



QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS PLAN (QIEP) 2019-2024



ABSTRACT

This Quality Improvement and Effectiveness Plan (QIEP) demonstrates how NCI's Quality Improvement and Effectiveness Team (QIE) supports NCI in addressing the outcomes of the 2019 QQI Re-Engagement Process and contributes to the advancement of the six strategic goals presented in the NCI Academic Strategy 2019-2024

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Introduction and Context

This Quality Improvement and Effectiveness Plan (QIEP) was prepared in 2020 as a response to the NCI Academic Strategy (2019-2024) and the 2019/2020 QQI Re-Engagement Action Plan. The QIEP outlines the contributions NCI's new Quality and Institutional Effectiveness (QIE) Team and a refreshed Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) will make to the achievement of Academic Strategy goals and to the overall quality and effectiveness of NCI.

In the design and implementation of this plan, the QIE Director was cognisant of the need to:

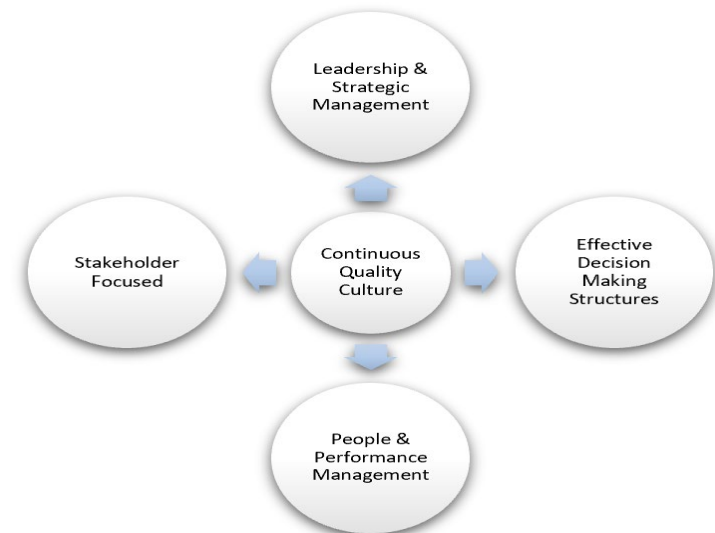
- Demonstrate how NCI aligns with and responds to internal and external stakeholder needs and requirements
- Minimise duplication and burden while maximising the relevance and fitness for purpose of QA processes, policies and structures
- Enhance transparency, understanding, engagement and ownership of QA & QI practices across NCI
- Be proportionate with a focus on finding a 'win-win' strategy, to ensure we maximise the benefits of QIE activities for stakeholders and participants.

The ultimate goal within this QIEP, is to give confidence to our internal and external stakeholders, that NCI has the ability and appetite to make timely, informed decisions around programme and institutional health, relevance, viability, sustainability and impact to ensure our ongoing institutional efficiency and effectiveness.

Format

The QIEP is structured around the six strategic themes of the 2019-2024 Academic Strategy with progress updated quarterly. The Plan provides detailed mapping for 2019/2020 – 2021/22. A refresh will be completed aligned with business needs in 2022 for the final two years of implementation, anticipated to lead up to NCI's first CINNTE institutional cyclical review. The activities proposed - particularly for 2019/2020 and 2020/21 – are also aligned with the Re-Engagement action plan deliverables, monitored quarterly by Academic Council and include responses to the COVID Crisis and QQI's alternative arrangements for delivery April 2020 – August 2021.

The QIEP seeks to advance NCI's approach to institutional effectiveness and a culture of quality by increasing transparency, consistency and evidence-based decision-making making in the following five areas:



Key Goals and Outcomes

Leadership & Strategic Management

- Align our academic, business, financial and strategic planning processes to deliver institutional goals and priorities.
- Enhance internal communications and clarify expectations, roles & responsibilities, particularly in relation to QA & QI.
- Increase transparency & effectiveness of KPIs and risk management to ensure goal delivery.
- Align decisions on NCI's Portfolio of Programmes against Institutional goals and priorities.

Effective Decision-Making Structures

- Review and refresh the Academic Governance Structure to enhance transparency, consistency and communication across NCI's Academic Governance Structure.
- Increase the voice of stakeholders in decision-making structures.
- Ensure evidence of programme and institutional quality, relevance, impact and effectiveness is gathered and used to inform decision-making.

People and Performance Management

- Support the refresh of the staff awards structure to reflect individual & team delivery against NCI Strategic Themes/Values.

- Launch Programme Lifecycle Management Structure (PLM) to ensure programme relevance, viability & sustainability.
- Invest in data analysis and reporting tools – to achieve a single source of truth for monitoring programme and Institutional performance & impact.
- Launch a 'Temperature Check' process to assess the 'fitness for purpose' & impact of support services, policies and procedures.

Stakeholder Focused

- Review and relaunch NCI's Student Voice structures to ensure we ask and respond to student experiences in a timely and effective way.
- Increase opportunities for the staff voice to inform decision-making and to increase staff engagement and contributions to NCI strategic goals and priorities.
- Launch a simplified 'plain English' approach to quality in NCI to aid engagement and ownership of QA processes and procedures by staff and students.

Continuous Quality Culture – be able to evidence:

- A holistic quality culture and commitment to benchmarking and continuous quality improvement across NCI.
- A responsiveness to internal and external stakeholder needs and experiences.
- Consistency with QQI rules, standards and requirements.

Deliverables (2019/2020)

No	NCI Strategic Theme	Relevant objectives	Delivery Lead(s)	Action
1	Outstanding Student Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and recognise students' participation in college-wide activities, which can contribute towards enhancing the college community at NCI, including student representation roles, work experience and helping with a peer-assisted learning scheme. Combine our recognised teaching excellence with an outstanding student experience both on-campus, off-campus and online. 	QIE Specialist & NCISU President	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support NCI's engagement with the NStEP initiative and co-designed and delivered training with the NCI Students Union for student representatives 2019-2020. Manage NCI's engagement with Student.Survey.ie, resulting in an increase in participation from the previous reporting year. Manage the NCI participation in the INDEx survey to enhance investment in NCI's digital infrastructure. Conduct a survey in April 2020 of the student experience following the March 2020 COVID lockdown. Develop and launch a new Academic Risk Register and COVID Management and Mitigation Action Plan to ensure continuing in the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and support structures throughout the COVID crisis. T be monitored by Academic Council quarterly.
2	Global Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on the success of our Chinese collaborations, by expanding our academic partnership portfolio across all regions in which we are active. 	QIE Director & International Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh QIE guidance on academic partnerships and collaborations initiated, to be completed in 2020/21. Participate in the HEA's Review of NCI's engagement in the Erasmus+ Programme with a view to supporting increased participation from 2020/21 onwards.
3	Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to understand and develop educational opportunities for those who are looking to reskill, upskill or avail of education that would not be widely available or affordable to them. 	QIE Director & Deans	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support the SoB Dean, Apprenticeship Manager and Recruitment Consortium in the application process for the new BA (Hons) Recruitment Practice Apprenticeship Programme. Initiate a redesign of NCI's policies and procedures to support further investment in blended and online learning.
4	Socially Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed our commitment to social responsibility and sustainability in our curricula, policies, strategies and procedures. 	QIE Director & Deans	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional guidance to programme teams undergoing programme re-validation to embed explicitly ethics, data governance and diversity/inclusion across the curriculum design process as far as practicable/relevant in line with the subject matter.
5	Enterprise Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to ensure that all programmes are developed to meet current and future workforce demands. Derive maximum benefit from external expertise and participation in national and international networks. 	QIE Director & QIE Specialist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a wholesale refresh of the NCI Policies and Procedures for Apprenticeship programmes to support the validation of the new BA (Honours) Recruitment Practice apprenticeship programme. Refresh of NCI's QAES and guidelines/briefing notes/templates for validation and revalidation updated to increase transparency and understanding of progress roles, responsibilities, requirements and expectations.
6	Recognised and Respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that both schools, all centres and any other departments actively look for accreditations that improve our profile and allow benchmarking against similar organisations. 	QIE Director & Deans	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the drafting of the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with Maynooth University for the delivery of Level 9 programmes. QIE team members participate as panel members in QQI re-engagement panels, validation and revalidation panels to increase NCI's QA network and impact. QIE team members participate in national consultations, events and launches including QQI, NStEP, Student.survey.ie and the INDEx Survey. QIE Director member of the QQI instigated National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN). Support Deans and Programme Directors in discussions with PRSBs to maintain programme alignment with professional standards and recognition – as appropriate.

Deliverables 2020/2021

No.	NCI Strategic Theme	Relevant objectives	Delivery Lead(s)	Planned Action
1	Outstanding Student Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and recognise students' participation in college-wide activities, which can contribute towards enhancing the college community at NCI, including student representation roles, work experience and helping with a peer-assisted learning scheme Combine our recognised teaching excellence with an outstanding student experience both on-campus, off-campus and online 	QIE Specialist & NCISU President	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a student-centred design approach to refresh the NCI Student Voice structure prior to relaunching in 2021. Engage with NStEP and the Students' Union to support the recruitment, training and participation of student representatives within QA & QI processes at NCI. Ensure the learner voice, gathered through Student.Survey.ie and internal feedback tools is used to monitor the quality of the student experience and inform effective decision-making particularly around COVID alternative arrangements. Utilise the Academic Risk Register and COVID Alternative Arrangements Action Plan to monitor the quality of the student experience between April 2020 – August 2021. Refresh the annual programme monitoring process to review evidence of consistency of teaching, learning and assessment practices across all validated modes of delivery.
2	Global Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that internationalisation, through our International Office, has an appropriate presence and position of influence throughout the college and academic structures Build on the success of our Chinese collaborations, by expanding our academic partnership portfolio across all regions in which we are active Create new support initiatives and advance our existing supports for our international students, alumni and stakeholders 	QIE Director & International Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review and refresh the terms of reference, membership and effectiveness of the NCI academic governance to maximise efficiency, transparency and impact. Contribute to the design and implementation of the 2021-2024 NCI International Plan, ensuring NCI and National QA requirements and expectations for academic partnerships are clearly articulated and met in partnership agreements. Collaborative Partnership Guides prepared and published for use by internal and external stakeholders. Thematic Review of NCI's International Team and services against the QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Learners completed in 2021.
3	Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a suite of online programmes, both fee bearing and free, which allow access to those who otherwise would not be able to avail of an NCI education. Continue to understand and develop educational opportunities for those who are looking to reskill, upskill or avail of education that would not be widely available or affordable to them 	QIE Director & Deans	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively engage with QQI consultations to develop and validate fully online programmes in response to the needs of key external stakeholders. Refresh the NCI QA Handbook (QAES) to include new policies and procedures for ensuring the quality of fully online programmes. Proactively participate in QQI pilots to develop and validate micro-credentials in response to sector, government and COVID-19 recovery plan needs to upskill/reskill the workforce.
4	Socially Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed our commitment to social responsibility and sustainability in our curricula, policies, strategies and procedures Demonstrate and report our main social, environmental and economic impacts 	QIE Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and launch a new NCI Programme Lifecycle Management Structure (PLM), which requires programme teams to consider embedding their commitment to social responsibility and sustainability within new validated and revalidated programmes. Enhance the accessibility, transparency and utilisation of qualitative and quantitative data to inform effective decision-making and reporting on NCI's responsiveness, relevance and impact to external stakeholders.
5	Enterprise Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to ensure that all programmes are developed to meet current and future workforce demands Derive maximum benefit from external expertise and participation in national and international networks 	QIE Director & QIE Specialist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh guidelines and templates for programme validation and revalidation to require evidence of programme currency, relevance and demand. Participate in national and European networking and peer review activities to enhance benchmarking and identify peer reviewers to participate in NCI programme validations and revalidations.
6	Recognised and Respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that both schools, all centres and any other departments actively look for accreditations that improve our profile and allow benchmarking against similar organisations 	QIE Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and implement QIE commitments and actions as articulated in NCI's Athena Swan, asIAm and QQI Re-Engagement commitments and action plans. Support alignment with professional body requirements in programme review processes.

Deliverables 2021/22

No.	NCI Strategic Theme	Relevant objectives	Delivery Lead(s)	Planned Action
1	Outstanding Student Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and recognise students' participation in college-wide activities, which can contribute towards enhancing the college community at NCI, including student representation roles, work experience and helping with a peer-assisted learning scheme Combine our recognised teaching excellence with an outstanding student experience both on- campus, off-campus and online 	QIE Specialist & NCISU President	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Launch refreshed NCI Learner Voice structure and monitor implementation and impact annually, reporting to Academic Council. 1.2. Ensure the learner voice, gathered through Student.Survey.ie and internal feedback structures is used to monitor the quality of the student experience during and following the lifting of COVID alternative arrangements. 1.3. Review data from the refreshed the annual programme monitoring process to assess evidence of programme level responses to the student voice, and review consistency of teaching, learning and assessment practices across all validated modes of delivery – including online. Academic Council paper to be prepared.
2	Global Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that internationalisation, through our International Office, has an appropriate presence and position of influence throughout the college and academic structures Create new support initiatives and advance our existing supports for our international students, alumni and stakeholders 	QIE Director & International Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Academic Council minutes and Annual Quality Report to capture and report evidence of NCI's global impact and monitor quality across collaborative partnerships. 2.2. Support the application for NCI to secure the QQI International Education Mark following a mapping process to demonstrate compliance with the Code of Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes to International Learners
3	Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a suite of online programmes, both fee bearing and free, which allow access to those who otherwise would not be able to avail of an NCI education. Continue to understand and develop educational opportunities for those who are looking to reskill, upskill or avail of education that would not be widely available or affordable to them 	QIE Director & Deans	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Proactively engage with QQI's consultation to validate fully online programmes in response to the needs of key external stakeholders. 3.2. Proactively participate in QQI pilots to develop and validate micro-credentials in response to sector, government and COVID-19 recovery plan needs to upskill/reskill the workforce.
4	Socially Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed our commitment to social responsibility and sustainability in our curricula, policies, strategies and procedures Demonstrate and report our main social, environmental and economic impacts 	QIE Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1. Review evidence from NCI's Programme Lifecycle Management Structure (PLM), of explicit commitments to social responsibility and sustainability, as well as ethical and data governance embedded within new validated and revalidated programmes – as appropriate. 4.2. Monitor consistency and accuracy in the utilisation of NCI's central qualitative and quantitative datasets to inform decision-making and reporting.
5	Enterprise Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to ensure that all programmes are developed to meet current and future workforce demands Derive maximum benefit from external expertise and participation in national and international networks 	QIE Director & QIE Specialist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1. Oversee the revalidation of 40 programmes throughout 2021/22 and 2022/23. Revalidation schedule agreed internally and with QQI in Q1 2021 and workload mapping undertaken to achieve agreed deadlines. 5.2. Participate in national and European networking and peer review activities to enhance benchmarking and identify peer reviewers to participate in NCI programme validations and revalidations.
6	Recognised and Respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that both schools, all centres and any other departments actively look for accreditations that improve our profile and allow benchmarking against similar organisations 	QIE Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1. Support the School of Business progress towards AACSB accreditation. 6.2. Support the alignment with professional body requirements in annual programmer monitoring, validation and (re)validation processes. 6.3. Support the submission of NCI's QStars Application 2021.

Deliverables 2022/2023 – 2023/24

To be profiled in 2021/22 in line with internal and external business needs and priorities.