The current primary vehicle for this is the MTU website established in 2022. The website is seen as a significant contributing factor to the 26% increase in first preference selections made through the Central Applications Office (CAO) for the next academic year. The website provides comprehensive information on education and training programmes, research, and related services, and includes information required by the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. As part of its commitment to reducing its impact on the environment, MTU recently developed an online Prospectus Builder, which allows prospective applicants to create and save a personalised digital prospectus. The review team view this as a positive step forward in terms of MTU integration and is a valuable tool for prospective students.

In addition, sections to aid enterprise, partnerships, local community, and advise visitors on how to navigate to the most relevant information on the website are easily found. The focus is on collaboration and covers a range of areas including innovation, entrepreneurship and fundraising. Information relating to governance is easily accessible and demonstrates Governing Body transparency. Links are provided to an extensive range of policies, covering both academic and corporate topics. The review team noted that the MTU website is recognised by the Government as one of only four websites that passed the 'Digital Accessibility Index 2023' audit. In addition to the website, MTU delivers extensive external communications through several social media channels.

MTU has retained an external consultancy to drive marketing and recruitment through brand awareness. The rationale is that MTU is still in its 'formation stage' and an external agency can enable some degree of flexibility and scaling capability during this phase. The review team noted the challenge for MTU in ensuring their communications, website and marketing continue to capture the diversity and distinctiveness of its large region.

Quality and accuracy are ensured through the single Marketing and Communications unit

operating across the six campuses. A rigorous process is followed, where pitches are discussed across the unit and evaluated in relation to strategy, and accuracy of data is validated through independent sources.

The main current challenge in Public Information and Communication relates to the legacy websites for both Cork and Kerry. For example, a student looking into Erasmus will arrive at separate Cork and Kerry links which then jump to the legacy websites. This is a sub-optimal experience that was mentioned several times during the main review visit, particularly by students. The review team noted that this issue has been recognised by the university and its resolution considered a high priority. A recommendation on this issue has been formulated in another section of this report. MTU's target is to continue to develop the website and to decommission the legacy websites by September 2024. The review team is of the view that consideration also needs to be given to ensuring a unified web/branding strategy across the additional campuses representing Art and Design, Music, and Maritime.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

An internal communication working group has been formed with members from all six campuses. An internal website called Workvivo has been developed for staff communications, with training being also rolled out. Information sessions and training were provided in late 2022 to communicate the details of the MTU strategy and how the new strategy influenced key messages, with the aim of ensuring staff activities were aligned to the strategy's ambitions and key messages.

The President circulates a monthly video as a general staff update and there has been a range of communications to all staff in relation to the transformation programme, including briefings and workshops. The review team noted that MTU have identified the need to improve the communications of policies, procedures, and processes to both staff and students. The recent nomination of a member of the communications team to participate in Academic Council may be a positive step but a more comprehensive approach needs to be articulated.

Recommendation:

- The review team recommends the development of a comprehensive communication strategy to include both internal and external stakeholders and ensure staff and students are kept up to date regarding developments and changes in university policies.

3.1.10 OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

As highlighted in the ISER, MTU has clearly stated that with respect to external collaborative and transnational provision, current policies and procedures remain in place on the Cork and Kerry Campuses. This will be the case until the legacy policies are altered by way of amendment or replacement by MTU. In the interim, in terms of ensuring quality and compliance, Governing Body has delegated authority to the President (and other members of the MTU Executive authorised by the President) to sign off on collaborations or agreements related to contracts with external parties on behalf of MTU. Governing Body has, however, reserved approval for any high-profile matters and/or matters associated with a high level of cost or risk.

During the main review visit, the review team met with a wide range of external stakeholders, including linked providers, industry representatives and collaborative provision partners. Overall, these stakeholders were positive about their engagements with MTU, and the review team commends MTU for the depth and effectiveness of these partnerships. The review team were impressed with the number and range of collaborative provision programmes, with both other education institutions and enterprise organisations, and the role of the Extended Campus in relation to enterprise partners, as discussed in Section 3.1.3.

External partners welcomed the formation of MTU and observed that MTU is not a "regional technical college", but a "university representing the whole south-west of Ireland", which they see as the key to talent recruitment. The external partners were of the view that the quality of the learning experience

and student progress have been to the fore in the development of the organisation design. The review team noted strong collaborations and partnerships with other Designated Awarding Bodies (DABs) and with a diverse set of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs). As noted earlier in this report, MTU is to be commended for the establishment of extensive and effective regional, national, and global industry partnerships.

Key points regarding the operation of these collaborations, which emerged during the main review visit, include the following:

- MTU has been open and collaborative with their external partners in the development of the strategic plan.
- In many cases, the external partners view MTU as a strategic learning partner and the university is embedded into the external organisation's strategy.
- Strong collaborations were noted in recruiting students and in developing and adapting programmes to address industry needs.
- A key strength noted by external partners is MTU's approach and openness to responding to feedback.
- The external enterprise partners recognise the calibre of MTU graduates, their employability and how quickly they adapt to the working environment.

There are two areas where the external collaboration experience could be further enhanced, particularly in the context of industry collaborations covering pharma, IT, cyber and medical device companies. Both enhancements call for the development of a more formalised approach to stakeholder management as noted in the form of a recommendation earlier in the body of this report:

- While the relationships between MTU and external partners are no doubt strong, and both MTU and external organisation representatives were positive about their ability to connect with the right group or

person, the management of the relationships/ interactions is predominantly informal and would benefit from supplementing the current informal processes with additional formal quality-focused processes. This would ensure consistent approaches in relation to programme development and feedback and would ensure appropriate processes are in place to address partnership issues when they arise.

- An additional opportunity to enhance external partnerships could also be driven by the creation of an industry alliance or advisory group. By bringing several external partners together in a more formal way, further opportunities for synergy and improvements may be identified.

Commendation:
- The review team commends MTU for the wide range of programmes offered in partnership with professional bodies and for which professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) offer professional recognition.

3.1.11 SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING, AND REVIEW

In addition to academic quality assurance, MTU established an Audit and Risk Committee, which reports directly to Governing Body, to oversee risk management, internal control and internal audit. The internal academic quality assurance processes within MTU are aligned to external quality assurance cycles and reporting requirements, including institutional reviews and the Annual Quality Report (AQR).

Regarding the evaluation of the student experience, the AQRs (p. 69) in 2022 and 2023 describe how the findings of National Student Surveys are 'analysed by the university and discussed by the Academic Council and other relevant units. However, as identified previously in this report, the review team noted the limitations of the national survey with, for example, only first- and final-year undergraduate students completing the survey, and the national survey being paused for 2024. Hence, the over-dependence on this

survey for feedback from students on their learning experiences presents a risk for MTU, particularly with the absence of any other opportunities for students to provide anonymous feedback on their learning experiences.

While the review team noted the progress made to develop and implement MTU academic policies and quality assurance processes, more work is required, and the review team noted that MTU has prioritised this work. The team also noted that the legacy policies and procedures of MTU (Cork) and MTU (Kerry) remain partially in place in the different campus locations as they apply to monitoring and review.

On the Kerry campus, the *Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes* describes the role of Programme Boards in assuring the quality and standard of academic programmes, including the delivery, assessment, and curricula, and ensuring stakeholder feedback informs academic decision-making. Similarly, on the Cork campus, the monitoring of academic programmes is carried out by Programme Boards, as described in the *Annual Programme Status Review* process. Both Programme Boards are required to report annually on programme developments and enhancements and this process is facilitated on the Cork campus through the recently implemented Enterprise *Reporting Portal.* Programme monitoring is informed by a range of performance indicators related to student profile and performance.

In addition to programme monitoring, existing quality assurance procedures across MTU include processes for programme review, academic unit review and professional services reviews. The review team notes and commends MTU for the extensive engagement with internal and external stakeholders in the review process. In addition to internal reviews, MTU engages with several external quality frameworks and many of its academic programmes are accredited or regulated by PSRBs.

Commendation:
- The review team commends MTU for the inclusion of internal and external stakeholders

in their quality review processes, including having external experts and students on review teams.

3.1.12 RESEARCH

MTU emphasises the development of a framework for research and postgraduate provision that aligns with its extended powers. With Research and Innovation expenditure of €26.2m and €2.2m in industry-funded research income, MTU has a strong position in these areas across the TU sector. This strength is also reflected in the number of research postgraduates and postdocs at 290 and 31 respectively. Research income is mainly from competitive funding applications to national and international agencies. The Research Offices, supported by the Recurrent Grant Allocation Model (RGAM) budget, assist in building sustainable capacity in research and innovation. The university's strategic development is steered by the Heads of Research with contributions from the Research Council Integration and Development Committee.

The university has established various policies and procedures regulating ethical research conduct and knowledge transfer. These include an *Authorship Policy, Code of Good Practice in Research, Human Research Ethics Policy, Open Access Policy*, and *Research Data Management Policy*, among others. These policies are approved by the Academic Council and are accessible on the MTU website.

The Research Integrity and Compliance Officer (RICO) ensures a research environment promoting responsible conduct and high integrity standards. The RICO collaborates with offices and postholders to develop research-related policies, procedures, and resources. Training initiatives on research integrity are provided to staff and students through online platforms and workshops.

The MTU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) oversees research activities involving human participants, ensuring ethical compliance. It consists of members from all six campuses and reviews applications for minimal risk and full ethical

research. The establishment of HREC is an attempt to streamline the ethical review process, reduce review time, and receive constructive feedback.

MTU governs research degree provision through comprehensive regulations covering quality aspects of postgraduate education. The Postgraduate Research Board (PRB) oversees quality assurance, policy formulation, and monitoring of research students. Recent enhancements include the proposed establishment of the MTU Graduate Research School, a Community of Practice for Research Supervisors, and increased digitisation of administrative processes.

The university plans to form a Graduate Research School to centralise governance and administration. A Community of Practice for Research Supervisors is proposed to enhance professional development. Digitisation of administrative processes is also prioritised to streamline operations. The university aims to strengthen its Research and Innovation infrastructure and increase multidisciplinary collaborations to address regional and global challenges.

MTU has a full QA process in place, where the Dean of Academic Quality Enhancement checks student qualifications and arranges supervision teams and training programmes. Within six months a full proposal is submitted, reviewed by an external expert and then a Graduate Panel receives a presentation by the research student. An extensive mid-term review report is produced with a progress report and plan. Every six months the both student and supervisor submit a page-long report, and both reports are circulated to a discipline-based committee. The Research Committee can recommend a six-month recovery plan, if progress is not going to plan, and additional measures include removal from the programme and an appeals process. The review team found these comprehensive measures highly commendable.

The university has a significant number of international research students, and the review team met with representatives of this group of researchers in several sessions. The overall

impression was that this group is performing well although it was noted that international research students tended to be working on individual projects and that some of them might have contact only with their supervisor. There is potential for an improved student experience by setting up a stronger community with more facilitated events for these students.

The review team noted MTU's active membership of the INGENIUM European University Alliance which supports investment in and sustainability of transnational cooperation among 10 universities in 10 European states. This was one of several international collaborations supporting the development of MTU's research endeavours.

MTU has processes in place for recognising strong research performance, including career progression and promotion. When enquiring about promotion routes related to learning and teaching the review team concluded that learning, teaching, and student experience is not recognised or rewarded to the same extent as research. The review team's discussions with staff indicated that staff retention challenges might be linked to this

issue and thus it merits a greater focus of attention.

As mentioned above, MTU has a variety of goals for developing research quality on all campuses. During meetings with researchers and research leaders, the review team probed their level of knowledge of the MTU research strategy, and how the strategy was perceived. Knowledge of the Research Strategy was notably higher among managers and research leaders and more modest among individual researchers.

Some of those interviewed pointed out that the merger allows for more cross-campus and interdisciplinary activities, developing further opportunities for the university. This has led to some additional successes in securing funding in Ireland and the EU. Overall, several staff found that the new research community is more successful, although they also pointed to a need for funding mechanisms to allow further collaboration as well as a need for increased internal support to encourage cross-campus collaborations.

After listening to the testimonies given, the review team deduced that MTU has no specific university

support unit for supporting applications for research grants or subsidies and the provision of such a unit will be especially important for supporting early career researchers.

The review team interviewed both research centre leaders, other research leaders, and individual researchers. The conversation with research centre leaders confirmed the prior impression for the review team, namely that MTU has several extraordinarily strong research centres. The conversation did not disclose any major challenges for the centres and the general impression was that the centres had strong management that largely acted autonomously. For the individual researchers, the situation was more challenging, with several reporting a significant workload related to teaching obligations that then hampered research development. For early-career researchers and some more senior researchers it was found challenging to find time to establish a research portfolio or to extend an existing portfolio. The review team considers this an important issue to address within a comprehensive research and innovation strategy.

The review team had discussions with both managers and staff regarding measures to remedy gender imbalances in research staffing and leadership. As discussed in Section 3.1.4 of this report, the university has a clear policy for diversity and inclusion but specific targets for inclusion, and the measures to pursue these goals, seem to vary significantly across the university and the review team was unable to identify a comprehensive strategy for addressing gender inequality in research. A general impression from the meetings conducted by the review team was that it was mainly left to individual research leaders to pursue goals for diversity and inclusion with little accountability regarding these goals. In some of the meetings between the review team and groups of researchers, only male researchers and research leaders were present.

Commendations:

- The review team commends MTU for the scope and scale of research and innovation, for establishing an optimistic and positive research culture with high expectations for future research opportunities in the new, merged structure and for its clear strategic focus on the development of multi- and inter-disciplinary research designed to have extensive reach and impact in driving educational, societal and economic development.
- The review team commends MTU for the prioritisation of collaborative research linked to issues of global relevance and efforts to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The review team commends MTU for the development and support of a series of Research Centres and Groups that are internationally significant in their research outputs and impact, and for its active membership of INGENIUM European University Alliance which supports investment in and sustainability of transnational co-operation among 10 universities in 10 European states.
- The review team commends MTU for the systematic approach to quality assurance in the MTU PhD program and for its focus on research integrity with all research-active staff and all research students required to undertake research integrity training and offered the option of undertaking a 10-credit module *Current Issues in Research Integrity*.

Recommendations:

- The review team recommends that MTU undertake a review of promotion processes to recognise and reward scholarship and innovation in learning and teaching.
- The review team recommends that MTU develop a clear research and innovation strategy, which embodies the scope and scale of ambition of technological universities and is aligned to a new strategy for learning, teaching and student engagement.
- The review team recommends that MTU develop a clear strategy for external collaboration that enables the maximisation of research potential and impact.

3.2 OBJECTIVE 2 - QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Alignment of institution's mission and targets for quality

The internal academic quality assurance system of MTU is systematically linked into external quality assurance cycles at the national level through several mechanisms. Chief amongst these are the annual reports, including the Annual Quality Report (AQR), to the two statutory agencies with legal and regulatory responsibilities for Irish further and higher education: Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) (System Performance Framework 2023-2028: Performance Agreement Template).

MTU's strategy for the five-year period from 2022 to 2027 identifies strategic pillars with associated goals and targets. The university has implemented a system called ViClarity, which is a comprehensive way of collating and tracking progress in relation to strategy. While this is not exclusively about quality, quality is one of many goals ViClarity is designed to support. The main area of the review team's observation relates to where the holistic ownerships of the overarching goals sits and who reviews and reports on progress, how often, to which fora and with what consequence.

MTU Governing Body has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the strategic plan and it has established an Audit and Risk Committee to assist in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities regarding risk management, internal control, and internal audit. As mentioned previously in this report, the role of Governing Body in respect of quality assurance and enhancement could be further clarified to ensure maximum alignment of the institution's mission and targets for quality.

The staff body works within a positive organisational culture and the review team saw extensive evidence of a professional, collegiate and compassionate culture across the university. It was particularly notable that such a positive culture had been maintained during a period of significant transformation in which staff had experienced a high degree of uncertainty. It will be important to maintain and build on this positive culture and,

to this end, it is recommended that regular staff surveys and associated action plans be conducted.

Commendations:

- The review team commends MTU on the progress made in establishing strong inter-campus staff relationships that will underpin the successful development of appropriate structures and processes required to realise the ambitions of the strategic plan.
- The review team commends MTU on the commitment, resilience, and professionalism of staff in ensuring a positive student learning experience.

Recommendation:

- The review team recommends that MTU implement a system for evaluating staff engagement and satisfaction and addressing any issues. This can be accompanied by, for example, an institution-wide staff survey conducted by external and impartial professionals annually during the major transformation, and then moving to biannually.

Innovative and Effective Practices for Quality Enhancement

The review team found that MTU has a strong culture of focusing on the quality of all aspects of the student learning experience and Section 3.1 of this report refers to multiple examples of best practice and innovation. Overall, while the review team found that quality assurance and enhancement could be further improved through the introduction of more systemic and formal university-wide policies and procedures, there are many examples, albeit often isolated, of innovative and effective practices across every area of the university. For instance, as mentioned in previous sections of this report, the engagement and inclusion of stakeholders in the quality assurance and enhancement processes, and in particular quality reviews, is a particular strength and ensures rigorous and comprehensive evaluation. The review team agreed that MTU could further enhance its quality assurance and

enhancement processes by supplementing existing practices for liaising with external stakeholders with a more formal and systemic quality framework.

3.3 OBJECTIVE 3 – PROCEDURES FOR ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

The review team is satisfied that the procedures in place at MTU are consistent with QQI policy and criteria for access, transfer and progression. Standard entry into Years 1 to 4 of full-time undergraduate programmes of MTU is through the Central Applications Office (CAO). Candidates wishing to apply for entry, advanced entry, exemptions, module credit or full awards on the basis of prior learning, be that formal or non-formal/ informal learning, can do so in accordance with the MTU Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy. MTU has a long-established national and international reputation in RPL policy, process, practice and scholarship and RPL can be applied for in any validated MTU programme or module, under this single university policy. A range of well-established RPL supports is available to candidates and academic assessors across the university through the MTU RPL Service based on the MTU (Cork) Bishopstown campus and the MTU (Kerry) Registrar's Office.

Promoting access to higher education for under-represented groups is a priority for MTU. In these endeavours, the university is guided by the goals and objectives of the *National Access Plan: A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022 - 2028*[4], as well as its obligations under other relevant national legislation and policy documents.

The Access Service supports access to MTU for groups who are under-represented in higher education. This includes students with disabilities, learning difference and/or significant ongoing health conditions; students who are experiencing social and economic barriers to access; mature students; Travellers; and minority groups. The review team received extremely positive feedback from both staff and students on these initiatives, specifically those working with the Traveller community.

MTU is part of the HEAR (Higher Education Access Route) national admissions scheme which offers places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers aged under 23 years from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. All HEAR-eligible students, once registered in MTU, are entitled to avail themselves of post-entry support including financial, academic and personal support.

Commendations:

- The review team commends MTU on its visible and inclusive student-centred culture that widens access to higher education and is clearly guided by the *National Access Plan: A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028*. This is demonstrated by its strong record of regional collaboration to ensure effective progression from further to higher education, with active membership of the Cork Colleges Progression Scheme (CCPS) being key in connecting further education and training to higher education programmes offered by MTU.

- The review team commends MTU on a well-developed policy of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) enabling entry, advanced entry, exemptions, and module credit on the basis of prior formal and non-formal learning.

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4   National Access Plan 2022–2028 | Policy | Higher Education Authority (hea.ie)

Section 4

Conclusions

Conclusions

4.1 OVERALL FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The review team wishes to express its gratitude to the many colleagues at Munster Technological University (MTU), led by President Professor Maggie Cusack, for their significant efforts in preparing for the review and for the helpful and collegiate manner in which all colleagues participated in the main review visit. The documentation received by the review team in advance of, during, and subsequent to the visit was compiled diligently and was most helpful in conducting the review.

Commensurate with the positive learning culture that the review team encountered throughout the main review visit, members of the senior management team made clear at the outset of the visit that they viewed the review process as a useful learning experience and a critical milestone on their journey to becoming a unified institution. This culture of openness to learning, to feedback, and to change remained evident throughout the review team's visit and provides the very foundation required to ensure that MTU is well equipped to build on the successes of its predecessor institutions and the that have already been made by the new university.

The review team was particularly impressed by the clarity of vision and level of ambition articulated in MTU's strategic plan, *Our Shared Vision 2022–2027*, together with the supporting thematic and enabling strategies that evidenced a progressive, values-driven university community committed to fulfilling the primary objective of a technological university in supporting the region's economy, community, and education.

The university's impact on its region was also evident throughout the review process and the review team was impressed by the extensive and effective regional, national, and global partnerships with government, industry, and community. These partnerships, which extended from all campuses, provided evidence of MTU's reach and impact in research and external engagement and also offered significant enhancement of learning, teaching, and the wider student experience.

Widening access is a key objective of technological universities and the review team was clear that MTU has significant strengths in this regard; the university has a visible and inclusive student-centred culture that widens access to higher education and offers opportunities for life-long learning.

Underpinning all of the developments that the review team evaluated is MTU's exceptionally strong culture founded on a clear set of values and lived through well-developed inter-campus staff relationships that are key to the successful development and implementation of the structures and processes required to deliver the ambitions of the strategic plan. This organisational culture values openness and informality in creating a collegiate community and the review team recommend that these current strengths be supplemented and complemented by developing an increased focus on establishing robust systems and processes that provide greater evidence of governance, delegated authority and accountability so that all staff and students are clear about their roles, rights and responsibilities, can play their full part in having a voice within the MTU community, and can develop to their full potential as members of staff or students.

These developments, which should form part of MTU's wider ongoing transformation, will also enable the university to meet new ambitions in equality, diversity, and inclusion. This is particularly pertinent in relation to senior research staff who will then provide role models for the next generation working in the traditionally male-dominated areas of science and technology in which MTU has such clear strengths.

The university had made good progress towards the unification of the cultures, structures, systems, and processes required to ensure effective governance, management and administration of quality assurance

and enhancement and excellent practice is evidenced by the many commendations contained within this report. The report's recommendations are designed to assist MTU on its transformation journey and the review team is confident that these recommendations will be received and acted upon in the positive spirit in which they are offered.

Finally, the review team wish to thank Dr Áine Ní Shé, Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs on the Cork Campuses and Institutional Coordinator for the review, for the exceptional level of support that she and her team provided to the review team throughout the review process. The review team is also grateful for the extensive ongoing support provided by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) who ensured the review process ran effectively.

4.2 FINDINGS

The review team was unanimous in its conclusions that:

1. MTU has made progress, commensurate with expectations, towards the development and implementation of a unified institutional QA infrastructure and has realistic plans for the full implementation of a single robust QA infrastructure;

2. MTU has demonstrated the effectiveness of its QA procedures and the extent of their implementation;

3. MTU procedures are compliant with ESG and have had regard to QQI QA Guidelines;

4. MTU has demonstrated the enhancement of quality through governance, policy and procedures;

5. MTU has implemented procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression in keeping with the QQI policy restatement.

4.3 COMMENDATIONS

Strategy

1. The review team commends the development of a coherent strategic plan, *Our Shared Vision 2022–2027*, that has established a clear mission, vision and set of guiding values for the new university, in which there is a clear shared focus on the transformation journey, 'Succeeding Together', and the role of the university in leading 'transformation through education' to fulfil the HEA Performance Agreement September 2023–August 2028 in accordance with the *Higher Education Authority System Performance Framework 2023–28.*

2. The review team commends MTU for the identification and development of five key *Strategic Themes* to drive the ambitions of the strategic plan in response to internal and external challenge and change: *Learner Education and Experience; People and Community; Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem; Leading Regional Development; Global Outlook.*

3. The review team commends MTU for the focus on five key *Strategic Enablers* to guide and support a five-year Implementation Plan: *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion; Sustainability and UN Sustainable Development Goals; Collective Commitment; Digital Infrastructure and Capabilities; Physical Infrastructure and Capabilities.*

Structures

4. The review team commends MTU on the development of a clear and comprehensive executive structure designed to provide strategic leadership and synergies across the organisation.

5. The review team commends the development of a single, high-level, two-tier Academic Operating Model structured across five faculties, each spanning multiple campuses, and designed to enable cross-campus working and the development of a single Professional Management and Support Services (PMSS) Operating Model aligned to the Academic Operating Model and designed to streamline resource allocation in the pursuit of strategic objectives.

6. The review team commends the use of a formal framework for IT projects and

IT operations at MTU, which will provide transparent decision making and efficient and effective planning.

Culture and People

7. The review team commends the MTU executive, led by the President, on the extensive work undertaken to date in establishing a strong values-based culture and laying the foundations for the development of a clear institutional identity, vision, and purpose.

8. The review team commends MTU for the adoption of a *Culture Values Assessment* to inform the strategic plan and the ensuing identification of values that prioritise, among others, *Responsibility and Ownership, Teamwork*, and *Cooperation.*

9. The review team commends the clear prioritisation of *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* as a key strategic theme within the strategic plan, *Our Shared Vision 2022–2027.*

10. The review team commends MTU on the university-wide and individual staff development initiatives in terms of new staff, non-senior management training, student support services, and counselling; especially regarding those individually initiated activities. The team acknowledges and compliments the commitment and engagement demonstrated by those involved.

11. The review team commends MTU on the progress made in establishing strong inter-campus staff relationships that will underpin the successful development of appropriate structures and processes required to deliver the ambitions of the strategic plan.

12. The review team commends MTU on the commitment, resilience, and professionalism of staff in ensuring a positive student learning experience.

Widening Access and Participation in Life-Long Learning

13. The review team commends MTU on its visible and inclusive student-centred culture that widens access to higher education and is clearly guided by the N*ational Access Plan: A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028.* This is demonstrated through its strong record of regional collaboration to ensure effective progression from further to higher education, with active membership of the Cork Colleges Progression Scheme (CCPS) being key in connecting further education and training to higher education programmes offered by MTU.

14. The review team commends MTU on a well-developed policy of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) enabling entry, advanced entry, exemptions, and module credit on the basis of prior formal and non-formal learning.

Support for Learning and Student Voice

15. The review team commends the dedication of both academic and PMSS staff in supporting the success of all students and fostering a student-centred supportive learning environment. This was particularly evident in the high levels of student engagement, recognised nationally and internationally, and supported by extensive personalised student support systems and services.

16. The review team commends MTU on the development of extensive policies, training and resources to support student mental health and wellbeing, including the development, in 2022–23, of the *MTU Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework Working Group.*

Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

17. The review team commends MTU for the scope and scale of research and innovation, for establishing an optimistic and positive research culture with high expectations for future research opportunities in the new, merged structure and for its clear strategic focus on the development of multi- and inter-disciplinary research designed to have extensive reach and impact in driving educational, societal and economic development.

18. The review team commends MTU for the prioritisation of collaborative research linked to issues of global relevance and efforts to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

19. The review team commends MTU for the development and support of a series of Research Centres and Groups that are internationally significant in their research outputs and impact, and for its active membership of INGENIUM European University Alliance which supports investment in and sustainability of transnational co-operation among 10 universities in 10 European states.

20. The review team commends MTU for the systematic approach to Quality Assurance in the MTU PhD program and for its focus on research integrity with all research-active staff and all research students required to undertake research integrity training and offered the option of undertaking a 10-credit module *Current Issues in Research Integrity*.

External Partnership and Regional Development

21. The review team commends MTU on the extensive and visible contribution of the university to achieving the primary objective of a technological university in supporting the region's economy, community, and education.

22. The review team commends the establishment of extensive and effective regional, national, and global government, industry and community partnerships that are diverse in nature, and which provide evidence of enhancement of learning, teaching and research and high-level, impactful external engagement.

23. The review team commends MTU for the wide range of programmes offered in partnership with professional bodies and for which professional, statutory and regulatory Bodies (PSRB) offer professional recognition.

24. The review team commends MTU for the inclusion of internal and external stakeholders in their quality review processes, including having external experts and students on review teams.

4.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

Governance

1. The review team recommends that MTU engage in a more structured and planned consultation process while undertaking a comprehensive and evidence-based process of reflection and self-evaluation when preparing for the next institutional review.

2. The review team recommends that MTU improve governance of quality assurance and enhancement by establishing a more comprehensive scheme of delegation in which roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the Governing Body, Academic Council and their sub-committees, together with the Executive, are made more explicit and transparent. This should include clear ownership of strategic objectives, key performance indicators, and risks in alignment with the university strategic plan, *Our Shared Vision 2022–2027.*

3. The review team recommends that MTU ensure the Governing Body and its sub-committees adequately challenge and scrutinise the university's international ambitions and activities to enable MTU to fulfil its potential in staff and student mobility, research, innovation and entrepreneurship.

4. The review team recommends that MTU review the size of Academic Council in accordance with Section 16.3 of The Technological Universities Act (2018) to

ensure it is sufficiently focused to deliver the functions required of an Academic Council and outlined in Section 17 of the above-mentioned Act.

Structures

5. The review team recommends the establishment of the new University Executive be expedited and clear responsibilities be identified for the Vice-President together with clear structures, roles and responsibilities at all levels reporting to Executive members. In particular, due attention should be paid to having the capacity and capability to enhance learning, teaching and the student experience, and to ensuring the achievement of the strategic objectives.

6. The review team recommends that MTU expedite the replacement of all legacy regulations to form a unified set of policies and procedures covering all aspects of quality assurance and enhancement relating to all students on all campuses.

7. The review team recommends that MTU develop and populate the academic and professional management support services structure, below the tier of the Vice President, to ensure adequate and effective middle management leadership and support for the senior executive to drive quality enhancement initiatives. Furthermore, MTU should monitor the scope and scale of roles relating to and including the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs, making changes where appropriate to ensure there is visible and accountable leadership of innovation and enhancement in learning, teaching, and student engagement.

8. The review team recommends that MTU give even higher priority to the website merger process in order to reduce the risk of providing incorrect information to internal and external stakeholders and to avoid any confusion that may be caused by the continued provision of legacy websites.

9. The review team recommends making central unified access to QA-related data at all levels a priority to ensure the consistent implementation of quality assurance and enhancement processes and to allow for accurate and reliable data analysis and data-informed decision making.

Strategy

10. The review team recommends that MTU develop a strategic approach to portfolio management and governance, including programme development, suspension, and retirement, enabling lifelong learning and the sustainability of the university. This approach should include a holistic and objective assessment of the current programme and module portfolio, taking into consideration the duplication of programmes and modules across campus locations. This assessment should be conducted jointly by Academic Council and the University Executive and should introduce metrics for following up the viability of programmes and their lifecycle, as well as creating a formal procedure for retiring programmes and modules.

11. The review team recommends that MTU ensure that all decisions relating to programme development, suspension and retirement be taken in line with the university's strategy and formally approved by Academic Council, and that both Academic Council and the Governing Body receive, discuss and approve regular reports summarising decisions relating to existing programmes and plans for new programmes within the context of continuous portfolio review.

Culture and People

12. The review team recommends that MTU establish more formal, robust, transparent, and documented processes and mechanisms to supplement and complement the existing system of networks and relationships upon which the current approach to quality is over reliant.

13. The review team recommends the development of a comprehensive people

and talent strategy that ensures recruitment, retention, development, and diversification of staff to drive and deliver the ambitions of the strategic plan, with national and international benchmarking. This should include robust systems to measure and monitor staff profiles and progress towards achieving a more diverse workforce, including through proactive international recruitment.

14. The review team recommends the development of more comprehensive, and consistently applied, onboarding package, induction process, and a clear set of processes relating to staff exit to ensure continuous improvement in talent identification, recruitment, reward, and retention.

15. The review team recommends the development of clear documentation specifying the requirements for qualifications, skills, and experience in the recruitment of academic staff, with a clear emphasis on increasing the entry level qualifications and research experience of those recruited.

16. The review team recommends that MTU develop and implement a comprehensive programme of staff development and support for academic staff delivering learning, teaching, and assessment, and this should include the ethical use of AI.

17. The review team recommends that MTU continue to develop its strategy and accompanying 'smart' targets designed to improve the representation of women among academic staff, particularly at more senior levels. Such a strategy should pay particular attention to developing mechanisms to support women into research leadership roles.

18. The review team recommends the development of a comprehensive communication strategy to include both internal and external stakeholders and ensure staff and students are kept up to date regarding developments and changes in university policies.

19. The review team recommends that MTU undertake a review of promotion processes to recognise and reward scholarship and innovation in learning and teaching.

20. The review team recommends that MTU implement a system for evaluating staff engagement and satisfaction and addressing any issues. This can be accompanied by, for example, an institution-wide staff survey conducted by external and impartial professionals annually during the major transformation, and then moving to biannually.

Support for Learning and Student Voice

21. The review team recommends that MTU enhance the student voice at programme level through the development of a uniform system of representation at formal academic decision-making fora, and implement a fit-for-purpose, university-wide system of independent evaluation of the student learning experience at both module and programme levels. Resulting reports should be used as a regular part of Annual Programme Review, Periodic Programme Review and internal Quality Reviews and feedback provided to students. This should include a robust university-wide mechanism giving opportunities to all students to provide feedback at module, programme and university level with responsive action plans discussed with student representatives and approved by the relevant sub-committee of Academic Council and then communicated to students.

22. The review team recommends the development and piloting of a system for providing structured formal feedback and feed-forward to all students on all modules that indicates their progress, together with a policy that stipulates both a maximum time period before formative feedback is received in each module, and a maximum turnaround time for the marking and return of assessed work on all modules.

23. The review team recommends the development and implementation of a new single MTU policy covering assessment and examination procedures including appeals and mitigation.

Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

24. The review team recommends that MTU develop a clear research and innovation strategy, which embodies the scope and scale of ambition of Technological Universities and is aligned to a new strategy for learning, teaching and student engagement.

25. The review team recommends that MTU develop a clear strategy for external collaboration that enables the maximisation of research potential and impact.

External Partnership and Regional Development

26. The review team recommends the development of a more strategic approach to external stakeholder engagement and management at programme, department, faculty, and institution-level to ensure a co-ordinated approach to relationship-building, the ongoing evaluation of partnerships and their continuous improvement to maximise the potential of external partnerships in line with the university's strategic plan, *Our Shared Vision 2022–2027.*

Internationalisation and Global Outlook

27. The review team recommends that MTU, in order to further its internationalisation agenda, develop an internationalisation strategy for the curriculum with clear roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, SMART objectives and appropriate funding to enable greater internationalisation of students' learning, and raises its ambition in relation to outward staff mobility, developing the strategy and policies required to facilitate this ambition, accompanied by the resources to support the internationalisation of staff.

Section 5

Top 5 Commendations and
Recommendations

Top 5 Commendations and Recommendations

TOP 5 COMMENDATIONS

1. The review team commends the development of a coherent Strategic Plan, *Our Shared Vision 2022–2027*, that has established a clear mission, vision and set of guiding values for the new university, in which there is a clear shared focus on the transformation journey, 'Succeeding Together', and the role of the university in leading 'transformation through education' to achieve the HEA Performance Agreement September 2023 – August 2028 in accordance with the *Higher Education Authority System Performance* Framework *2023 – 28.* (Commendation 1)

2. The review team commends MTU on the commitment, resilience, and professionalism of staff in ensuring a positive student learning experience. (Commendation 12)

3. The review team commends MTU on its visible and inclusive student-centred culture that widens access to higher education and is clearly guided by the *National Access Plan: A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022–2028*. This is demonstrated through its strong record of regional collaboration to ensure effective progression from further to higher education, with active membership of the Cork Colleges Progression Scheme (CCPS) being key in connecting further education and training to higher education programmes offered by MTU. (Commendation 13)

4. The review team commends the establishment of extensive and effective regional, national, and global government, industry and community partnerships that are diverse in nature, and which provide evidence of enhancement of learning, teaching and research and high-level, impactful external engagement. (Commendation 22)

5. The review team commends MTU on the extensive and visible contribution of the university to achieving the primary objective of a technological university in supporting the region's economy, community, and education. (Commendation 21)

TOP 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The review team recommends that MTU improve governance of quality assurance and enhancement by establishing a more comprehensive scheme of delegation in which roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the Governing Body, Academic Council and their sub-committees, together with the Executive, are made more explicit and transparent. This should include clear ownership of strategic objectives, key performance indicators, and risks in alignment with the university strategic plan*, Our Shared Vision 2022–2027.* (Recommendation 2)

2. The review team recommends the establishment of the new University Executive be expedited and clear responsibilities identified for the Vice-President together with clear structures, roles and responsibilities at all levels reporting to Executive members. In particular, due attention should be paid to having the capacity and capability to enhance learning, teaching and the student experience, and to ensuring the achievement of the strategic objectives. (Recommendation 5)

3. The review team recommends that MTU establish more formal, robust, transparent,

and documented processes and mechanisms to supplement and complement the existing system of networks and relationships upon which the current approach to quality is over-reliant. (Recommendation 12)

4. The review team recommends the development of a comprehensive people and talent strategy that ensures recruitment, retention, development, and diversification of staff to drive and deliver the ambitions of the strategic plan, with national and international benchmarking. This should include robust systems to measure and monitor staff profiles and progress towards achieving a more diverse workforce, including through proactive international recruitment. (Recommendation 13)

5. The review team recommends that MTU enhance the student voice at programme level through the development of a uniform system of representation at formal academic decision-making fora, and implement a fit-for-purpose, university-wide system of independent evaluation of the student learning experience at both module and programme levels. Resulting reports should be used as a regular part of Annual Programme Review, Periodic Programme Review and internal Quality Reviews and feedback provided to students. This should include a robust university-wide mechanism giving opportunities to all students to provide feedback at module, programme and university level with responsive action plans discussed with student representatives and approved by the relevant sub-committee of Academic Council and then communicated to students. (Recommendation 21)

Section 6

Institutional Response

Institutional Response

Institutional Response to the Report of the CINNTE Review Panel for Munster Technological University (June 2024)

Munster Technological University (MTU) is a multi-campus technological university in the South-West of Ireland with an ethos of excellence and an ambition to serve the needs of its community and region through its rich academic provision, broad range of collaborations, and vision of higher education provision that is innovative, responsive, entrepreneurial and forward-looking.

Coming into being in January 2021, in the midst of a global pandemic, MTU was fortunate to build on the long-established strengths, extensive experience, and passion for education, research and entrepreneurship of two respected predecessor institutions, and is proud to carry on their strong traditions of supporting and engaging students and widening access to higher education and training for all in the region.

We are delighted that this ethos shone through strongly in the meetings of MTU staff, students and external partners with the CINNTE Review Team during their visit, finding reflection in the Team's commendations on MTU's "visible and inclusive student-centred culture that widens access to higher education" and the "extensive and visible contribution of the university to achieving the primary objective of a technological university in supporting the region's economy, community, and education".

MTU is deeply committed to achieving the highest quality and standards in all we do. All of our activities, be they in education provision, research, or engagement, are underpinned and framed by comprehensive and rigorous quality assurance procedures.

The CINNTE Review Team observed that it encountered a "culture of openness to learning, to feedback, and to change" throughout their visit to MTU. We have never believed in 'resting on our laurels', but continuously strive to further enhance what we do – we can always improve, and everything we do well, we can do even better.

We are therefore most grateful to the members of the CINNTE Review Team for their astute, thorough, yet collegial and supportive review which yielded both an appreciation of our strengths, expressed in a range of findings and commendations, and guidance on opportunities for further enhancements given through a number of constructive and insightful recommendations.

As described in our self-study documentation, MTU completed its first Strategic Plan, *Our Shared Vision 2022 – 2027*, in September 2022 following broad-based stakeholder engagement and a period of intensive development. Each of the five thematic areas of Our Shared Vision encompasses five wide-ranging and ambitious Strategic Objectives for MTU. To facilitate achievement of these objectives, the University has identified a number of key Strategic Enablers that will guide and support MTU and ensure ongoing success.

In their report, the members of the CINNTE Review Team express themselves "impressed by the clarity of vision and level of ambition articulated in MTU's strategic plan", noting that "the supporting thematic and enabling strategies [...] evidenced a progressive, values-driven university community". The Team further commends "the development of a coherent Strategic Plan [...] in which there is a clear shared focus on the transformation journey, 'Succeeding Together'".

We are gratified and encouraged by the Team's strong endorsement of our shared vision for the future development of our University. Implementation of the Strategic Objectives is

progressing, and its progress is a standing item on the agenda of the Strategic Development Committee of Governing Body.

The CINNTE Review Team also commends MTU's diverse, "extensive and effective regional, national, and global government, industry and community partnerships", noting that these evidence, amongst others, "high-level, impactful external engagement".

Our partnerships are invaluable to us, enriching every aspect of our activities and providing myriad impulses for further growth. We are pleased about the Review Team's recognition of the breadth, depth and impact of our many connections with partners within the region and beyond. We express our deepest appreciation to each of our partners in further and higher education, industry, business and the broader community. This commendation is a recognition of ongoing support from our partners which we value greatly.

 A commendation also goes to the staff of MTU for their "commitment, resilience, and professionalism [...] in ensuring a positive student learning experience". I would like not only to echo this appreciation, but to extend it and express my sincere thanks to every member of MTU staff for the unwavering commitment and professionalism that I have seen you bring to all you do to improve our University on a daily basis, throughout a period of great change and additional challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic and the cyber-attack.

 The CINNTE Review Team observes that "MTU's extensive and inclusive approach to consultation and collaboration" was evident to its members throughout their encounters with students, staff and external stakeholders during the review visit.

It is therefore a matter of regret to us that our planned targeted stakeholder engagement towards self-study specifically for the CINNTE review had to be curtailed, for reasons outlined in the ISER. We concur with the CINNTE Review Team that "a more structured and planned consultation process" would have been desirable, and will be implemented, planning for broad-based, in-depth stakeholder consultation to inform the institutional self-reflection process in preparation for the next institutional review.

MTU thanks the CINNTE Review Team for advice in this regard, as we thank the Team for all of their considered recommendations for enhancement, which have clearly been made in a spirit of supportive engagement with the University's goals and ambitions. We will carefully consider all recommendations and will outline our plans for addressing them in our Implementation Plan.

 In the meantime, MTU is encouraged by the fact that the advice of the Review Team validates many key enhancements already identified and, in part, commenced by the University.

Thus, the establishment of the new University Executive is fully in train. Filling of the first tranche of Executive positions is imminent, and we expect that all members of the new Executive will be in post by the end of 2024/25. In consonance with the Team's recommendation to identify "clear structures, roles and responsibilities at all levels reporting to Executive members", we have also begun to work on the design of the next organisational tier below the level of Vice-President, Chief Corporate Officer and Faculty Dean, retaining support from KPMG for this process.

Expedited completion of a complete unitary QA framework for MTU and the need to ensure that quality policies and procedures are applied throughout in a consistent and reliable manner have also already been identified by MTU in its ISER as enhancement areas.

Crystallisation of the organisational design framework will also enable the University to commence a thorough review of our complement of quality processes in the context of the new organisational structures, with a view to ensuring that all procedures, implementation mechanisms and quality roles are adequately formalised, aligned with the new structures, and comprehensively documented. This process will aim to minimise any reliance of the quality system on "networks and relationships", and to confirm that the quality system is robust enough to ensure a consistent approach to quality throughout.

Another enhancement that MTU has committed to on foot of internal review is delivery of an enhanced MTU programme portfolio. We welcome the CINNTE Review Team's recommendation that MTU should develop a "strategic approach to portfolio management and governance, including programme development, suspension, and retirement, enabling lifelong learning and the sustainability of the university", and appreciate the Team's advice that "[t]his approach should include a holistic and objective assessment of the current programme and module portfolio, taking into consideration the duplication of programmes and modules across campus locations".

When formulating its approach to strategic portfolio development, MTU will take heed of the recommendation to develop a formal procedure for programme and module retirement as an important quality assurance mechanism to support this process which will incorporate formal approval by Academic Council. Systematic involvement of Academic Council and Governing Body in continuous portfolio review, in accordance with their respective functions under the Technological Universities Act 2018, will furthermore be ensured.

MTU also acknowledges the importance of a comprehensive and transparent scheme of delegation that clearly describes and delineates the roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of Governing Body and Academic Council with their sub-committees, together with the University Executive, within the University's governance structures. MTU will examine and work towards defining the distribution of responsibilities between the different functions in greater detail, resolving any uncertainties, and ensuring that the scheme of delegation shows clear ownership of strategic objectives, KPIs and risks, in alignment with our Strategic Plan.

MTU's students, from apprentice to doctoral researcher, are front and centre in our education provision, and learner empowerment lies at the heart of several of MTU's strategic objectives. We are therefore pleased that our "student-centred culture" and the dedication of our staff in "supporting the success of all students and fostering a student-centred supportive learning environment" have been recognised by the CINNTE Review Team through a number of commendations.

By the same token, we welcome the Team's recommendation to further enhance the student voice at MTU, in particular through implementation of a "fit-for-purpose, university-wide system of independent evaluation of the student learning experience at the module and programme level". To the furthest extent possible within sectorial limitations, MTU will review and enhance its overall structures and mechanisms for student representation in academic decision-making fora and formal feedback provision, with particular attention on the integration of these with programme monitoring and review and other internal quality review processes and the implementation of appropriate mechanisms for closing the feedback loop for the students themselves.

To conclude, I would like to again cordially thank the members of the CINNTE Review Team, Professor Cara Aitchison (Chair), Professor Brian Bowe, Ms Yvonne Overdevest, Mr Eoin Crossen, Ms Sarah Lynn and Professor Jakob Stoustrup, for their professionalism, courtesy and good humour throughout all their interactions with the University. While always focused and purposeful, the Team's collegial and respectful approach supported high quality interactions in which everyone felt heard.

My gratitude also goes to the representatives of QQI's Tertiary Education Monitoring and Review Unit (TEMRU) who have accompanied us on the CINNTE journey from the beginning, in particular Marie Gould, Orlaith O'Loughlin, and Stephen Kelly. Your unwavering responsiveness, support and guidance from beginning to end were invaluable in helping us through the CINNTE process and ensuring a successful outcome to this significant external quality assurance review.

I likewise want to express my heartfelt gratitude to every one of our own staff members and students who contributed to this review, both those who met the CINNTE Review Team to share their views during its visit, and those who worked hard in the background to ensure all phases of the CINNTE review went smoothly.

Last but most definitely not least, I would like to say a most cordial 'thank you' to the members of our valued external partners who gave up their time to testify to the relationship between our organisations – go raibh míle maith agaibh.

Professor Maggie Cusack, FRSE.
President Munster Technological University

Appendices

PLEASE SUPPORT
Brú
Columbanus

Accommodation
for relatives of
patients in
Cork Hospitals
and the Hospice

Brú Columbanus

Appendix A: Terms of Reference for the Review of Technological Universities

The Terms of Reference for the review of the Technological Universities are an adaptation of the CINNTE review Terms of Reference for Designated Awarding Bodies. These Terms of Reference provide an enabling framework to facilitate and further enhance the institutional review process of the new institutions.

SECTION 1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

Context and Legislative Underpinning

In 2016 QQI adopted a Policy for Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions, which sets out the scope, purposes, criteria, model and procedures for the review process. These are detailed in this handbook.

The Technological Universities Act 2018 provides for the establishment of technological universities, as well as setting out their functions and governance structure. These Terms of Reference provide supplemental information for the quality review of new technological universities within the CINNTE Review Cycle Schedule 2017–2024.

The CINNTE schedule of cyclical reviews has been revised to reflect the planned establishment of technological universities; the institutional review of each new technological university is planned to commence 18 months from the date of establishment of that technological university with submission to QQI of the institutional self-evaluation report (ISER).

1.2 Purpose

The Policy for the Cyclical Review of Higher Education Institutions highlights four purposes for individual institutional reviews, as set out in the CINNTE handbook. These are consistent in these Terms of Reference, with some amendments to the measures as highlighted below:

Purpose	Achieved and Measured Through:
1. To encourage a QA culture and the enhancement of the student learning environment and experience within institutions	- emphasising the student and the student learning experience in reviews - providing a source of evidence of areas for improvement and areas for revision of policy and change and basing follow-up upon them - exploring innovative and effective practices and procedures - exploring quality as well as quality assurance **with a focus on the development of an integrated quality system within the new institution**
2. To provide feedback to institutions about institution-wide quality and the impact of mission, strategy, governance and management on quality and the overall effectiveness of their quality assurance	- emphasising the governance of quality and quality assurance at the level of the institution - pitching the review at a comprehensive institution-wide level - evaluating compliance with legislation, policy and standards - evaluating how the institution **intends to** identify and measure itself against its own benchmarks and metrics to support quality assurance governance and procedures - emphasising the improvement of quality assurance procedures
3. To contribute to public confidence in the quality of institutions by promoting transparency and public awareness	- adhering to purposes, criteria and outcomes that are clear and transparent - publishing the reports and outcomes of reviews in accessible locations and formats for different audiences - evaluating, as part of the review, institutional reporting on quality and quality assurance, to ensure that it is transparent and accessible
4. To encourage quality by using evidence-based, objective methods and advice	- Using the expertise of international, national and student peer reviewers who are independent of the institution; - ensuring that findings are based on stated evidence - facilitating the institution to identify measurement, comparison and analytic techniques, based on quantitative data relevant to its **evolving** mission and context, to support quality assurance - promoting the identification and dissemination of examples of good practice and innovation

SECTION 2 OBJECTIVES AND CRITERIA

The overarching theme for the institutional review of a newly formed technological university is: ensuring a forward-looking perspective.

2.1 REVIEW OBJECTIVES

Enhancing academic quality and excellence should be a key goal of each newly formed technological university. It is recognised that these new institutions will need to move from an implicit strategy based on the sum of the dissolved institutions, to a common global mission, strategy and goals, and that it will take time to mainstream an institution-wide quality assurance system, and to implement institution-wide procedural change.

The objectives for the CINNTE Review are framed within this context. Whilst the review process will be forward-looking, it must also ensure trust through transparency and commitment to a culture of quality assurance.

Objective 1

To review the effectiveness and implementation of the QA procedures of the new technological university through consideration of the procedures set out in the annual quality report submitted by the university.

The scope of information in respect of quality assurance contained in the annual quality report (AQR), or otherwise reported, includes reporting procedures, governance and publication. It is recognised that the procedures that governed quality assurance in the dissolved institutions may not be unified in one single document at the time of submission of the AQR and/or review process. There may, therefore, be a number of individual procedures set out in the AQR that reflect former institutional approaches, and supplementary information may be requested by the review team in the form of documentation or interviews in advance of, or during, the review process.

The relevant outcomes of the last review of the former institutions should be addressed and resolved, and the development of the new unified quality assurance system in place since the establishment of the new institution, evaluated. The review team will also consider the effectiveness of the AQR and institutional self-evaluation report (ISER) processes implemented across the new technological university.

The scope of this objective also extends to the technological university's overarching approach to assuring itself of the quality of its research degree programmes and research activities in the context of its establishment as a new institution, and to the effectiveness of the procedures for the quality assurance of its collaborations, partnerships and overseas provision.

Objective 2

To review the enhancement of quality by the technological university through governance, policy and procedures.

In the new technological university, institution-wide governance, policy, procedures, mission, goals and targets for quality may not be fully established at the time of the review. In this context, the process – and progress – towards developing these elements will be evaluated, and the methodology and design of quality assurance, as well as transitional governance approaches, will be considered.

Objective 3

To review the effectiveness and implementation of procedures for access, transfer and progression.

2.2 REVIEW CRITERIA

Criteria for Objective 1

The review report will include a specific qualitative statement on the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of the new institution and/or the extent of their development and/or implementation. The report will also include a specific statement on the extent to which the quality assurance procedures can be considered as compliant with the European Standards & Guidelines (ESG) and as having regard to QQI's statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (QAG).

The criteria to be used by the review team in reaching conclusions for this objective are:

- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015);
- QQI Core Quality Assurance Guidelines;
- QQI Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Universities and Other Designated Awarding Bodies;
- The technological university's own objectives and goals for quality assurance, where these have been determined.

Where appropriate and actioned by the institution, additional QQI guidelines may be incorporated:

- Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes
- Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Providers of Research Degree Programmes
- National Framework for Doctoral Education

Criteria for Objective 2

The Review Report will include a specific qualitative statement on the enhancement of quality by the institution through governance, policy, and procedures. This statement may be accompanied by a range of ancillary statements and recommendations in reference to this objective in the context of the newly formed institution. If identified, innovative and effective practices for quality enhancement will be highlighted in the report.

The criteria to be used by the team in reaching conclusions for this objective are:

- The new institution's distinct mission and vision, or the plans and process in place for their development.
- The goals or targets for quality identified by the institution and/or the plans or process in place for their development.
- Additional sources of reference identified by the institution.

Criteria for Objective 3

The report will include a qualitative statement on the extent to which the current procedures being implemented in the new institution are in keeping with QQI Policy for Access, Transfer and Progression.

- Key questions to be addressed by the review for each objective in the context of the new institution:
- How is a new unified quality assurance system being planned for and developed?
- How are quality assurance procedures and reviews being implemented in the new institution?
- What transitional quality assurance arrangements have been put in place? What reflections would the institution make on these?
- Who takes responsibility for quality and governance of quality assurance in the newly established, multi-campus, geographically spread institution?
- How effective are the current internal quality assurance procedures of the institution?
- How transparent, accessible and comprehensive is reporting on quality and quality assurance across the institution? What documentation and supporting information is available?
- How is quality promoted and enhanced?
- Are there effective innovations in quality enhancement and assurance?
- How is the new university developing a common mission, strategy and goals for quality?
- How has information on transitional arrangements been communicated?

SECTION 3 THE REVIEW PROCESS

3.1 Process

The primary basis for the review process is this handbook

3.2 Review Team – Technological Universities

QQI will appoint an external review team to conduct an institutional review of each new technological university. The size of the team and the duration of their visit will depend on the size and complexity of the institution but in general the review team for a technological university will consist of 6 persons. Each review team includes a chair and coordinating reviewer, and may be supported by a rapporteur, who is not a member of the team, to take and collate notes of meetings. A single team may undertake the review of two different institutions.

Reviewers are not QQI employees, but rather peers of the institution. The institution will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed composition of their review team to ensure there are no conflicts of interest, and QQI will ensure an appropriate and entirely independent team of reviewers is selected for each institution. QQI has final approval over the composition of each review team.

There will be appropriate gender representation on the review team. The team will consist of carefully selected and trained and briefed reviewers who have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their tasks. The team will operate under the leadership of the review chair.

The review team for the institution-wide review of the newly formed technological universities will be appointed in keeping with the following profile[5].

1. A review chair

The role of the Chairperson is to act as leader of the review team. This will be an international reviewer who is a (serving or recently former) senior third-level institution leader – usually a head of Institution or deputy head of Institution or a senior policy advisor who:

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5   QQI seeks guidance from the institution on the profile of a specific review team. The institution is consulted in advance, prior to confirming the team.

- Possesses a wide range of higher education experience, with specific experience of creating a new university and/or of merging higher education institutional contexts.
- Demonstrates a deep understanding of the complexities of the higher education system and of establishing a new higher education institution.
- Understands often unique QA governance arrangements; and
- Has proven experience in the management of innovation and change.

2. A coordinating reviewer

The role of the coordinating reviewer is to act as secretary to the team as well as to be a full review team member. This is usually a person with expertise in the higher education system and prior experience in participating in external reviews. As the coordinating reviewer is responsible for drafting the report, he or she will possess proven excellent writing abilities.

3. A student reviewer

The role of the student reviewer is to represent the student voice in the review team. The student reviewer will, typically, be an Irish or international student with significant experience of higher education or an undergraduate student who has completed a quality assurance training programme and/or has had a role in institutional self-evaluation and/or review.

4. An external representative

The role of the external representative is to bring the "third mission" perspective to the review team, **specifically in the context of the establishment of a new technological university.** By way of example, they may have specialist knowledge in some or all of the following areas:

- External expectations of graduate skills and competencies,
- Issues and trends in industry and/or the wider community,
- The external perception of the new institution and its activities,
- Quality assurance practices in other sectors,
- Knowledge of the area identified in the specific institutional reviewer profile.

In addition to the specific roles above, the full review team complement will include a range of experts with the following knowledge and experience:

- experience of higher education quality assurance processes within a newly established institution and/or merging institutional context,
- experience of postgraduate research programmes,
- experience and proven ability in the advancement of teaching and learning,
- experience of a higher education institution with similar profile and/or mission.

All elements of the CINNTE cyclical review process, and guidance on conducting the institutional self-evaluation process are detailed in this handbook.

3. 3   Procedure and timelines

The outline set out in the policy (below) will be elaborated further and timelines will be set out to accompany it, through discussion and consultation.

Step	Action	Dates	Outcome
Terms of Reference (ToR)	Completion of an institutional information profile by QQI Confirmation of ToR with institution and HEA	9 months before the Main review visit (MRV)	Published Terms of Reference
Institutional Profile	Forwarding to QQI of the institutional profile	6-9 months before the MRV	Published Institutional Profile
Preparation	Appointment of an expert review team Consultation with the institution on any possible conflicts of interest	6-9 months before the MRV	Review team appointed
Self-evaluation	Forwarding to QQI of the institutional self-evaluation report (ISER)	12 weeks before the MRV	Published ISER (optional)
Desk review	**Desk review of the ISER by the team**	At least 1 week before the initial meeting	ISER initial response provided
Initial meeting	An initial meeting of the review team, including reviewer training and briefing	5 weeks after the ISER, 7 weeks before the MRV	Team training and briefing is complete. Team identifies key themes and additional documents required
Planning visit	A visit to the institution by the chair and coordinating reviewer to receive information about the ISER process, discuss the schedule for the main review visit and discuss additional documentation requests	5 weeks after the ISER, 7 weeks before the MRV	An agreed note of the planning visit
Main review visit	To receive and consider evidence on the ways in which the institution has performed in respect of the objectives and criteria set out in the Terms of Reference	12 weeks after the receipt of ISER	A short preliminary oral report to the institution

Step	Action	Dates	Outcome
Report	Preparation of a draft report by the team – **1ˢᵗ draft submitted to QQI**	6-8 weeks after the MRV	QQI Review Report
	Draft report sent to the institution for a check of factual accuracy	12 weeks after the MRV	
	Institution responds with any factual accuracy corrections	**14** weeks after **MRV**	
	Preparation of a final report	**16** weeks after **MRV**	
	Preparation of an institutional response	**18** weeks after **MRV**	Institutional response
Outcomes	Consideration of the review report and findings by QQI together with the institutional response and the plan for implementation	Next available meeting of QQI committee	Formal decision about the effectiveness of QA procedures *In some cases, directions to the institution and a schedule for their implementation*
	Preparation of QQI quality profile	2 weeks after decision	Quality profile published

The form of follow-up will be determined by whether 'directions' are issued to the institution. In general, where directions are issued, the follow-up period will be sooner, and more specific actions may be required as part of the direction.

Step	Action	Dates	Outcome
Follow-up	Preparation of an institutional implementation plan	1 month after decision	Publication of the implementation plan by the institution
	One-year follow-up report to QQI for noting. This and subsequent follow-up may be integrated into annual reports to QQI	1 year after the MRV	Publication of the follow-up report by QQI and the institution
	Continuous reporting and dialogue on follow-up through the annual institutional reporting and dialogue process	Continuous	Annual quality report Dialogue meeting notes

Note: *The total period from start to finish is approximately 15 months but will depend on QQI committee meeting dates.*

Appendix B: Main Review Visit Schedule

DATE 11/03/2024 GOVERNANCE, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Time (GMT)	Group	Role	Purpose
09.00-09.30	Meeting with President	President	
09.30-10.00	Private Review Team Meeting		
10.00-10.30	1. President & Registrars	President	Private Meeting with President and Registrar. To discuss institutional mission, strategic plan. Roles and responsibilities for QA and enhancement.
		Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs/Institutional Review Coordinator	
		Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar	
10.30-11.30	2. University Executive	President	Discuss institutional mission, strategic plan. Roles and responsibilities for QA and Enhancement.
		Head, School of STEM	
		Head of Strategy & Performance/Director Transformation Management Office	
		Vice President for Finance and Administration	
		Vice President for External Affairs	
		Vice President for Corporate Affairs	
		MTU Transformation Office	
		Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs	
		Head, Faculty of Engineering & Science	
		Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar	
		Head, Faculty of Business & Humanities	
		Head, School of Health & Social Sciences	
		Head, School of Business, Computing & Humanities	
11.30-12.00	Private Review Team Meeting. Tea / Coffee		

12.00-12.30	3.a Governing Body Representatives (External Governors)	Chair, MTU Governing Body (external member)	Discuss mechanisms employed by the Governing Authority for monitoring QA & QE and how it ensures effectiveness
		External Member	
		External Member	
		External Member	
	3.b Governing Body Representatives (Staff & Students)	Internal Member - Staff	
		Internal Member - Staff	
		internal Member - Student	
		internal Member - Student	
		Secretary to MTU Governing Body	
12.30-13:00	4. Members of Academic Council/Staff Involved in Design of Academic Structures	Lecturer, Dept of Biological & Pharmaceutical Sciences/AC member	
		MTU INGENIUM Coordinator/Member of AC and Standing Orders Committee	
		Head, Dept of Tourism & Hospitality/Member of AC/ Chair AC Admissions Committee	
		Outgoing HoD Maritime Studies and AC Member	
		Lecturer, Dept of Pop Jazz Trad Voice & Theatre Studies/AC Member	
		Head, Dept of Process, Energy & Transport Eng (previously Joint Head of Implementation - Academic Planning and Policies 2020–2022)	
		Administrative Officer, Office of the Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs	
		Senior Staff Officer, Office of the VP for Academic Affairs & Registrar	
		Vice President Education, MTU Kerry Students' Union	
		Vice President Education, MTU Cork Students' Union	
13.00-14:00	Review Team Lunch/Break		
14.00-14.45	5. Heads of School/Faculty	Head, School of STEM	Discuss how the University monitors the effectiveness of its QA/QE processes and structures and how it ensures the outcomes are enacted in an appropriate, consistent and timely manner.
		Head, School of Mechanical, Electrical & Process Engineering	
		Head, MTU Cork School of Music	
		Head, School of Science & Informatics	
		Head, School of Building & Civil Engineering	
		Head, National Maritime College of Ireland	
		Head, School of Business	
		Head, School of Humanities	
		Head, MTU Crawford College of Art & Design	
		Head, Faculty of Engineering & Science	
		Head, Faculty of Business & Humanities	
		Head, School of Health & Social Sciences	
		Head, School of Business, Computing & Humanities	

14.45-15:15	6. Students' Union Officers	President, MTU Kerry Students' Union	Discuss student engagement and student role in the University in QA, Strategic Planning and decision-making processes.
		President, MTU Cork Students' Union	
		Vice President Education, MTU Cork Students' Union	
		Vice President Education, MTU Kerry Students' Union	
		Vice President Welfare, MTU Cork Students' Union	
		Vice President Welfare, MTU Kerry Students' Union	
		PGR student (MTU CSM); student member of Governing Body and AC	
15.15-15.45	Private Review Team Meeting		
15.45-16:30	7. Student Representatives: Undergraduates	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agricultural Science Y4	Discussion with students from all Faculties, to include representation from different years, disciplines and service users.
		Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Pharmaceutical Science Y2	
		Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agricultural Engineering Y1	
		Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing Y3	
		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care Y4	
		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care Y4	
		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care Y4	
		Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care Y4	
		BA in Visual Communications Y4	
		BA in Visual Communications Y4	
		BA in Photography with New Media Y4	
		BA in Creative Digital Media Y4	
		BA in Creative Digital Media Y4	
		BSc in Agribiosciences Y4	
		BBus in Marketing Y4	
		Joint UCC-MTU Biomedical Science programme	
		BEng Hons in Structural Engineering Y4	
		BEng Hons in Structural Engineering Y4	
		Chemical & Biopharmaceutical Engineering Y3	
		Chemical & Biopharmaceutical Engineering Y4	
		Chemical & Biopharmaceutical Engineering Y3	
		Bachelor of Engineering (Hons)	
		BMus student	
		Fine Art Y4	
		Software Development Y3	
		Hospitality Management Y4	
		Early Childhood Care education and Care Y4	
		Visual Communications Y3	
		Home Economics and Business Y2	
		Business (Common Entry) T2	

16.30-17.15	8. Student Representatives: Postgraduates (Taught)	Master of Science in Nursing	Discussion with students from all Faculties, to include representation from different years, disciplines and service users.
		MA in Journalism	
		Department of Biological Sciences	
		CSM, Taught MA in Music, under the Commercial Composition strand	
		PhD in the Computer Science	
		MSc Cybersecurity	
		Class Rep for MSc in International Business	
		PT MSc in Digital Marketing Strategy, online delivery	
		Certificate in Digital Marketing	
17.15-17.30	Private Review Team Meeting		

DATE 12/03/2024 STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Time (GMT)	Group	Role	Purpose
09.00-09.30	Institutional Coordinator		Meeting with Institutional Coordinator to clarify issues from previous day and review today.
09.30-10.15	9. Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement	Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar	Discussion on experience of implementing quality assurance throughout the institution.
		Institutional Review Facilitator	
		Dean of Academic Quality Enhancement and Graduate Studies	
		Curriculum Development Facilitator, Registrar's Office	
		Head, Department of Health & Leisure/INGENIUM Work Package 2/4	
10.15-11.00	10. Programme Design, Approval, and Modification	Curriculum Development Facilitator, Registrar's Office	Discuss governance of QA procedures for approval of new programmes and modifications to current programmes
		Change Management Implementation Facilitator (Academic)	
		Head, Dept of Sport, Leisure & Childhood Studies/ Chair Academic Planning & Review Comm	
		Lecturer, Dept of Civil, Environmental & Structural Engineering	
		Head, Department of Social Sciences	
		in lieu of Dr Fiona O'Boyle, Head, (REEdI) Rethinking Engineering Education in Ireland	
		Head, Extended Campus	
		Head, Dept of Management & Enterprise	
		Head, Department of Mechanical, Biomedical & Manufacturing Eng	
11.00-11.30	Private Review Team Meeting		

11:30-12.15	11. Governance and QA of Research (Members of AC Research & Innovation Committee. Postgraduate Research Board (PRB) and Human Research Ethics Comm)	Research Integrity & Compliance Officer/Chair Research Council I&DC	Discuss governance of QA procedures for research and innovation
		Head of Research	
		Head of Research	
		Dean of Academic Quality Enhancement and Graduate Studies	
		CAPPA/Member Research Council I&DC	
		Head, Department of Organisation and Professional Development/Member Research Committee	
		Senior Lecturer, Department of Applied Social Studies/ Chair Human Research Ethics Committee	
		Institute Librarian, Cork Campuses	
12.15-13.00	12a.Teaching, Learning, Assessment	Head, Department of Technology Enhanced Learning	Discuss role of committee in governance of QA procedures for Teaching and Learning and Assessment
		Senior Lecturer Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering/TLU	
		Lecturer/Work Placement Coordinator	
		Senior Lecturer/Work Placement Coordinator	
		Deputy Librarian	
	12b. Teaching, Learning, Assessment	Exams Officer, Kerry Campuses	
		Exams Officer, Cork Campuses	
		Lecturer in Performance (Popular Music)	
		Department of Fine Art and Applied Art	
		Lecturer, Department of Marketing & International Business	
		Lecturer, Department of Management & Enterprise/ TLU	
		Lecturer Department of Mathematics/Academic Developer (Academic Integrity) N-TUTORR	
		Universal Design Commitment Officer	
		Head, Department of Civil, Structural & Env. Eng., Chair Assessment Infringements Board	
		Deputy Librarian, Cork Campuses	
13.00-14.00	Review Team Lunch/Break		
14.00-14.45	13. Heads of Department	Head, Department of Biological Sciences	To discuss Quality Management Processes at the Department Level, implementation & how their effectiveness is ensured.
		Head, Department, MTU CSM	
		Head, Department of Nursing Studies	
		Head. Department of Applied Social Studies	
		Head, Department of Computing and CMIT	
		Head, Department of Accounting & Information Systems	
		Head, Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering	
		Head, Department of Architecture	
		Head, Department of Business and HCT	
		Head, Department of Arts & Health in Education	

14.45-15.30	14. Academic staff from various Faculties - non-management (2 parallel sessions)	Lecturer, Department Accounting & Information Systems - Accounting	To discuss involvement in QA and enhancement
		Lecturer, Department of Social Studies. Applied Linguistics/Sociolinguistics / Irish language	
		Lecturer, Department of Marketing & International Business, Lecturer - French & German	
		Lecturer, Department of Media Communications. Journalism, Digital media content creation, Television Production	
		Lecturer, Department of Process Energy and Transport	
		Lecturer, Department of Biological Sciences, Biomedical Science	
		Lecturer, Department of Craft Studies	
		Lecturer, REEDi Programme, School of STEM	
		Lecturer, Medical Commencement Programme	
		Lecturer, Department of Computer Science - Cloud Computing, Game-based Learning Ntutorr, n-TUTORR project. Physics	
		Lecturer, Department of Marketing & International Business / Lecturer in German and Communications	
		Lecturer, Department of Physical Sciences, Chemistry and Physics	
		Lecturer, Department of Sport, Leisure & Childhood Studies - Sport Science (Skill Acquisition)	
		Lecturer, Department of Physical Sciences / n-TUTORR project. Physics/ Environment Air Quality / EDI	
		Lecturer, Department of Pop, Jazz, Trad, Voice and Theatre Studies	
		Lecturer, Department of Department of Civil, Structural & Environmental Engineering; Subject specialism - Environmental Engineering and Bioresources recovery	
		Lecturer, Department of Organisational & Professional Development	
		Lecturer, Maritime Studies - Thermodynamics, Naval Architecture	
		Lecturer, Department of Construction	
		Lecturer, Department of Mechanical, Biomedical and Manufacturing Engineering Department	
15.30-16.00	Private Review Team Meeting		

Time	Session	Role	Purpose
16.00-16.45	15.a Staff supporting implemen-tation of undergraduate curriculum (Central)	Senior Technical Officer, N-TUTORR (seconded from Dept of TEL)	To discuss involvement in QA and enhancement
		E Learning Strategic Projects Coordinator	
		Student Engagement Officer	
		Student Engagement Officer	
		Senior Library Assistant	
		Deputy Librarian	
		EDGE Coordinator	
		Academic Success Coach/Navigate	
		Academic Learning Centre	
	15.b Staff supporting implementation of undergraduate curriculum (Academic Units)	Administrator - School of Health and Social Sciences	
		IT Technician supporting UG curriculum - Kerry campuses	
		IT Technician, School of Business	
		Placement co-ordination Officer	
		Placement - Nursing	
		Senior Tech Officer, Faculty of Engineering & Science	
		Administrator, Faculty of Business & Humanities	
16:45-17:30	16.a Staff from Student Support Services (Reactive)	Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager	To discuss involvement in QA and enhancement
		Acting Head of Student Counselling	
		Student Ombudsman	
		Academic Success Coach	
		Officer for Learning Difference	
		Disability Support Officer	
		Study Guidance and Transitions Officer	
	16.b Staff from Student Support Services (Proactive)	Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager	
		Student Services Officer	
		Student Services Officer	
		Sexual Violence & Harassment Prevention Officer	
		Careers Officer	
		Careers Officer	
		Societies Officer, Cork Campuses	
		Arts Officer	
		Graduate Studies Office	
16:30-17.00	Private Review Team Meeting		

DATE 13/03/2024 RESEARCH & STAFF

Time (GMT)	Group	Role	Purpose
09.00-09.30	Institutional Coordinator		Meeting with Institutional Coordinator
09.30-10.15	17. Directors/ leads: Research Institutes & Centres	NIMBUS	To discuss the implementation of QA procedures for research
		CAPPA	
		Director IMAR	
		HEX-SPO	
		HINCKS	
		Senior Business Development Scientist, Shannon ABC	
		SoMEP Eng/iEdHub	
		Lecturer Dept of Computer Science, PI - SIGMA	
		Senior Management Accountant, Finance Office	
10.15-11.00	18. Research supervisors and post-doctoral researchers	Senior Lecturer, Department of Media Communications	Staff experience of research management and supervision, the relationship between teaching, research and innovation, QA and enhancements and the impacts on the research student experience.
		Lecturer, Department of Civil, Structural & Environmental Eng., also of SIRIG	
		Senior Lecturer, Department of Biological Sciences/ Head NUTRI Research Group	
		CAPPA/Physical Sciences	
		Lecturer, Department of Biological and Pharmaceutical Sciences	
		Senior Lecturer, Department of Organisation and Professional Development - NTUTORR - Academic Integrity	
		Assistant Lecturer, Department of Musicianship & Academic Studies	
		Post-Doctoral Researcher, NIMBUS	
		Post-Doctoral Researcher, CAPPA	
		Post-Doctoral Researcher, Kerry Campus	
11.00-11.30	Private Review Team Meeting		
11.30-12.15	19. Graduate Students	PhD Department: Biological Pharmaceutical Sciences	To discuss QA & QE procedures with taught postgraduates and research postgraduates
		Master Department: Engineering (TEM)	
		PhD in Physical Sciences and double degree with Politecnico di Bari through OPTAPHI, Researcher in CAPPA now	
		PhD in Management & Enterprise, Non-EU	
		PhD in Electrical & Electronic Engineering, Non-EU	
		MSc in Sport, Leisure & Childhood Studies, EU	
		PhD in Civil, Structural & Environmental Engineering, EU	
		PhD in Biological Sciences, Risam Scholarship, EU	
		MA in Applied Social Sciences, EU	
		PhD in Sport, Leisure & Childhood Studies, EU	

12.15-13.00	20. External Stakeholders	Officer Commanding & Commandant Naval College, Associate Head NMCI	To discuss engagement of external stakeholders in strategic management and QA structures
		HR, Learning & Talent Management Leader, Boston Scientific	
		KPMG Cork	
		Founder, Limelight Media, Director	
		Planning and Events Manager, RTÉ Concert Orchestra	
		HR Management Operations Support, Pfizer	
		Vice President and Managing Director, Europe, VicOne (Trend Micro Subsidiary)	
		CEO, Cope Foundation	
		Ex-CEO of Zenith Technologies	
13.00-14.00	Review Team Lunch/Break		
14.00-14.45	21. Access and Widening Participation: Staff	Academic Administration & Student Affairs Manager	To discuss QA aspects of student recruitment, admission, progression with particular reference to entrants via Access routes
		Academic Administration & Student Affairs Manager	
		Admissions Officer	
		Admissions Officer	
		Access Officer	
		Transitions Coordinator	
		Kerry Access	
		FE to HE routes	
		RPL/UD	
		RPL	
14.45-15.30	22. Access and Widening Participation: Students	BA in Community Development Y3	To discuss quality of student experience for those admitted via Access routes
		BEng Electronic Engineering Y4	
		BA (Hons) Fine Art Y3	
		BA in Business Y2	
		BA (Hons) Contemporary Fine Art Y1	
		BEng in Civil Engineering Y2	
		BSc Hons Analytical Chemistry Y4	
		Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting Y3	
		Bachelor of Science in Health and Exercise Sciences with Massage Therapy Y2	
		Single Module Certification Y1	
		Bachelor of Business - General Y1	
		Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Health and Leisure with Massage Y4	
15.30-16.00	Private Review Team Meeting		

16.00-16.30	23. International Education - Staff	International Officer, Cork	To discuss involvement in QA and enhancement in International Education.
		International Manager, Kerry	
		International Office, Kerry	
		Academic Pathways Office, Kerry	
		Study abroad advisor (non-EU)	
		ERASMUS	
		Head, Department of Marketing & International Business	
		Head of Department of International Medical Commencement	
		Head, Department of Computer Science	
16.30-17.15	24. International Education - Students - incoming & outgoing	Bachelor of Business (Hons) in International Business with Language (English) Y4	
		Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Marketing Y4	
		BEng (Hons) Mechanical Engineering Y1	
		MSc Data Science & Analytics Data Science Y5	
		MSc Artificial Intelligence Y5	
		Bachelor of Business (Hons) in International Business with Language (French) Y4	
		International Medical Commencement Y1	
		International Medical Commencement Y1	
		Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing Y1	
		Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing Y1	
17.15-17.30	Private Review Team Meeting		

DATE 14/03/2024 INTERNATIONALISATION AND COLLABORATION

Time (GMT)	Group	Role		Purpose
09.00-09.30	Institutional Coordinator			Meeting with Institutional Coordinator
09.30-10.15	25. Staff from collaborative providers, partners and/or PSRBs	Deputy President and Registrar, University College Cork (UCC)	MTU-UCC Consortium Agreement	To discuss arrangements re QA with collaborative providers
		CEO, Engineers Ireland	PSRB	
		Senior Lecturer, Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI)	Pathway from ICP	
		Engineer & Ship Surveyor, Marine Survey Office, Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport	Regulator	
		Director of Nursing Bon Secours Hospital Tralee	Hosting Nursing Placements	
		Captain, Atlantic Flight Training Academy (AFTA)	Collaboration in two programmes	
		Chief Executive, Cork Education & Training Board	Cork Colleges Progression Scheme, Tertiary Initiative	
		Associate Director, KPMG	INGENIUM member	
10.15-11.00	26. Staff Recruitment and Development/ Human Resources Procedures	HR Manager		To discuss HR procedures that support QA & QE among all staff
		Recruitment Office, HR		
		Recruitment Office, HR		
		Senior Lecturer, Teaching & Learning Unit		
		Lecturer, Teaching & Learning Unit		
		Senior Lecturer Department of Biological Sciences/TLU		
11.00-11.45	27. Campus Infrastructure and Finance	Finance Manager		To consider funding prospects and opportunities to further develop the campus facilities to support teaching, research and the wider student experience
		Governance and Compliance Manager		
		Senior Architect		
		Resource Management Change Coordinator		
		Buildings and Estates Manager		
		Kerry Sports Academy Manager		
		Estates Manager		
		Health & Safety Officer		
		Assistant Buildings Officer		
		Senior Financial Accountant		
		Arena Manager		
		PPPs		
11.45-12.15	Private Review Team Meeting			

12.15-13.00	28a. Staff from IT, Library Services, TEL, Digital	IT Manager		
		IT Manager		
		Head of Institutional Records and Reporting and EDSU		
		Systems Librarian		
		Institute Librarian, Kerry Campuses		
		Timetabling Coordinator		
		Senior Technical Officer, Department of TEL		
		Head of IT Applications		
		MTU N-TUTORR Lead		
12.15-13.00	28b. Staff from Communications/ Marketing	Vice President External Affairs		
		Marketing Officer		
		Digital Marketing Officer		
		Communications Specialist, Office of the President		
		Schools Liaison Officer Kerry		
		Schools Liaison Officer Cork		
		Schools Liaison officer		
		Digital Officer, Marketing Unit		
13.00-13.45	Review Team Lunch/Break			
15.45-16.15	29a. Visit to Kerry North Campus - Meeting with craft/apprenticeship stakeholders	Head of School, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics		
		Head of Department, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics		
		Head of School, Mechanical, Electrical and Process Engineering		
		Head of Department, Centre of Craft Studies		
16.15-17.00	29b. Visit to Kerry North Campus - Meeting with external stakeholders	Principal, Kerry College		
		Global CIO and CEO European Business		
		Sustainability and Services Manager, Kerry Agribusiness		
		MD for Ireland		
17.00-18.00	Tour of Kerry North Campus	Head of Strategic Development		
		Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar		
		Vice President for Corporate Affairs		
		Buildings and Estates Manager		

DATE 15/03/2024   FEEDBACK

Time (GMT)	Group	Role	Purpose
09.00-11.00	Private Review Team Meeting		
10.30-11.00	QQI Meets with Institutional Coordinator		to gather feedback
11.00-11.30	QQI meets with Review Team		to discuss Review Team's key findings
11.30-12.00	Private Review Team Meeting		
12.00-12.30	Meeting with President		
12.30-13.00	Oral Report	President	
		Head, School of STEM	
		Head of Strategy & Performance/Director Transformation Mgt Office	
		Vice President for Finance and Administration	
		Vice President for External Affairs	
		Vice President for Corporate Affairs	
		MTU Transformation Office	
		Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs	
		Head, Faculty of Engineering & Science	
		Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar	
		Head, Faculty of Business & Humanities	
		Head, School of Health & Social Sciences	
		Head, School of Business, Computing & Humanities	
		Dean of Academic Quality Enhancement/Dean of Graduate Studies	
		Institutional Review Facilitator	
		Assistant Registrar and Head of Student Engagement	
13.00-14.00	Lunch		
14.00-17.00	Private Review Team Meeting		Report drafting

Glossary

Term	Definition/meaning
2012 Act	Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 Revised
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AQR	Annual Quality Report
Athena SWAN	An equality charter mark framework and accreditation scheme
ATKS	(Knowledge Transfer Ireland [KTI]) Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey
CAO	Central Application Office (which processes applications for undergraduate courses in Irish HEIs)
CCPS	Cork Colleges Progression Scheme
CINNTE	Name/branding for QQI's first higher education institutional review cycle
CoreHR	Staff Records System
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DAB	Designated Awarding Body
DSS	Disability Support Service
EAAC	Examinations and Assessment Appeals Committee
EARC	Examinations and Assessments Review Committee
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
FTE/WTE	Full/whole time equivalent
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEAR	Higher Education Access Route
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HR	Human Resources
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
IEM	International Education Mark
INGENIUM	European University Alliance
ISER	Institutional Self-Evaluation Report
IT	Information Technology
ITIL	A framework for effectively managing IT services throughout the entire service lifecycle
JAWs	Joint Academic Workshops
LRC	Learning Resource Centre
MEBs	Module Examination Boards
MEE	Module External Examiner
MTU	Munster Technological University
MyBan	Upgraded Banner (student record management) system
NAIN	National Academic Integrity Network
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NIST	National Institute of Standards and Technology
PABs	Progression and Award Boards

PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PMSS	Professional Management and Support Services
PRB	Postgraduate Research Board
PSRBs	Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies
QAG	Quality Assurance Guidelines
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RFAM	Review of the Funding Allocation Model for Higher Education Institutions
RICO	Research Integrity and Compliance Officer
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SALI	Senior Academic Leadership Initiative
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOLAS	The National Further Education and Training Authority
SRS	Staff Records System
TLU	Teaching and Learning Unit
ViClarity	Comprehensive system for collation and tracking of strategic progress