

# IT Sligo Institutional Self Evaluation Report January 2018





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“ To push for excellence today without continuing to push for access for less privileged students is to undermine the crucial but incomplete gains that have been made. Equity and excellence cannot be divided ”

*(Ernest, L. Boyer (1997) “Ernest L. Boyer, Selected Speeches, 1979-1995”, Jossey-Bass.*

## Foreword by IT Sligo President

I confirm my endorsement of this Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) as an effective reflection of the current status of the quality of the teaching, learning, and research and service activities at IT Sligo. The ISER follows from an extended consultation process, where the views and feedback from various internal and external stakeholders were gathered through face-to-face meetings and through online discussions. The outcome of this process is to further embed a culture of quality across all functions of the Institute, to identify aspects of our processes and services where improvements can be made and to present a plan that will deliver those improvements.

IT Sligo is on a continuous improvement journey to achieve Designated Awarding Body status. This self-evaluation informs us about what is working and what processes could be further improved. The institutional review process is also part of this journey and I very much welcome the involvement of QQI and the external evaluation panel in further enhancing our quality assurance platform, policies and procedures, as well as the overall standard of the higher educational service that we provide.

I would like to thank the staff, students, and stakeholders who were involved in this process. I look forward to welcoming the Review Team to IT Sligo in April and to engaging with them in the Institutional Review Process.



Brendan McCormack, PhD  
President, IT Sligo

# Chapter 1. Introduction and Context



The Institute of Technology, Sligo (IT Sligo) has been an integral part of the development landscape in the North West of Ireland since it opened in 1970 and has brought higher education opportunities to the Region for almost half a century. It is also one of the regional leaders in education, innovation, economic and social development. IT Sligo delivers flexible contemporary programmes from apprenticeship, through higher certificate and degree level courses to taught postgraduate and research awards using both traditional and online delivery.

The Institute is a focus for local business innovation and development and has an excellent track record in collaborating with enterprises, the community and creative industries across the core disciplines of Business and Social Sciences, Engineering & Design and Science. The Institute's 6,000 students include full time undergraduates, post graduates, craft apprentices and online / blended learning students. Over a third of the students are attending off-campus, taking their learning through online/blended learning mode. The Institute currently has approximately 500 staff and occupies a modern, well equipped 72 acre site in Sligo Town. The Institute operates on a budget of some €40m and contributes €100m to the greater Sligo region, from salaries of local residents, student spending and capital developments.

IT Sligo has a national reputation for educating the work force through online/blended learning modes of learning. This has built up over many years and has been achieved through developing a culture of, and a commitment by staff of finding ways to educate those who otherwise cannot access higher education. These include, for example, those in the workforce, those seeking employment, springboard learners and learners on new apprenticeship programmes.

The Institute also, is part of the Connacht-Ulster Alliance, working towards re-designation as a technological university, and works closely with state agencies and employer representative bodies to help grow the economic base in the region. The Institute participates in national and regional initiatives such as the Action Plan for Jobs and the Regional Skills Forum. With over 20,000 graduates, many who are working in the region, the alumni are important to the Institute. The Institute works closely with employers who take our students on work placements and employ our graduates and a culture of student entrepreneurship is encouraged. Community engagement is also important, and IT Sligo makes its excellent conference and events facilities available to a range of external organisations.

## 1.1 Mission

With a vision to become Ireland's most accessible Technological University, regionally engaged through teaching, research and strategic partnerships, IT Sligo's Strategic Plan 2017-2022 articulates the Vision and Mission of the institute as:

### 1.1.1 Vision

Your Education and Innovation Partner for Life

### 1.1.2 Mission Statement

Advancing economic, social and environmental sustainability through education, innovation, and engagement, producing graduates who are innovative, confident and capable of leading the development of the region and beyond.

## 1.2 Management and Governance

The Institute is governed by a Governing Body of 19 people comprising a chairperson, 17 ordinary members (comprising 6 public nominees, 1 ICTU nominee, 5 industry nominees, 2 student nominees, 3 staff nominees) and the President. The President currently presides over an Executive Committee of five senior managers – Registrar, Secretary/Financial Controller and three Heads of School. The Senior Management Group is made up of the Executive Team and 8 Heads of Academic Departments and 12 Heads of Non-Academic Functions (See Appendix 1 – Organisational Structure: Current and Proposed).

Despite recent economic challenges and continued underfunding of Higher Education, IT Sligo maintains a position of positive financial standing. It is located on one of the finest higher education campuses in the country, with over 70 acres devoted to the provision of highest quality teaching, learning and recreation for students. This is testament to the excellent governance and management enjoyed by the Institute since its founding in 1970. The various Governing Bodies and management teams over the years, at all levels, have demonstrated their ability to respond in a creative and caring manner to student and staff needs, and have also been strongly committed to the engagement with external stakeholders for the good of the region.

In a climate of increasing regulation and reporting, the Institute continues to ensure that it has the appropriate structures and resources to deliver on its strategic objectives. It also has the systems in place to ensure that structures and procedures are sufficiently robust to allow the Institute to take risks in areas that it considers important to its future, or where it can make an effective contribution to the development of the region. The public are becoming more discerning about the role of higher education and the expectation that HEIs must give good value for public monies invested. The Institute routinely reviews its procedures to ensure that it is meeting the expectations of the public. Having said that, the governance of large organisations, such as IT Sligo, is placing more and more demands on resources in terms of compliance, audits, review and handling of complaints and queries. The requirement of, for example, data protection, child protection, vetting, student protection, employee protection is increasing, and rightly, enshrined in legislation. The Institute is responding in a professional and systematic manner to this developing regulatory environment.

## 1.3 Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan 2017-2022 for IT Sligo sets out a series of strategic objectives which will ensure that the Institute continues to produce high quality graduates of value in a competitive employment market, conducts applied research that supports regional economic development and promotes innovation and entrepreneurship.

See [www.itsligo.ie/publications](http://www.itsligo.ie/publications) for full version.

The overarching key performance indicators in the Strategic Plan are, by 2022:

- To grow from 6,000 to 10,000 students,
- To increase the number of graduates from 1,550 to 3,000 and
- To achieve re-designation as technological university.

The Strategic Plan has six high level objectives:

1. Our Students: Develop the ability to navigate their futures in a complex world.
2. Learning & Teaching: Support the continuous professional development of all staff. Maintain and strengthen leadership in technology enhanced learning.
3. Research Development & Innovation: Enable more students and staff to conduct research. Gain international recognition in key research areas.
4. Partnership & External Engagement: Build stronger partnerships with second level schools/ETBs, employers and community.
5. Shaping & Influencing Economic, Social & Cultural Development: Raise the education-qualification profile of the regional population. Support social entrepreneurship, business start-ups and development in the region.
6. Organisation & Governance: Continue to provide robust governance, accountability and appropriate processes.

The Strategic Plan also includes over 200 individual actions that various functions and departments are engaged in delivering. The progress on these actions is reported using an internally developed online tracking system. Progress is reported on a quarterly basis to Governing Body, Executive, and Academic Council.

## 1.4 The External Environment

IT Sligo serves the Connacht-Ulster (CU) region and the three Institute of Technology's in this region operate in a geographical land mass of some 25,781 km<sup>2</sup> (31% of the land mass of Ireland). Some 396,500 of a total population of 847,500 are in the workforce, and the contribution to the national GVA from the region is 12.3%. In describing the region, the close proximity to Northern Ireland – in particular counties Fermanagh and Tyrone – needs to be appreciated in terms of the existing, and new opportunities, for cross-border collaboration. It is likely that the consequences of the implementation of Brexit will remain for many years. Notwithstanding that, the inclusion of the border counties in our region should be an inherent consideration of any future developments for IT Sligo.

The region can be described as rural and sparsely populated with the largest urbanised centres at Galway (pop. 73,000), Sligo (pop. 19,500), Castlebar (pop. 12,000), and Letterkenny (pop. 19,500). Comparing the [2016 national census with that of 2011](#), the three counties of Sligo, Donegal and Mayo are the only counties in Ireland where the population decreased in that period.

The North West is a region with eight counties, one of the fastest growing cities in Europe and over 80,000 3rd level students within its catchment; with nearly 900,000 residents enjoying an enviable lifestyle in an area of great natural beauty, environmental assets and natural resources.

In general terms, the North-West region has remained economically resilient, and continues to perform very strongly in European Regional terms. There are a number of 'at a glance' statistics which illustrate some of our strengths:

- There are over 140 FDI multi-nationals supported by the IDA in our Region
- Their operations employ in excess of 26,000 people
- In 2016, our top 15 multi-national companies exported over €10bn. of products and services
- The Region has in excess of 50,000 businesses and the strength of SME's is evidenced in the fact that we have been awarded European Entrepreneurial Region by the EU for 2018
- Additionally, there are indigenous global success story companies operating in our Region, some of which are world leaders in their fields: CombiLift, Portwest, McHales Agri, Aerogen and thousands more.

The agri-food sector is also a very important potential growth sector for the Region, accounting for almost 36% of the national agriculture output. This sector encompasses primary production (agriculture or farming), forestry, fishing, food and drinks (excluding tobacco) and wood-processing. Exports of food and beverages nationally increased by over 50%, since 2009, to €12bn and by the end of 2015. The agri-food sector accounted for 7.6% of national GVA, exporting to the UK, US, China and France. It is the largest cross-border trading sector on the island of Ireland and in 2016 there were some 35,000 persons in this region, over the age of 15 years, employed in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing.

NUI Galway is located in the southern-most part of the region, with a separate campus in Sligo and has some 17,000 students. The three Institutes of Technology of the Connacht-Ulster Alliance together have eight campuses; Galway (Dublin Road, Monivea Rd -Centre for Creative Arts & Media Mountbellew, Letterfrack), Castlebar, Letterkenny, Killybegs, and Sligo town. The region has in excess of 50,000 businesses, comprising of construction, wholesale and retail, professional services, agriculture, manufacturing – and are mostly SMEs or micro-businesses. The medical devices sector is relatively strong, with a number of large FDI companies, and marine and energy-related industries and tourism are important growth areas. The IDA and Enterprise Ireland are both driving industrial growth development of engineering and ICT sectors for the North-West.

In general, the population is older and less well qualified compared to the rest of the country. More than 55% of second level graduates attend 3rd level outside of the region. Only 4% of the graduates of national HEIs are employed in the region. While state agencies, business representative bodies, local authorities and entrepreneurs have made efforts in recent years to build infrastructure and sustainable economies, projections suggest that the region may not grow substantially over the coming years. The viability of the region to maintain and grow a stable economic base capable of attracting inward investment and population, and of supporting modern standards of living is not strong. The Institute has grown in external reputation through the recent economic maelstrom. Our employment-focused suite of programmes have served both the institute and the region well, and our online/blended learning students live and work in 25 countries across the globe. We have rapidly responded to the skills need of the region and the country, developing and flexibly delivering new programmes to reskill those affected by the economic downturn as well as providing the skilled graduates required by the industries, business and public services driving the economic recovery.

## 1.5 Internal environment

There are some 3,656 full-time and 2,425 part-time student enrolments. The majority of the latter are taking their learning through online/blended mode, or distance learning. While the institute has experienced considerable growth in online students, of concern is the lack of year-on-year growth in the number of full-time enrolments for the Institute for the last 5 years. This is only somewhat explained by a demographic dip in the number of Leaving Certificate students in the region. On a positive note, the numbers completing second level education in the region is set to grow by 9% over the next 5 years (see Learner Profile section 2.5).

The Institute has three Schools; School of Science, School of Engineering and Design and School of Business and Social Sciences, covering a wide range of discipline areas. Since 2010 102 new programmes have been developed, validated and delivered. For 2016-17 15 new programmes were introduced. This is a reflection of both the evolving demand from employers and the level of flexibility and responsiveness of the institute and its staff to meet the changing needs of employers (Institute Strategic Plan 1.4). It should be noted that, while IT Sligo has been a quick

responder in meeting the needs of employers for new programmes, other Institutes have introduced significantly more programmes targeted at full-time CAO students, and have grown their full time enrolments as a consequence.

IT Sligo actively develops and maintains engagement with individuals, communities, firms, non-governmental organisations and the public sector, in Ireland and internationally. All of the Institute's academic programmes are informed by a close relationship with relevant employers, industry and professional groups and other stakeholders (See Appendix 2). External stakeholders contribute directly to the design of programmes, and assist in their delivery through workplace learning opportunities, including; professional work placements; guest lectures; site visits and work-based projects.

Our students rank the support they receive from staff as our greatest strength (Source Behaviour & Attitudes Survey 2015 and 2016 available on soft copy). Our staff 'go the extra mile' for our students as they are committed to the Institute's goal of making higher education accessible to students in the region and to students outside our region through our online provision. Moreover, it is not only the academic staff, it is the entire team of academic, administrative, technical and support staff that makes this claim a reality.

## 1.6 The future context for higher education

Irish higher education is undergoing a time of change and development. *The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* is driving greater levels of partnership and collaboration in higher education – be it as clusters of HEIs or as a more formal coming together as Technological Universities. Either way, the intended outcome is that higher education will be in a better position to contribute to the future development of the economy, particularly for the regions.

When the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 set out the pathway for high performing Institutes of Technology to achieve Technological University status, IT Sligo's Governing Body strongly articulated its ambition to achieve this status. In 2013, IT Sligo signed a Memorandum of Understanding with our partner Institutes of Letterkenny (LYIT) and Galway & Mayo (GMIT) to establish the Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA), with the aim of meeting the criteria for re-designation. The CUA has successfully completed Stage 1 of the TU process and is now preparing its Stage 2 Plan, in a four stage process towards re-designation. The CUA has 8 campuses, over 15,000 students, 1,500 staff and an annual income of over €125m.

IT Sligo are cognisant that the TU ambition places demands on the routine operation of an Institute. It can give rise to very fundamental questioning of the purpose and effectiveness of a regional higher education provider, and challenges the sense of regional identity and relevance that has been built up over the last 40 to 50 years.

Secondly, regardless of the pursuit of the TU ambition, in order to optimise the effectiveness of higher education provision, further collaborative partnerships will be required between HEIs and ETBs, and between HEIs and industry. Each partnership will need to be selective in niche areas of collaboration. Examples of such partnerships are already emerging though the development of the "new apprenticeship programmes" (Institute Strategic Plan 3.3). IT Sligo was the first to develop such a programme in the country, the BA (Hons) in Insurance Practice. Given the limited resources, the specific expertise and talents of staff, and the capacity of the Institute to manage relationships, serious consideration is given to the identification of areas to be prioritised, and supported, for collaboration.

Thirdly, the profile of both the 'student' and the learning paradigm are changing, due to the rapidly increasing impact of the internet on people's work, lifestyle and social interaction. How we address this will determine the effectiveness of the Institute as a provider of meaningful higher education. The challenge is to achieve a balance between meeting the needs of local and regional industry while delivering to a diverse student population from a rural dispersed, and relatively socio-economically deprived region, using technology to meet the needs of students and industry from outside our region, and securing sufficient funds to run a multi-million euro operation. IT Sligo is already responding to the changing learner profile through its provision of online/blended learning programmes. This is an area of continuous change, which is both exciting and challenging for academic and administrative support staff (Institute Strategic Plan 1.4).

There are also many national strategies related to, for example, enterprise, entrepreneurship, innovation, internationalisation, and national reports such as those produced by the [Expert Group on Future Skills Needs \(EGFSN\)](#) to which higher education is expected to respond. From an educational perspective, the [Action Plan for Education 2016-2019](#) sets out a number of strategic developments intended to enhance the access to, and relevance of higher education in meeting the needs of a diverse range of learners, including:

- improving the learning experience and learning outcomes, and enhancing the supports for learners impacted by disadvantage and from diverse background
- providing pathways from Further Education and Training to Higher Education
- facilitating a diverse range of learners to make informed higher education/career choices
- enhancing the supports for international students
- enhancing the capacity to meet national and regional skills needs
- creating a stronger focus on Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation
- increasing the number of researchers.

See Appendix 3 for more detail on how IT Sligo is responding to national policies and strategies.

# Chapter 2. Profile of IT Sligo



## 2.1 Introduction

IT Sligo is a highly successful Institute of Technology, as evidenced by its national recognition as a leader in online learning (Taoiseach's Public Service Excellence Award, 2012), its strong financial position in the backdrop of a sector in financial deficit, and its Category 1 status in the HEA Mission Based Performance Compact evaluations. Four examples of recent national-level achievements include (i) the development (in close collaboration with the Irish Insurance Institute) and delivery of a BA (Hons) in Insurance Practice, the first new apprentice programme in the country, (ii) the BEng in Data Centre Facilities Management, developed at the request of Google, Microsoft and eBay for their European facilities) (iii) an online Masters in Regulatory Affairs jointly delivered with NUI Galway and developed with the Irish Medical Devices Association and (iv) Apprenticeships in Carpentry and Joinery, and in Toolmaking represented Ireland at the World Skills Competition in Dubai in 2017.

The Institute is now ready for the next evolutionary stage in its development, and as highlighted earlier, has embarked upon the objective of achieving Technological University (TU) status.

## 2.2 HEA Mission Based Performance Compact

A System Performance Framework that stated national priorities and key objectives of Government for higher education was set out by the Minister for Education and Skills for 2014-2016.

In February 2014 IT Sligo agreed a Mission Based Performance Compact with the HEA with seven domains having regard to institutional mission:

- Clusters
- Participation, access and lifelong learning
- Teaching and learning
- Research and innovation
- Engagement
- Internationalisation
- Institutional consolidation.

This was designated Cycle 1 and there are associated minutes and profiles information. Cycle 2 reviewed performance at the end of 2014. Self-Evaluation reports and associated data were produced. Cycle 3 reviewed performance at the end of 2015. Self-Evaluation reports and associated data were produced but have still to be published by the HEA. Cycle 4 examined the performance across the full period of the Mission Based Performance Compact in September 2017. During the entire process to date, IT Sligo was given a top performing Category 1 rating by the HEA and performance funding was released in full.

## 2.3 Campus Infrastructure

The Institute is financially stable, delivering a balanced budget with a respectable level of reserved funds to carry out capital developments. Through prudent financial management and generating an annual surplus, we have enhanced the excellent campus environment and completed a major extension to the Yeats Library, the MacMunn Science Building, a new 3G pitch and floodlights, and an extension to the Technology Building. In 2016, a new 280-seat lecture theatre (Aurivo Auditorium) was opened at the heart of the Campus. This current programme of investments was completed in autumn 2017 with the refurbishment of the School of Business & Social Sciences (Constance Markievicz building). The Knocknarea Arena is the Institute's main sporting and conference arena. It houses a fully equipped gymnasium and regularly hosts entertainment and conference events of national and international standing. The area is surrounded by high quality outdoor sports facilities including, GAA, rugby and soccer pitches, a floodlit athletics arena, 3G all-weather facility, outdoor gym, and extensive cycling facilities.

## 2.4 Delegated Authority Statement / Status

The Institute of Technology (IoT) sector operates within a highly developed regulatory framework. It received autonomy under the 1992 Regional Technical Colleges Act. At that time the National Council for Education Awards (NCEA), acted as a certification, awards and quality assurance body for the sector, and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), with responsibility for the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), were both established under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999. The sector's mission and governance structures were revised under the 2006 Institutes of Technology Act. This Act is one of a group of Acts included in a collective citation, to be construed together as one (Institutes of Technology Act 2006 (25/2006), s. 1(4)). The Acts in this group are:

- Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 (16/1992)
- Regional Technical Colleges (Amendment) Act 1994 (29/1994)
- Regional Technical Colleges (Amendment) Act 1999 (20/1999)
- Institutes of Technology Act 2006 (25/2006) (25/2006), Part 2 (ss. 3-28)

In response to the developing autonomy of the Institutes, the 1999 Qualifications (Education and Training) Act included a process of Delegation of Authority (DA) for Institutes which could demonstrate appropriate and sufficiently robust structures for the management and quality assurance of any or all of its programmes. Today QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) is the independent State agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland. It was established in 2012 by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

IT Sligo was one of the first Institutes to make a submission for and to be granted DA status in 2004 for all taught programmes up to Level 9. In 2007 the Institute achieved DA at Level 10 for research programmes in the areas of Environmental, Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering

In May 2014, QQI published a policy (QP.04) entitled Policy and Criteria for the Delegation of Authority to the Institutes of Technology to make Higher Education and Training Awards (including Joint Awards).

IT Sligo implemented the Institutes of Technology Ireland (IOTI) Sectoral Protocols for the Delegation of Authority (DA) by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) to the Institutes of Technology (IoTs) to make Joint Awards and for the Awarding of Research Master's Degrees at NFQ Level 9 under delegated authority (DA) from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). These were approved by IT Sligo Academic Council and application was made to QQI. QQI extended Delegated Authority for these in April 2015.

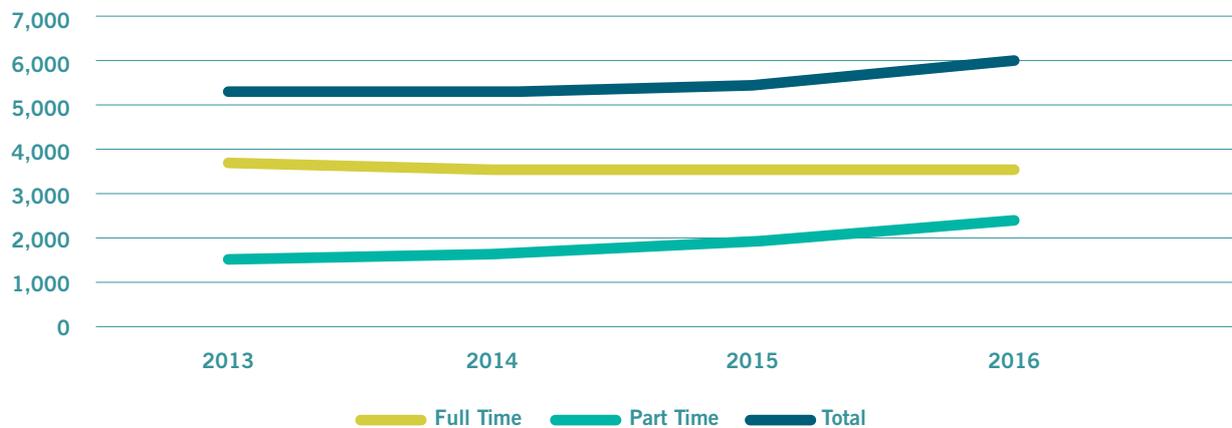
## 2.5 Learner Profile

This section will examine both current and future learner profiles.

### 2.5.1 Student Numbers

IT Sligo has grown its total number of higher education enrolments by 13.6% over the past 7 years from 5,275 in 2010-11 to 5,941 in 2016-17. Full time numbers remained relatively steady in the first half of this decade, but have started to drop slightly in the past two years. There has been a significant increase in part time student enrolments at IT Sligo since 2010-11 with numbers increasing by almost 60% in this time. IT Sligo is now the leading provider of online delivery of education in Ireland, followed by UCD and UL. Apprentice numbers have seen a dramatic decrease in recent years from 785 in 2010-11 to 186 in 2014-15. Numbers increased again in 2015-16 to 327.

### STUDENT NUMBERS 2013 - 2017

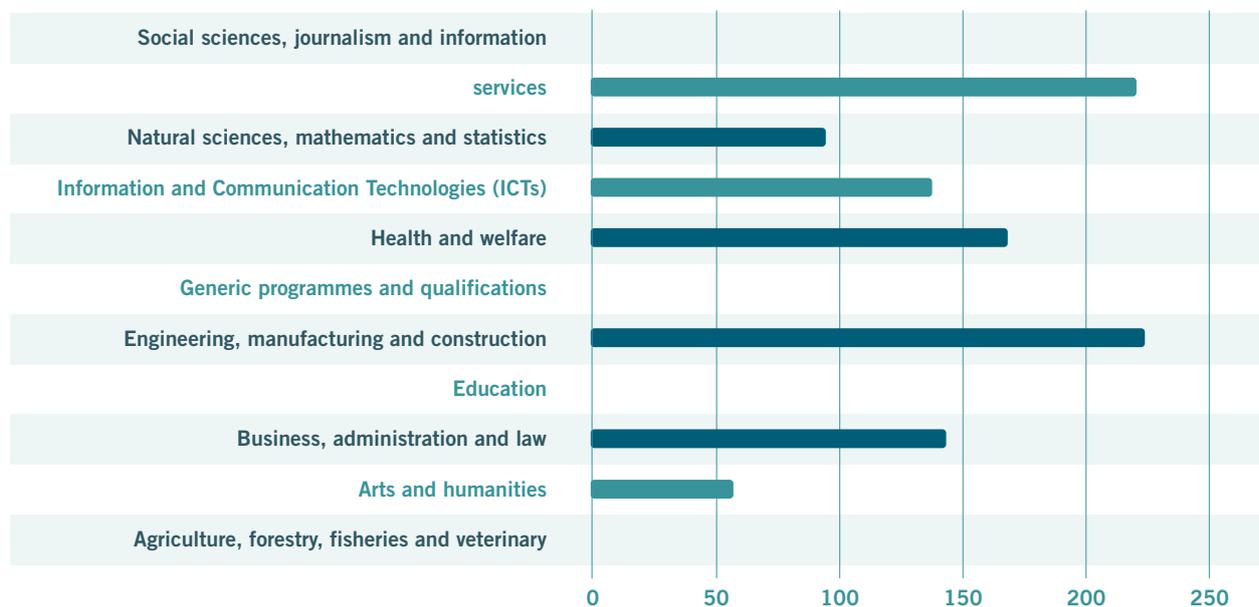


Source: HEA Mar Return

## 2.5.2 What are their fields of study?

The fields of study using the ISCED1 codes for the 1st year new entrants of 2016/17.

### STUDENT COUNT PER FIELD OF STUDY



Source: HEA Mar 17 Return

## 2.5.3 Where Do the Students Come from?

IT Sligo is an important destination for students in Connacht and Ulster. Over 80% of our students come from the local region.



Source: CAO 1st Year Entrants HEA Mar 17 Return

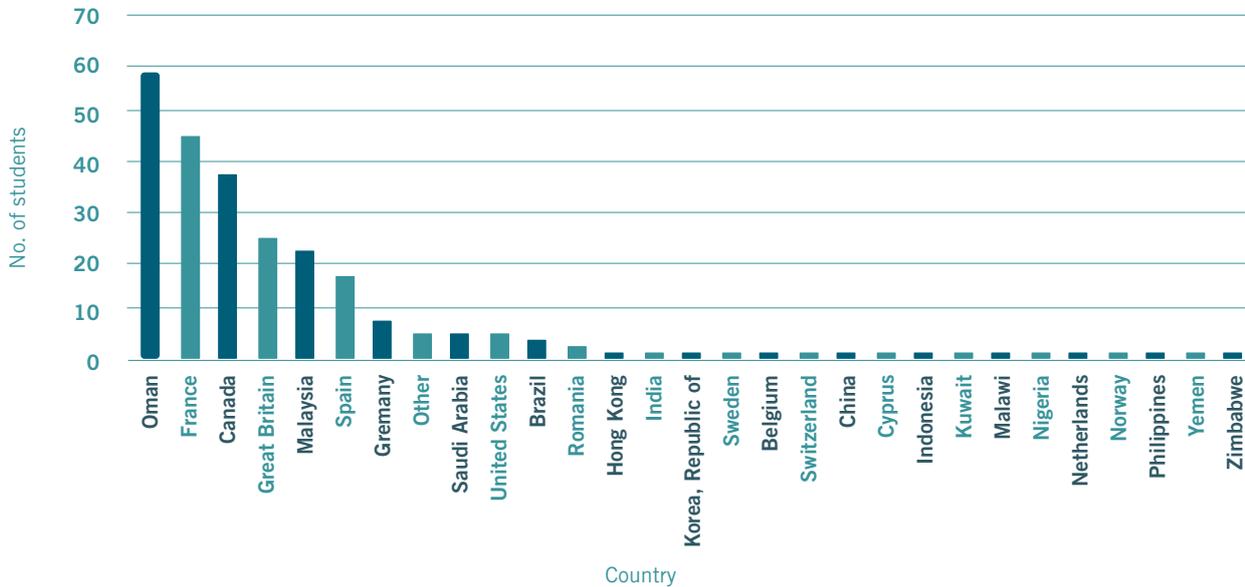
## 2.5.4 Top 30 feeder Schools from the CAO

No.	Name	County	Student No.
1	No School name given perhaps a PLC student or some years post School	Unknown	148
2	Summerhill College	Sligo	48
3	Abbey Vocational School	Donegal	31
4	Colaiste Cholm Cille	Donegal	31
5	St Clares Comprehensive Sch	Leitrim	25
6	Ursuline College	Sligo	24
7	Magh Ene College	Donegal	23
8	Scoil Mhuire, Clochar Na Trocaire	Roscommon	23
9	Coola Post Primary School	Sligo	22
10	St Columbas Comprehensive Sch	Donegal	18
11	Drumshanbo Vocational School	Leitrim	17
12	St Muredachs College	Mayo	17
13	St. Mary's College	Sligo	17
14	Colaiste Clochar Na Trocaire	Roscommon	16
15	Loreto College	Westmeath	14
16	Carrick-On-Shannon Community School	Leitrim	14
17	Cnoc Mhuire	Longford	14
18	Scoil Na Maighdine Muire	Mayo	14
19	Clochar Iosa Agus Mhuire	Mayo	12
20	Davitt College	Mayo	12
21	Abbey Community College	Roscommon	11
22	Ballinode College	Sligo	11
23	Ballyhaunis Community School	Mayo	11
24	St Attractas Community School	Sligo	11
25	Colaiste Loreto	Cavan	10
26	Mercy College	Sligo	10
27	Mohill Community College	Leitrim	10
28	Scoil An Chroi Naofa	Mayo	10
29	Swinford Post Primary School	Mayo	10
30	Breifne College	Cavan	9

Source: HEA Mar 17 Return

## 2.5.5 International Students

### DOMICILIARY OF STUDENT COHORT



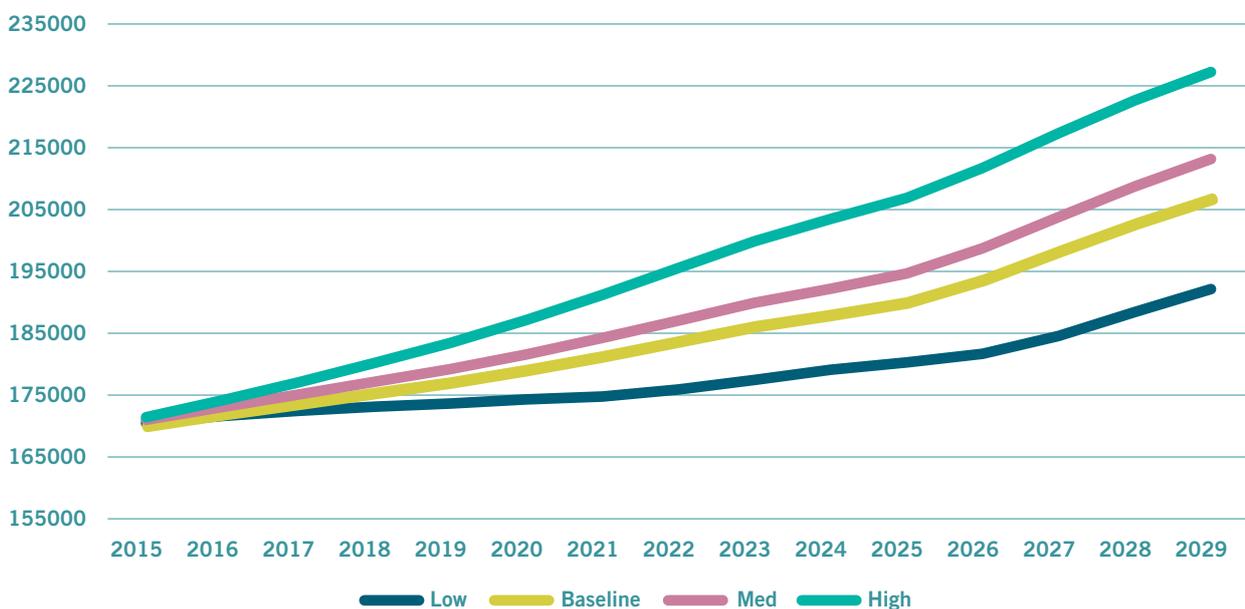
Source: All Students Nov 17 HEA Return – 258 Students

## 2.5.6 Projections of Future Demand

Nationally

The Department of Education publishes reports of demands for all sectors of education. Their forecasts they show different scenarios based on levels of births, immigration and migration. All scenarios are showing growth to 2031 for Third Level.

### PROJECTIONS OF DEMAND FOR THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION



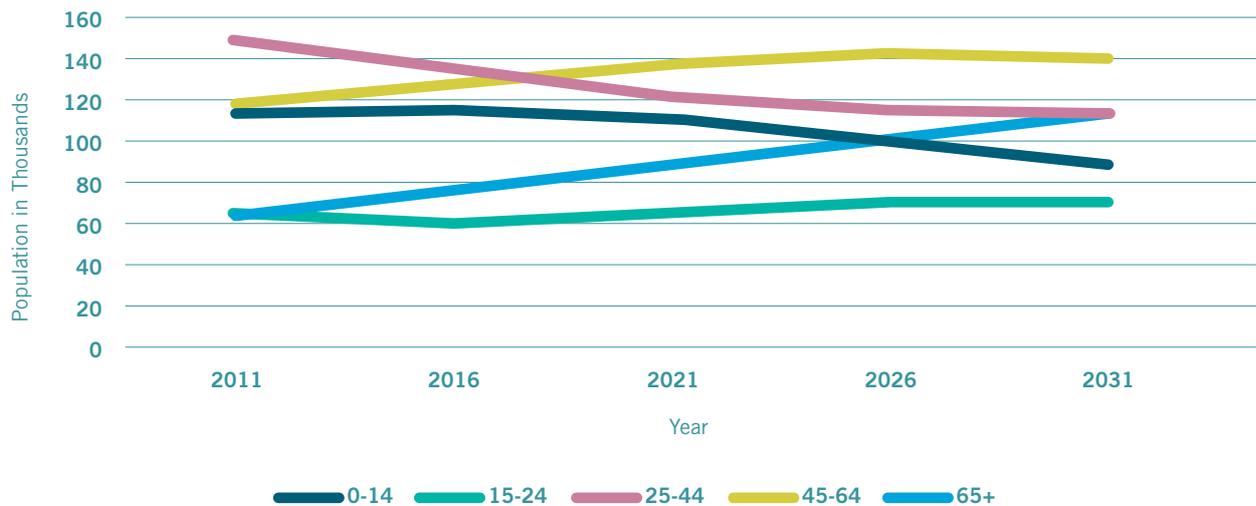
Source: Dept. of Education and Skills Projections of Demand for Full Time Third Level Education, 2015 – 2029, November 2015

## 2.5.7 Data on Population in the main IT Sligo Catchment Areas

The Irish Government are currently finalising the “Ireland 2040 Our Plan - National Planning Framework” document. This document has balanced regional development as one of its aims. However it acknowledges that there will not be uniform growth across Ireland.

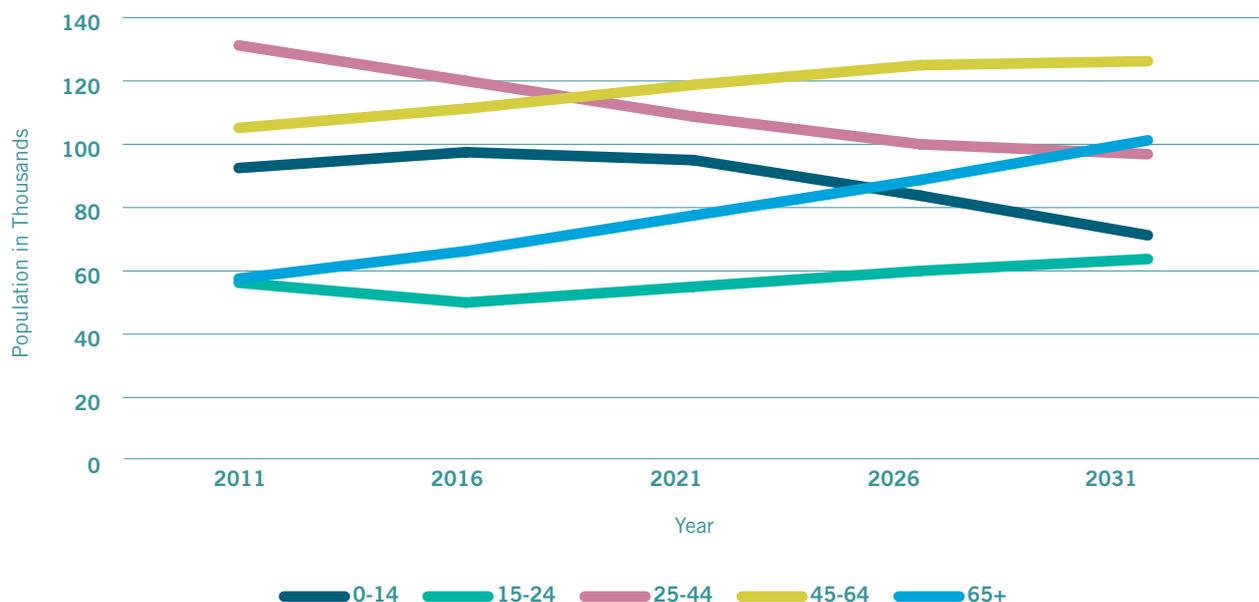
The Central Statistics Office (CSO) produces Regional Population Projections. The current set are for 2016-2031 and the trend in regions that are served by IT Sligo is for a growing number of 15-24 year olds up to 2031. However the number of 0-14 year olds is declining in both regions and will impact after 2031.

### BORDER POPULATION FORECAST BY AGE BANDS



Border - Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan, Sligo

### WEST REGION POPULATION FORECAST BY AGE BAND



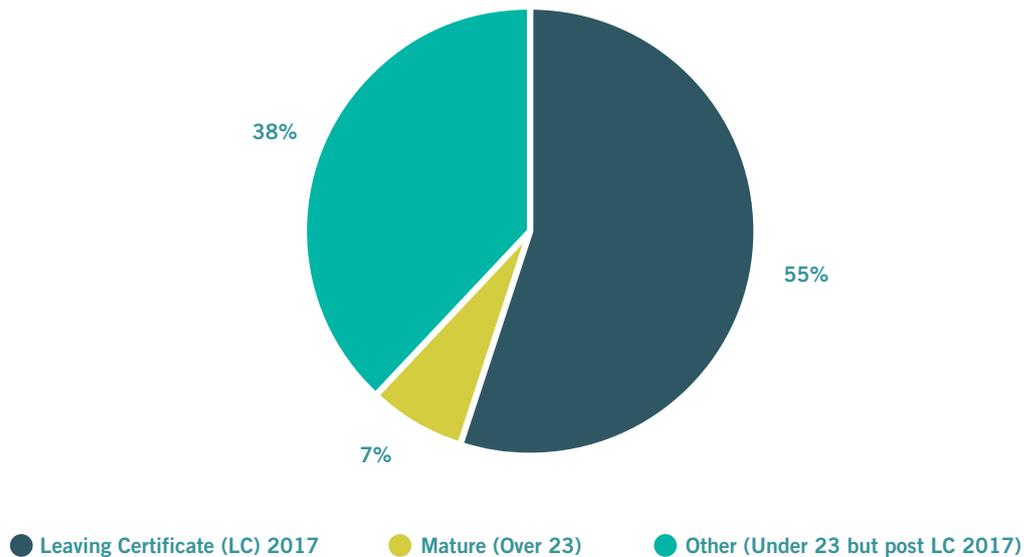
West - Galway City, Galway County, Mayo, Roscommon

Source CSO Regional Population Projections 2016-2031

## 2.5.8 How did students enter IT Sligo?

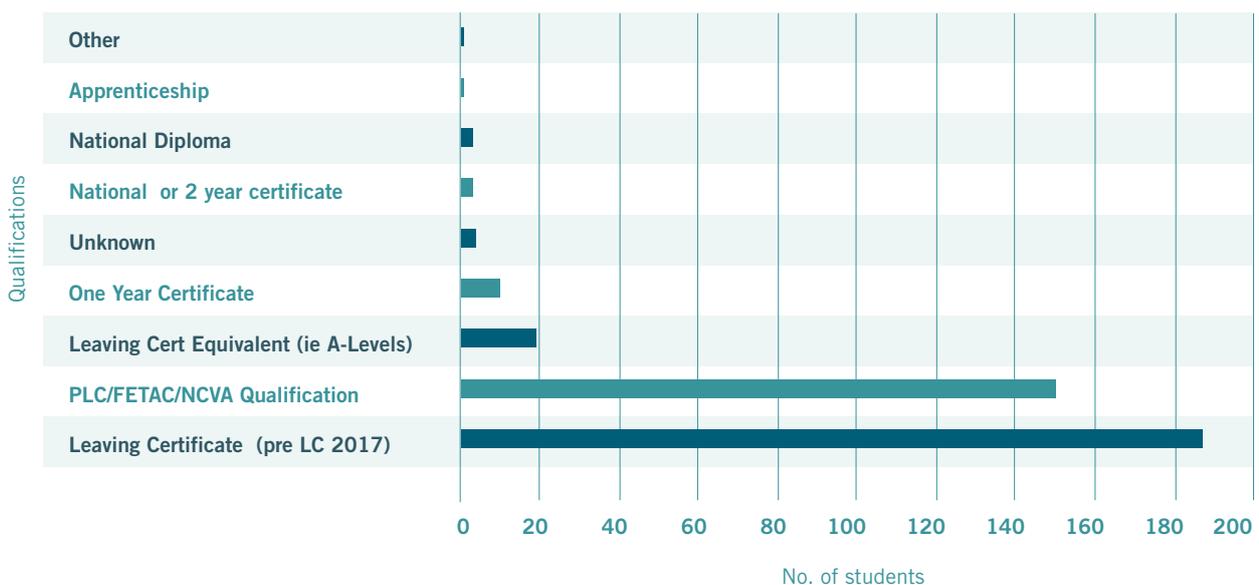
The following data is from 1st Year Entrants in 2017. This illustrates the routes that students take to gain entry to IT Sligo. From this only 55% of IT Sligo's first year intake used the current year Leaving Certificate to gain entry. A further 187 (18.5 %) used a leaving certificate from previous years. 150 students (14.8%) used a further education qualification to gain entry. 75 students (7%) were mature entry.

### ACTUAL NUMBER OF 2017 FIRST YEARS BY ENTRY CATEGORY



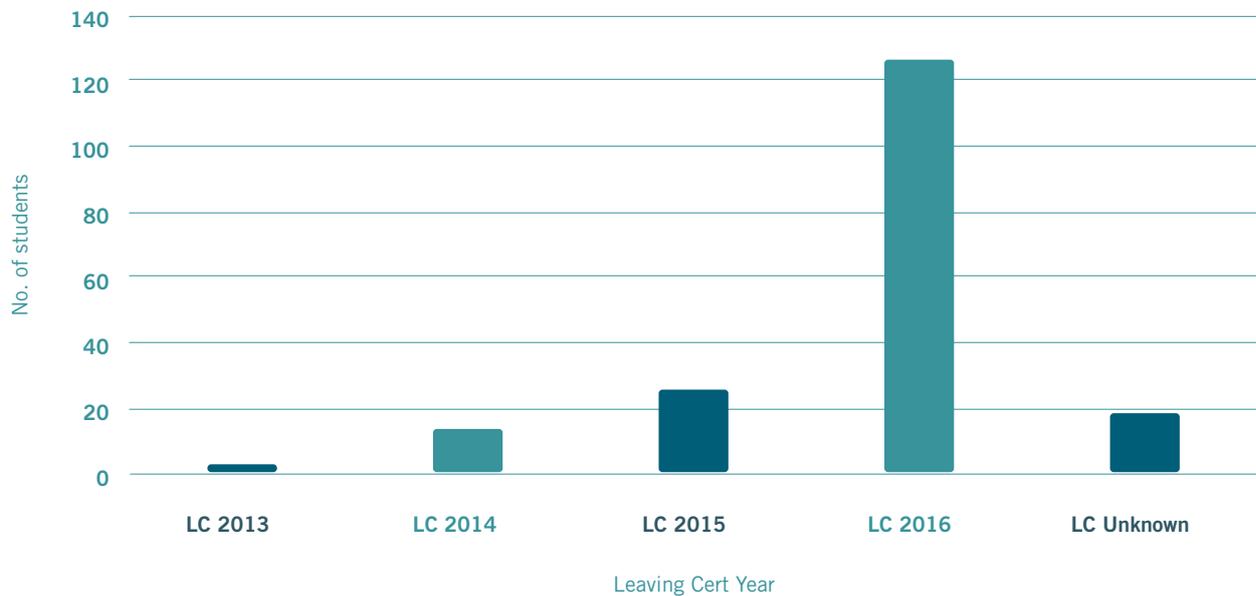
The majority of students who were not mature but did not use the current year Leaving Certificate, used Leaving Certificate from a previous year or a Further Education Qualification.

### BREAKDOWN OF 'OTHER' QUALIFICATIONS IN 2017 FIRST YEARS

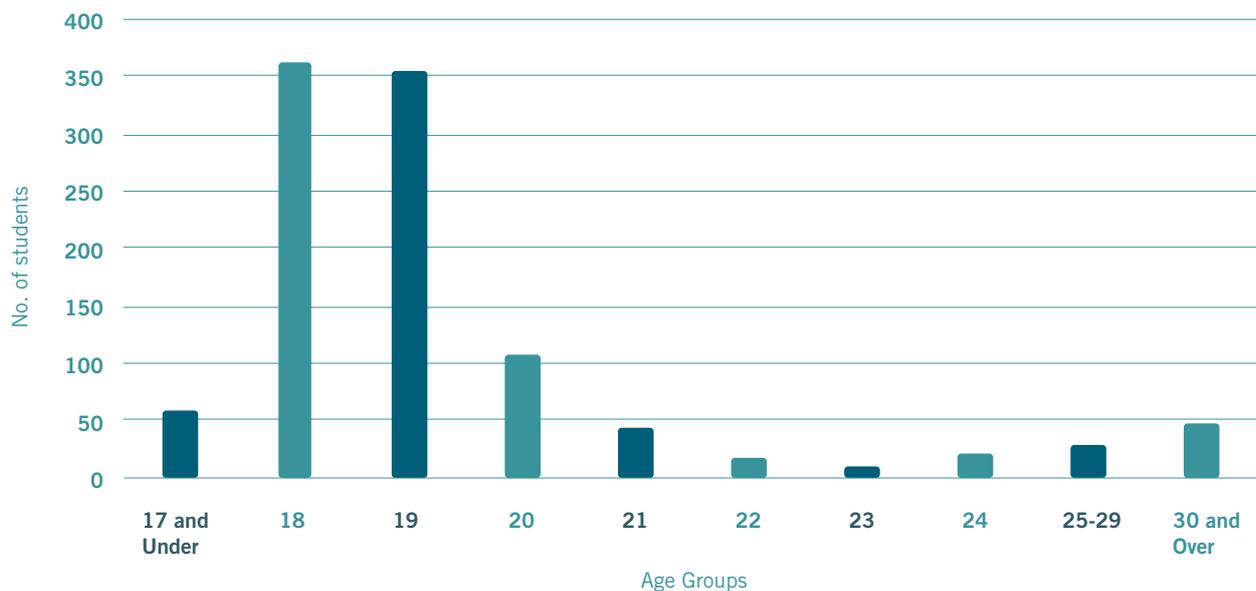


The majority of students who entered using a previous years Leaving Certificate, used Leaving Certificate results from one or two years previously.

### PRE 2017 LEAVING CERT YEAR



### FULLTIME UNDERGRADUATE NEW ENTRANTS BY AGE



## 2.5.9 Socio Economic Background of Students

The report on [Student Grant Recipients from a First Year Full-Time Undergraduate New Entrant Cohort for the Academic Year 2013/14 in HEA Funded Institutions](#) (Published November 2015) is the most recent on the numbers of student receiving state grants. In this report IT Sligo at 64% had the 2nd highest percentage of students in the state receiving a grant.

% in receipt of DES Grant	Full-time Enrolments	Full-time Undergraduate NEs
DES Grant 2016/2017	59.80% 2200 students	67% 694 students
Comparative Figure 2015/2016	59.60%	64.10%

## 2.5.10 Progression

The institute overall non progression rate has fallen over the last few years. However the L6 non progression rate is well above the sector average.

**% NON PROGRESSION RATES 2010-2016**



## 2.5.11 Completion Analysis

The HEA have recently explored completion analysis. The information below is the data set that the HEA are currently looking at as a draft completion analysis.

Overall IT Sligo:

2007/08 New Entrants Completion Rate	%
Institution Rate Level 6	53
Institution Rate Level 7	66
Institution Rate Level 8	80
Overall Institution Rate, All Levels	67
Sector/National Rate Level 6 (IoTs only)	63
Sector/National Rate Level 7 (IoTs only)	60
Sector Rate Level 8	73
Overall Sector Rate, All Levels	66
National Rate Level 8 - All Sectors	81
Overall National Rate - All Sectors and Levels 6, 7 and 8	76

## 2.5.12 Field of Study IT Sligo

NFQ Level / ISCED Field of Study	Completed %
<b>Level 6</b>	
(3) Social Sciences, Business and Law	53%
(5) Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	100%
<b>Level 6 Total</b>	53%
<b>Level 7</b>	
(2) Humanities and Arts	68%
(3) Social Sciences, Business and Law	63%
(4) Science, Mathematics and Computing	52%
(5) Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	59%
(7) Health and Welfare	90%
(8) Services	70%
<b>Level 7 Total</b>	66%
<b>Level 8</b>	
(2) Humanities and Arts	68%
(3) Social Sciences, Business and Law	88%
(4) Science, Mathematics and Computing	79%
(5) Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	74%
(7) Health and Welfare	83%
<b>Level 8 Total</b>	80%
<b>Total</b>	67%

Source: HEA 2017

Additional information related to student numbers, future demand, entrant profile etc. available in Appendix 4

## 2.5.13 First Destination Graduate Survey

The Institute has undertaken a First Destination Graduate Survey for the classes of 2011 until 2015 (see memory stick). This was normally carried out 9 months after graduation. A pilot of the new Ireland wide annual graduate outcomes survey is in place for the survey of graduates of 2017, taking place in Q2 2018. The survey is collected in respect of graduates of higher education institutions approximately nine months after their completion of study. The data submitted in the record is obtained through a survey instrument, centrally defined by the HEA and locally managed by HEIs.

Two key themes have emerged from the First Destination Survey:

- The numbers of graduates seeking employment/education has seen a significant decrease over the last few years, linked presumably with changes in the economy: 10% seeking in 2011 – 2% in 2015 (9% in 2012; 5% in 2013; 2.4% in 2014)
- Consistent levels of graduate employment in Connaught – 44.8% Average: (45% in 2011, 44% in 2012, 51% in 2013, 41% in 2014, 43% in 2015)

## 2.6 Research, Development and Innovation

The Institute has some 78 registered research students, the majority of whom are working on applied ('mode 2') research in collaboration with industry. There are three Strategic research centres, in Environmental Science, Precision Engineering and Manufacturing and in Social Care Practice. In 2017, there were 6 PhD graduates and 1 Masters graduate.

# Chapter 3.

# Development of Institutional Self Evaluation Report



The Institute formed a cross functional Institutional Review Operational Team, chaired by the Registrar. The core membership was: Registrar, Assistant Registrar, Educational Development Manager, Chair of the Academic Processes, Heads of School. There were also floating membership to suit scope of discussions e.g. Head of Research. This group normally met on a weekly basis.

This group received training in group facilitation and reflective self-evaluation skills with Professor Paddy Maher (Emeritus Professor of the University of the Highlands and Islands).

The group identified data sources for the Institutional Self Evaluation Report:

- Extern Reports (Schools)
- EAP7 (Schools)
- ISSE (Past) & Benchmarking LIT
- Previous Programmatic Reviews (Schools)
- Previous Institutional Review (2008)
- First Destination Survey
- Strategic Plan
- Strategic Plan Stakeholder, GB, AC Consultation
- Trendence Survey
- HEA Profiles
- Progression Data
- HEA Compact Self Analysis
- PWC Internal Audits – Timetable, Retention, International
- GB Self-Assessment
- Professional Body Reports (Schools)
- CAO data
- CSO Data
- ISSE Current
- Focus Groups (Full time, Part Time, Online, Staff – Academic and Non Academic)

There were a number of Information Sessions with Staff and Student Union Class Representatives to introduce the Institutional Review and the ISER. Presentations were made to School and Functional Teams. Focus Groups were held a number of times for staff on Quality Systems and Student Lifecycle.

Focus group cohort	Number of sessions
Full Time Students	4
Mature students	1
International Students	1
Online Students	1
Post Grad research students	1
Staff (academic & non-academic)	4

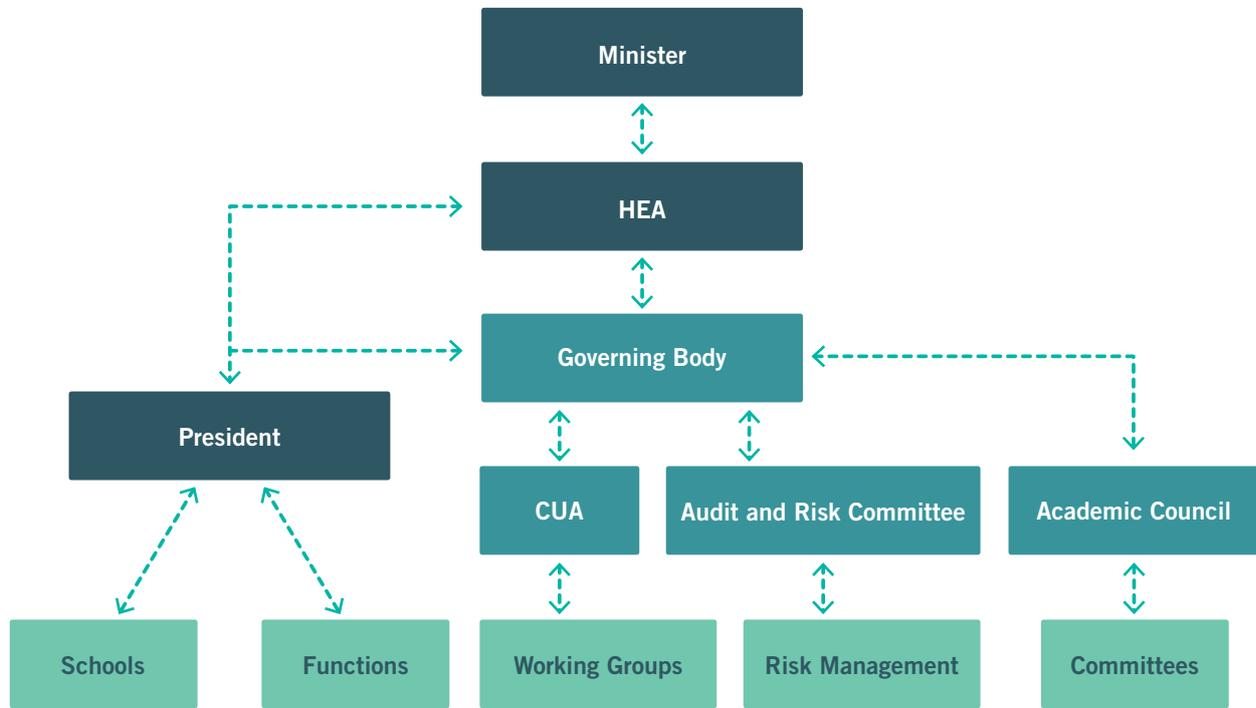
The Institutional Review was an Agenda Item at Executive Committee and Academic Council. The Executive committee also met with QQI to discuss Institutional Review.

The draft ISER was taken to Academic Council and Executive for comments. The final version was then endorsed by the President.

# Chapter 4. Planning, Governance and Ownership of Quality Assurance

## 4.1 Governance Structures

The following organisational chart depicts the structures and committees that constitute the governance and operations of IT Sligo.



## 4.2 Governing Body

The Governing Body (GB) comprises 19 members who typically meet 8 times each year, during the academic period. The President is an ex officio member of the GB and the Secretary/Financial Controller acts as its secretary. The rest of the Institute Executive team attend meetings in an advisory capacity. [See full list of current members.](#)

The GB routinely considers the recommendations made by the Academic Council. Reserved functions must be exercised only by resolution of the governing body (section 21a (1) of Institutes of Technology Act 2006 (25/2006)). The GB undertook their own Self Evaluation processes in December 2016, responses to questions posed were:

Question	Response
Are you satisfied that the Board has clearly documented its role and responsibilities, such as compiling a formal schedule of matters specifically reserved to it for decision?	83.3% were Satisfied or Very Satisfied.
Are you satisfied that the Board has reviewed the controls and procedures adopted by the State body to provide itself with reasonable assurance that such controls and procedures are adequate to secure compliance by the State body with statutory and governance obligations?	91.7 % were Satisfied or Very Satisfied.
Are you satisfied that a culture of openness and debate is promoted in the State body and that all Board members are afforded the opportunity to fully contribute to Board deliberations and meetings, including affording non-executive Board members an opportunity to bring an independent judgement to bear on issues?	83.3 % were Satisfied or Very Satisfied.

## 4.3 Governing Body Committees

### 4.3.1 Audit & Risk Committee

The Institute's Audit & Risk Committee has been established as a sub-committee of the Institute's Governing Body with a written Charter and terms of reference. In line with the new Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies issued on 31st August 2016, at the Governing Body meeting on 14th June 2017, the Audit Committee was renamed the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC).

#### WORK OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

The Committee carries out the following activities:

- Monitors & reviews the effectiveness of the internal audit activities and formally approves all Internal Audit reports and the Annual Institute Internal Audit Plan
- Advises the Governing Body on the effectiveness of the Systems of Internal Controls, Risk Management and Corporate Governance in operation within the Institute
- Meets annually with the Comptroller & Auditor General and Internal Audit without management present
- Reviews the Financial Statements of the Institute
- Manages any Protected Disclosures within the Institute which are submitted to the Chair of the Committee.

### 4.3.2 Risk Management

The purpose of Risk Management is to ensure that risks to IT Sligo are identified, analysed and managed so that they are maintained at acceptable levels. The goal is to identify risks and determine how they may be treated, tolerated, transferred or terminated. IT Sligo is committed to establishing and maintaining a systematic approach to the identification and management of risk.

IT Sligo has a Risk Management Policy, which outlines the risk appetite and the terms of reference of the Risk Management Committee for IT Sligo. The Policy applies to all functions of IT Sligo, both academic & support, including campus companies and research centres.

The objectives of the Institute's risk management process are:

- To protect the assets and reputation of the Institute and to ensure its continued financial well being.
- To support better decision making through a good understanding of risks and their likely impact.

The members of the Risk Management Committee are the Executive Committee members, and the committee is chaired by the President. This committee reports its work into the Audit & Risk Committee and the Governing Body. The Policy and current Institute Risk Register are included in the memory stick.

### 4.3.4 Academic Council and its Committees

The Academic Council is responsible for the quality of all academic activities within the Institute. The terms of reference are set out in section 10 of Institutes of Technology Act 2006 (25/2006) and this gives a broad preview to the work of the Academic Council.

This includes:

- the academic operational plan
- student admission criteria
- academic approval of new programmes
- approval of external examiners
- approval of examination results
- approval of quality assurance procedures.

Institute's submission to QQI for extension of Delegated Authority and Institutional Reviews. The Academic Council is the primary vehicle for driving academic improvements, innovation and change. There are 35 Members of Academic Council 13 ex officio and 22 elected (see appendix 5).

## ACADEMIC COUNCIL COMMITTEES

The Academic Council gained approval from the Governing Body to establish the committees listed below (under sections 4a and 5 of the Act). As part of the Self Evaluation process each committee examined its operation in relation to its terms of reference to identify what was working well and what needed to be improved. Where terms of reference were identified to be modified this would be taken through the normal Academic Council processes.

### 4.3.4.1 Planning and Coordination Committee

The Planning and Co-ordination committee has delegated responsibility for recommending approval of all awards offered by the Institute. Further, the committee has delegated responsibility for overseeing approval of all new programme submissions, including sub-degree, degree and post graduate programmes, and agreeing material modifications to existing programmes. Actions are highlighted in Institute Strategic plan 2.3 and 6.4

#### Strengths of Planning and Coordination Committee

Identification of process improvements

Increased efficiency in managing applications for initial programme approvals and modifications

Understanding of importance of information management and communication

#### Areas for development

Document Management System

Management of internal review process for programme validation

### 4.3.4.2 Academic Processes Committee

The Institute has a responsibility to ensure that fairness and consistency are included in assessment and that the rights of full time and part-time learners are acknowledged and enshrined in its procedures and policies. This Committee is responsible for establishing procedures and policies in relation to student admissions to the Institute including non-standard and mature students, students attending part time programmes and the recognition of prior learning. It is responsible for maintaining documentation on admission policies and procedures. Actions are highlighted in Institute Strategic plan 6.4 and 6.5

#### Strengths of Academic Processes Committee

All committee members are focussed on quality enhancement

Committee is very practical and seeks to provide improvements that have a positive impact on the management of policies and procedures

New policies and procedures have been approved and implemented

Committee reviews policies and procedures, as well as decisions it has made, and amends where necessary

#### Areas for development

Reduce time taken for approval of new procedures or propose amendments

More efficient process for review and approval of external examiners

#### **4.3.4.3 Research and Innovation Committee**

As outlined in the 2017-2022 strategic plan, the Institute has a policy to foster and grow its research activities (Institute Strategic Plan 3.0). This requires support for research active staff and students and policies to attract new funding and new researchers. This Committee develops policies and procedures in harmony with the Institutes Research Policies and promotes research and innovation as an important activity in the Institute. Objective 3 of the Strategic Plan is related to Research, Development and Innovation and actions are focussed in the development areas identified below.

##### **Strengths of Research and Innovation Committee**

Presidents Bursary

Contract Research Unit – Interaction with students

Review of Research pipeline and student applications

Technology Gateway

##### **Areas for development**

Incorporating research into school

Culture

Budget

Constraints on Lecturers

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#### **4.3.4.4 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee**

The core business of the Institute is to deliver a high quality education, relevant to learners. Aspects of programme delivery that need constant updating include, the incorporation of computer-assisted teaching methods and the implementation of flexible delivery techniques to meet the diverse needs of both full-time and part time learners while maintaining academic standards. To achieve this, the Institute must ensure that it has the policies, procedures and processes in place to deliver the highest standard of education. An integral component of this requirement is ensuring that the high calibre staff in the Institute are provided with, and trained in the appropriate tools and techniques to meet the changing needs of learners and of employers (Institute Strategic plan 2.1 and 2.2). The role of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee include, making recommendations and advising the Academic Council on any issues relating to the structure and delivery of all programmes, and the policies related to the further education and training of academic staff.

##### **Strengths of Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee**

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

Induction

##### **Areas for development**

Resources

Policies

Data Capture and Use of Data

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#### 4.3.4.5 National Higher Education Strategy Committee

In responding to the National HE Strategy, 2011, the Institute has established the Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA). The CUA partners (IT Sligo, GMIT and LyIT) have established a Memorandum of Understanding and an implementation plan to achieve its primary objective of pursuing a trajectory towards re-designation as a Technological University. Following on from the Ministerial announcement on May 30, 2013, the Institute is also becoming involved in a cluster with NUI Galway and potentially other providers on the western seaboard. In addition to this, QQI are in the process of making significant changes to its academic QA, awarding status and other policies affecting IoTs. Still further, the International HE landscape is set to change significantly, as a result of Brexit. The National Higher Education Strategy Committee monitors and reviews these and related landscape issues and reports to the Academic Council on progress, potential issues and recommended actions.

##### Strengths of National Higher Education Strategy Committee

Chair gives good synthesis of external strategy papers

To identify key speakers to speak on key issues

Conduit to political reps re TU – All parties and southwest

Conducts due diligence on landscape – across the board

##### Areas for development

Bigger committee – Need more members

#### 4.3.4.6 Collaborative Monitoring and Review Academic Committee

A Collaborative Monitoring and Review Academic Committee comprising members of the Academic Council, Executive Committee and external representation is being established with the responsibility of monitoring and periodically reviewing all collaborative agreements (national and transnational). The external member/s will have expertise in the type/context of provision being reviewed. The terms of reference for such reviews will be proposed by this committee once established, for approval by the Academic Council and, Executive Committee. This committee will produce an annual report for consideration by the Academic Council and Executive Committee. This committee is currently being constituted and will be supported by the Registrars function.

## 4.4 Policy for Quality Assurance

It is the policy of IT Sligo to have procedures in place to ensure that the quality of its programmes and awards meet the internal specifications and those of other bodies legitimately empowered to make specifications. The Quality Assurance policy is framed within the context of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the Quality and Qualifications Act 2012 and the determinations of QQI. The approach to quality encompasses quality assurance and objectives relating to ongoing quality enhancement. The policy is informed by the mission, vision and strategic development of the Institute, as set out in the Institute's Strategic Plan.

Quality Assurance in the Institute's operations is achieved, managed and continuously improved through an accredited Quality Management System based on a comprehensive suite of written Procedures, and the [Institute Quality Manual](#). Policies and procedures are developed and approved through the Executive Committee, the Academic Council or the Governing Body (as appropriate to each sphere of responsibility). The Institute has a diverse student cohort and it is the policy of the Institute to ensure that all students are treated equitably and consistently.

The Institute has an approved set of [Marks & Standards](#) that form part of the Quality System; these specifically cover academic regulations that relate to the management of examinations, assessments and awards. As part of the process of continuous improvement of the Quality System, the Institute is moving from a fully paper based quality manual with forms etc in appendices to an online version of the quality manual, which has links to policies, procedures and forms included and available as hyperlinks throughout the document. The intention is to ensure that the quality manual is more easily accessible to staff and external stakeholders, and that it is easier to keep the manual up to date when policies and procedures are amended. Academic Council approved the new manual structure, and while the process of implementing the changes has proven to be more time consuming than originally anticipated, there is a robust, QQI approved quality assurance system in place, and a strong emphasis on maintaining a culture of quality and quality improvement. It is the intention to make the transition to the fully online manual by Q2 2018, and a dedicated resource to manage this process was approved by the Institute Executive Committee in December 2017.

Two focus groups were held in the Institute to reflect on the Quality System; these were attended by a cross-section of academic and non-academic staff. They identified the following strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the operation of the Quality System, actions for which are covered in the Institute Strategic Plan 6.4 and 6.5

### Strengths

Agility in new programme development

Ability to respond quickly to learner needs and changing educational and societal demands

Positive approach to programmatic review

Sharing of knowledge among peers

### Areas for development

Improve consistency in implementation of policies and procedures across the Institute

Improved communication of new developments and any changes to procedures

Greater use of feedback on implementation of procedures and policies in use

Easily accessible QA manual

Streamlining and updating of sources of information e.g. Institute website

Reduce the time taken to make changes or approve new procedures

Policies and procedures are developed and modified in line with the requirements of external bodies and are continuously reviewed by staff and the Academic Processes Committee (APC) which has responsibility for recommending new policies, procedures, or proposed modifications for approval to Academic Council. As part of the preparation for Institutional Review, the APC identified its strengths and weaknesses and these have been described earlier in this report. A review of Marks and Standards, conducted by APC, and subsequently Academic Council, is described below, as an illustration of the work of APC in line with the objective of quality enhancement.

#### CASE STUDY – MARKS & STANDARDS

Situation: Academic Council approves amendments to Marks & Standards and the new version is published when amendments are made. It was noted that there were a number of issues that were pending review, which would take a significant amount of time to work through.

Opportunity & Action: In an effort to make this process more efficient, APC undertook a full review of Marks and Standards and made recommendations for changes to Academic Council. APC and Academic Council held additional special meetings to facilitate the overall review of Marks and Standards in a coherent fashion, and this process was completed in December 2017. There was a significant additional time commitment for meetings and staff gave very willingly of their time to facilitate this process.

The advantage of this approach has been to allow a comprehensive review of Marks and Standards by focussing solely on that document as opposed to bringing individual changes forward in a more piecemeal fashion. The result is a more robust document that can subsequently be used for further improvements and amendments.

## 4.5 Quality Assurance Mechanisms and Processes

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) relating to this state that “the policy translates into practice through a variety of internal quality assurance processes that allow participation across the institution” (ESG, 2015. P.8).

Quality assurance mechanisms and processes are overseen by Academic Council, through the various sub-committees.

## 4.5.1 Implementation

The structures of the Institute are such that they allow for clear roles and responsibilities in relation to the implementation of the quality system via its procedures and policies. In the first instance, the QA manual is the source of information in relation to implementation. Based on feedback from focus groups, an area that could be improved is communication regarding procedures and also the ease with which procedures can be located and accessed by staff. All procedures are available on the internal IT Sligo staff portal (and many of these are also available externally on the Institute website). However, in the course of preparation for the ISER, it has become apparent that the portal is not easy to navigate for staff who are not familiar with it and, as a result, staff may refer to procedures that they have already downloaded and printed, or they may consult with a colleague to identify what procedure should be followed. Thus meaning that the most recent version of a procedure may not be used. The Institute is addressing this issue through Strategic Plan Objective 6.4, regarding the introduction of the online QA manual and linked procedures. The Institute aspires to having an approved updated Quality Manual available in Q2 2018. This is highlighted as an action in the Institute Strategic Plan, objective 6.4.6.

The Institute has in place policies and procedures that are designed to ensure academic integrity in the delivery of its programmes and in assessing student performance. These are contained in the [Quality Manual](#) and are also available on the staff portal. This helps to ensure a culture of quality and integrity.

## 4.5.2 Monitoring

The Institute has an Internal Audit function and an Audit & Risk Committee that report to Governing Body. This has been described section 4.3.1.

Existing procedures have a mechanism, via the sub-committees of Academic Council, for providing feedback on their implementation in place. The Institute monitors the use of its procedures in the context of its strategic plan e.g. the ambition to grow the number of online students, and increasing the number of international students. Some processes have grown and developed 'organically', but now require a more formal approach. An example of this is the introduction of a procedure for the use of online invigilation of examinations for online students. In the process of developing this procedure, there was an opportunity for all staff to provide feedback and comments, before the final procedure was approved by Academic Council.

## 4.5.3 Revision

Procedures that are found to require revision are brought in the first instance to the Academic Processes Committee for discussion and review. Any member of staff can propose an amendment or procedure to a member of the APC. These changes/proposals are usually either recommended for approval to Academic Council or returned to the proposer for further work and/or amendments.

# Chapter 5. Quality Assurance and Enhancement (Incorporating the National Framework of Qualifications)

## 5.1 Awareness and use of the NFQ and Assurance of appropriate standard of programmes

### 5.1.1 Programme Offerings

IT Sligo is committed to providing access to education for a diverse range of learners; it is a core element of its provision. This includes those students who apply through the CAO process as well as mature learners who apply through direct entry. The Institute uses the NFQ as the basis for all of its programmes. As well as implementing the ladder system, the Institute also has in place a wide range of programmes that have exit awards incorporated, should a student be unable to complete their course of study. This means that they are provided with every available opportunity to gain a qualification from their programme of study.

There is a variety of Level 6 to 10 programmes available in IT Sligo (See Appendix 6).

As a leader in online learning, the Institute offers a significant number of online and blended learning programmes from levels 6-9, as well as a number of Springboard programmes. There are several special purpose awards, details of which are provided (also see Appendix 6). The number of online programmes has increased in recent years to include more programmes in the School of Business and Social Sciences, as well as newly validated online programmes in the Schools of Science and Engineering. The Institute Strategic Plan focuses on an increase in the number of online programmes and students. This is aligned with the objective of widening access for students, particularly those who wish to combine study with work, often for the purposes of career development. The Institute will continue to build on its reputation in online provision of education across all Schools.

### 5.1.2 Admission routes

The Institute pursued potential opportunities for advanced entry to year 2 of some of its programmes, with a view to establishing articulation agreements/Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with college and Education and Training Boards (ETBs) whose programmes were well aligned with those in IT Sligo. The success of this is dependent on the degree of compatibility of the programmes and in particular, first year modules, in both Institutes. An example of such a progression pathway is advanced entry to the Bachelor in Business in Tourism programme in the School of Business and Social Sciences; it is anticipated that students will take advantage of this entry route in September 2018.

Information on access and admission is provided to students in a variety of formats, including the [Institute website](#). In terms of fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, the Institute has in place a procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), which includes the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, as well as prior certified learning. This is considered an essential component for ensuring the students' access and progress in their studies. Given the increasing number of online programmes, it has become apparent that the RPL process needs to be reviewed, updated and resourced in order to ensure that it is fit for purpose and implemented consistently across the Institute, and Strategy Objective 1.2 connects to work in this area. The Institute uses the 'My Experience' website and online e-portfolio assessment tool ([www.myexperience.ie](http://www.myexperience.ie)) to evaluate evidence of learning submitted in relation to prior experiential and prior certified learning. The website and assessment tool were developed by IT Sligo in conjunction with GMIT and Letterkenny IT, as part of the CUA. The portal provides advice and guidance to prospective applicants for RPL. Analysis/feedback shows that the e-portfolio portal is used inconsistently by staff and prospective students, and that the process should be made more efficient and clearer for prospective students, particularly in relation to mapping of their experience to programme learning outcomes. Work is underway to enhance the RPL procedure with input from the LTA and APC sub-committees, as well as the Senior Management group. Institutional practice for RPL is in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, and there is a representative from the Institute working with other institutions and QQI to try to ensure coherent recognition at national level.

### 5.1.3 Induction

The Institute complies with external regulations in managing the student lifecycle. The Institute has in place an induction programme for its full-time and part-time/online programmes. The Induction process was revised during 2016/17 so that it provides a more structured introduction to IT Sligo and the students' specific programme of study. Induction is considered to be a key element of the student experience, and in the case of online students, provides them with an opportunity to meet fellow students and their programme team. As early as possible in a programme, students are provided with information on their programmes, including assessment schedules and the types of learning experience that they will encounter.

The Institute collects, monitors and acts on information on student progression. An important mechanism for monitoring progression and identifying any potential problems is the programme board meeting, whereby lecturers can review student performance and contact can be made with them in an effort to engage or re-engage them. Moodle pages also provide useful information relating to student engagement with course materials. At a programme and module level, student performance is continually reviewed and action taken where necessary.

## 5.2 Design and approval of programmes

During the academic year 2016-2017, there were 15 new programmes developed and approved. Over the course of the year, it was apparent that the timescale set out in the quality manual for new programme development was not strictly adhered to. In some cases, this meant that the preparation of documentation was done under some time pressure and that there was insufficient time to undertake a comprehensive review of the materials before they went out to external panels. There is a balance between trying to be agile when there is a new programme idea, and ensuring that the timeframe for validation is adhered to, in terms of allowing amendments to the timelines. The quality of the programme is not compromised, but it has become challenging to manage deviations from the timelines where there are many new programmes being proposed. As a result of this, the Planning and Co-ordination committee has implemented a new more formalised version of an 'internal review' of documentation before it is sent out to an external validation panel. It is anticipated that this will allow more time for documentation to be considered and to allow for a comprehensive review of all aspects of the programme being developed.

The Institute has provided training for staff in devising programme and module learning outcomes, and assessment strategies, for the purposes of programme design and development. All proposed new programmes are designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the Institute strategic plan; this includes a focus on the needs of industry and the region, as well as ensuring that programmes are student centred. In designing new programmes, the Institute engages with external stakeholders, as well as students and alumni. This ensures that programmes benefit from external expertise and reference points. The Institute programmes are designed to enable smooth student progression throughout the stages of the programme, as well as allowing progression to different levels of qualification on the NFQ. Examples of this are opportunities for progression from level 6-8 for Business, Science and Engineering qualifications, with a further opportunity to study at levels 9 and 10.

The expected student workload is defined in line with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) for modules, and consideration is given to the overall structure of a programme in terms of the number of individual modules that are required to ensure that learning outcomes can be met and assessed. Consideration is given to the balance of contact time vs independent learning for both full time and online programme delivery. Generally, there is a higher number of direct contact hours for full time delivery. The incorporation of group work and cross modular assessment is being increasingly considered in programme design, in the context of student workload and assessment strategies.

The Institute Strategic Plan 1.1 outlines the inclusion of work placement on all programmes where possible, and there is a working group addressing this objective.

The formal institute approval process for new programmes is described in detail in Chapter 2 of the [Institute Quality Manual](#). New programmes are developed in line with the strategic objectives of the Institute, which includes addressing the needs of learners, and regional development needs.

The new level 8 BA degrees in [Sociology and Politics](#), and [Writing and Literature](#) attracted strong interest and it is anticipated that this will increase.

A new [Data Centre Facilities Engineering](#) programme was developed in partnership with industry providers including Google, Facebook and Microsoft in order to meet the growing need for upskilling of service personnel in the industry.

Furthermore, new programmes are currently in development that reflect the changing needs of industry and demand for new skillsets, such as IT. These programmes are being developed as a result of preparation for programmatic review, which revealed that the extent of change required in some programmes constituted new programmes rather than re-validation of existing programmes. The proposed new programmes will provide flexibility in entry routes as well as areas of specialisation.

## 5.3 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

### 5.3.1 Monitoring of Programmes

Chapter 4 of the [Institute Quality Manual](#) specifies the methods by which programmes are monitored. Once a programme has been validated and approved for delivery, the process of monitoring the on-going delivery needs to be enacted. This provides a formal mechanism for quality assurance and facilitates two way communications between staff and students, maintaining a high level of engagement with programme operational issues. The programme monitoring process also includes a formal channel for feedback to be provided by students and staff into programme design, development and delivery. One of the ways in which this is done is via the Programme Board which is scheduled to meet four times in the academic year with an agenda identified for each meeting. Programme boards, in line with ESG 1.9 make decisions on programme content, design and delivery.

The Programme Board is also an opportunity to take stock of student performance and also provides a forum for the student voice. This is a valuable opportunity to reflect on student expectations and experience in relation to the programme. IT Sligo is currently engaged in the [National Student Engagement Programme \(NStEP\)](#) programme to enhance the effectiveness of feedback from elected class representatives and to respond to feedback from students. This engagement in NStEP will ensure a continued effective communication mechanism between students and the programme board/academics staff. Class representatives are invited to programme boards, of which they are members, with limited attendance rights. There is some variability in the exact nature of the way in which the Programme Boards are operated, but generally, class representatives attend for the initial part of the meeting and then leave when other confidential matters that may pertain to individual students are being discussed. The Institute established a working group to examine the mechanisms for capturing the student voice and for ensuring that there were adequate mechanisms in place for student engagement; the Institute believes that it operates in line with the requirements of the ESG for the provision of opportunities for student engagement.

Outside of the formal structures of the Programme Board, there is a sense of collegiality and openness in student-staff communication, such that any issues or problems can normally be resolved quickly. The Programme Board is the forum for discussing students' workload, progression and completion, as well as the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students. Generally, a Programme Board will determine a schedule of assessment at the beginning of each semester, to try to ensure an even balance of assessment type and workload.

The Institute has implemented a paper based module and programme feedback system, which is used to varying degrees, and it is quite cumbersome in terms of analysis. There are two surveys completed by students: the QA1 (Module Evaluation), QA2 (Programme/Stage Evaluation) and QA3 (Programme Evaluation completed by staff). External examiner reports as well as programme monitoring reports are discussed at Programme Board level and these provide valuable information in relation to student performance, retention and progression.

The Institute conducted a pilot of [GURU](#), a secure online submission system for examination papers and external examiner feedback and reports. This system will provide a more efficient method of recording and disseminating external examiner feedback that is provided in reports, as well as ensuring greater security and oversight in the examinations process. The Institute is reviewing feedback on the use of the system, with a view to making a decision on its full adoption.

Examples of actions taken as a result of Programme Board decisions include, for example, amendments to programme assessments, in order to enhance the student experience and to ensure that the programme is meeting the needs of students/graduates. Examples of decisions taken at programme board meetings are the introduction of online delivery of a module in a full-time programme (in line with objective 1.1.4 of the Institute Strategic Plan) and the re-balancing of exam vs continuous assessment to allow the development of critical and creative thinking skills. The process for proposing changes that require consideration by the Planning & Co-ordination sub-committee is via an EAP4, which has recently been amended to make it more accessible for staff, with the facility of providing the required information online. An individual staff member cannot propose a change using an EAP4. It must be a programme board recommendation, and extracts of minutes must be provided as evidence of the decision. The EAP4 system works well, and it is hoped that the new form will make the process easier to implement. An example of an EAP4 is available on soft copy.

At a more strategic level, the School Policy Committee is concerned with overseeing and implementing the School Plan. It is not concerned with operational issues, but confines its business to actions required to ensure implementation of strategic initiatives.

The tasks include, but are not confined to:

- Interpretation of the Institute Strategic Plan in respect of School activities
- Appraising academic developments
- Advising the School on physical resource implications
- Advising the School on likely staff recruitment and development of specialist discipline areas.

School Policy committees play a key role in programme development and ensure a link between the strategic and operational levels within the School.

### 5.3.2 Programmatic Review

The Institute has in place a procedure for programmatic review whereby all programmes in a School are reviewed on a five yearly basis, to ensure that they are appropriate and relevant, in the context of the external environment, and student needs. The process for programmatic review is described in Chapter 5 of the [Institute Quality Manual](#). It is preceded by the School Planning Process, as this has been found to be beneficial for the programmatic review. One of the key issues identified in the programmatic review process is the difficulty to devote sufficient time to meetings etc., while the normal demands of teaching continue. However, programme boards meet as often as is necessary, with communication ongoing outside of the formal meeting. Subject group lecturers also meet to agree on approaches to module development, and any changes that might be made.

#### EXAMPLE OF APPROACH TO PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW:

The School of Business, as part of its programmatic review in 2016, established working groups to examine key areas relating to programme development and student experience – these working groups produced reports that have now been passed on to the Department of Computing to assist in preparation for their programmatic review.

Across the Institute, there is evidence of external engagement and input from external stakeholders that helps to inform programme design and development. External validation panels are used for programmatic review and these provide a critical independent perspective on programmes and provide valuable input into many aspects of the confirmation of programme content and any revisions. During the period covered by the ISER, there has been one programmatic review in the School of Engineering and Design (2013), and two in the Schools of Science (2008 and 2013) and Business and Social Sciences (2011 and 2016). The Institute has normally complied with any conditions and recommendations of validations set out by the panels. However a condition was specified by the panel for the re-validation of programmes in the School of Business and Social Sciences that was believed to be inappropriate by Academic Council. It requested that Governing Body set aside the condition on that basis. The condition and the rationale for requesting that it be set aside are shown below:

*The condition reads:*

*1. Students must be represented on Programme Boards and they should have full voting and member rights.*

*However, this condition is considered to be inappropriate on the following basis:*

1. That the Institute will continue with current practice as described in the QA manual, where students (elected representatives) are members of Programme Boards and we therefore believe that the Institute fulfils that requirement of Condition 1.
2. That to specifically stipulate 'full voting and member rights' in such a condition is outside the scope of what is required for student representation/student voice as specified by the ESG, QQI and the 2012 Act.

## 5.3.4 Service Unit Review

IT Sligo is currently developing a Service Unit Review for its Central Service Functions. These include

- Academic Administration/Registry
- Student Services
- Library
- Computer services
- Online Learning
- Research, Innovation and Engagement
- International
- Timetabling
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Estates

Up to now these functions have been included in the Institutes Internal Audit plan and sample internal audit reports on them are available on soft copy.

However, the Institute is developing a procedure for this process and will pilot it in the Library in September 2018.

## 5.4 Student admissions, progression, recognition and certification

### 5.4.1 Full-time undergraduate programmes

All applications for entry to the first year of IT Sligo's full-time undergraduate courses are made through the Central Applications Office (CAO). Applications open during November for courses starting in September of the following year. While the majority of incoming students to first year hold the Irish Leaving Certificate, IT Sligo welcomes applications from all types of students such as QQI FE candidates, other school leaving exams (GCE A-Levels, BTEC, HNDs, etc), and mature students. QQI FE scores are converted to CAO points and candidates can apply to any programme in the Institute on this basis. Because IT Sligo is committed to facilitating the entry of QQI FE candidates, a target of 20% of places is set on each programme for holders of Level 5 or Level 6 awards. The overall target for 2017 first year intake was 1277 students which gave a QQI FE target of 255. A total of 401 offers were made to candidates who presented QQI FE qualifications to achieve this target but just 170 of those offers were accepted. More promotion will be done with the Colleges who provide QQI FE programmes to increase the level of uptake. Where a student fails to meet the honours mathematics requirement for the BEng (Honours) Civil Engineering, the Institute holds a special mathematics examination after the Leaving Certificate results are issued to afford such students another opportunity to attain a place on the programme.

## 5.4.2 Advanced Entry

Application for advanced entry to years beyond Year 1 are made by direct application to the Institute. Each application is assessed by Academic Staff to ensure that the relevant learning outcomes have been achieved.

## 5.4.3 Online part time programmes

The Institute offers a range of online courses which have been designed through Industry engagement to meet current skills needs. Application for these part time online programmes are made directly to the Institute and they are assessed by members of academic staff. IT Sligo participates in the Springboard Scheme, enabling eligible candidates to avail of free places on a range of courses leading to awards at certificate, degree and post-graduate level. The following are eligible to apply for courses in 2017/18 academic year (subject to the applicant meeting all requirements):

- Homemakers (all courses are open to Homemakers)
- People in employment
  - who wish to take a course in the manufacturing sector (e.g. Bio-pharma or medical devices technology) or
  - who wish to take an ICT Conversion course or
  - who already hold a Level 7 (Ordinary Degree) IT qualification who wish to upskill to a Level 8 IT qualification
- The unemployed or formerly self-employed (all courses are open to these category of applicants, with the exception of the two year part-time ICT conversion courses which are not open to those in receipt of a Jobseekers-related payment).

## 5.4.4 Access

IT Sligo is fully committed to developing and promoting initiatives that seek to counter educational disadvantage. Based on an informal survey conducted by the Access Office in 2015, the Institute is in line with other HEIs as regard the ratio of Access students to the total undergraduate student population. There are a number of strands to our Access Office activities and initiatives including:

- Supports for students with special needs as a result of a disability or medical condition. IT Sligo is a member of the [Disability Access Route to Education \(DARE\) scheme](#)
- Supports for students from socio-economic disadvantaged areas including grant support from our Bursary Fund. IT Sligo is a member of the [Higher Education Access Route \(HEAR\) scheme](#)
- Mature Student Supports and Workshops.

## 5.4.5 Students with a disability

Many students with disabilities gain entry to third level studies through the standard route. In addition, IT Sligo reserves a number of places each year for students with disabilities who cannot compete equally in the Leaving Certificate or FETAC/QQI examinations and who do not achieve the necessary points through the standard route. However, all applicants must achieve at least the minimum entry requirements for any course. The Access Office developed a Disability Support Policy (available on soft copy) to guide staff in their work with student with a disability. Up to 2014, IT Sligo operated its own disability access route. At that point it was decided to join the national [Disability Access Route to Education \(DARE\)](#). The advantages include: students make one application through the CAO regardless of the number of colleges they are applying for, applications are centrally assessed so it is more transparent and independent, the administrative burden is considerably lessened for the Institute, supports such as Fund for Students with a Disability and learning supports can be applied more effectively. As a member of DARE, IT Sligo offers places on reduced points to applicants with disabilities. The table shows the number of offers of places made to DARE applicants in 2016 and 2017.

Offers Made	Level 8	Level 6/7	Total Offers Made
2016	31	124	155
2017	79	126	205

For Data Protection reasons, we do not track DARE applicants once the offers are made unless they register with the Access Office for support.

Not all students who have a disability or a learning difficulty use the DARE Scheme in making their application to college. There are currently 399 students registered with the disability and learning support service in the Institute.

Below is the breakdown of students currently registered:

## 5.4.6 Learning Support

- 265 students registered with (SpLD) Specific Learning Difficulties; Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADD, ADhD or a General Mild Learning Disability registered with the Learning Support Service
- (13 students currently awaiting a psychological educational assessment, therefore registration currently pending)
- 7 on-line students registered with (SpLD) Specific Learning Difficulties; Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADD, ADhD or a General Mild Learning Disability registered with the Learning Support Service.

## 5.4.7 Disability Support

- 86 students registered with Disability for Physical/ mobility, Mental Health, Neurological condition or a significant on-going illness
- 28 students registered with (ASD) Asperger's Syndrome
- 13 on-line students registered with the Disability Service.

In light of the increasing numbers of students with a disability, the Institute has recently procured a specialist Disability Support Service to help support students to reach their full potential in the institute.

### CASE STUDY:

#### *Students from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds:*

Heretofore, the Institute had its own “Breaking the Mould” scheme to encourage school Leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds across the Border, Midlands, West and North West Region to progress to higher education. Participants got the benefit of a Summer School to help the transition to higher education and a bursary to help with the costs of entry to college. The numbers supported through “Breaking the Mould” are shown in the following table:

Year	Total Applications	Total Approvals	IT Sligo CAO Offers	BtM Participants; Summer School	Bursary Recipients
2010	78	39	32	30	25
2011	111	83	51	35	34
2012	141	92	53	39	38
2013	210	140	86	59	56
2014	163	110	68	39	32
2015	193	126	106	70	67
2016	211	137	108	72	68
2017	143	97	78	55	52

However, following an independent evaluation of the scheme in 2016 by independent consultancy firm Nexus Research, it was decided to replace “Breaking the Mould” with the national [HEAR Scheme](#) so as to make it easier for students to make application and to reduce the administrative burden on the Institute. The main difference between HEAR and the “Breaking the Mould” Scheme is the eligibility criteria: the more elaborate set of [HEAR qualification criteria](#) combines income with other indirect financial indicators, and a number of social and cultural indicators. The advantages for the Institute and potential applicants from joining the HEAR Scheme include: Wider population base as HEAR is a national scheme, applicants will only need to complete one application pack regardless of the number of colleges they apply for, applications are assessed centrally so it is more transparent and independent, the administrative burden is considerably lessened for the Institute, the same type of supports such as orientation and grant support can be applied more effectively.

## 5.4.8 Mature Students

In the Central Applications system, mature candidates are defined as candidates who have reached the age of 23 years or over by 1 January in the year of application. IT Sligo acknowledges and appreciates the positive impact that mature students can bring to academic and campus life – up to 20% of places on courses in the Institute are reserved for mature applicants. Applications are made through the CAO as per usual process. The table below shows the number of mature students to First Year.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
181	169	165	164	118	170

An information evening for interested applicants is held in January each year. Mature Student workshops are held in the week immediately preceding the commencement of first year classes, for incoming mature students who have been away from education for some time.

Further details are outlined in Appendix 7 regarding criminal convictions, student vetting, physical testing, transfer and progression.

## 5.4.9 Recognition and Certification

On satisfactory completion of their programme of study, students are conferred with their qualification. Conferring is a key event in the academic calendar, where students receive their formal documentation relating to their qualification in the form of a transcript of results and parchment. Information is also available to the student through Digitary which allows online secure access to confirmation of qualifications for students and other external bodies to whom they grant access. Students who complete minor awards, SPAs and single subjects also receive the appropriate certification.

As part of its quality enhancement activities, the Institute is operating a pilot of 'Gradebook', which allows for centralised recording of component grades which make up the overall result for each module in a programme of study. While this is done currently using a paper system, and the overall final grade is recorded in 'Banner', the use of Gradebook will provide a more robust and easily accessible system for tracking and recording student grades.

# 5.5 Student Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

## 5.5.1 Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Strategy

IT Sligo's "[Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2016-2018](#)" was developed by members of the Institute's Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee (LTAC) during a period of uncertainty and of rapid change in higher education. There was uncertainty as to whether IT Sligo would merge, at some point in the future, with the Connacht Ulster Alliance (CUA) partners and become a Technological University (TU). During the development of the Institute's LTA Strategy a 'CUA draft Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy', dated May 2013 emerged and was reviewed by the LTAC. The five pillars of the draft CUA strategy were deemed laudable but the provenance of the document was unknown. The LTAC members were not clear whether to produce a strategy for IT Sligo or for the CUA. After a period of inertia it was agreed to develop an IT Sligo strategy predicated on the LTA Strategy for 2010 to 2013. The educational philosophy of the LTA Strategy 2016-2018 states, "IT Sligo is guided by a student-centred pedagogical approach to learning, teaching and assessment" and defines student-centred learning as "learning that is personalised, to the extent that it addresses the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students". The strategy has an implementation plan with measurable outcomes which should be communicated to the Institute community. Hard copies of the strategy have been circulated to staff and it is available on the Institute's [website](#). Each of the strategy's objectives has a defined action, target date and person/unit responsible for implementation. Whilst there is a shared responsibility for implementation in LTAC, responsibility for promoting, monitoring and ensuring that each of the 27 objectives are met, forms part of the role of the Educational Development Manager.

The LTAC has instigated a number of discrete working groups to address:

- Student Group Work
- Learning Analytics
- Student Retention
- Assessment of Student Learning

## 5.5.2 Centre for Enhancement of Learning & teaching (CELT)

In November 2014 a proposal from the LTAC that IT Sligo should, “establish and resource an institutional centre for learning and teaching to support academic professional and continuing development” was approved by Academic Council (AC). It was suggested that the new centre would be called the “Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning” (CELT) to connect to the National Forum’s overarching ‘enhancement’ theme and that its remit would be to support academic staff with respect to:

- Professional development opportunities
- New approaches to teaching and learning (new pedagogies)
- Programme design
- Assessment strategies
- Educational research
- Educational technologies
- Student support.

Despite the proposal for the CELT from the AC and commitment of the Executive Committee to resource it, the CELT has yet to be established due to a delay in recruitment of the Educational Development Manager who will lead the centre. As a consequence, many of the activities associated with the themes listed above have also been delayed, which remains a source of frustration among academic staff, it is recognised however that there is an urgent requirement for training and professional development around new pedagogies and the technologies that support teaching and learning.

## 5.5.3 Supporting Students in Student Centred Learning Approach/ Interventions

The Institute has taken the initiative to develop, either on its own or collaboratively, a number of supports and resources that contribute to student-centred learning approach, as outlined in the section on Learning Resources. Summary of Section on Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

### Strengths

The LTA Strategy promotes student-centred learning and has a robust implementation plan with measurable outcomes

Learners and lecturers are the principal stakeholders in education. Through the LTA they are encouraged to take an active role in shaping the learning process

### Areas for development

The new Educational Development Manager will have responsibility for reporting on LTA Strategy

Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching must be established, resourced and supported in its functions

## 5.6 Teaching Staff

### 5.6.1 Recruitment

IT Sligo complies with the Selection Procedures determined by the Minister for Education and Science under the [RTC Act 1992](#). Job descriptions are drawn up for posts and the essential and desirable qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience are set out. Posts are advertised in the national press, posted on the Institute website and increasingly on jobs.ac.uk, a UK Higher Education jobs website. The Selection Board composition is determined by the procedures and includes a member of the Governing Body as Chair, the relevant Head of School, a nominee of the President (usually the relevant Head of Department), an appropriate academic from another Institute of Technology or University, and a business / industry representative. Shortlisting is undertaken by a subset of the Selection Board, applying the requirements set out in the job description. The interview process is then structured around determining the competence / suitability of candidates for a lecturing position. The recommendations of the Selection Board are brought to the next meeting of the Governing Body for approval, after which the post can be offered to the successful candidate.

In the main, this process is effective in that it is fair and transparent and provides assurance as to the competence of lecturing staff. The inclusion of senior academic managers both from within and outside the Institute provides assurance as to the academic competence of the candidates, and the inclusion of an external business / industry representative ensures that candidates are assessed as to their up to date knowledge and experience of industry, thus ensuring graduates acquire the relevant skills required in the workplace. Despite this, the process has limitations. Firstly these procedures are very prescriptive and were written in 1992. Much has changed in the intervening 25 years in regard to both best practice in recruitment as well as the changing role of lecturers. IT Sligo, through the sector representative body THEA (previously IoTI), has sought Ministerial consent to set the procedures aside and allow the Institute to come under the auspices of the Commission for Public Service Appointment (CPSA). Such a move would allow the Institute the flexibility to modernise its practices within an overall principles-based approach to recruitment, with the principles being openness, transparency, accountability and merit based. Unfortunately approval has not been forthcoming, thus leaving the Institute continuing to utilise rather antiquated procedures. The Institute remains hopeful that the re-designation as a Technological University might present an opportunity to change the statutory basis of recruitment procedures.

Student recruitment, particularly on the institute's online programmes, is very dynamic and, in a number of areas health and safety requirements prescribed limits to the size of student groups, means that resourcing needs can arise at very short notice. Equally the need to cover absence at short notice can and does arise. To meet these very real needs of students requiring a lecturer can result, by necessity, in less robust recruitment procedures. The Institute is mindful of the potential risks associated with these circumstances and seeks to minimise them with better resource planning, however it is inevitable that there will always be a degree of uncertainty, albeit at the margins.

### 5.6.2 Staff Development

IT Sligo invests in the professional development of all staff, including teaching staff, and does so through a number of routes.

1. Firstly the Institute has an annual budget to fund formal programmes of further study. This process is initiated in spring each year, applications are invited and considered by the Executive Committee. Approval is granted for programmes beginning the following autumn. Seven Academic staff began funded PhD studies in September 2017, bringing the total number of academic staff being supported in this way to 38, approximately 13% of the academic staff. In addition, other academic staff are being funded to undertake a range of other programmes of study.
2. Each School retains a budget to fund discipline specific professional development requests from staff members.
3. As a member of the LIN network, IT Sligo encourages staff to participate on LIN programmes for professional development. In particular new lecturing staff, of which there has been 20 recruited since January, have been encouraged to undertake the First Steps in Teaching and Learning open online course. 18 staff (new and existing) have begun this.
4. Given the Institute's recognised national leadership position in Online Learning, the Centre for Online Learning (COL) provides an extensive range of professional development opportunities for lecturing staff with, for example, 44 events taking place in the first semester of 2017/18 alone. In addition to scheduled learning events COL employs Instructional Designers who work with lecturing staff on a 1 to 1 basis to support them in adapting their learning, teaching and assessment strategies to become compatible with online delivery
5. The Research Office provides, on request, modules in Research Practice from an accredited Level 9 programme in Research Skills

Overall this represents a picture of an Institute that supports and invests in the professional development of its staff. Additionally this activity is aligned to the Institute's Strategic Objectives which are to achieve Technological University status (criteria for which includes the level of staff with PhDs) and to build on our nationally recognised leadership position in Online Learning.

Notwithstanding this strategic alignment, there is a degree of adocracy to IT Sligo's professional development activities. The Institute creates and supports development opportunities and it is, in the main, left for staff to determine whether they participate or not. This in itself is not a poor practice but, a more consistent, structured and managed approach may be more appropriate.

Ideally, discussions regarding professional development between academic staff and their managers should take place in the context of a PMDS / appraisal type setting. The institute has a PMDS system that requires an annual discussion between staff and managers, however implementation of this system is not consistent in all departments, but as we continue to do this we have begun to take other steps to better plan and structure the professional development opportunities provided to staff. Section 2.1 of the Institute Strategic Plan outlines how this will be done with a focus on Annual Training Needs Analysis and Continuous Professional Development.

One of the specific staff development objectives identified by the Institute is the need to increase the number of academic staff with a postgraduate qualification in teaching and learning in higher education. From a very low base, targets were set to increase the number in the Performance Compact 2014-2016 agreed with the Higher Education Authority. The increase in numbers was intended to be achieved through the development of the Institute's own programme in this area, and targeted at new lecturing staff. This programme was not developed due to staffing restrictions and as an alternative, new staff were encouraged to consider LIN modules to meet these needs. The final report summary to the HEA, submitted in 2017, showed progress but the target was not met.

The recent appointment of a new Educational Development Manager (EDM) is a critical first step in developing a more structured and focused approach to academic staff development. The EDM's role includes setting up a Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, and undertaking a Training Needs Analysis. The Training Needs Analysis has been completed (June 2017) with academic staff across all three schools. This document is available on soft copy. This will be used to set out a professional development programme designed to meet the Institute's needs.

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Assessment Skills for Higher Education Staff – open online course
- Peer Assisted Learning Leadership - open online course

All available at: <https://www.cpdlearnonline.ie/>

Through the National forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning we have 15 Professional Development digital Badge courses <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/digital-badges/> that are available to IT Sligo staff. However, in order for IT Sligo staff to undertake and complete a course the institute is required to provide a trained facilitator. The forum provided one or two sessions in Dublin to train facilitators but no one from IT Sligo was available to attend. At time of writing there is no indication from the Forum when/if more facilitator sessions will be run. One solution would be to collaborate with other IoTs such as AIT and GMIT where trained facilitators are in place.

Within IT Sligo the following eLearning Certification Courses are available for IT Sligo staff:

- Online Lecturer Induction
- Moodle Basics
- Adobe connect
- Panopto
- Live delivery
- Online Lecturer Skills
- Etivities

## 5.7 Learning resources and student support

### 5.7.1 Learning Resources

The Institute has taken the initiative to develop, either on its own or collaboratively, a number of supports and resources for students as follows:

#### ***5.7.1.1 A Dual-Pathway MOOC to Improve Student Transition from Second to Third Level.***

“Get Ready Education – A Learning Journey” is a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) that was designed to help second level students prepare for the transition into higher education. The project was a collaboration between 7 Irish universities and IoTs, led by IT Sligo. It was funded in 2015 by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning under the ‘National Roadmap for Building digital Capacity in Irish HE’. There are two discrete pathways within the MOOC - a self-directed pathway, intended primarily for first year undergraduates and those with MOOC experience; and a teacher-facilitated pathway where participants are supported and directed through elements of the MOOC by a teacher in their secondary school or FE College, using a blended approach to learning. MOOC participants are also supported by e-moderators (working in one of the collaborating HEIs) whose role is to stimulate and support discussion. The MOOC consists of 5 modules and a reflection piece. The courses are open and available to allow school teachers to choose the modules they wish to run with their classes providing flexibility in terms of time and participation. It also provides for MOOC participants to focus on areas they have identified as particularly relevant to them.

- Modules
- MOOC Orientation
- Discover Learning
- Critical and Creative thinking
- Digital Literacy & Communications
- Responsible Citizenship
- Reflection

The MOOC is available, with guest access, at: <http://www.getready.education/>

#### ***5.7.1.2 Academic Success - Preparation for 3rd Level***

These short, open, online courses were developed in collaboration with a number of other universities and colleges in Ireland, UK, Australia and New Zealand and led by Epigeum - a spin-out company of the Imperial College London and now owned by Oxford University Press. It has been designed for online, full-time and part-time students at IT Sligo. The courses aim to prepare students for college life and give helpful tips and advice on how to find information. They cover issues from adapting to college life to managing study skills and academic integrity. The courses are hosted on the Institute’s VLE, Moodle and lecturers have been encouraged to incorporate them into existing, relevant modules and/or align with learning outcomes. A number of lecturers in the School of Business and Social sciences have incorporated the courses into programmes but information about the benefits for students needs to be more widely disseminated. The courses are openly available to all students registered with IT Sligo and available at: <https://www.itsligo.ie/student-hub/academic-success/>

#### ***5.7.1.3 Student Success Toolbox***

The aim of the Student Success Toolbox is to support transitions from thinking about study to the first weeks of college, particularly for flexible learners (undergraduate adult, part-time and online/distance students). A suite of digital tools has been created to assist flexible learners by helping them assess their own readiness, provide feedback and lay the foundation for successful programme completion. The Student Success Toolbox project is supported by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning’s ‘Building Digital Capacity’ fund. It is a collaborative project involving Dublin City University, Institute of Technology Sligo, Maynooth University and Dundalk Institute of Technology. The Student Success Toolbox is openly available to all students registered with IT Sligo and available at: <https://www.itsligo.ie/onlinelearning/about/student-success-toolbox/>

### 5.7.1.4 Maths MOOC

A free, online, pre-degree Mathematics Open Course - The MOOC is particularly suitable for CAO Leaving Certificate applicants who may not meet the Mathematics entry requirements for their preferred honours degree programme. A pass in this special exam will be deemed equivalent to meeting the Mathematics entry requirement.

Available at: <https://www.itsligo.ie/2017/08/14/pre-degree-mathematics-open-course-at-it-sligo/>

### 5.7.1.5 Library Support Course

The Yeats Library Moodle page is designed to assist and guide students through their research and studies. Links and resources are provided to support students throughout the academic year.

### 5.7.1.6 Online students Induction course

This course has been designed to help students prepare for online learning. It sets the context for online learning, returning to education, setting expectations, getting to know other online students, managing time and developing study skills. The course provides videos, resources and information to help students familiarise themselves with the online environment.

Available at: <https://www.itsligo.ie/student-hub/online-students-induction-course/>

### 5.7.1.7 Lecture Capture

Lecture Capture or 'Academic Video' is currently being piloted by one lecturer in the School of Engineering and Design. Lecture capture is essentially the recording of a live lecture given to a cohort of campus based students in a classroom. The lecturer can record him/herself and any presentation slides together. This is then made available to the class for those who are unable to attend and for revision. A number of classrooms have been fitted out with the technology required for lecture capture, and a report on the operation and efficacy of lecture capture will be disseminated to academic staff in due course.

Summary

#### Strengths

These resources support student-centred learning and student self-development

Supports have been developed for both campus based and online learners

Resources help students develop their digital capabilities

#### Areas for development

The transition MOOC 'Get Ready Education' requires additional funding and continued support - either from the collaborating partners or by IT Sligo alone

The Academic Success courses should be promoted to all academic staff and students and, ideally, incorporated into all programmes

Further online resources should be identified and developed, including a course on academic integrity

IT Sligo to use the Student/Learner digital experience Tracker in Q1, 2018

## 5.7.2 Student support

Our Student Support Services team provides a range of information, advice and support systems to help students to make the best of their time at the Institute. For full time students, we understand that the independence of being a student and living away from home is a big step for most people and that it is much easier for a student to do well in their studies if they are happy with other aspects of their life. Our Student Support Services team helps students cope with any concerns or worries that they may have. The Student Counselling Service and the Student Medical Service offer professional and confidential student support free of charge to all registered IT Sligo students. A Service Level Agreement is available on the Student Hub with contact details for the team (available on soft copy).

A full list and outline of student support services is included in Appendix 8.

### 5.7.2.1 Admissions Office

The Admissions Office provides on-going support in such areas as admissions, registration, grants, fees and examinations, and Garda Vetting for students.

### 5.7.2.2 Access Office

The Access Office provides supports for a range of students. Students with disabilities including physical and mobility disabilities, sensory disabilities, (hearing and visual impairments), mental health difficulties, and specific learning difficulty (dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, ADHD, Asperger's Syndrome) are offered support and advice. Supports available include, assistive technologies, learning support for students with specific learning difficulties, general support for students with disabilities or ongoing illnesses, Assistive Technology Room, Applications to the Fund for Students with Disabilities, Screening for students who suspect that they may have dyslexia or specific learning difficulties. The table below shows the allocation available to the Fund for Students with a Disability and the number of students assisted in the last three academic years:

<b>2014/15</b>	<b>€79,339</b>	<b>200</b>
2015/16	€82,528	227
2016/17	€70,638	247

The Access Office also administers the Student Assistance Fund and the Childcare Fund. The Student Assistance Fund aims to ensure that disadvantaged students receive financial supports to enable them to fully benefit from their studies and in particular to assist them in overcoming financial obstacles which may otherwise cause them to abandon their studies. All students attending a full-time undergraduate course of not less than one year's duration are eligible to apply for assistance to overcome acute or unexpected hardship. Any tuition or registration fees must be paid in full before students can receive funding from the Student Assistance Fund. The table below shows the allocation available to the student assistance fund over the last three academic years and the number of students assisted:

<b>2014/15</b>	<b>€139,851</b>	<b>275</b>
2015/16	€103,910	214
2016/17	€165,362	265

The Childcare Fund is a limited fund, available to help full-time students who have childcare responsibilities. In order to be eligible to apply for funding from the Childcare fund, applicants must qualify for free or the EU rate of fees and meet the eligibility criteria for application for a maintenance grant from SUSI. Applicants must also have paid any outstanding tuition or registration fees before becoming eligible for support from the Childcare Fund. The table below shows the allocation available to the student assistance fund over the last three academic years and the number of students assisted:

<b>2014/15</b>	<b>€58,509</b>	<b>50</b>
2015/16	€81,286	51
2016/17	€69,262	37

### 5.7.2.3 The Careers Office

The Careers Office provides advice and career guidance to prospective and current students within the Institute and to other third level education providers. It also provides a service to students who are about to graduate to help them make well informed decisions.

### 5.7.2.4 Counselling Services

The counselling services help students through difficult times. They also encourage students to embrace positive living and to develop positive mental health habits. The latest Annual Report is available available on soft copy.

### **5.7.2.5 Retention Officer**

In order to ensure that the Institute responds appropriately to the risk of student attrition, the Institute created a Retention Officer post to co-ordinate efforts to improve retention. Duties include:

- planning and implementation of the Institute's annual Induction Programme for incoming first year students and Apprentices
- planning and delivery of the Institute's Peer Mentoring Programme
- carrying out of a survey of students who have left IT Sligo prematurely to identify causes
- implementation of an electronic student engagement system pilot
- monitoring of relevant management information in relation to retention to include programme & module performance for all exams, lowest/highest pass rates, completion rates, etc.
- monitor implementation of the Institute's Student Retention Policy (available on soft copy).

### **5.7.3 IT Sligo Student Retention Policy**

This student retention policy has been developed to address the distinctive needs of IT Sligo. A diverse student population, widening participation and different levels of preparedness for higher education combined with many internal and external issues, all have an impact on retention levels. In recognising that many factors can be at play in student's early withdrawal from college, it follows that a collaborative approach is required in order to improve student retention rates. Addressing retention requires a coherent policy and a set of actions which recognises the holistic nature of this issue, the complete student experience and the contribution of all sections of the institute in an integrated way. The Retention Policy contains recommendations and suggested actions that Schools can implement to improve retention on their programmes. Retention initiatives at the Institute were reviewed by Internal Auditors, Price Waterhouse Coopers and their report (available on soft copy) contains a number of recommendations that have been considered by Management and which will be taken on board

### **5.7.4 The Student Mentoring Programme**

At IT Sligo, we wish to create a very welcoming and supportive environment for our first years. To this end, we have developed the Student Mentoring Programme, which offers a great opportunity for students and staff to work together to support our incoming first years. The Student Mentoring Programme offers new students the opportunity to create networks between each other and student mentors. These mentors help first years to access the key practical information they need to begin their studies with confidence. Students are placed into groups on the basis of their programme of study, and assigned a mentor. The groups meet for lunch on assigned days for four weeks of semester one, and one week in semester two, giving participants the opportunity to chat with each other about their new experiences. Mentors give important information on the supports available to students, and are able to answer practical questions about timetables, room locations and where to buy coffee.

Each lunch also features 'drop-in' visitors from academic and support staff. Our mentors are second and third year students who have been trained for their role. They are available to answer basic queries via email, text message or phone call for the duration of the programme. They will direct first years to support services where necessary. The latest report from the Student Mentoring Programme is available available on soft copy.

# Chapter 6.

# Apprenticeship Provision



## 6.1 Existing Provision

Prior to the establishment of the apprenticeship council there were 27 statutory apprenticeships in the following major areas of activity:- Electrical, Motor, Construction and Engineering. For these apprenticeships SOLAS and previously FAS oversaw the apprenticeship programmes, and, delivered the off the job training elements in conjunction with the Institutes of Technology.

IT Sligo trains apprentices at phase 4 and 6 from this existing provision, currently in 3 apprenticeships, namely, Electrical, Carpentry and Joinery, and Toolmaking. Following a decline in apprenticeships resulting from the economic crash, there is a resurgence in demand for these apprenticeships and the numbers are enjoying modest but steady growth, particularly in the electrical trades. Nationally the Action Plan For Education 2017, has a cumulative target of over 100 apprenticeship schemes with 31,000 apprentice registrations over the period to 2020. This plan has ambitions to increase the number of craft registrations in 2017 to 4,147 with 13 new apprenticeship programmes, with 800 apprentice registrations.

### 6.1.1 QA arrangements for existing apprenticeships

The strategic and operational responsibility for the pre 2017 apprenticeships lies with SOLAS. SOLAS is in the process of validating these apprenticeship programmes with the QQI. It is planned to review all the existing apprenticeships over the coming years. The [Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland December 2013](#) (p.82) outlines the changes required in this curriculum review.

### 6.1.2 Ambition for new apprenticeships

In May 2013 Minister Ruairi Quinn announced a [Review of Apprenticeship Training](#). This review concluded that apprenticeships should have the following characteristics.

- Industry led
- Two years duration as a minimum
- Learning that alternates between a workplace and an educational or training institute
- A minimum of 50% on the job training
- Part of formal Education and Training
- Apprentices are employed and paid under a Contract of Apprenticeship
- Substantial in depth and duration, in order to prepare Apprentices to work autonomously and competently in a specific occupation.

While all the existing apprenticeships were at level 6, the review proposed that apprenticeships could be on the framework from level 5 to level 10 and prepare apprentices for a specific occupation. Following the review, the apprenticeship council was established and was tasked initially with the development of new apprenticeships. It was a key recommendation that these apprenticeship proposals would be industry led with consortia of industry and education and training advisors. Following an examination of over 70 proposals received, 25 were approved for development and the insurance practitioner apprenticeship was one of the first 25 approved (The Apprenticeship Council Report on New Apprenticeship Programme Proposals, June 2015). Submissions were subject to detailed evaluation criteria under the following headings were agreed by the Apprenticeship Council and specified in the call for proposals:

- I. Evidence of sustainable skill demand
- II. Evidence of learner focus
- III. Evidence of practical commitment to roll out of the new apprenticeship
- IV. Readiness to enter development phase leading to roll out of the new apprenticeship
- V. Cost effectiveness/value for money of the proposal

To ensure the above criteria were consistently and fairly applied in assessing each proposal, the evaluation panel used a marking scheme to evaluate and rank proposals.

## CASE STUDY

### *Example of successful apprenticeship approval*

The insurance practitioner apprenticeship was proposed initially by Zurich insurance, however the apprenticeship council recommended that it would have broader industry support and the Insurance Institute of Ireland was appointed to lead out on the proposal.

The consortium: The Insurance Institute formed a strategic committee to advise on the programme and to select a provider to validate and deliver the programme. IT Sligo was selected as the co-ordinating provider based on the track record on the delivery of on-line programmes and work based learning programmes.

Development of programme: Following appointment of IT Sligo as co-ordinating provider, the development of the programme commenced. The programme was successfully validated by an international panel in May 2016 and SOLAS commenced the process of drafting the statutory instrument which created insurance practice as an occupation governed under the apprenticeship scheme.

Running of programme: The programme commenced in September 2016, with 67 apprentices, with 40% of the cohort being female. Of the pre 2016 apprenticeships, normally 1% of this cohort would be female. The programme continued to grow with the 2017 intake of 83 apprentices with the addition of the life insurance stream.

Quality arrangements: The programme is operated under the QQI topic specific guidelines for apprenticeship. The Consortium Steering Group (CSG) deals with planning and strategic issues such as setting the demand for places. The CSG is facilitated by the Insurance Institute and consists of senior figures in the financial services and the insurance industry. On an operational level, the IT Sligo course board, along with representatives from the Insurance Institute and the insurance industry, manages the day to day running of the programme. This current approach works excellently and there is an overlap of members on the CSG and the course board, which allows a sharing of information between both groups. IT Sligo and the Irish Insurance Institute (III) both employ a manager to operationally manage the programme, with the IT Sligo manager working with the students and the III manager working on industry and work based learning.

## 6.2 Apprenticeship Future Plans

IT Sligo has collaborated on the delivery of a number of new apprenticeship programmes in conjunction with the other colleges and industry groupings. IT Sligo has also responded to the 2017 call with a number of proposals for the development of new apprenticeship programmes, across the 3 schools in the Institute. The Insurance Consortium Steering Group (CSG) agreed to support a joint submission between Institute of Technology Sligo and Insurance Institute of Ireland (III) and a proposal for a level 9 and level 10 apprenticeship in insurance practice. At the time of writing ITS have been unsuccessful in achieving additional apprenticeship programmes and the review process is ongoing.

# Chapter 7. Joint and Transnational Provision



Currently there are two key programmes that have recently been developed that have gone through the collaborative and transnational provisions process. They are the MSc Medical Biotechnology Regulatory Affairs with NUI Galway and the Biomedical Sciences Programmes with Ulster University.

The programmes that are running and have current student numbers and intakes for 2018 are shown in the Table below.

Current Student Numbers on Collaborative Part Time Programmes

Programme	Collaborative or Transnational Institution	Mode	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
MSc Medical Technology Regulatory Affairs	NUI Galway	Online and Workshops	0	19	38	39	39
BSc Biomedical and Healthcare Sciences	Ulster University	Online and workshops	0	0	19	40	60

### KEY ISSUES ARISING

The School of Science has been involved with two highly successful inter-college collaborations leading into new markets both nationally in Ireland and internationally.

There are four main stages as follows:

1. Draft and approve a preliminary Memorandum of Understanding. This process is relatively straight forward.
2. Conduct a detailed “due diligence” process involving financial, legal, academic, operational and reputational reviews. This is done by a separate group from within IT Sligo, not all of whom may be cognate to the disciplines involved. The set-up of this process has proven to be slow and cumbersome, with unclear benefits. There is an alternative mechanism to recognise the status of accredited learning providers in the public sector when dealing with high-reputation HEI’s such as NUI Galway and Ulster University. In both collaborations with Ulster University and NUI Galway there was no reciprocal requirement by these HEI institutions to complete “Due Diligence” on IT Sligo.
3. Draft a consortium agreement including a joint awarding agreement where relevant. This is a complex process as it seeks to reconcile documents and procedures such as ‘Marks and Standards’ across two different academic institutions. Legal advisors typically become involved at this stage for both sides.
4. Documents at different stages are reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee, the Academic Council and the Governing Body, this repeated review of documents is a very time consuming part of the process.

### PROCESS IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. Streamlining of Process

Processes and procedures for Collaborative and transnational Collaborations should be streamlined, as in its current format it is a major disincentive to entering into any level of engagement with national and international partners.

#### 2. Due Diligence

Where the collaborator is an accredited HEI with delegated authority and an internationally known reputation (for example a public sector funded University in Ireland or the UK) the requirement for “Due Diligence” should be reviewed. The processes in these HEI institutions currently does not require the “Due Diligence” process to be implemented on IT Sligo. This practice slows the entire process and impacts the confidence in the partnership arrangements.

## CASE STUDY

### History of Delivery of level 8/9 Medical Technology Affairs programme and issues raised in managing a National Collaborative programme

This section outlines the complexity and issues that arise in working on the NUI Galway collaboration for the Level 9 MSc Medical technology Regulatory Affairs Programme and the level 8 Certificate and Higher Diploma in Medical Regulatory Affairs and Quality. With different systems in place between the two institutions for many academic processes, the programme is effectively evolving all the time with new challenges. This is a complex process and has been successful to date due to the collaboration of staff across both HEI's.

#### Exam boards:

Situation: A joint marks and standards was developed between the institutions specifically for this programme. This involves alternating exam board meetings between the two institutions, NUI Galway and IT Sligo. This adds a layer of complexity as whenever the exam board is held in NUI Galway, results are entered also in Banner and a separate mini exam board meeting is required. Much of the responsibility for "accuracy" and "comparability" of the results falls on the programme coordinator.

Opportunity: In retrospect it may be simpler to process the results in one college only and remove this opportunity for error. There may also be an opportunity for electronic transfer of results.

#### Deferrals:

Situation: There is a different deferrals procedure between the two institutions which causes much annoyance amongst the students. To defer any module or modules within an academic year, students must complete separate application forms for both institutions. IT Sligo charge €100 for deferral and €50 for re-registration. In NUI Galway, the process is called "Leave of Absence" if it extends across another academic year, the fees for this are much higher- "The NUI Galway Fee in order to re-register at NUI Galway to complete your degree in a new Academic Year, following leave of Absence are €1,824. This fee is known as a Repeat fee."

Opportunity: We are proposing that NUI Galway reconsider this fee in light of the part time online nature of our programme but this change may take some time.

In addition, if a student defers one module in NUI Galway, they are effectively "off the system" until they re-register again, regardless of the fact that 5 other modules may be in progress. IT Sligo appear to have greater flexibility around this.

#### Registration:

NUI Galway charge a €50 registration fee whereas IT Sligo charge €250.

Opportunity: In summary, a programme review with management after a full cohort of students have been through the system would be advisable to implement "lessons learned".

Overall Summary:

#### Strengths

The development and validation of the joint Programmes with Ulster University and NUI Galway were a highly progressive initiative in the School of Science at IT Sligo.

#### Areas for development

The challenge has been in the running of the course and reconciling differences between institutional rules and regulations. The programme could be improved if a universal shared IT/Banner system was adopted so that the results are entered in one place to minimise opportunities for errors with marks.

The challenge of two deferral systems for students and associated difference in costs for registration and deferrals is something that needs to be negotiated between both HEIs

# Chapter 8. Online Provision

## 8.1 Definition of Online Learning

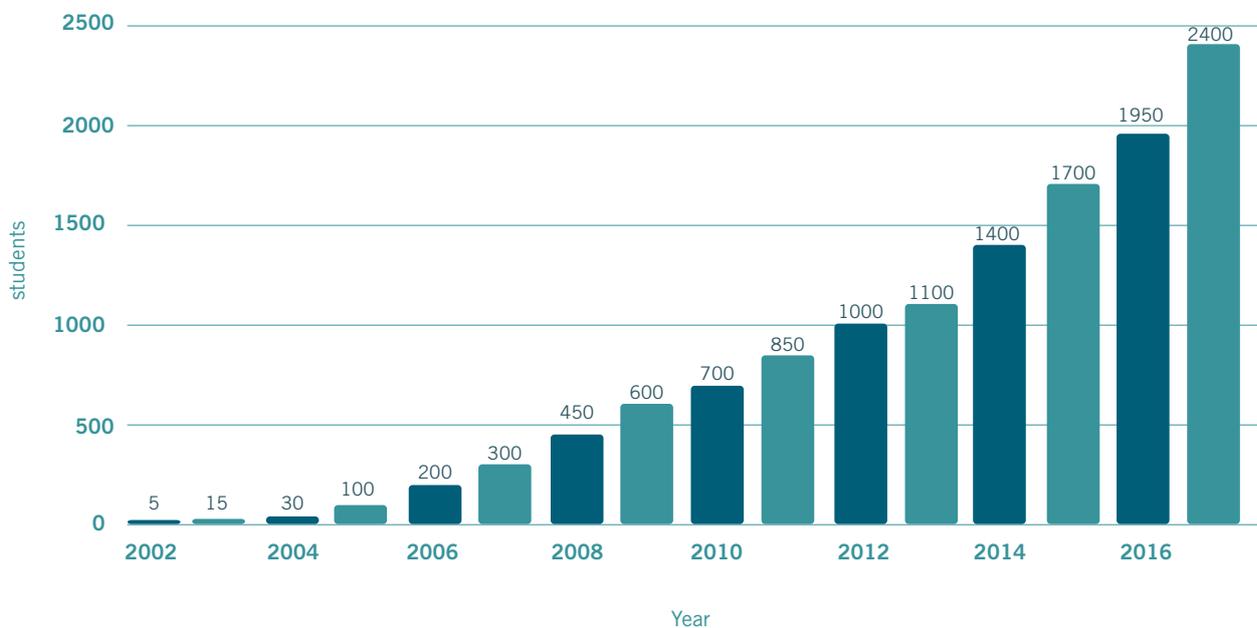
IT Sligo defines online learning as a programme or module where most course activity (80% or more) is completed online with some required face to face activities such as labs, lectures, discussions taking place. Note however, that some of our online courses are delivered and assessed fully online (100%) and have no requirement for students to attend face to face instructional activities at all. The Online Learning Consortium (OLC) defines 7 categories of e-learning. Our predominant models of online learning adhere to the OLC definitions for 'Blended (or Hybrid) Online Course' and 'Online Course'. See <https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/updated-e-learning-definitions-2/>

## 8.2 Background and Growth of Online Learning

IT Sligo delivered its first online programme, BSc (Hons) in Quality Management, in 2002 to 5 students. By 2011 the number of online learners had grown to 850 and the Institute established the Centre for Online Learning and seconded 3 members of staff as Programme Managers to develop online learning, grow student numbers and support both staff and students.

Since 2011 online development has grown to over 70 online programmes across all disciplines (at levels 6, 7, 8 and 9 on the NFQ) with 2400 online students enrolled for 2017/2018. In recent years IT Sligo has won a number of awards for online education including an Engineers Ireland Excellence Award, An Taoiseach's Public Service Excellence Award (2012) and the National Forum's Teaching Experts: Learning Impact Awards in 2015 in recognition of the teaching by 2 lecturers on the Lean six Sigma MOOC - a Massive Open Online Course.

**GROWTH IN ONLINE STUDENTS**



Our online delivery model typically replicates the traditional face-to face classroom by web-casting live classes over the Internet. All live lectures are recorded for those who may not be able to login to the live class and recordings can be downloaded and viewed at a time more convenient to the student. Recorded lectures are also a valuable revision resource. IT Sligo uses Moodle as the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Each programme and module has its own Moodle page where lecturers can post useful resources and links to further information as well as create assignments and multiple choice quizzes. Students typically upload their assignments to Moodle and receive feedback and grades from the lecturer. Some online programmes require students to attend IT Sligo for a number of practical classes, typically three or four times per year.

Online learning from IT Sligo has been very successful with high examination marks and good feedback from students. Many of our online programmes are bespoke and have been created specifically for large multinational and SME companies such as: Intel, Coca-Cola, Boston Scientific, Abbott, Masonite, Eli Lilly, Janssen Biologics, Pfizer, Stiefel, GSK and Merck, Sharp and Dohme (MSD). The Institute also collaborates with NIBRT (National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training) in the delivery of biopharma programmes.

Another collaborative programme is the B.Eng. in Data Centres Facilities Engineering which was developed in partnership with industry providers including Google, Facebook and Microsoft in order to meet the growing need for upskilling of service personnel in the industry. This course has been structured in order to serve the pan-European Data Centre services community. All lectures are delivered online, in English, while the practical laboratory sessions will take place at IT Sligo, Ireland and Haute École Louvain en Hainaut (HELHa) in Mons, Belgium.

The Institute has an ambitious target to grow online student numbers from 2,400 (in 2017) to over 5,500 by 2022. This ambition recognises the need for a step-change in the current systems and processes for recruitment and education of students online. Staff will be well prepared in online pedagogy and best practice will be applied in the design, delivery, assessment and resourcing across all in-class and online programmes.

## 8.2.1 MOOCs (Massive Open Online courses)

As mentioned elsewhere in this report IT Sligo has developed a number of free, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) (Map showing the location of Lean Six Quality MOOC Participants available on soft copy).

## 8.2.2 Introduction to Lean Six Quality

The first MOOC to be announced in Ireland, was funded internally and has been run on 4 separate occasions. Youtube Video: <http://youtu.be/d2YSkH8xzXY>

## 8.2.3 Get Working MOOC

is a free online course whose purpose is to ensure that job seekers are “interview ready”. The course has been developed by Worklink in conjunction with IT Sligo, based on previous live and online programmes which participants found very useful in preparing them to find work. Using a series of practical online classes, exercises and assignments between modules, participants can expect to

- gain new insights and ideas to apply to their work search
- get a new perspective on options open to them, and
- learn how to implement a pro-active work search plan.

This course is best suited to professionals and graduates who have not participated in similar programmes before and wish to avoid the pitfalls that can result in delays in finding work. The Get Working MOOC has been delivered to IT Sligo Springboard students since 2014.

## 8.2.4 Transition MOOC

See Academic Success - Preparation for 3rd Level under Learning Resources

## 8.2.5 OSH Induction MOOC

In collaboration with the Health and Safety Authority this project, to deliver an induction course in health and safety for employees new to the workplace, is currently under development. It is expected to be rolled out nationally in Q2, 2018.

These MOOCs have been developed ad-hoc and the institute should develop an institutional MOOC strategy to define the drivers for MOOC development. The institute must also investigate how MOOCs could reach new students and create flexible learning opportunities for them.

## 8.3 Springboard

Springboard was launched in 2011 as part of the Government's Jobs Initiative, and provides free, part-time places on higher education courses in areas of identified skills needs. Springboard aims to enhance collaboration and engagement between the enterprise sector and higher education providers in the design and delivery of relevant and responsive higher education programmes to support job creation and expansion in line with the objectives of the Government's action plan for jobs, which aims to increase the number of people in employment to 2.1m by 2020. Target participants are jobseekers with a previous history of employment who would benefit from upskilling or cross-skilling to get back into sustainable employment. However, since its inception the criteria for these programmes has expanded and the ICT skills programmes have facilitated employed participants for the last 3 years. For applicants applying to programmes in the Biopharma or Med Tech sectors, which commenced in the 2017 academic year, Springboard will now also fund applicants regardless of their employment status. The target group remains those whom are unemployed and those in employment can now fill up to 50% of places on these programmes. Springboard only supports part time courses of twelve months or less in duration and programmes must lead to a higher education award that is included in the National Framework of Qualifications at level 6 to 9. The ICT skills conversions programmes are the only exception to this rule and are considered accelerated learning programmes for those whom already hold a level 8 qualification.

IT Sligo has enrolled 1978 participants on Springboard programmes since its implementation in 2011. The focus of these programmes has also changed from Environmental and Construction programmes in 2011 to the Biopharma and Med Tech sector in 2017. To date IT Sligo have enrolled the largest cohort of Springboard participants on the Biopharmaceutical programmes with 53% of the students enrolled to date completing programmes from level 6 to level 9 in the Biopharma area.

## 8.4 Quality Assurance (QA) and Continuous Improvement of Online Delivery

### 8.4.1. QA Guidelines

The quality assurance of online programmes adheres to QA processes for all academic programmes and to Marks and Standards. IT Sligo has two QA guidelines specifically for online provision (full details available on soft copy):

- **CDEV003 Continuous Improvement of an Online Course**  
Purpose: *To ensure that consistent standards of quality are achieved when making a programme available as an online distance learning programme.*
- **CDEV002 Preparation of a programme for Online Delivery**  
Purpose: *to identify weaknesses in the delivery of online distance learning programmes and continuously improve such programmes.*

These guidelines were originally approved as procedures in 2011 but were recently reviewed by the Planning and Coordination Committee which recommended they become guidelines (available on soft copy).

Since their adoption in 2011 it would be fair to say the two guidelines were not always adhered to. There were capacity issues with COL not having the staff to work through the procedures and it was often the case that new programmes were being put online in a short timescale and parts of the guidelines were bypassed.

## 8.4.2 Benchmarking of Technology Enhanced Learning

In April, 2017 the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee approved a proposal to establish a small, cross-institutional group of staff from Faculty/Library/ICT/learning support/academic development to self-evaluate IT Sligo's Technology Enhanced Learning based on eight benchmarking criteria, ensuring the self-evaluation is representative and evidence-based.

The eight benchmarks were developed by ACODE (the Australasian Council on Open, Distance and E-learning) and are internationally recognised.

The eight Benchmark topic areas are:

1. Institution-wide policy and governance for technology enhanced learning;
2. Planning for institution-wide quality improvement of technology enhanced learning;
3. Information technology systems, services and support for technology enhanced learning;
4. The application of technology enhanced learning services;
5. Staff professional development for the effective use of technology enhanced learning;
6. Staff support for the use of technology enhanced learning;
7. Student training for the effective use of technology enhanced learning;
8. Student support for the use of technology enhanced learning.

Each benchmark has 6 to 9 indicators. For more detailed information visit:

<https://www.acode.edu.au/mod/resource/view.php?id=193>

IT Sligo addressed benchmarks 1 and 6 in Q2, 2017 as a pre-requisite to attending the Inaugural, ACODE-UK TEL Benchmarking Summit in June together with senior TEL staff from each of 16 UK universities. The Institute will address two different benchmarks per annum and repeat the process on a 4-year cycle. The challenge to this is the availability of staff to join the working group as there is an expected time commitment of five hours per person per benchmark over a 2-month period.

A commitment to developing TEL through the ACODE benchmarks has been included in the Institute's Strategic Plan 2.2.2

## SUMMARY

### Strengths

IT Sligo is the leading provider of online education in Ireland

Development of bespoke programmes through engagement with industry partners

Programmes delivered across all disciplines and levels from 6 to 9 (NFQ)

70% academic staff currently trained to deliver online

### Areas for development

The Institute needs to be more agile if it is to maintain its lead in the provision of online education

Additional staff (online learning advisors, instructional designers and an RPL Officer) are required to support online learners and lecturers and to help grow online education

IT Sligo should identify and adopt an external rubric or benchmark with a recognised kite mark to demonstrate quality and continuous improvement of its online programmes

Investigate how Data Analytics could be used to support retention and improve academic grades

Marketing on-line programmes - Need to dedicate a marketing person for online recruitment

Identify and implement a CRM appropriate to stakeholder needs

90% of academic staff should be trained to deliver online by 2022 (as per Strategic Plan)

Develop guidelines/policies in support of Technology Enhanced Learning

Develop an institutional MOOC strategy

# Chapter 9. Research



## 9.1 Research at IT Sligo

Research management at IT Sligo is through the Research Office (the first professional Research Office in the sector) as part of the Registrar's functional area. The Research Office currently consists of a Head of Research, two Research Administrators and six Contract Research staff. In addition, a committee of the Institute's Academic Council (the Research and Innovation Committee), exists to make recommendations to the Governing Body on policy and programmes for research. The Research and Innovation Committee comprises, *inter alia*, staff members from each of the academic schools, members of the Research Office and of the post-graduate student body.

The research supervisor(s) and the postgraduate student(s) (the research team) are responsible for the day-to day conduct of the research, management of budgets and reporting on progress and outcomes. The Research Office provides support, as appropriate.

The Quality Assurance of research is managed through the Code of Good Practice for the Conduct of Postgraduate Research at IT Sligo. This document, as part of the overall Institute's Academic QA system, sets out the research environment and research process at IT Sligo, including procedures that are followed at key stages of the process (such as registration, monitoring and examinations).

The Institute organises its key research areas through Strategic Research Centres (SRC) (primary areas of focus) and Recognised Research Groups (RRG) (emerging areas). The current Strategic Research Centres are:

### – **PEM – The Precision Engineering and Manufacturing Centre**

The PEM Centre builds on the Institute's research strengths in material science, laser processing, micro-machining, polymer processing, rapid prototyping, general manufacturing process control and statistical process analysis. The PEM SRC structure provides its Principal Investigators, who have all individually demonstrated notable research achievements through engagement with industry, a platform to consolidate its group's, experience, expertise and resources. The PEM Centre comprises of 5 Principal Investigators, 2 senior academic researchers, 3 postdocs, 3 postgraduates.

Recent funding successes include: INTERREG VA – Research in Industry, as part of a collaboration focused on advanced manufacturing in the medical device industry (NW Centre for Advanced Manufacturing) and the SFI funded Déantús Centre collaboration (advanced manufacturing).

The PEM centre is also the location of IT Sligo's EI funded Technology Gateway. Established in October 2013, to date the PEM Gateway has conducted over 100 industry projects. It builds on the Institute's research strengths in material science, laser processing, micro-machining, polymer processing, rapid prototyping, general manufacturing process control and statistical process analysis. The PEM Gateway research and technology themes are complementary and provide a unique single industry support offering in precision engineering and manufacturing. Through coupling these areas of expertise together and exploiting common competencies, the PEM Gateway is positioned to provide comprehensive research and technology services to the Irish manufacturing industry located in the region and beyond.

### – **CRiSP – The Centre for Research in Social Professions**

The Centre for Research in Social Professions (CRiSP) was established in 2012. Since its inception, team members have undertaken empirical research in a number of research areas, such as youth and community, health, psychology, educational progression, teaching and learning, social and environmental sustainability, policy, interculturalism, and community development. In partnership with social professionals and local communities, CRiSP has developed its mission of improving the quality of life for those living within the region. For this work to happen, CRiSP utilises knowledge, skills and expertise of local people, researchers from across IT Sligo, local, national and international partners (e.g. Canadian, North American and European academic partners; national and local government; statutory, private and voluntary sector agencies).

CRiSP is consolidating these achievements by creating a research space for social and health science researchers; and business/enterprises to collaborate together. The Centre does this through:

- Building research capacity
- Supporting research capability
- Strengthening research capability

The CRiSP Centre has won funding from a variety of agencies, including from the public and voluntary sectors. Most recently, the CRiSP Centre has been involved in EI funded Innovation Voucher projects.

– **CERIS – The Centre for Environmental Research, Innovation and Sustainability**

CERIS is an innovative and expert team of researchers, academic staff and students providing key solutions in Applied Ecology and Resource Management. CERIS focuses on solutions for the management of land, water, natural resources and for the development of alternative energy technologies. CERIS members are scientists and engineers comprising academic staff (who also teach on IT Sligo's undergraduate courses), post-doctoral staff & research associates, Masters and PhD students. IT Sligo has carried out environmental research since the 1980's, both on a national and international level. CERIS carries out research on behalf of, and in co-operation with, a multiplicity of third-level institutions, agencies and industries. Its members provide advice and expertise to a range of academic and industrial bodies in both Europe and North America. Recent significant funding wins include INTERREG VA – Environment (High Nature Value Farming) and EPA funded research on Invasive Species.

The current Recognised Research Groups are:

- [The Nanotechnology and Bioengineering Research Group \(Nano-Bio\)](#)
- [The Mobilities Research Group](#)
- [The Mathematical Modelling Research Group](#)
- [The Clinical Health and Nutrition Research Group \(CHANCE\)](#)
- [The Cellular Health and Toxicology Research Group \(CHAT\)](#)

In addition to the Academic Research Centres (SRCs and RRGs) the Institute has also established a [Contract Research Unit](#) (CRU) as part of the Research Office. The CRU provides a dedicated outreach Research & Innovation support to regional enterprises, communities and individuals. The CRU offers: advice on funding initiatives available; assistance with funding applications; provision or sourcing the technical skills to develop a project. Key focus areas are: Design assistance for new or improved products or processes; Analysis and optimisation of resource, energy & waste streams; Innovative Waste reduction/recycling systems; Renewable energy and sustainable technologies; CAD design and 3D prototyping

The Contract Research Unit has won funding from a variety of sources including Enterprise Ireland and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland. To date, the CRU has won 50 Innovation Vouchers and 4 Innovation Partnership Feasibility Studies, and has established 38 Sustainable Energy Communities from North Donegal, across the Border Counties and in Dublin.

The Institute supports researchers through two in-house funding schemes: The President's Bursary, which funds new students and projects; the Capacity Building Fund, which supports a range of activities, including travel, small equipment items, small-scale student support, etc. In all, the Institute invests around €400k/ a in these schemes.

The President's Bursary has been transformational in that it has encouraged a number of staff, new and existing, to become involved in research supervision for the first time. To date, there have been 10 rounds, with over 60 students recruited.

Current capital provision is six dedicated research labs and 70 office spaces. Postgraduate students also have access to the full suite of Science and Engineering laboratories.

The Institute currently has 80 students across all three Schools; 54 in Science; 16 in Engineering and Design; 10 in Business and Social Sciences.

Research funding is approximately €2m/ a, and, to date, the Institute has won funding from over 40 national and international research funding schemes, from Innovation Voucher scale (€5k), to Horizon 2020 and EU Structural Funds Lead Applicant scale (€multi-million). INTERREG funding has recently facilitated the hiring of a Research Funding Officer to the Research Office.

The Institute is currently re-structuring to place a Vice-President for Research, Innovation and Engagement on its Executive Committee.

The Research Management landscape in Ireland is constantly changing. This is reflected in initiatives and developments in research provision at IT Sligo. Areas for development in the future are identified in the table below.

## Strengths

Organisation of key research areas through Strategic Research Centres (SRC)

- PEM: The Precision Engineering & Manufacturing Centre
- CRiSP: The Centre for Research in Social Professions
- CERIS: The Centre for Environmental Research, Innovation and Sustainability

Recognised Research Groups

Establishment of a Contract Research Unit (CRU)

Institute Funding schemes:

- The President's Bursary
- Capital Building Fund

Highly successful with Research Funding opportunities

## Areas for development

Rolling out of an existing accredited graduate education and staff training programme in Research Skills

Rolling out of agreed structured research Masters and PhD programmes

Reconfiguration of existing Research and Innovation space, and provision of new space

Extending the Research Management function through the new Executive position and a number of new positions in the Research Office, including a Research Funding Officer and a Graduate Education Officer

Rolling out of the HR Excellence in Research scheme

Delivery of a postgraduate student skills-gap identification and training process

# Chapter 10. Information



# 10.1 Information Management

The Institute collects and analyses relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

The key Management Information Systems used by IT Sligo are:

Application Name	Provider	Application Description
Banner	Ellucian	Student Information System
CoreHR	CoreHR	HR/Payroll Management System
Agresso	Unit 4	Financial Management System
Koha, Coral and DSpace	Interleaf / PTFS Europe	Library Management System
EDS	Digitary	Web-based solution that enables institutions to securely issue official documents online.

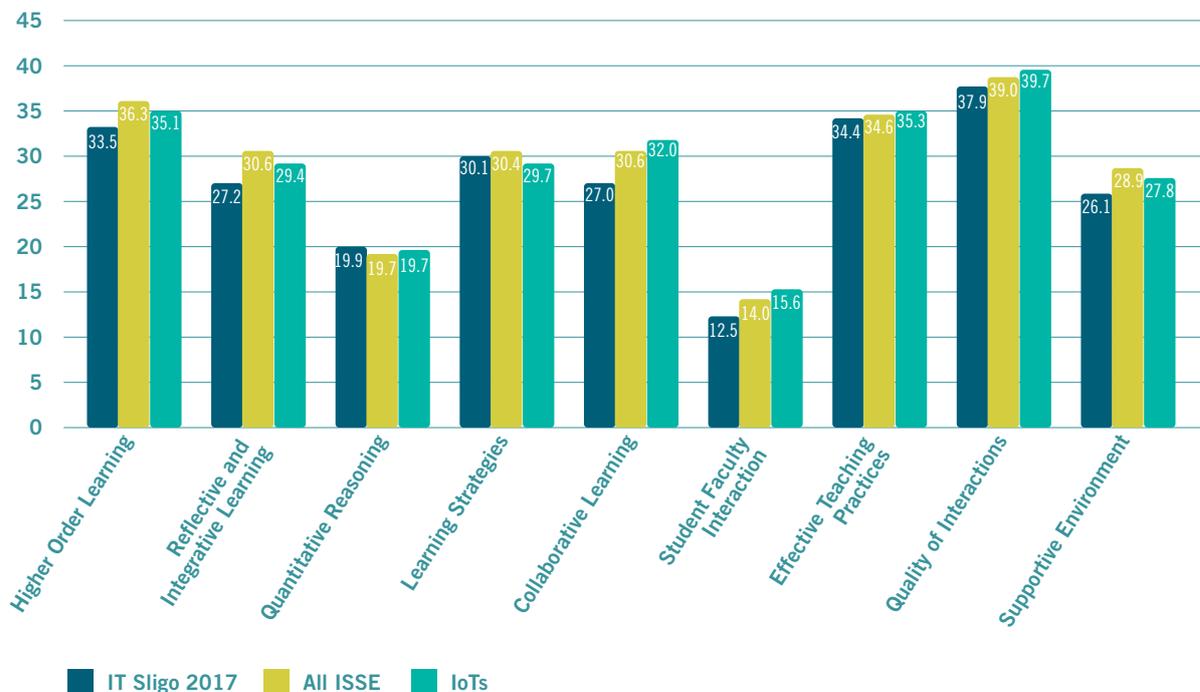
These applications are supplied by [EduCampus Services](#) to provide IT shared services to the Higher Education sector in Ireland, in line with government strategy for shared services, as outlined in the “[Education and Training Sector Shared Services Plan 2014-2016](#)” published by the Department of Education and Skills.

The following are examples of enhancement projects in the institute.

## 10.1.1 Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)

The Institute carried out a comprehensive review of the ISSE report for IT Sligo and made a presentation to staff on this in May 2017(available upon request).

### IT SLIGO INDICES 2017 (ALL STUDENTS)



In summary, of the various scores, it may be concluded that IT Sligo was very close to the national averages for all categories (slightly less than average on supportive environment, reflective learning and higher order learning). Upon completion of an analysis of the report down to programme level, the following actions were identified:

- Roll out of Moodle to all Programmes [occurring incrementally].
- Every Lecturer to have a Moodle page.
- Moodle to be used as a student engagement tool [taking place for all new programmes]
- Writing centre to be investigated [new programme on Literature and Writing approved].
- Learning Support Centre & tutorials to be in library [in the process of setting up a CELT centre]
- Blended learning and support needs to be looked at [has been introduced into all new apprenticeship programmes]
- Review work placements in courses [since agreed in the new strategy for all Level 8 programmes].
- More sophisticated ways of doing roll calls [the Seats™ software system is being trialled].
- Breaking the Mould to be extended [this has now been integrated into a Universal Design approach].
- Map of when assessments likely to be scheduled to avoid duplication of dates [being done at programme level].

### 10.1.2 SEAtS attendance tracking software

The SEAtS attendance tracking solution captures proof of presence, engagement and student success. SEAtS Learning Analytics collect, categorise and score data collected from physical and digital touch-points overlaid with data from timetables, student information and other campus systems. Its Data Repository supports Big Data Analytics requirements by enabling processing of both structured and unstructured data from our campus and beyond, and combines that data with student profile and activity data to identify emerging trends and patterns. It also allows us to identify at-risk students as early as possible for effective interventions.

We are currently within the testing period of the implementation plan with a projected Live Date of the 22nd January. We are piloting the system within Two Departments – Department of Civil Engineering & Construction and Department of Life Sciences. The Pilot will be assessed on an ongoing basis but evaluation will take place after 2 full years to see if it helps with progression from Y1 to Y2. The decision will then be made re wider roll out.

### 10.1.3 The Student digital experience Tracker

The Centre for Online Learning will run the Jisc Student Digital Experience Tracker, in Q1, 2018. This is a survey and student engagement process that will help the institute learn more about its' students' experiences of the digital learning environment and the digital curriculum. COL will run three discrete surveys for; full-time students; online students; and apprentices.

- Specifically, the tracker will allow IT Sligo to:
- Gather evidence from learners about their digital experience, and track changes over time
- Make better informed decisions about the digital environment
- Target resources for improving digital provision
- Plan other research, data gathering and student engagement around digital issues
- Demonstrate quality enhancement and student engagement to external bodies and to students themselves.

### 10.1.4 Strategic Plan Online Tracking System

The Strategic Plan has over 200 individual actions that various functions and departments are engaged in delivering. The progress on these actions is reported using an internally developed online tracking system. Progress is reported on a quarterly basis to Governing Body, Executive, and Academic Council. The online tracking system allows each function to report on its progress on an ongoing basis. It also can be used as planning tool as the actions can be sorted by their deadlines, allowing resources to be allocated to those with the upcoming deadlines.

## 10.1.5 SCRUM

SCRUM is a management tool, designed and developed within IT Sligo. It provides a dashboard interface for the presentation and analysis of institutional information aimed principally at senior management as a strategic management tool reporting on:

- **Students** - Daily reporting of students registered to date, tracking actual versus forecast performance by School/Department with historic trends and ability to drill down to course level and an option to include forecasts.
- **Contribution** - Dashboard reporting of actual student numbers, fee income and unit costing by School/Department with ability to drill down to course level with historic trends.
- **Resource Utilisation** - Dashboard presentation of monthly pay & non-pay budgets and who works where and staff qualifications.
- **Management** - Quarterly dashboard to track performance on strategic KPIs.



### 10.1.5.1 Key Benefits of SCRUM for IT Sligo

- Single version of the truth. Elimination of manual reporting from source systems and different versions.
- Forecasting - Student targets set for each school (down to course, year) and ability to track performance.
- Strategy & planning - “Information at finger tips” to make strategic decisions, access to student numbers, staffing profile, financial contributions by course, pay and non-pay costs actual and forecast.
- Compliance with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) with timely secure Management information

### SUMMARY

#### Strengths

Use of shared services model for key MIS systems

#### Areas for development

Programme Board Data - The institute uses the banner system to give the data required for the EAP7 form. There were issues with the calculation and this had to be resolved by the software vendor. However there remain issues as resist students are counted in the calculation giving incorrect performance figures.

The institute is also working to develop and standardise the data sets available to the programme boards.

Projects such as those detailed above need to be fully integrated into the Institute.

## 10.2 Public Information Management

IT Sligo publishes information on the Institute's strategic objectives, and on its extensive range of fulltime and online programmes, through publications, media and public enquiries, news releases and across IT Sligo online platforms.

IT Sligo has published a [Strategic Plan for 2017 -2022](#) which sets out the key objectives of the Institute over the next five years. This is available to the public on the [IT Sligo website](#). Hard copies are also available on request. The Institute publishes an [Annual Report](#) within six months of the end of each academic year. This summarises main activities and achievements during the period in review.

A hiatus in the publication of annual reports between the years 2012 to 2015 has been addressed over the past 12 months to bring our Annual Reports up-to-date.

Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 requires FOI bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis outside of FOI, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in Sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act. This allows for the publication or giving of records outside of FOI provided that such publication or giving of access is not prohibited by law. The scheme commits FOI bodies to make information available as part of their normal business activities in accordance with this scheme.

[FOI – A Guide for Stakeholders](#)

[Manual Part 1 – Processing FOI Requests](#)

[Manual Part 2 – Exemptions and Consultation Procedures](#)

[Request for information](#)

The Institute's [Publication Scheme](#) is available to view and [download](#). Under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, public bodies such as IT Sligo are required to publish a [Disclosure Log](#). This log contains information of the types of requests received under FOI 2014 since 1st January 2015 and the decisions made in response to those requests. Disclosures are listed in the date order of when the request was received by IT Sligo. For privacy reasons, identifying information such as the name of the requester will not be included in the disclosure log.

Section 22 of the Protected Disclosure Act 2014 requires the publication of an [annual report relating to the number of Protected Disclosures](#) made in the preceding Calendar year and also for the publication of information with regard to any actions taken in response to Protected Disclosures made. This report must not result in persons making disclosures being identifiable.

Data Protection is the safeguarding of the privacy rights of individuals in relation to the processing of personal data, in both paper and electronic format. The Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003 lay down strict rules about the way in which personal data are collected, accessed, used and disclosed. The legislation also permits individuals to access their personal data on request, and confers on individuals the right to have their personal data amended if found to be incorrect.

IT Sligo regularly publishes [news releases relating to activities, student/staff achievements, and strategic developments](#). The releases are published on the news section of [itsligo.ie](#) and are also distributed to regional and national media outlets. The production, approval and distribution of Institute news releases is co-ordinated by the Communication Office. Recent and archived news release are available to view [here](#).

IT Sligo has an extensive presence across a range of Social Media platforms. These are [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Snapchat](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).

IT Sligo publishes its full listing of all its full-time and part-time courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level on [itsligo.ie](#). The Institute's marketing office also produces a college prospectus each academic year, which is available in both hard copy and [digital format](#).

The Institute's Marketing Steering Group, which meets at regular intervals throughout the year, has highlighted navigation and content management issues with the college website. A new [itsligo.ie](#) is being developed in the second-half of 2017 by the Marketing Office and IT Services in collaboration with the Institute's Digital Media service provider Zoo TV. This upgrade is addressing navigation and out-of-date content on [itsligo.ie](#).

In autumn 2017, the Institute's Marketing Office commissioned an external media group (Core Media) to conduct an independent of the Institute's marketing proposition. The aim is to help enhance the information flow about the Institute's offering to prospective students. The Marketing Evaluation includes the following, and the report is due Mid-January 2018:

- Detailed review of existing information and research
- Conducting in-depth interviews with staff and key stakeholders
- Establishment of a new marketing proposition for IT Sligo.

### Strengths

Relevant information widely available

### Areas for development

Website improvements - [www.itsligo.ie](#)

Data Management & Protection: A Review of institute data requirements and definition of rules in the context of the new Data Protection Regulations and Guidelines

Information for prospective new students

Improve Communication Processes Within Institute: The Institute will develop an internal communication mechanism to ensure appropriate information and consultation between management, staff and students, and will ensure that committees and fora are managed effectively.

# Chapter 11. Key Findings, Actions and Conclusions



## 11.1 Review Objectives

The objectives of a review are documented in the Terms of Reference (ToR). The Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and the Review Report must analyse whether an institution has achieved these and the extent to which they have been achieved. Below is a summary conclusion for the Institute under each objective.

### OBJECTIVE 1: EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

The Institute quality system is in compliance with the requirements of the ESG, QQI guidelines and the 2012 Act. It should be noted that it is in the process of developing and enhancing the QA system to address legacy issues and to move towards a continuous process of quality enhancement. The Institute is in the process of reviewing and implementing changes that were identified as part of a gap analysis of the quality system. Part of this involves moving to a 'living' online quality manual.

The Registrar Function had identified the need for a Registrar Function Audit System that reviews the QA System on an ongoing basis. However up until now it did not have a suitable resource that was not involved on a day to day basis with the QA System. The quality assurance system will be audited on a monthly basis through Registrar function. A Schedule of Audits will be agreed that will examine the operation and compliance with the QA System.

The Institute welcomed the introduction of the AIQR process as an initiative that will encourage more reflection on its Quality Systems. It has completed two AIQR but acknowledges that it is still introducing this process. It has embedded the process into Academic Council Processes by having the report endorsed by Academic Council and by involving the Chair of Academic Processes in its development. The ISER process benefited from the AIQR process, however the institute feels that it will be of more benefit in the future when a solid bank of AIQR are available.

Opportunities that are identified through the Institute Self-assessment are detailed below as actions, also noting where there may be an existing body of work being undertaken to address the action.

Opportunity/Action identified	Relevant document and section	Alignment with existing work	Person/Department Responsible	Implementation status
Data Capture and Use of Data, including EAP7	ESG 1.1 Policy for quality assurance ESG 1.7 Information management	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 6.5.2 "Build a set of learning analytics – e.g. student engagement, progression, completion rates etc."	Registrar	Q3 2018
Data Management & Protection: A Review of institute data requirements and definition of rules in the context of the new Data Protection Regulations and Guidelines	ESG 1.7 Information management	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 6.4.4 "Review of institute data requirements and definition of rules in the context of the new Data Protection Regulations and Guidelines"	Data Protection	Q2 2018
Easily accessible QA manual to be available online	ESG 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 6.4.6 "Continue to develop staff intranet/staff portal"	Assistant Registrar	Q2 2018
Document Management System	ESG 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance ESG 1.7 Information Management	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 6.4.6 "Continue to develop staff intranet/staff portal"	Assistant Registrar	Q3 2018

Opportunity/Action identified	Relevant document and section	Alignment with existing work	Person/Department Responsible	Implementation status
Improve consistency in implementation of policies and procedures across the Institute	ESG 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 6.4.6 "Continue to develop staff intranet/staff portal"	Assistant Registrar	Ongoing
Greater use of feedback on implementation of policies and procedures in use	ESG 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance		Assistant Registrar	To be reviewed in Q4 2018
Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Strategy: The Educational Development Manager will have responsibility for reporting on LTA Strategy	ESG 1.3 Student centred learning, teaching and assessment	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 1.2.4: "Foster inclusion and participation for all students"; Objective 1.3.4 "Support students to achieve their full potential"  Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy 2016-2018	Educational Development Manager to work closely with those responsible for actions and target dates agreed within the strategy	Q2 2018 & ongoing
Extending the Research Management function through the new Executive position and a number of new positions in the Research Office, including a Research Funding Officer and a Graduate Education Officer	ESG 1.1 Policy for quality assurance	Strategic plan 2017-2022: Objective 3.3 "Apply creative talent to develop innovative design solutions and increase contract and applied RDI"	Head of Research	Underway

## OBJECTIVE 2: DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The Institute is in compliance with the relevant sections of the ESG and QQI guidelines, but it has suggested a number of specific actions for quality enhancement in relation to its procedures for new programme approval and monitoring. Similarly, actions have been identified to support a quality culture and to enhance decision making.

Opportunity/Action identified	Relevant document and section	Alignment with existing work	Person/Department Responsible	Implementation status
Joint running of programmes across institutions and reconciling differences between institutional rules and regulations.	ESG 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 4.1 "Build stronger partnerships with 2nd level Schools/ETB and other HEIs"	Registrar	On-going

## OBJECTIVE 3: QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

The Institute quality system covers all aspects of its operation and its policies and procedures inform the way in which the Institute achieves its objectives. The Institute strategic plan 2017-2022 sets out the mission, vision and goals relating to the student experience and the broader activities of the Institute. The policies and procedures that are part of the quality system support and enable the achievement of these objectives. Work is underway to ensure that the quality system is in line with the Institute mission and vision and that the policies and procedures are fit for purpose, and continually reviewed.

As part of the overall review of the quality system and the introduction of the online quality manual, the following quality enhancement objectives have been identified:

- Improved management of the external examiner process to be in line with QQI guidelines
- Implementation of Gradebook System on Banner
- Availability of Personalised Exam Timetable
- Website updates and management of information relating to the quality system
- Document management system and improved availability of information
- ISSE Report to programme level.

The Institute recognises that promotion of a quality culture is essential and this should be embedded in all aspects of academic and non-academic operations. Enhanced communication and a more easily accessible quality manual will help to support this objective.

Opportunity/Action identified	Relevant document and section	Alignment with existing work	Person/Department Responsible	Implementation status
Establishment of a Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching	ESG 1.5 Teaching Staff	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 2.1 "Support the continuous professional development of all staff"  Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2016-2018	Educational Development Manager	Q2 2018 & on-going
There is an opportunity to roll an existing accredited graduate education and staff training programme in Research Skills	ESG 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment  ESG 1.5 Teaching staff	Strategic plan 2017-2022: Objective 3.1 "Enable more students and staff to conduct research"	Head of Research	Underway
Rolling out of agreed structured research Masters and PhD programmes	ESG 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment  ESG 1.5 Teaching staff	Strategic plan 2017-2022: Objectives 3.1 "Enable more students and staff to conduct research" and 3.2 "Gain international recognition in key research areas"	Head of Research	Underway
Reconfiguration of existing Research and Innovation space, and provision of new space	ESG 1.6 Learning resources and student support	Strategic plan 2017-2022: Objectives 3.1 "Enable more students and staff to conduct research" and 3.2 "Gain international recognition in key research areas"	Head of Research	Underway
Rolling out of the HR Excellence in Research scheme	ESG 1.5 Teaching staff	Strategic plan 2017-2022: Objectives 3.1 "Enable more students and staff to conduct research" and 3.4 "Promote Institute RDI to stakeholders and market Institute achievements"	Head of Research	Underway

Opportunity/Action identified	Relevant document and section	Alignment with existing work	Person/Department Responsible	Implementation status
Incorporating research into school	ESG 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 3.1 "Enable more students and staff to conduct research"	VP Research Innovation & Engagement	Q3 2018 & Ongoing
Development of a Research Culture	ESG 1.2 Design and approval of programmes	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 3.1 "Enable more students and staff to conduct research"	VP Research Innovation & Engagement	Q3 2018 & Ongoing
Increase the Budget allocated to Research	ESG 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 3.1.2 "Develop infrastructure and capital resources to support target post graduate numbers"	VP Research Innovation & Engagement	Q1 2019 & Ongoing
Reduce Constraints on Lecturers	ESG 1.5	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 3.1.4 "Develop a time allocation procedure and a budget to allow staff members to prepare and submit publications, supervise post-doctoral researchers and submit grant applications"	Executive	Q2 2018 & Ongoing
Information for prospective new students	ESG 1.7 Information management	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 1.4.1 "Undertake a comprehensive marketing analysis to understand potential applicants (full time & online), to guide how we develop relevant programmes and to inform how we market these programmes"	Registrar	Q2 2018
Improve Communication Processes Within Institute: The Institute will develop an internal communication mechanism to ensure appropriate information and consultation between management, staff and students, and will ensure that committees and fora are managed effectively.	ESG 1.7 Information management	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 6.5 "Improve evidence-based information systems to inform decision making"	Executive	Q3 2018

Opportunity/Action identified	Relevant document and section	Alignment with existing work	Person/Department Responsible	Implementation status
Identify and implement a CRM appropriate to all stakeholders' needs. Critical for all students.	ESG 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification		VP Online Development, COL & Registrar	Q1/Q2 2018
Identify and adopt an external rubric or benchmark with a recognised kite mark to demonstrate quality and continuous improvement of online programmes	ESG 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment ESG 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 2.2 “Maintain and strengthen leadership in technology enhanced learning”	VP Online Development & COL	Q2 2018 and on-going
Additional staff are required to support online learners and lecturers and to help grow online education. These include: online learning advisors instructional designers RPL Officer Dedicated marketing person	ESG 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment ESG 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 2.2 “Maintain and strengthen leadership in technology enhanced learning” Objective 1.4.1 “Undertake a comprehensive marketing analysis to understand potential applicants (full time & online), to guide how we develop relevant programmes and to inform how we market these programmes” Objective 1.2.4: “Foster inclusion and participation for all students”; Objective 1.3.4 “Support students to achieve their full potential”	VP Online Development & COL	Q2 2018 and on-going
Improved communication of new developments and any changes to procedures	ESG 1.7 Information Management	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 6.4.6 “Continue to develop staff intranet/staff portal”	Assistant Registrar	Ongoing
Reduce the time taken to make changes to procedures or to approve new procedures	ESG 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 6.4.6 “Continue to develop staff intranet/staff portal”	Assistant Registrar/ Chair of APC	To be reviewed in Q4 2018

Opportunity/Action identified	Relevant document and section	Alignment with existing work	Person/Department Responsible	Implementation status
More efficient process for the management of external examiners, including review and approval	ESG 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance ESG 1.7 Information Management		Assistant Registrar/ Chair of APC	Q3 2018
Implementation of Internal Review process for programme validation	ESG 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance		Assistant Registrar/ Chair of P&CC	
Website improvements - www.itsligo.ie	ESG 1.8 Public information	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 1.4.1 "Undertake a comprehensive marketing analysis to understand potential applicants (full time & online), to guide how we develop relevant programmes and to inform how we market these programmes"	Registrar	Q2 2018

#### OBJECTIVE 4: PROCEDURES FOR ACCESS, TRANSFER AND PROGRESSION

The Institute complies with the QQI Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression. The Institute proactively promotes broad access to higher education. To that end, IT Sligo is a member of both DARE & HEAR Schemes. September 2018 will see our first intake of students through HEAR. The Institute does not have an upper limit on the number of students recruited through those routes. Our Disability Supports will be further strengthened by the implementation of a dedicated Disability Support Service in Semester 2 2018.

However it has identified areas such as its RPL provision as needing development and has allocated resources towards reviewing its procedure and resources to expand its use.

Opportunity/Action identified	Relevant document and section	Alignment with existing work	Person/Department Responsible	Implementation status
Promotion of Hear & Dare to Target populations	ESG 1.8 Public information	Strategic Plan 1.2.3 "Implement national access admissions programme (HEAR) for students of low socio-economic backgrounds.	Access Officer	Review Q4 2018

Opportunity/Action identified	Relevant document and section	Alignment with existing work	Person/Department Responsible	Implementation status
Widen access to higher education/Employ a RPL Officer to support staff and applicants for Recognition of Prior Learning	ESG 1.3 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Objective 1.2.4: "Foster inclusion and participation for all students"; Objective 1.3.4 "Support students to achieve their full potential"	Executive	Q3 2018
Provide appropriate scaffolding supports for students	ESG 1.3 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	ESG 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Registrar	Q3 2018
		ESG 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Registrar	Q2 2018
		and Strategic Plan 1.2.4 "Identify learners who require additional support earlier in their academic life and ensure that adequate supports are provided"	Registrar	Q3 2018
		Strategic Plan 1.2.5 "Embed Universal Design for Learning (UDL) across programmes with appropriate training and support".	Heads of School, CELT	Next Programmatic Review

### OBJECTIVE 5: QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL LEARNERS

The Institution has used the Internal Audit Function to review its International Education. It has also developed an International Strategic Plan based on the new [Irish Educated Globally Connected: An International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020](#). The Audit Report and the International Strategy (both available on the Memory Stick) are being developed into an operational action plan for the upcoming year.

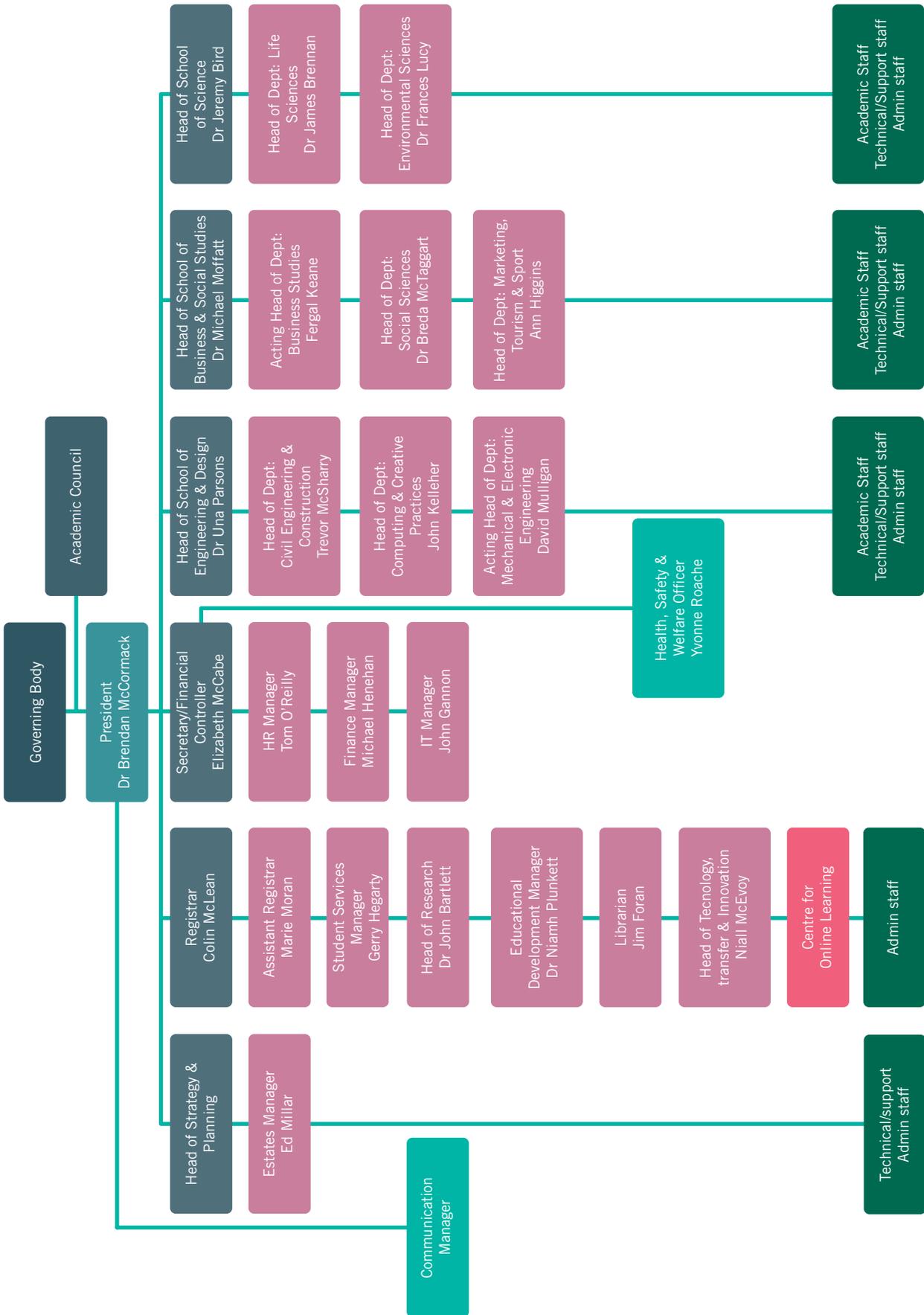
The Institute is working to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners and feels that it is well positioned to meet the requirements of the upcoming statutory international education quality assurance scheme.

Opportunity/Action identified	Relevant document and section	Alignment with existing work	Person/Department Responsible	Implementation status
International Action Plan based on IT Sligo International Strategy and Internal Audit	ESG 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	International Strategy & Internal Audit	International Office	Q2 2018
Ensure compliance with the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners	ESG 1.3 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	International Strategy	International Office	Q2 2018

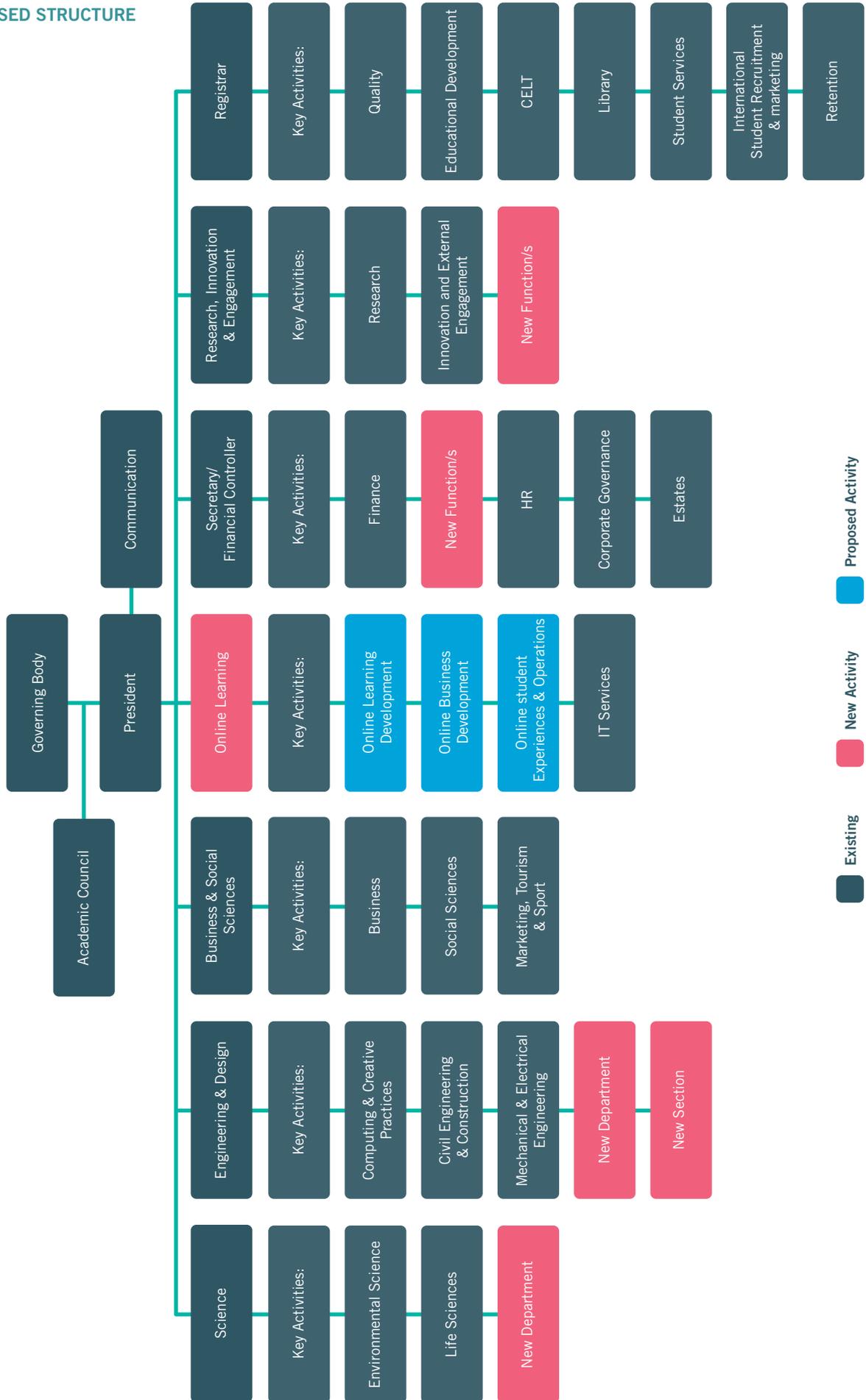


# Appendix 1: IT Sligo Organisational Structure (current and proposed)

CURRENT STRUCTURE



PROPOSED STRUCTURE



# Appendix 2: Survey regarding Professional body accreditation in HEIs associated with QQI

Appendix 2: Survey regarding Professional body accreditation in HEIs associated with QQI

Professional Bodies	Public/Private	Desk Review	Self-evaluation	Site visit	Criteria review	International/Peer Experts	Other
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)	Public	Desk review		Site visit	Criteria review	International/Peer experts	Exam papers, marking scheme & example scripts reviewed
Institute of Certified Public Accountants (ICPA)	Public	Desk review		Site visit	Criteria review		Exam papers, marking scheme & example scripts reviewed
Chartered Accountants Ireland	Public	Desk review		Site visit	Criteria review	International/Peer experts	Exam papers, marking scheme & example scripts reviewed
Chartered Institute of Building (CIB)	Public	Desk review	Self-evaluation	Site visit	Criteria review	International/Peer experts	
Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIAM)	Public	Desk review		Site visit	Criteria review		Exam papers, marking scheme & example scripts reviewed
Engineers Ireland	Public	Desk review		Site visit			
Engineers Ireland	Public	Desk review	Self-evaluation	Site visit	Criteria review	International/Peer experts	
Football Association of Ireland (FAI)	Public			Site visit	Criteria review		
Forensic Society of Great Britian	Public	Desk review	Self-evaluation	Site visit	Criteria review	International/Peer experts	
Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)	Public	Desk review	Self-evaluation	Site visit	Criteria review		
Insurance Institute of Ireland	Public	Desk review			Criteria review		
Reps Ireland on behalf of EHFA	Public	Desk review	Self-evaluation	Site visit	Criteria review		
Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)	Public	Desk review	Self-evaluation	Site visit	Criteria review	International/Peer experts	
Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI)	Public	Desk review	Self-evaluation	Site visit	Criteria review	International/Peer experts	
Swim Ireland	Public	Desk review	Self-evaluation	Site visit	Criteria review		

# Appendix 3: IT Sligo response to national policies and strategies

The Institute is very cognisant of national policies and strategies and works with various stakeholders across the region and nationally to deliver on the objectives contained in such policies. Below are some examples of the Institutes achievements and contributions in respect of national policies and objectives.

### **NATIONAL PLAN FOR EQUITY OF ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION 2015-2019.**

#### **Goal 1: To mainstream the delivery of equity of access in HEIs**

- Supports for students from target groups are addressed primarily through mainstream student services (e.g. mentoring and retention, disability services, counselling).
- HEI access strategies are aligned with the policy and targets as set out in this National Access Plan (In Strategic Plan, see Objective A, Action 2.5 'Embed Universal Design for Learning (UDL) across programmes, with appropriate training and supports'.
- Post-entry mentoring programme has been reviewed.

#### **Goal 2: To assess the impact of current initiatives to support equity of access to higher education**

- Access infrastructure has been in relation to appropriate application of core funding to support an access infrastructure in HEIs (new disability services, additional counselling hours)

#### **Goal 3: To gather accurate data and evidence on access and participation and to base policy on what that datatells us**

- Have analysed geographic patterns of access to higher education.
- Tracking of progression, retention rates and the student experience of target student groups to be incorporated into the SCRUM system
- Annual meetings with School principals and career guidance teachers with IT Sligo to review linkages and associated access-related activities. ETBs are now part of this,

#### **Goal 4: To build coherent pathways from further education and to foster other entry routes to high education**

- Have mapped and develop clear student pathways, including those between further and higher education
- RPL policy in place, and to engage with QQI in the development of an overall national
- HEAR and DARE schemes now fully implemented
- Access to HE increased for insurance industry employees
- New MOU with MSL ETB

#### **Goal 5: To develop regional and community partnership strategies for increasing access to higher education with a particular focus on mentoring**

- Two new programmes developed with NUIG and one new apprenticeship with GMIT (All in medical devices sector)
- Regional Skills Forum audit underway.
- New Domain included in the Strategic Plan 'Partnership and External Engagement' with four areas for building stronger partnerships: with 2nd level Schools/ETBs, Employers, Community and with Alumni
- Developed 1st new apprenticeship in Ireland in direct response to improving access to HE.

### **ACTION PLAN(S) FOR JOBS; THE NATIONAL SKILLS STRATEGY 2025; AND, THE NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP).**

Under the National Action Plan for Jobs, North-West, there are 15 actions for IT Sligo. Of those, here is a list of achievements as per the March 2016 report (numbers identify the action in the plan):

#### **Action 1:**

New Frontiers is Enterprise Ireland's national entrepreneur development programme for innovative, early-stage start-ups. The ITSligo/LyIT operation delivered Three Phase 1 programmes in 2016 to 42 participants. 12 Participants completed Phase 2 in 2016. They were drawn from the Food, IT, Consumer and Industrial products sectors. In the North West, there were 45 participants in Phase 1.

The Virtual Incubation Programme, funded through the EI CEC collaborative programme was launched with a collaboration between Millmount Development Centre, Drogheda and Creative Spark Enterprise Centre, Dundalk. 4 participants from the med tech, digital graphic design and consumer products sectors make up the first cohort of this 6 month engagement.

#### **Action 37:**

Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI), through its management of Enterprise Ireland's Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative (TTSI), supports the outreach activities to industry undertaken by the network of Technology Transfer Offices around the country. Working with the Technology Transfer Office network, KTI works with business, investors, Universities, Institutes of Technology, State research organisations, research funders and Government agencies to maximise the availability of State-funded technology, ideas and expertise to business. KTI also heavily promotes the use of such research capabilities through its central knowledge transfer and technology transfer functions. The KTI website ([www.knowledgetransferireland.com](http://www.knowledgetransferireland.com)) hosts model agreements, practical guides and information on expertise within the public research system, supporting the efficient transfer of economically valuable research outputs to enterprise.

#### **Action 40:**

The NE Regional Skills Forum manager, located at the Regional Development Centre (RDC) at DkIT, is working with relevant stakeholders and leveraging industry linkages. IoTs, ETBs and EI have steering committee positions on the Skills Forum, along with industry representatives and other stakeholders. Within DkIT, during 2016, the RDC supported entrepreneurs through EI's New Frontiers programme and the EI funded CEC VIP programme, in collaboration with Creative Spark. DkIT was also engaged in a number of Innovation Vouchers and Fusion projects with industry. It also engaged in a number of workshops promoting applied research opportunities across the North East. In November, DkIT engaged in roundtable workshops with companies from Louth, Meath, Cavan and Monaghan to support its three-year strategic planning process.

#### **Action 45:**

The Connaught Ulster Alliance achieved approval from the Minister for Stage 1 submission of the 4 Stage Technological University re-designation process. €750K funding was approved by the HEA in 2016.

#### **Action 91:**

A combined Medical Devices Cluster of companies was approved for funding by EI. In addition, EI funding was also approved for a Manufacturing Gateway in IT Sligo.

#### **Action 116:**

The NW Skills forum met in November. Numerous employer representative bodies and employers were in attendance along with the various education and training providers from the region. The RSF manager is involved in a number of initiatives that promotes education/training providers collaborating with external employers in areas such as work based learning, student placements, projects and events.

#### **Action 117:**

Three new programmes in Clinical Medical Science were delivered, in collaboration with the Ulster University. The Annual Engineering Expo and Science Festival were successfully staged at Sligo IT. In addition, IBEC members are in regular contact with the HEI sector to progress and advance this action.

#### **Action 128:**

IT Sligo met with 2nd level Principals and Career Guidance Teachers in Sept 2016. IT Sligo and MSL ETB are holding discussions leading towards better career guidance practices.

### **INNOVATION 2020 REPORT**

***We have built a strong research and innovation base in Ireland:*** IT Sligo has identified 3 Strategic Research Centres and 5 Recognised Research Groups. There is a particular focus on Environmental Science, Precision Engineering and Manufacturing, Biomedical Sciences and Social Sciences. The intention is to focus on key domains and to adequately resource these to build a level of critical mass and international standard output.

***We will become a Global Innovation Leader:*** In 2016 It Sligo worked with IDA to attract two new FDI companies to the region, both of whom set up their first footprint in the Institute's Innovation Centre. Discussions also commenced with IDA and the Local Enterprise Office to take space in the Building Block in the town (a facility to support new start-ups and incoming businesses).

***We will increase public and private investment in research and development:*** In 2016, the Institute invested in excess of €400,000 in building research capacity and research bursaries.

***We will enhance the impact of research and innovation for enterprise:*** In 2016 the Institute delivered 24 Innovation Voucher projects

**We will ensure that education drives innovation:** The Institute commenced delivery of a new taught masters programmes in Medical Devices (Regulatory Affairs) in collaboration with NUIG. This is in direct response to the needs of industry.

**We will focus research and innovation activity on social and economic development:** All of the research at IT Sligo is focussed on social and economic development, as is evidenced by the peer reviewed publications and reports generated for industry.

**We will support Innovation through the protection and transfer of knowledge:** The Institute had a number of live patents that are the subject of commercialisation discussions with potential industry partners.

## ENTERPRISE 2025 REPORT.

The vision in the Enterprise 2025 report is for Ireland to be the best place to succeed in business delivering sustainable employment and higher standards of living for all. IT Sligo has contributed directly to this in the North-West through the activities of its innovation Centre that houses 30 new start-ups or incoming businesses setting-up in the region. These companies include a number of IDA companies that have taken space in the Innovation Centre as their first platform in the region before locating to an industrial setting. There are over 150 employees associated with these companies and the success rate is 95% (i.e. based on companies still in existence after 5 years, independent of the Institute). The Institute also contributes directly to the development of talent for the region, where all of the new programmes (and programme re-validations) are carried out with input from industrial experts.

## IRISH EDUCATED, GLOBALLY CONNECTED: AN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STRATEGY FOR IRELAND, 2016-2020.

The report below summaries some of the key deliverables from IT Sligo in respect of Ireland's International Strategy:

### **Strategic Priority 2: Internationally oriented, globally competitive institutions**

- IT Sligo delivers to the International strategy mainly through its online programmes. There are 70 students located in 25 countries taking online programmes provided by IT Sligo (2017/2018). Notwithstanding that, It Sligo had in excess of 300 international students on campus in 2016. It also agreed with the CUA partners for the three International offices to work in collaboration when attending or promoting the Institutes internationally.
- In 2016, some 8% of the student population of IT Sligo was made up of non-Irish full time students. This represents a 20% increase over the 2015 data.
- In 2016, 12 staff availed of the Erasmus+ outgoing scheme. This is a significant increase over the figure of 7 in 2015.
- Currently, approximately 10% of students go on placement abroad. These are in programmes such as tourism and childcare. In it's new Strategic Plan, IT Sligo committed to providing work-placement on all Level 8 programmes. This will increased the demand for overseas placements.

### **Strategic Priority 4: Succeeding Abroad**

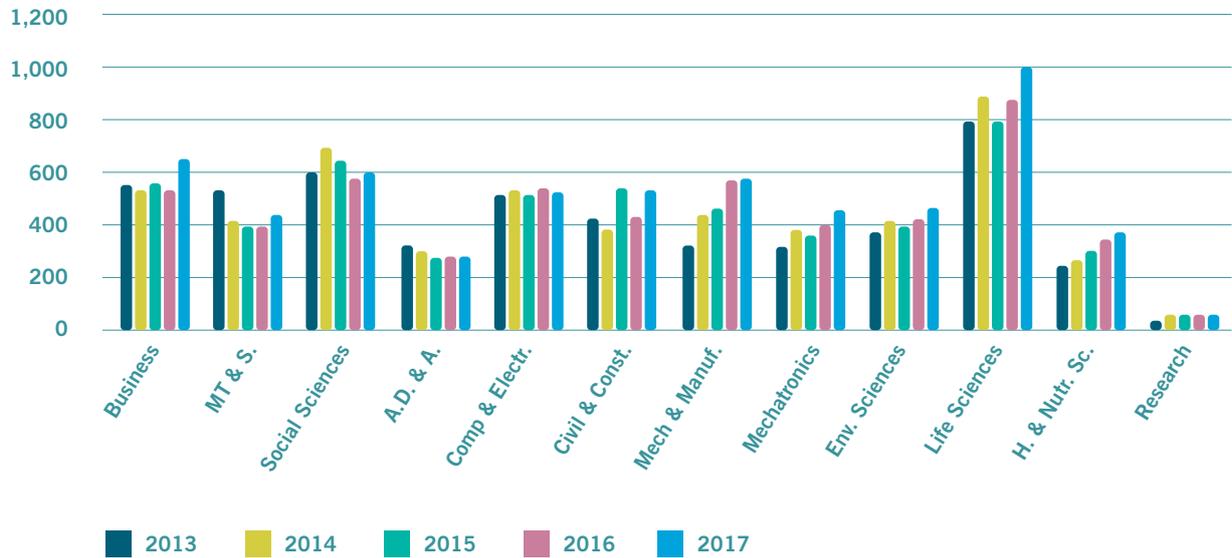
- In 2016, It Sligo introduced the KonnectAgain™ Alumni package and currently has in excess of 1,000 registered users. This is being used to better understand the needs and expectations of Alumni.

# Appendix 4: Student Numbers by Department 2013-2017

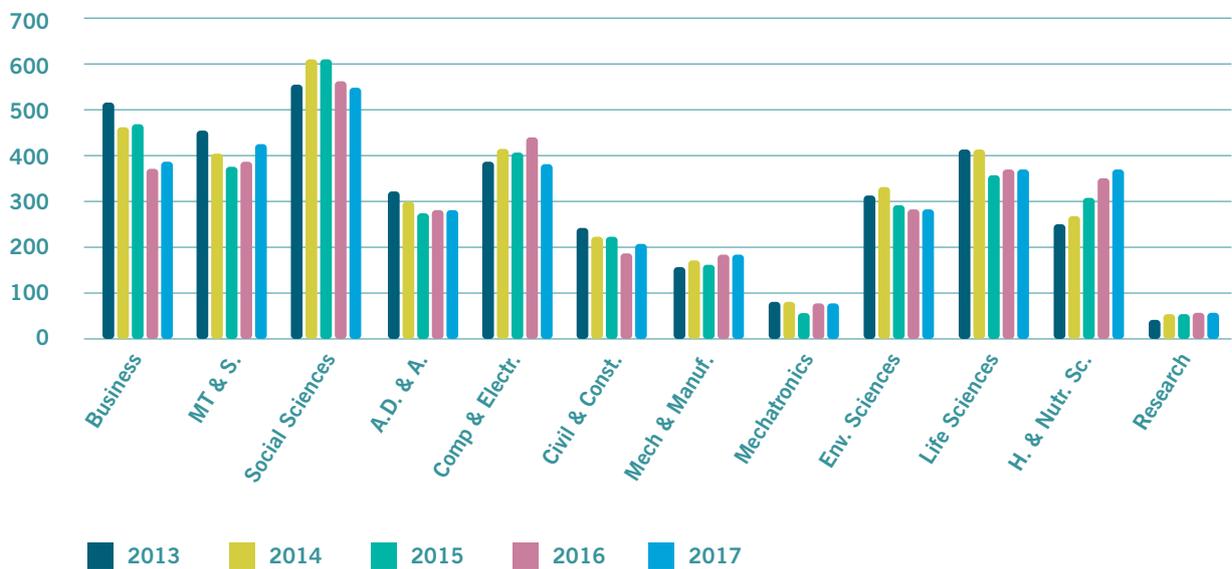


Student Numbers by Department 2013-2017

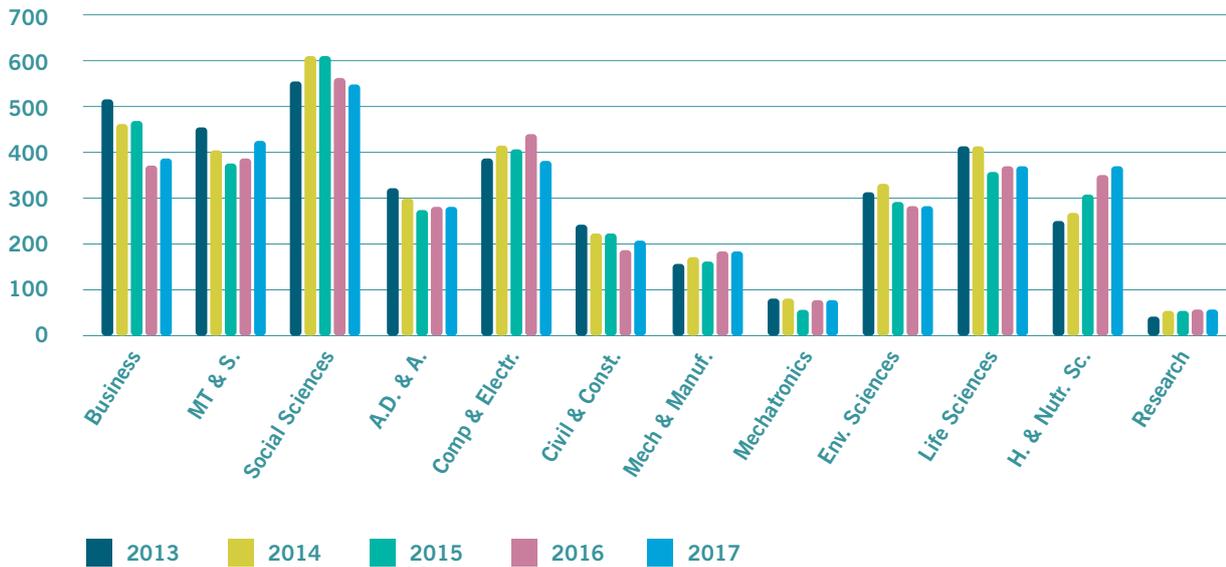
TOTAL



FULL TIME



### FULL TIME



Source IT Sligo HEA November return.

Apprentice numbers:

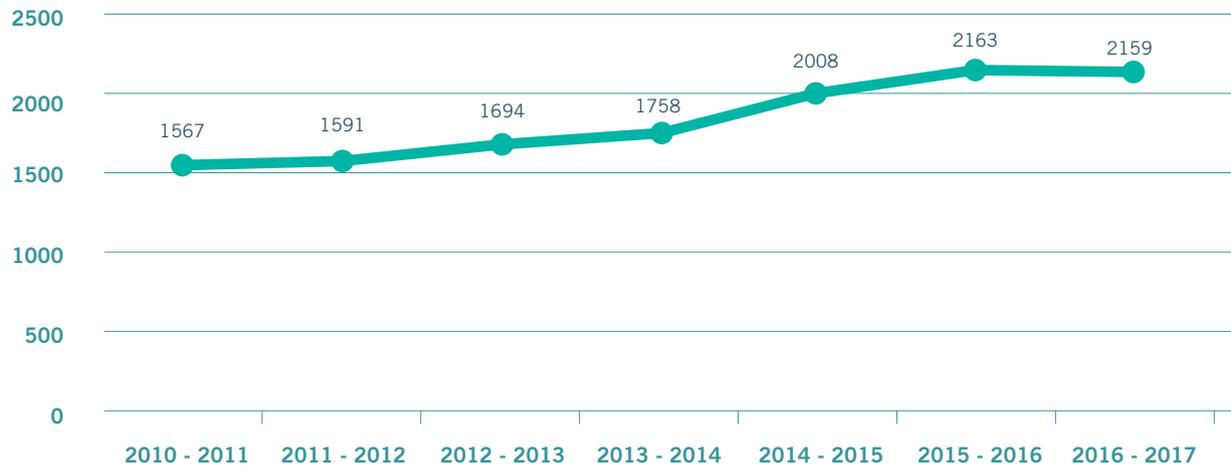
### APPRENTICE NUMBERS 2010 TO PRESENT IT SLIGO



Level 8 numbers:

The number of students enrolled on level 8 honours bachelor programmes has increased by almost a quarter since 2010-11 from 1,567 to 2,159.

### HONOURS BACHELOR DEGREE (LEVEL 8) ENROLMENTS



## PROJECTIONS OF FUTURE DEMAND

Projections of Full Time Demand for Education in DES-Aided Third Level Institutions, 2015-2029

	S0	S1 (baseline)	S2	S3
2014	169,474			
2015	170502	170890	171,016	171,404
2016	171644	172716	173,058	174,130
2017	172465	174439	175,063	177,037
2018	173123	176166	177,118	180,161
2019	173655	177897	179,212	183,454
2020	174314	179873	181,574	187,134
2021	174788	182125	184,230	191,214
2022	175909	184535	187,057	195,528
2023	177434	186966	189,914	199,856
2024	179104	188796	192,175	203,487
2025	180265	190841	194,658	206,891
2026	181667	194465	198,722	211,696
2027	184582	199092	203,791	217,351
2028	188449	203562	208,706	222,627
2029	192156	207544	213,134	227,244
Scenario	S0	S1 (Baseline)	S2	S3
<b>Transfer Rate from Second Level</b>	Decreasing to 60%	2014/2015 levels (63.8%)	Remain at 63.8%	Increase to 70%
<b>Mature Entrants</b>	2014/2015 levels (5300)	2014/2015 levels (5300)	Increase of 25%	Increase of 25%
<b>International Entrants</b>	2014/2015 levels (1700)	2014/2015 levels (1700)	Increase of 25%	Increase of 25%

Source Dept of Education and Skills

## PROFILE OF 1ST YEAR ENTRANTS IN 2017

### Analysis of Current Students

2017 First Years by Type	Actual Number	%
Leaving Certificate (LC) 2017	557	55%
Mature ( Over 23)	75	7%
Other (Under 23 but post LC 2017)	378	37%
<b>All</b>	<b>1010</b>	<b>100%</b>

What is the 'Other' made up of? What is the highest Qualifications they presented with	
Leaving Certificate (pre LC 2017)	187
PLC/FETAC/NCVA Qualification	150
Leaving Cert Equivalent (i.e. A-Levels)	19
One Year Certificate	10
Unknown	4
National or 2 year certificate	3
National Diploma	3
Apprenticeship	1
Other	1
<b>Grand Count</b>	<b>378</b>

Of the 187 LC's, when did they do their LC?	
LC 2013	3
LC 2014	14
LC 2015	26
LC 2016	126
LC unknown	18
<b>Grand Count</b>	<b>187</b>

**COUNTY OF ORIGIN OF FULL TIME ENROLMENTS:**

County	No. of registered 1st Years	%
Sligo	283	25%
Mayo	165	15%
Donegal	160	14%
Leitrim	100	9%
Cavan	63	6%
Roscommon	62	5%
Galway	55	5%
Westmeath	48	4%
Longford	34	3%
Monaghan	34	3%
Other EU/Intl	23	2%
Meath	18	2%
Dublin	17	2%
Offaly	14	1%
Kildare	10	1%
Louth	9	1%
Wicklow	7	1%
Cork	5	0%
Waterford	5	0%
Laois	4	0%
Limerick	4	0%
Clare	3	0%
Kilkenny	3	0%
Tipperary	3	0%
Fermanagh	2	0%
Wexford	1	0%
<b>Grand</b>	<b>1132</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### FT UG NEW ENTRANTS BY FIELD OF STUDY (ISCED 1)

Field	Student Count
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	0
Arts and humanities	57
Business, administration and law	143
Education	0
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	224
Generic programmes and qualifications	0
Health and welfare	168
Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)	138
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	94
Services	220
Social sciences, journalism and information	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1044</b>

HEA Mar 17 Return

#### FT UG NEW ENTRANTS BY AGE

Age	Student Count
17 and under	58
18	360
19	353
20	107
21	42
22	18
23	9
24	22
25-29	27
30 and over	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>1044</b>

HEA Mar 17 Return

# Appendix 5: Academic Council



Academic Member	Ex-officio or nominated and election by all eligible members	Number
Registrar	Ex-officio	1
Heads of School	Ex-officio	3
Heads of Department	Ex-officio	8
Head of Research	Ex-officio	1
Academic Staff	Elected	22
	Total	35

Non-Academic Members	Ex-officio or nominated and election by all eligible members	Number
President	Ex-officio	1
Student Affairs Manager	Ex-officio	1
Administrative Staff	Elected	1
Technical Support Staff	Elected	1
Students	Elected	2
Representative of Registrar Function	Ex-officio	1
Head of Strategy & Planning	Ex-officio	1

Academic elected members are allocated as a ratio of the total teaching hours in each School. Current numbers are school of Business and Social Science 8 members, School of Engineering and Design 8 Members, School of Science 6 members.

# Appendix 6: List of programmes including special purpose awards

## SCIENCE

School	FP	Course
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agri-Food Science (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Applied Archaeology (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Environmental Science (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Environmental Science (Add-on)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Occupational Safety and Heal (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Occupational Safety and Heal (Add-on)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Agriculture and Food
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Applied Archaeology (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Environmental Protection (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Occupational Safety and Health (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Higher Certificate in Applied Archaeology
Science	Full-time	Higher Certificate in Science
Science	Part-time	Master of Science in Environmental Health & Safety Management
Science	Part-time	Master of Science in Environmental Protection
Science	Part-time	Post Graduate Diploma in Science in Environmental Protection
Science	Part-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Environmental Management (Add-on)
Science	Part-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Environmental Science (Add-on)
Science	Part-time	Bachelor of Science in Occupational Safety & Health (Add-on)
Science	Part-time	Bachelor of Science in Environmental Management (Add-on)
Science	Part-time	Bachelor of Science in Environmental Protection (Ab-initio)
Science	Part-time	Certificate in Occupational Safety and Health
Science	Part-time	Higher Certificate in Occupational Safety and Health
Science	Part-time	SPA Certificate in Science in Irish Wild Flower Identification
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Human Nutrition (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Public Health and Health Prom (Add-on)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Science in Health Science and Physical Activity (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Health Science and Physiology (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Human Nutrition (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Master of Science in Bioprocessing
Science	Full-time	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Bioprocessing
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Forensic Investigation & Ana (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Forensic Investigation & Ana (Add-on)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Medical Biotechnology (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Medical Biotechnology (Add-on)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Pharmaceutical Science (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Pharmaceutical Science (Add-on)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Science (Ab-initio)
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Forensic Investigation and Analysis (Ab-initio)

School	FP	Course
Science	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Science (Ab-initio)
Science	Part-time	Certificate in Biopharmaceutical Science
Science	Part-time	Master of Science in Biopharmaceutical Science
Science	Part-time	Master of Science in Industrial Pharmaceutical Science
Science	Part-time	Master of Science in Medical Device Manufacturing
Science	Part-time	Post Graduate Diploma in Science in Biopharmaceutical Science
Science	Part-time	SPA Quality Analytics for Biopharma
Science	Part-time	Certificate in Medical Device Regulatory Affairs & Quality
Science	Part-time	Higher Diploma in Science in Medical Device Regulatory Affairs & Quality
Science	Part-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Applied Medical Sciences (Ab-initio)
Science	Part-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biopharmaceutical Science (Add-on)
Science	Part-time	Certificate in Science in Biopharmaceutical Science
Science	Part-time	Certificate in Science in Biopharmaceutical Science
Science	Part-time	Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Science (Ab-initio)
Science	Part-time	Bachelor of Science in Biopharmaceutical Science (Add-on)
Science	Part-time	Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Science by Distance Lea (Ab-initio)
Science	Part-time	Certificate in Science in Biopharmaceutical Processing
Science	Part-time	Certificate in Science in Bioprocess Engineering
Science	Part-time	Certificate in Science in Biopharmaceutical Processing
Science	Part-time	Certificate in Science in Cleanroom Manufacturing
Science	Part-time	Higher Certificate in Science in Good Manufacturing Practice
Science	Full-time	Doctor of Philosophy
Science	Full-time	Master of Science by Research
Science	Part-time	Master of Science by Research

#### ENGINEERING AND DESIGN 2017/18

School	FP	Course
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fine Art (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts in Performing Arts (Acting) (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts in Performing Arts (Theatre Design) (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Architectural Design (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts in Interior Architecture & Design (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Design (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Design (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fine Art (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Performing Arts (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts in Creative Design (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Writing and Literature (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Arts in Creative Design (Ab-initio)

School	FP	Course
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Writing and Literature
Engineering & Design	Apprentice	Carpentry & Joinery
Engineering & Design	Apprentice	Electrical Trades
Engineering & Design	Apprentice	Toolmaking
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Engineering (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Project Management (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Quantity Surveying (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Engineering (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Environmental Engineering (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Adv Wood & Sustainable Building Tech (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Quantity Surveying (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Quantity Surveying (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Higher Certificate in Construction Economics
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Higher Certificate in Civil Engineering
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Certificate in BIM and Lean Construction Management (SPA)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Certificate in Construction Law, Procurement and Finance (SPA)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Certificate in Strategic Construction Management (SPA)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Masters of Science in Project Management
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Masters of Science in Road Maintenance Engineering
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Post Graduate Diploma in Road Maintenance Engineering
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Project Management
Engineering & Design	Part-time	SPA in Engineering Road Network Management (SPA)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Certificate in Engineering Road Maintenance Engineering
Engineering & Design	Part-time	SPA Certificate in Project Management L9
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Project Management
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Quantity Surveying (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Science in Construction Management (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Science in Quantity Surveying
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Master of Science in Energy Management
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Software Develo (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Systems and Networking (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Computing in Game Development (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Computing in Software Development (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Computing in Systems and Networking (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Science in Computing in Web Dev & Creative Design (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic & Computer Engineering (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Higher Certificate in Electronic & Computer Engineering

School	FP	Course
Engineering & Design	In-Service education	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Systems and Networking (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Higher Diploma in Science in Computing
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Science in Computing in Web Dev & Creative Design (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electronic & Computer Engineering (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic Engineering (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Certificate in Engineering in Electronics & Automation
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Precision Engineering & Design (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Precision Engineering and Design (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Higher Certificate in Engineering in Engineering in Precision Engineering & Design
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Higher Certificate in Mechanical Engineering
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Master of Science in Quality
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Certificate in Advanced Lean Sigma Quality - Black Belt
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Quality Management & Technology (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Precision Engineering & Design (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Science in Manufacturing Management (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Science in Quality Engineering (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Certificate in Six Sigma Yellow Belt
Engineering & Design	Part-time	SPA Certificate in Engineering in Lean Sigma Quality
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Certificate Work Based Project (SPA)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Certificate in Quality Assurance
Engineering & Design	Part-time	SPA Certificate in Process Technologies
Engineering & Design	Part-time	SPA in Validation Technologies
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechatronics (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Mechatronics (Ab-initio)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Higher Certificate in Mechtronic Engineering
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechatronics
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechatronics (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Data Centre Facilities Engineering (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Mechatronics (Add-on)
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Mechatronics .
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Bachelor of Engineering in Polymer Processing (Add-on)

School	FP	Course
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Certificate in Engineering in Automation and Instrumentation
Engineering & Design	Part-time	Certificate in Polymer Technologies
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Masters of Engineering by Research
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Doctor of Philosophy (Eng)
Engineering & Design	Full-time	Masters of Science in Engineering by Research

#### BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES 2017/18

School	FP	Course
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Doctor of Philosophy Business
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Masters in Business Studies by Research
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting Stream (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Finance and Investment Stream (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Honours) (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Honours) Finance & Investment (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Finance (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in General Stream (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in HRM Stream (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in Business Administration L7 (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in Accounting (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in Accounting (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in Business Administration (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in Business L7 (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Higher Certificate in Business

School	FP	Course
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Higher Certificate in Business in Accounting
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Higher Certificate in Business in Office Administration
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business in Insurance Practice (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business in Insurance Practice (Life) (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Bachelor of Business (Honours) (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Business accs (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Bachelor of Business (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Bachelor of Business in Accounting (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Bachelor of Business in Management Applications (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Higher Certificate in Business
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Masters in Marketing
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Sport & Business (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Tourism with Event Management (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Business L8 DoMTS (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business (Honours) Int. Bus. With Languages (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in Applied Sport and Business (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	International Business Erasmus Programme (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in Digital Media Marketing (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in International Marketing Erasmus (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in Marketing & Sales (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in Marketing (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in Marketing (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in Marketing (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in Recreation and Leisure (Ab-initio)

School	FP	Course
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Business in Tourism (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Certificate in International Foundation Studies
Business & Social Sciences	In-Service education	Masters in Marketing
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Masters in Marketing
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Bachelor of Business in Digital Media Marketing (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Bachelor of Business In International Marketing (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Bachelor of Business in International Marketing Erasmus (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Bachelor of Business in Marketing (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Bachelor of Business in Tourism (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	International Business Erasmus Programme (Add-on)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Masters in Humanities by Research
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Humanities in Joint Major: English & Psychology (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Humanities in Joint Majors: Sociology and Politics (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Care and Education (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Full-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care Practice (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	In-Service education	Masters in Social Care & Social Justice
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Doctor of Philosophy Humanities
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Masters in Social Care & Social Justice
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Master of Arts in Humanities in Leadership in Early Childhood
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Masters in Humanities by Research
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Humanities in Leadership in Early Childhood
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Humanities in Joint Majors: Sociology and Politics (Ab-initio)
Business & Social Sciences	Part-time	Certificate in Counselling

# Appendix 7: Further details: Student admissions, progression, recognition and certification



### **CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS:**

IT Sligo is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and is keen to encourage a diverse student population with a wide range of talents, backgrounds and experiences. Applications for admission are considered on the basis of the qualifications, skills, abilities and personal qualities of the applicant. We acknowledge the critical role of education in the rehabilitative process, and having a criminal record will not necessarily debar an applicant unless the nature and seriousness of the offence in question makes it inappropriate for them to be admitted. Applications are processed in accordance with IT Sligo Criminal Convictions Policy.

### **STUDENT VETTING POLICY:**

A number of courses at IT Sligo require students to undertake work placements that will bring them into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults and in which they will assume positions of trust. Since the introduction of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016, it is a criminal offence to allow any person (including students) to undertake work placements and/or any other activities that amount to "Relevant Work or Activities" which are defined in the Act. We are committed to protecting the safety of those children and vulnerable adults. The Student Vetting Policy is available [here](#).

### **PHYSICAL TESTING:**

Students on a number of programmes participate in practical modules that include elements of physical exercise. The policy is to ensure that students participate in physical exercise at a level that suits them best. At registration stage for the programmes concerned, students are requested to fill out a simple self-assessment questionnaire. The information is reviewed by our Medical Services staff. Where considered necessary, students may be invited for a follow-up medical assessment before participating in the physical exercise elements of their course.

### **TRANSFER:**

Transfer from one programme to another is facilitated where there is sufficient overlap between modules and learning outcomes. A number of programmes have been developed with a common first year to facilitate students who do not want to specialise until year 2.

### **PROGRESSION AT IT SLIGO:**

IT Sligo offers a wide range of courses at different levels, as well as the opportunity to progress between them. Students can enrol for Higher Certificate, Bachelor Degree and Honours Bachelor Degree levels, with clear opportunities for progression between each level. After graduation, students can progress to study at Masters and Doctoral level. All courses fit within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) – the official system of qualification recognition in Ireland ([www.nfq.ie](http://www.nfq.ie)). Application for advanced entry (beyond year 1) is by direct application to the Institute. The Institute publishes criteria for admission to add-on programmes on the Institute's website.

# Appendix 8: Student Support Services



#### **CHAPLAINCY:**

The Chaplaincy Office offers personal support and advice to students of all faiths and none.

#### **STUDENT MEDICAL SERVICE:**

The student medical services are available on campus five days a week. They facilitate students to attend to their personal health concerns and maintain healthy lifestyles without having to leave the campus.

#### **STUDENT SUPPORTS SERVICES OFFICER:**

The Student Supports Services Officer is available to meet with students about any personal, general or welfare issues. The Student Supports Services Officer also oversees the processing of complaints both under the Student Charter (in regard to complaints against a student) and also under the Procedure for Students to make a complaint about services provided by IT Sligo.

#### **IT SLIGO STUDENT'S UNION (ITSSU):**

ITSSU has three officers and a number of part-time staff to provide ongoing support, guidance and representation. ITSSU works closely with Institute management to ensure that student welfare and facilities are first class. IT Sligo makes a considerable financial investment in ITSSU.

ITSSU oversee the operation of Clubs & Societies. Some 70 Clubs and Societies are supported to ensure that there are activities to suit all tastes. Funding for individual Clubs & Societies is decided and allocated by a committee comprising Institute staff and ITSSU. A block grant is allocated to ITSSU who then distribute the funds.

#### **STUDENT ACCOMMODATION:**

While IT Sligo does not provide student accommodation directly, there is ample student accommodation adjacent to the campus run by private operators. In total there are over 2,000 beds available in the vicinity. ITSSU hold a directory of the accommodation (purpose built student accommodation, self-catering options and digs) available and they provide support and guidance to students and their parents to locate suitable places to stay during the academic year.

#### **MONETARY ADVICE:**

Managing money can be a challenge for students and in some cases, financial worries can be a reason for students dropping out of college. IT Sligo collaborates with the local Money Advice & Budgeting Service to provide information, advice and guidance on how to successfully manage on a budget. MABS clinics are held on campus from time to time to facilitate students.

#### **SPORTS FACILITIES:**

Outdoor sports facilities include:

- Floodlit championship standard playing pitch for gaelic games and rugby.
- Floodlit Soccer Pitch complete with dugouts available for FAI certified games.
- Floodlit eight lane Athletics Arena
- Floodlit Astro Pitch for gaelic games, soccer and rugby
- The following facilities are available to students, staff and members of the public in the Knocknarea Arena:
- Sports hall for indoor sports, large enough to accommodate two full five-a-side pitches or two basketball courts.
- Multi-purpose area for a variety of uses.
- A state-of-the-art gym with over thirty exercise machines which caters for both cardiovascular and resistance training.
- The resistance machines can accommodate wheelchair users
- Snack bar with a viewing balcony over the Athletics Arena and Playing Pitches.
- Astro Pitch, caters for a range of sports, including three 7-a-side soccer pitches.

# Appendix 9: Recommendations from 2008 Institutional Review

The panel made the recommendations set out below. They are classified in relation to the objectives of the Institutional Review as set out in the Terms of Reference for IT Sligo.

**Objective 1 - Public Confidence**

1. In the promotion of its activities and provision of public information, the Institute should place greater emphasis on publicly available information on its quality systems, on the robustness of these systems and on building trust in them.

**2008 Response:**

The Institute accepts this point. In February 2009, the Institute validated new quality assurance procedures. An updated set of Marks and Standards will be validated by June 2009. Both of these documents will be placed on the web site and will be produced in hard copy hand book format for circulation to all staff. A series of seminars will be delivered to all staff by the EDU, in the academic year 2009/10, to launch these documents and to deal with frequently asked questions. In February 2009, the Institute has placed the full set of modules and programmes from the School of Science on the web for viewing by staff and students. By the end of 2009, all of the modules and programmes offered by the Institute will be accessible on the web site.

**2017 Response:**

The Institute is continuing to implement this. It is placing more of its Quality System and Reports on its external website ( See <https://www.itsligo.ie/about-it-sligo/administration/registrar/quality/panel-reports/>) so that the Public can access this and to develop confidence in IT Sligo and its operation. There are now links to all the approved modules and programme schedules are all available externally through the website.

**Objective 2 - Strategic Planning and Governance**

2. It is recommended that in reviewing the Strategic Plan and in other reviews conducted by the Institute, there should be a more reflective approach than there was in the case of the Self Evaluation Report (SER), that there should be a comprehensive analysis of relevant strengths and weaknesses and greater emphasis in the documentation of evidence of ongoing quality enhancement.

**2008 Response:**

The senior management of the Institute reviewed the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan in February 2009. During the Spring of 2009 it is intended to refocus the plan, based on a SWOT analysis, and there will be a greater emphasis on publicising on-going quality enhancements. The Institute is currently undertaking a Communications Audit that will provide both an examination and protocols of enhancing communications with staff, students, governing body and external stakeholders.

**2017 Response:**

This process is ongoing and has been developed further in the development of the new Strategic Planning Process. See Strategic Plan 2017-2022. In addition, the HEA require a reflective evaluation of its performance of its Mission based Performance Compact. See 2.2. HEA Mission Based Performance Compact

3. It is recommended that in order to assist with the achieving of institutional goals and objectives, there would be a greater alignment between personal objectives set under the PMDS process and institutional requirements.

**2008 Response:**

Under the Towards-2016 national agreement the Institute has committed to carrying out PMDS in every function. This process is on-going and greater effort will be made to increase its visibility.

**2017 Response:**

The PMDS process is continuing and the output from it is used to prioritise the funding for staff development programmes. See section 5.4.1. Staff Development

**Objective 3- Quality Assurance**

4. The panel recommends that the effectiveness of the quality assurance system should continue to be kept under review with particular emphasis on the seven elements of the European Guidelines for Standards and Quality Assurance. The evaluations carried out should be systematic and evidence based.

**2008 Response:**

IT Sligo will continue with the Internal Review process. Phase 1 was completed prior to the HETAC Institutional Review in December 2008. Phase 2 will be completed by June 2009. By that stage, all functions will have been reviewed. Thereafter, there will be at least one function reviewed each semester. There are currently twelve staff members and two students trained on the process. New staff and students will be trained in 2009/10 and in subsequent academic years.

**2017 Response:**

The Institute now has Price Waterhouse Coopers as its Internal Auditors. In addition it has its own Internal Audit and Continuous Process Improvement Manager.

5. The panel was provided with evidence of the good relationships that exist between staff and students and the involvement of students in a representative capacity on various bodies at Institute, School and Department levels. The panel recommends that the Institute should build on its strengths in this area and that its processes and procedures ensure that good practice is applied universally throughout the Institute.

**2008 Response:**

IT Sligo will look at new ways of enhancing the staff/student relationship. For example, the Institute is collaborating with the TCD Sheen group (which is working on student feedback initiatives), and the EDU will continue to promote best practice throughout the Institute.

**2017 Response:**

NStEP, the National Student Engagement Programme is a collaborative initiative under development by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), the Higher Education Authority (HEA), and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). IT Sligo are now involved in NStep. The institute has taken part in the ISSE annual survey.

6. The panel recommends a review of the student feedback mechanisms. It is apparent that little credence is attached to the appraisal forms as key vehicles for student feedback and it is recommended that a codified system for responding to feedback and for closing the feedback loops be established.

**2008 Response:**

This recommendation is noted and a review will be conducted in the 2009/2010 academic year that will deliver a more transparent system of collating and responding to student feedback.

**2017 Response:**

The Institute has a Working Group on Student Membership on Programme Committees. The purpose of the WG is to consider the participation of students on the Programme Boards/Committees. The forms are part of a national agreement and cannot be modified at local level.

7. The panel recommends an alignment of the staff development policies and procedures with the goals of the Institute. In this context, it emphasises particularly (a) the building of capacity for research, innovation and technology transfer and (b) the development of pedagogic skills and assessment methodologies. (See also 3 above)

**2008 Response:**

The Institute is in the process of aligning the Research Office with the Innovation and Technology Transfer function. The outcome of this process will deliver modules for students and staff in Research Practice, Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship. The Institute previously took a strategic decision to co-locate its Research and Business Innovation facilities which offers a unique capacity to provide SME business development and applied research supports. The Institute plans to deepen and expand these activities while forging a leadership role to promote an enterprise culture to maximise the potential for growth across the region. The EDU will conduct an evaluation of industrial placements with a view to establishing best practice and developing its procedures in this regard.

**2017 Response:**

Currently the functions of Research and Innovation are together in the Registrars Function.

The Institute has recruited an Educational Development Manager who will be responsible for Academic Staff Development, Academic Learning Support, and the monitoring of the Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

The Institute's Research and Innovation Offices have been given Ex Officio seats at the academic Council, where they can contribute to research and innovation aspects of all of the Institute's Academic activities. Both Heads are members of the Research and Innovation Committee of the Academic Council, where they give routine reports on activities. The Institute led a SIF funded project for the IoT sector to produce a 60 credit, Level 9 Graduate Diploma (with embedded 30 credit Certificate and Single Subject Certificates) in Research Skills for postgraduate education and staff training. A number of cohorts have taken these modules. On technology transfer, the Institute has joined with LYIT, GMIT and NUIG in a combined TTO office. Since 2008, the Institute has held a series of lunchtime seminar programmes for staff and students, as well as a number of seminars and colloquia on research topic and activities.

**Objective 4 - Qualifications Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression**

8. The panel recommends building on the positive attitude towards increasing access to higher education so as to broaden the support for access activities and to integrate them more fully in the activities of schools and departments.

**2008 Response:**

In February 2009 the Institute was notified of its successful bid for funding for Access from the 'Dormant Fund' account, to the amount of €125,000. This will go to enhancing the Access services in three specific areas: Breaking the Mould, Enterprise

Challenge and Community Steps. It is the intention of the Institute to continue seeking such funding to support other initiatives. The Institute is also conducting a review of its administrative support services for Access with a view to optimising the range of services on offer to students.

Also in Spring 2009, the Institute provided a number of accelerated access routes to facilitate persons who were recently entering the ranks of the unemployed to rapidly enter higher education with a view to progressing to a full time programme in the academic year 2009/10.

**2017 Response**

The Institute has carried out a study into the effectiveness of Its Breaking the Mould programme to inform its activities in the future. The institute is also involved in the HEAR and Dare Schemes. See section 5.2. Student admissions, progression, recognition and certification. The institute was successful in securing funding from the HEA in Springboard Programme funding for targeting unemployed students into part time programmes to upskill.

**Objective 5 - Delegated Authority**

9. The panel recommends that the delegated authority granted to Institute of Technology, Sligo, be continued as provided for in the 1999 Act.

**2008 Response:**

Noted with thanks.

**Objective 6 - Recommendations for Enhancement**

10. In reviewing its activities, the Institute should place an increased emphasis on benchmarking against national and international standards and practices. This should apply particularly to reviews of the seven elements of the European Guidelines for Standards and Quality Assurance.

**2008 Response:**

This will be covered as per item 4 above. Phase 2 of the Internal Review will have a greater focus on the European Guidelines, whereas Phase 1 was focussed primarily on the HETAC guidelines. The guidelines have been incorporated into the new Institute QA procedures.

**2017 Response:**

The Institute has incorporated the updated European Standards and Guidelines into its Quality System.





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