

National College of Ireland
Quality Assurance Handbook



2 Quality Assurance and Enhancement System

November 2018

2	Quality Assurance and Enhancement System	2-1
2.1	Introduction.....	2-5
2.2	External Quality Assurance.....	2-5
2.3	Process for Updating Quality Assurance System in National College of Ireland.....	2-5
2.4	Corporate Governance	2-7
2.4.1	<i>Role of the Governing Body</i>	2-7
2.4.2	<i>Appointment of Members of the Governing Body</i>	2-8
2.4.3	<i>The Role of the Members of the Governing Body</i>	2-11
2.4.4	<i>Term of Office and Retirement</i>	2-12
2.4.5	<i>Code of Conduct for Member of the Governing Body</i>	2-13
2.4.6	<i>Disclosure of Interests by Members of the Governing Body</i>	2-15
2.4.7	<i>Chairman of the Governing Body</i>	2-17
2.4.8	<i>Role of the Senior Independent Governor</i>	2-17
2.4.9	<i>Committees of the Governing Body</i>	2-18
2.4.10	<i>Charter of Ethics in Procurement</i>	2-22
2.5	Standing Committees of the National College of Ireland	2-23
2.5.1	<i>Executive Team</i>	2-23
2.5.2	<i>The Executive Group</i>	2-24
2.5.3	<i>Academic Operations Committee</i>	2-25
2.6	Academic Governance	2-26
2.6.1	<i>Academic Council</i>	2-28
2.6.2	<i>Academic Standards & Policy Committee</i>	2-30
2.6.3	<i>Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee</i>	2-32
2.6.4	<i>Research Committee</i>	2-32
2.6.5	<i>School Committee</i>	2-36
2.6.6	<i>Programme Committee</i>	2-37
2.6.7	<i>Class Representative Liaison</i>	2-39
2.7	Key Roles Supporting Quality Assurance & Enhancement.....	2-39
2.7.1	<i>President of the College</i>	2-40
2.7.2	<i>Vice-President, Academic Affairs & Research</i>	2-40
2.7.3	<i>The Registrar</i>	2-41
2.7.4	<i>Director of Quality Assurance and Statistical Services</i>	2-43
2.7.5	<i>Quality Officer</i>	2-44
2.7.6	<i>Dean of School</i>	2-44
2.7.7	<i>Vice-Dean, Postgraduate Studies & Research (School of Business)</i>	2-45
2.7.8	<i>Vice-Dean, Undergraduate Studies (School of Business)</i>	2-46

2.7.9	<i>Vice-Dean, Academic Programmes & Research (School of Computing)</i> ..	2-47
2.7.10	<i>Head of Cloud Competency Centre</i>	2-48
2.7.11	<i>Programme Director</i>	2-49
2.7.12	<i>Faculty Member</i>	2-51
2.7.13	<i>Programme Coordinator</i>	2-52
2.7.14	<i>Academic Partnership Manager</i>	2-53
2.7.15	<i>Apprenticeship Manager</i>	2-53
2.8	Other Committee Structures	2-54
2.8.1	<i>Committees Related to Assessment & Discipline</i>	2-54
2.8.2	<i>Health and Safety Committee</i>	2-54
2.9	Role of Quality Assurance and Statistical Services (QASS) Office	2-55
2.9.1	<i>Policy Creation</i>	2-55
2.9.2	<i>Programme Development and Validation/Revalidation</i>	2-55
2.9.3	<i>Service and Business Process Improvement</i>	2-55
2.9.4	<i>Institutional Review</i>	2-55
2.9.5	<i>Representation</i>	2-55
2.9.6	<i>Institutional Research</i>	2-56
2.9.7	<i>Contribution to Strategic and Academic Planning</i>	2-56
2.9.8	<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	2-56
2.9.9	<i>Outputs from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement System</i>	2-57
2.10	The Creation, Implementation and Maintenance of College Policies	2-60
2.10.1	<i>Purpose</i>	2-60
2.10.2	<i>Scope</i>	2-60
2.10.3	<i>Policy Statement</i>	2-60
2.10.4	<i>Definitions</i>	2-62
2.10.5	<i>Policy Owner</i>	2-62
2.10.6	<i>Related Documentation</i>	2-62
2.10.7	<i>Contacts</i>	2-63
2.10.8	<i>Review and Indicators of Effectiveness</i>	2-63
2.11	Project authorisation and management Process	2-63
2.11.1	<i>Introduction</i>	2-63
2.11.2	<i>Objective of the Process</i>	2-63
2.11.3	<i>Summary of the Approval Process</i>	2-64
2.11.4	<i>Spend-Level Authorisation Hierarchy</i>	2-64
2.11.5	<i>Project Initiation and Management Process</i>	2-64
2.12	Service and Support Function Quality System	2-67

2.12.1	<i>The Evaluation Process</i>	2-67
2.12.2	<i>Terms of Reference</i>	2-67
2.12.3	<i>Self-Evaluation Process</i>	2-68
2.12.4	<i>Peer Review Group</i>	2-69

Table of Figures

Figure 2-1: Process for Updating Policy and Procedure	2-7
Figure 2-2: Organisation Structure	2-10
Figure 2-3: Academic Governance Structure.....	2-27

Table of Tables

Table 1: Summary of Outputs of the QAES system.....	2-59
---	------

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Quality Assurance Handbook outlines the governance structures that enable National College of Ireland (NCI) to facilitate quality assurance and enhancement of its programmes and services. It outlines how the Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (QAES) is updated, and the roles that both corporate and academic governance structures and key office holders play in supporting the QAES. It also describes the specific role of the Quality Assurance and Statistical Services (QASS) Office and the mechanisms that it uses to promote and support a culture of quality assurance and enhancement. The supporting policies on policy formation, project management, and the framework for the evaluation of College support and service functions is also described.

2.2 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

From an external point of view, the College is subject to a number of external measures to ensure compliance with quality assurance standards. These include programme validation and revalidation panels, programme review panels and institutional review panels. Such mechanisms for external review are instigated by relevant outside bodies such as QQI, the Higher Education Authority (HEA), and professional bodies that accredit and recognise NCI programmes such as the CIPD, Psychological Society of Ireland, the Teaching Council, Chartered Accountants Ireland, ACCA, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants.

2.3 PROCESS FOR UPDATING QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM IN NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND

NCI's QAES can only be effective if it is aligned to the current needs of learners and industry. It is therefore of the utmost importance that this system is continuously reviewed and updated. The policies supporting the system are reviewed arising from the outputs of the academic governance structures.

The following structures are in place to allow feedback to occur within the system, thus allowing for the implementation of the necessary changes to occur. There are other instruments such as feedback surveys and focus groups, identified throughout the handbook.

1. Executive Team
2. Executive Group
3. Academic Operations Committee (AOC)
4. Academic Council and its Sub-Committees:
 - Academic Standards & Policy Committee (ASPC)
 - Research Committee and its sub-committees
 - Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee (LTAC)
 - Programme Committee
 - Class Representative Liaison

Meetings of Academic Council and its sub-committees will normally take place on a Wednesday afternoon to facilitate maximum participation of all members of the Committees. It is the responsibility of the Chair of these committees to ensure that

minutes are recorded and action items are followed up on. It is the responsibility of the Secretary of each of the Committees to present minutes of meetings in a timely manner, normally within 5 working days of the meeting and that actions impacting or requiring change to the QAES are brought to the attention of the DQASS.

All committee structures listed above are required to present an annual report to Academic Council each year. Recommendations for change to the existing QAES presented at any stage throughout an academic year will be reviewed by the Academic Standards & Policy Committee (ASPC). This process is recorded by the DQASS and presented to the Committee for review. Prior to presentation to the ASPC, the DQASS will, where appropriate, research and/or consult with appropriate stakeholders regarding the impact of the change.

The ASPC will present a report detailing the recommended changes that need to be made to the QAES. When/if these changes are approved by Academic Council, the QAES will be revised to reflect the approved changes. On completion of this task, the ASPC will report back to Academic Council.

The QAES is an institutional-wide system, therefore, any issue that arises concerning quality around college processes can and must be communicated to the QASS Office without delay. The DQASS will then present such concerns, initiatives and queries at the next sitting of the Academic Operations Committee (AOC) or ASPC, whichever is scheduled to meet next. Should the issue warrant it, a special meeting of either committee may be called. The College will also incorporate all methods of feedback used within college structures and external to college structures. External structures include programme submission panels, programme review panels and institutional review panels.

Ensuring the quality of the College's academic programmes involves the active participation of the Academic Council, Schools, College committees, staff, faculty, learners and external stakeholders. The roles of key participants in this process are outlined below.

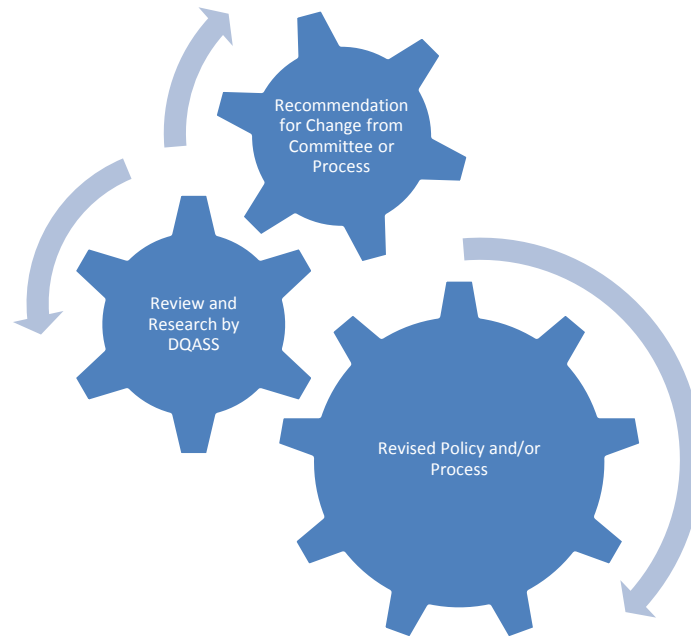


Figure 2-1: Process for Updating Policy and Procedure

2.4 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

2.4.1 Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body constitutes the Board of Directors of the National College of Ireland Ltd and, as such, its members have all of the responsibilities of Directors under the Companies Acts and at common law. The Governing Body is responsible for the strategic development of the College and overseeing the mission of the College, monitoring the **delivery of the Learners Charter and delivery of the College's strategies in the areas of Learning and Teaching programmes, Learning and Teaching Research and Learning and Teaching enterprise.** The collective responsibility and authority of the Governing Body should be safeguarded.

The Governing Body oversees the management of and controls the affairs of the College and all property of the College, and performs the functions conferred on the College by its Memorandum and Articles, and shall have all such powers as are necessary or expedient for the purpose of those functions.

The Governing Body shall meet at least 4 times per year, retain full and effective control over the College and monitor the executive management and performance. The Governing Body should have a formal schedule of matters specifically reserved to it for decision to ensure that the direction and control of the College is firmly under its authority. This schedule should include at least the following:

1. Approval of annual budgets and corporate plans;
2. Approval of strategic plans;
3. Approval of annual reports and accounts;

4. Board Appointments and Removals;
5. Approval of terms of reference and appointments to Governing Body Committees;
6. Approval of Bank facilities, Mandates and Guarantees;
7. Appointment of the President of the College;
8. Receipt and approval of quarterly President's Reports to the Governing Body;
9. Approval of terms of major contracts;
10. Significant acquisitions, disposals and retirement of assets of the college;
11. Major investments and capital projects, delegated authority levels;
12. Treasury policy and risk management policies;
13. Review of the system of internal controls.

All members of the Governing Body should have access to advice and services of the Company Secretary who is responsible to the Governing Body for ensuring that procedures are followed and that applicable rules and regulations are complied with. The removal of the Company Secretary should be a matter for the Governing Body as a whole.

The Governing Body should, in a Governing Body resolution, establish the formal procedures whereby members, in the furtherance of their duties, may take independent professional advice, if necessary, at the reasonable, expense of the College. Such procedures should also be set out in the code of conduct for members of the Governing Body. **Any business or other interests, which could affect a member's independence,** should be dealt with as outlined in the section on Disclosure of Interests.

It is the Governing Body's duty to ensure that a balanced and understandable assessment of the College's position is made in presenting its Annual Report and Accounts to the Companies Office. The members of the Governing Body should state in the annual report that they are responsible for preparing the accounts. There should also be a statement by the external auditors about their reporting responsibilities.

The Governing Body has responsibility to establish procedures for maintaining an appropriate relationship with external auditors. The members of the Governing Body should review and adopt an annual report from the Finance, Audit and Organisation sub-committee on the effectiveness of the Colleges internal controls, including financial, operational and compliance controls and risk management.

The Governing Body is responsible for compliance with all statutory obligations applicable to the College. Where individual Governing Body members become aware of non-compliance with any such obligation, they should immediately bring this to the attention of the Chairman of the Governing Body with a view to having the matter rectified. If the matter can be rectified by the Chairman the matter can be closed; if the matter cannot be rectified, the Chairman should advise the Governing Body accordingly.

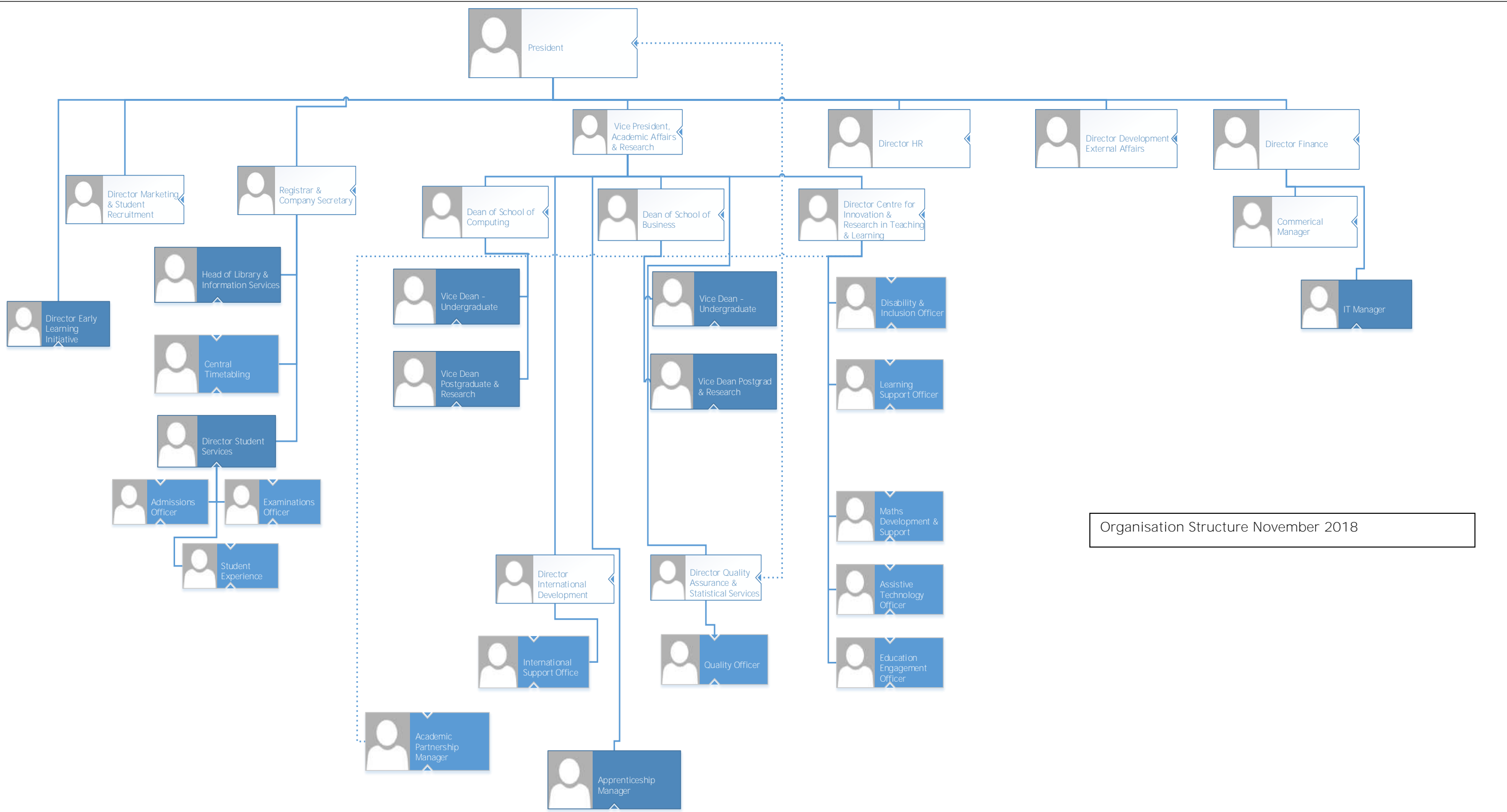
The Governing Body should be supplied, in a timely fashion, with information which is of a suitable quality to enable its members to satisfactorily discharge their duties.

2.4.2 Appointment of Members of the Governing Body

The Governing Body is appointed in accordance with the Articles and Memorandum of Association of the National College of Ireland Ltd and consists of a total of 16 members

constituted as following:

- 1) Two Members nominated by each of the following:
 - a) IBEC
 - b) ICTU
 - c) The Jesuit Order
- 2) An Independent Chairman
- 3) Two Staff Representatives from NCI
- 4) One Representative **from NCI's Students' Union**
- 5) Up to five Independent Governors approved by the Board on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee
- 6) The President of NCI (ex officio)



Organisation Structure November 2018

Figure 2-2: Organisation Structure

2.4.3 The Role of the Members of the Governing Body

As the Governing Body of the College is, from a legal perspective, the Board of Directors of the College, the obligations of a member of the Governing Body are the equivalent to the obligations of a Director of a company. The fundamental principle in relation to the obligation of a Director is that it is owed to the company and not to any member or nominating body who may have appointed them to the Board. In other words, each Director must ensure that, at all times, the best interests of the company, and not any other interest, are at the forefront of their considerations when making decisions relating to the company or otherwise acting as a Director.

Subject to the above legal position, the primary role and responsibility of members of the Governing Body is to oversee and to participate in decision making in the best interest of the College and in keeping with its mission and values. The following responsibilities and expectations relate to this role.

- All members of the Governing Body must place the highest priority on promoting and preserving the unique ethos and mission of the College and its commitment to community-based learning, and should act as an advocate for the College at all times to the best of their ability.
- Members of the Governing Body must be committed to having NCI compete vigorously and energetically but also ethically and honestly with other educational institutions, commercial organisations and other providers of educational services and research.
- Ensure that NCI is committed to conducting all procurement, including consultancy, in accordance with best practice guidelines.
- Members of the Governing Body must ensure that they are fully compliant with all returns required as Directors of National College of Ireland Ltd, including Ethics in Public Office legislation, and the Company Secretary shall assist each Director in fulfilling all such compliance requirements.
- Members of the Governing Body will avoid giving or receiving corporate gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might affect the ability of the donor or recipient to make independent judgment on business issues.
- Members of the Governing Body are required to avoid the use of NCI resources or time for personal gain or the benefit of persons/organisations unconnected with the College or the benefit of its competitors.
- Members of the Governing Body must comply with NCI's commitment to providing access to general information relating to its activities in a way that is open and in compliance with the terms of the Freedom of Information Acts and General Data Protection Rules (GDPR).
- Members of the Governing Body are required to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by the College, including but not limited to:
 - Personal information
 - Information received in confidence by NCI
 - Any commercially sensitive information or other information relating to or affecting the reputation of the College
- Members of the Governing Body will observe the strictest confidentiality in relation to all discussions and decisions taken at meetings of the Body.
- Members are required to attend all meetings of the Governing Body save for unavoidable occasions. Any member missing from two consecutive meetings

shall be approached by the Chairman or Senior Independent Governor as appropriate, and the matter will be discussed with the member concerned.

- All members of the Governing Body must acknowledge and abide by the requirement to be loyal to the College and to at all times conform to the highest standards of business ethics.
- All members of the Governing Body are committed to promoting the health and safety of all the Colleges learners and staff.
- Members of the Governing Body should ensure they are properly briefed prior to attendance at meetings.

These responsibilities and expectations form a code of conduct (see Section 2.4.5), which is adopted by the Governing Body and reviewed annually by the Senior Independent Governor as part of an overall Corporate Governance review. Proposals for any necessary changes shall be made to the Governing Body.

On appointment of new members to the Governing Body, the Chairman will lead a full induction programme, in the course of which the Company Secretary shall provide each new member with the following:

- A copy of the Mission Statement of the College, together with existing strategy and policy documents;
- A formal schedule of matters referred to or reserved for the Governing Body for decision;
- Procedures for obtaining information on relevant new laws and regulations;
- Procedures to be followed when, exceptionally, decisions are required between Governing Body meetings;
- A schedule detailing the composition of all committees and their terms of reference;
- A statement explaining their responsibilities in relation to the preparation of the accounts, the College's system on internal control and audit with supporting assumptions or qualifications as necessary;
- A statement informing them that they have access to the advice and services of the Company Secretary, who is responsible to the Governing Body for ensuring its procedures are followed and that the applicable rules and regulations are complied with;
- A code of ethics/conduct, including a disclosure form for their personal and professional interests;
- A fully updated list of all compliance regulations relating to the College's activities; and
- **A copy of the most up to date version of the "Code of Practice for the Governance of Third Level Institutions"** together with any relevant best practice governance guidance notes.

2.4.4 Term of Office and Retirement

One third of the members of the Governing Body retire each year based on who has been longest in office. A retiring member is eligible for re-appointment subject to them not exceeding two full terms in office with the exception of the President of the College who holds their position *ex officio*. Section 38 of the Articles and Memorandum of Association of the Company provide for disqualification of Governors on specified grounds.

2.4.5 Code of Conduct for Member of the Governing Body

NCI has developed this Code of Conduct for members of the Governing Body. This Code of Conduct takes account of the implications of the Ethics of Public Office Acts, 1995 and 2001 together with compliance requirements as set out in Appendix 1 of the Directors Guide.

2.4.5.1 Intent and Scope

The purpose of the Code is to provide guidance to the Chairman and members of the Governing Body of NCI in performing their duties as members of the Body, as set down in the relevant legislation.

2.4.5.2 Objectives

The objectives of the Code are:

- To set out an agreed set of ethical principles;
- To promote and maintain confidence and trust in the Governing Body and Staff of NCI;
- To prevent the development or acceptance of unethical practices;
- To promote the highest legal, management and ethical standards in the entire activities of NCI; and
- To promote compliance with current best governance and management practice in all the activities of NCI.

2.4.5.3 General Principles

All members of the Governing Body are required to observe the following fundamental principles as set out in the framework for the Code of Conduct.

1. Integrity

Members of the Governing Body are required to disclose outside employment/business interests which they consider may be in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of NCI.

- The Governing Body will not allow management or employees to be involved in outside employment/business interests in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of NCI;
- Members of the Governing Body will avoid giving or receiving gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the recipient to make independent judgment on business transactions;
- Members of the Governing Body must be committed to having NCI compete vigorously and energetically but also ethically and honestly with other educational institutions, commercial and other providers of research and advisory services;
- NCI is committed to conducting its purchasing activities of goods/services in accordance with public policy and the best business practice and its purchasing regulations reflect this;
- NCI is committed to ensuring that the accounts/reports accurately reflect their operating performance and are not misleading or designed to be misleading;
- Members of the Governing Body are required to avoid the use of the NCI resources or time for personal gain, for the benefit of persons/organizations unconnected with the College or its activities or for benefit of competitors; and
- NCI is committed not to acquire information or business secrets by improper

means.

2. Information

NCI is committed to providing access to general information relating to its activities in a way that is open and enhances its accountability to the general public. Members of the Governing Body are required to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by NCI. This would constitute material such as:

- personal information;
- information received in confidence by NCI;
- any commercially sensitive information or other information sensitive to the reputation or effective performance of the management of the College.

Members of the Governing Body will:

- observe appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where, exceptionally, it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest;
- comply with all relevant statutory provisions (e.g. Data Protection legislation, the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, etc);
- observe the strictest confidentiality in relation to all discussions and decisions taken at meetings of the Board;
- fulfil all regulatory and statutory obligations imposed on the Company; and
- comply with detailed tendering and purchasing procedures, as well as complying with prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure.

NCI has introduced measures to prevent fraud and to ensure compliance with the prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure. As such, members of the Board are required to use their reasonable endeavours to attend all Governing Body meetings.

It is acknowledged that the acceptance of positions following employment and/or engagement by a third level institution can give rise to the potential for conflicts of interest and to confidentiality concerns. The Governing Body of NCI will consider any cases in which such conflicts of interest or confidentiality concerns may arise and will take appropriate steps to deal with such matters in an effective manner. The Governing Body will also ensure that any procedures that it may put in place in this regard are monitored and enforced.

3. Loyalty

The Governing Body acknowledge the responsibility to be loyal to NCI and to be fully committed to all its activities while mindful that NCI itself must at all times take into account interests of its learners, funders and other stakeholders, including taxpayers. It also acknowledges the duty of all its members to conform to the highest standards of business ethics.

4. Fairness

NCI is committed to complying with employment equality and equal status legislation, and to instilling fairness in all its business activities and dealings. The College values

its learners, faculty and staff, suppliers, and customers and treats all its learners, faculty and staff, suppliers and customers equally.

5. Work/External Environment

The Governing Body and staff of the NCI place the highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of its employees and learners. Accordingly, NCI will ensure that community needs and concerns are fully reflected and considered in its activities and operations, and will minimise any detrimental impact of its operations on the environment.

6. Responsibility

NCI will circulate this Code of Conduct, alongside a policy document on disclosure of interests to all members of the Governing Body. The College will also ensure that all members of the Governing Body understand its contents, and will provide practical guidance and direction as required on such areas as gifts and entertainment and other ethical considerations which arise routinely.

7. Review

NCI will review this Code of Conduct as appropriate, making any recommendations for revision to the Governing Body for consideration and approval.

2.4.6 Disclosure of Interests by Members of the Governing Body

In addition to the legal requirement under the Companies Acts and the requirements of the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995, the following procedures should be observed:

- i) On appointment to the Governing Body of the College, each member should furnish to the Secretary of the Institute details relating to his/her employment and all other business interests including shareholdings, professional relationships etc., which could involve a conflict of interest or could materially influence the member in relation to the performance of his/her functions as **a member of the Governing Body. Any interests of a member's family of which he/she could be expected to be reasonably aware or a person or connected with the member which could involve a conflict of interest or could materially influence the member in the performance of his/her functions should also be disclosed.** For this purpose, persons and bodies connected with a member should include:
 - a) a spouse, parent, brother, sister, child or step-child;
 - b) a body corporate with which the member is associated;
 - c) a person acting as the trustee of any trust, the beneficiaries of which include the member or persons in (a) above or a body corporate as in (b); and
 - d) a person acting as a partner of the member or of any person or body who, by virtue of (a) – (c) is connected with the member.

Each member should furnish to the Secretary details of business interests on the lines above of which he/she becomes aware during the course of his/her membership of the Governing Body.

- ii) Where it is relevant in any matter which arises, the member should require to indicate to the Secretary the employment and any other business interests of

all persons connected with him/her, as defined at (i).

- iii) Where a member Governing Body has a minor shareholding valued at less than **€15,000 or of not more than 5% of the issued share capital of a** business with which the College has a business relationship, the Governing Body may exercise discretion regarding the disclosure as required above.
- iv) If a member has a doubt as to whether this Code requires the disclosure of an interest of his/her own or of a connected person, that member should consult the Chairman and senior independent Governor.
- v) Details of the above interests should be kept by the Company Secretary, in a special confidential register and should be updated on an annual basis (completed details to be forwarded by members to the Secretary of the College within 10 days of receipt of request). Changes in the interim should be notified to the Secretary as soon as possible. Only the Chairman, Secretary, Senior Independent Director, and President should have access to the register.
- vi) Should a matter relating to the interests of the Chairman arise, he/she should depute the Senior Independent Director to chair the Governing Body meeting and should absent himself/herself when the Governing Body is deliberating or deciding on a matter in which the Chairman or a person or body connected with the Chairman has an interest.
- vii) Governing Body documents on any case which relate to any dealings with the above interests should be made available to the member concerned prior to a decision being taken. Such documents should be taken to include those relating to cases involving competitors to the above interests. Decisions once taken should be notified to the member.
- viii) As it is recognised that the interests of a Governing Body Member and persons connected with them can change at short notice, a member should, in cases where they receive documents relating to their interests or those connected with them, return the documents to the Company Secretary at the earliest opportunity.
- ix) A member should absent themselves when the Governing Body is deliberation or deciding on matters in which that member (other than in their capacity as a member of the Governing Body) or a person or body connected with the member has an interest. In such cases a separate record (to which the member would have access) should be maintained.
- x) Where a question arises as to whether or not a case relates to the interests of member or a person or body connected with that member, the Chairman of the Governing Body should determine the question. Where such matter relates to the interests of the Chairman the Senior Independent Director should determine the question.
- xi) Former Governing Body members should treat commercial information received while acting in that capacity as confidential.

2.4.7 Chairman of the Governing Body

The Chairman is responsible for creating the conditions that ensure the effectiveness of the Governing Body.

2.4.7.1 Duties / Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the Chairman is the efficient and effective working of the Board of Governors. This includes the following duties:

- Run the business of the Governing Body and set its Agenda. The Agenda should take full account of the issues and concerns of all Board Members. Members may be asked to provide significant Agenda items prior to meetings. Agendas should be forward looking and concentrate on strategic matters.
- Ensure that the Members of the Governing Body receive accurate, timely and clear information, in particular about College performance, to enable the Governing Body to make sound decisions, monitor effectively, and provide advice to promote the success of the College.
- Direct discussions towards the emergence of a consensus view, giving clear direction from the Board of Management.
- Ensure effective communication with stakeholders and ensure that members of the Governing Body develop an understanding of the views of the major stakeholders.
- Manage the meetings of the Governing Body to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for discussion of complex and contentious issues, arranging for informal meetings beforehand, where appropriate, to enable thorough preparation for the Board discussion. It is particularly important that members have sufficient time to consider critical issues and are not faced with unrealistic deadlines for decision making.
- Ensure that the collective responsibility and authority of the Governing Body is safeguarded. Excessive influence on Governing Body decision-making by individual members should be avoided while allowing Governing Body members the opportunity to fully contribute to deliberations.
- Take the lead in providing a properly constructed induction programme for new Board members, with the Company Secretary facilitating provision. It is the responsibility of the Chairman to address the development needs of the Governing Body as a whole, with a view to enhancing its effectiveness as a team.
- Encourage active participation by all members of the Board.
- Provide advice and support to the President and Senior Executive Team of the College, while respecting executive responsibility.
- Ensure a clear structure for the effective running of Governing Body Committees.
- Promote effective relationships and open communication both inside and outside the Boardroom between members and the senior executive team.

2.4.8 Role of the Senior Independent Governor

The Board shall appoint one of the members to be the Senior Independent Governor for a term of two years as provided for in the Articles of Association.

2.4.8.1 Duties and Responsibilities

The Senior Independent Governor shall:

- Be responsible for completion of annual performance review of the Chairman, and shall also lead an annual corporate Governance review of the College as well as fulfil such duties as may be assigned to him/her from time to time by the Governing Body.
- In the absence of the Chairman, the Senior Independent Governor will chair all meetings of the Governing Body.

2.4.9 Committees of the Governing Body

The Governing Body may establish such committees as it deems appropriate for the effective performance of its duties but will establish and maintain the following committees as a minimum:

- The Finance, Audit and Organisation Committee
- The Remuneration Committee
- The Nominations Committee
- The Risk Committee

2.4.9.1 The Finance, Audit and Organisation Committee

The Governing Body will maintain a Finance, Audit and Organisation Committee (FAOC) of a least three members with written terms of reference which deal clearly with its authority and duties.

The duties of the FAOC consist of:

- Meeting with external auditors at least once a year.
- Regularly meeting with the President, Director of Finance, the Secretary and the Financial Controller for the purpose of discussing the internal control systems and other significant issues.
- Monitoring the integrity of the financial statements of the College, including the annual returns and interim reports and other formal statements relating to financial performance
- Reviewing significant financial reporting issues and judgments which they contain.

The FAOC will review summary financial statements, significant financial statements, significant financial returns to regulators and stakeholders and any financial information or documents requested by the Board. In particular, it will review and challenge the following where necessary:

- The consistency of any changes to accounting policies on an annual basis.
- The methods used to account for the unusual or significant transactions where different approaches are possible.
- Whether the Company has followed appropriate accounting standards and made appropriate estimates and judgments, taking account of the views of the Auditor.
- All material information presented with the financial statements.

The FAOC will also monitor the effectiveness of the **College's** internal audit function

and ensure it has sufficient resources and access to information to enable it to perform its functions effectively. This involves reviewing and assessing the annual internal audit plan, and reviewing and monitoring Management's response(s) to the recommendations arising from internal audits. The FAOC oversees the **College's** relationship with the external auditor(s). This involves reviewing the annual audit plan, any representation letters and **Management's** responses to the external audit. Finally, it must also review its own performance constitution and terms of reference to ensure its ongoing effectiveness and to recommend any necessary changes to the Board for approval in a timely, actionable manner.

2.4.9.2 The Remuneration Committee

The Governing Body should establish a Remuneration Committee of at least three members with written terms of reference which deal clearly with its authority and duties and which reviews the remuneration of the President, Vice President and Director of Finance on an annual basis, making necessary recommendations thereon to the Board.

The duties of the Remuneration Committee consist of reviewing all relevant comparative information and to make recommendations to the Board in respect of the Remuneration of the President, Vice Presidents and the Director of Finance, including performance related remuneration and pension.

2.4.9.3 The Nomination Committee

The Governing Body shall maintain a Nominations Committee.

The duties of the Nomination Committee consist of the following:

- Reviewing and reporting to the Governing Body on the skills, knowledge and composition of the Board, making recommendations for necessary changes.
- Succession planning at Chairman, Governor, and President Level within the Company and what skills and expertise are needed for the future.
- Being responsible to the Governing Body for identification and recommendation of three independent Directors, as provided for in the Articles and Memorandum of Association.
- Recommending a suitable candidate for appointment as Senior Independent Governor.
- Recommending appointments to the Finance, Audit and Organisation Committee, and the Remuneration Committee in conjunction with the Chairman.
- Keeping the leadership needs of the Company under review at Governing Body and Executive Board level.

2.4.9.4 The Risk Committee

The Governing Body will maintain a Risk Committee of at least four Members with written terms of reference which deal clearly with its authority and duties.

The duties of the Risk Committee consist of:

- Advising and assisting the Governing Body in discharging its oversight responsibilities in the area of risk management (excluding internal financial control where oversight is provided by the Finance Audit and Organisation Committee)
- Reviewing and monitoring the establishment of a risk register to identify, assess and manage risk and compliance with statutory obligations.
- Monitoring **the effectiveness of the Company's approach to risk management** and ensure it has sufficient resources and access to information to enable it perform its functions effectively.
- Arranging regular discussions with the President, the Director of Finance and the Company Secretary on the general levels of risk maturity within National College of Ireland.
- Reviewing its own performance constitution, and terms of reference to ensure its ongoing effectiveness and recommended any necessary changes to the Board for approval.

2.4.9.4.1 Risk Register

The Risk Register is maintained by the Director of Finance on behalf of the Executive Team. The main Risk Register contains all current identified risks, with a sufficiently detailed description to allow an understanding of the risk. It also details the controls and actions in place to mitigate the risk. Each risk is allocated to one of the following broad Risk Areas:

01. Viability of NCI
02. Structural Changes in the Sector
03. Fundraising
04. Student Numbers / Recruitment
05. Programmes
06. International
07. Quality
08. Teaching and Learning
09. Governance
10. External Relations
11. Financial Control
12. Contingency Planning
13. Colleagues
14. Child Protection / Safeguarding
15. Research & Intellectual Property
16. Facilities

The Risk Committee is also provided with the following additional reports ahead of each meeting:

1. Event Report which is a summary regarding any risk-events that have occurred since last meeting, and update regarding the 5 highest scoring risks on the Register.
2. Changes Report which details of any changes that have been made to the Register since the preceding published version.

2.4.9.4.2 Risk Scoring

Each risk is scored on two axes - 'Impact' and 'Likelihood'. Risks are then graded on a scale from 'Low' to 'Critical'. The use of a 'Heat Map' helps in comparing the relative seriousness of risks.

Impact: Management's assessment of the likely impact on NCI from 1 (minor) to 6 (major), if the risk occurred.

Likely: Management's current assessment of the possibility of the risk actually occurring from 1 (low) to 6 (high).

Total: Total risk score is calculated by multiplying the assessed values for "Impact" by "Likelihood"

Risk Scoring Guide								
Impact	Catastrophic	6	6	12	18	24	30	36
	Critical	5	5	10	15	20	25	30
	Significant Important	4	4	8	12	16	20	24
		3	3	6	9	12	15	18
	Minor	2	2	4	6	8	10	12
		1	1	2	3	4	5	6
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
		Extremely remote		Remote		Probable		Likely
		Very Likely						
		Likelihood						

Total Risk Score = Impact (1-6) x Likelihood (1-6)

Overall Risk Levels		
Risk Level	Total Risk Score =	Risk Level Description
Critical	30 - 36	Can be accepted by senior management with adequate justification and where possible mitigating treatment plans are implemented immediately.
High	20 - 29	Can be accepted by senior management provided that continual management and monitoring is in place. Additionally, potential treatment plans are to be investigated and implemented where required.
Medium	10 - 19	Can be accepted by senior management, with some documentation or justification

Low	< 10	Can be accepted by senior management, without documentation or justification
-----	------	--

2.4.10 Charter of Ethics in Procurement

While it is recognised that good working relationships between buyers and suppliers are essential to the delivery of a quality service, it is acknowledged that ethical standards must be maintained at all times by all parties. The purpose of this Charter is to set appropriate boundaries for ethical behaviour to be adhered to by all those involved in the procurement process. In particular, personnel directly engaged in procurement, or in a position to influence decisions on contract awards to any extent, are required to commit themselves to adhere to this Charter. This Charter of Ethics in Procurement has been formally approved by the Governing Body.

Charter on Ethics in Procurement Gifts:

- Gifts or financial rewards of any significance may under no circumstances be offered, accepted or solicited.
- Without prejudice to the above, however, unsolicited gifts of low or nominal intrinsic value may be offered and accepted.

Hospitality

- Hospitality must never be solicited.
- Meals: normal business practice may occasionally justify dining with a supplier, but only subject to internal guidelines.
- Golf Outings and other Entertainment: these may be accepted as hospitality only on a limited basis and again subject to internal guidelines.
- Travel and/or Accommodation Expenses: may never be accepted or paid for by suppliers.

Sponsorship

- Sponsorship must never be solicited from suppliers and where offered may only be accepted when expressly approved in writing by management.

Conflict of Interest

- Persons operating within the purchasing/supply chain must refrain from using **either their personal position or the organization's resources for gain.**
- All forms of personal interest in supplier and purchasing organizations other than in publicly quoted companies, including any shareholding and/or personal relationships which could give rise to conflict of interest, must be disclosed to management in writing.

Confidentially

- All supplier and tender information relating to the tender process must be treated in the strictest confidence, at least up to the time of contract award. Disclosure of such information, and in particular to another interested party, is strictly prohibited. Adherence to this principle is fundamental to the participation of all parties to the procurement process.
- After the award of contract information may be provided in accordance with

FOI legislation, where invoked or with the provisions of EU procurement directives.

2.5 STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND

The Management of the NCI is coordinated and facilitated by three Standing committees. These are:

- The Executive Team
- The Executive Group
- The Academic Operations Committee (AOC)

It should be emphasised that these committees exist for the purpose of assisting the President in discharging responsibilities as Chief Executive Officer of NCI. Policies emanating from the deliberations of these committees may require approval of Academic Council and/or the Governing Body.

2.5.1 Executive Team

2.5.1.1 Terms of Reference

The Executive Team, which is accountable to the President, is the senior management committee with responsibility for:

- Development and implementation of strategy
- Approval of appropriate policies and procedures,
- Agreement of budgets, pay policy and capital expenditure plans,
- Monitoring risk and corporate performance and ensuring that all aspects of the corporate function operate with optimal efficiency and effectiveness.
- Approval of additions to headcount
- Approval of any out of budget expenditure
- Monitoring of external regulatory, statutory and governmental relationships
- Oversight of the Commercial, Early Learning Initiative (ELI) and Development functions
- Reporting issues to Governing Body

Although each member of the Executive Team has an overall defined area of responsibility in this context, the Team assumes a shared responsibility for every **aspect of the College's operations. The Executive Team will help also to determine the corporate response to specific initiatives or situations.**

It is recognised that the Executive Team cannot discharge this broad mandate without widespread consultation; therefore, an important responsibility for the Team is establishment of appropriate channels of communications with the Executive Group and the wider College community.

2.5.1.2 Members

The Executive Team consists of the following members:

- President (Chair)

- Vice President Academic Affairs & Research
- Director of Finance
- Registrar & Company Secretary
- Director of HR
- Director of Marketing & Student Recruitment

2.5.1.3 Frequency of Meetings

The Executive Team meets every 2 weeks with alternative fortnights as part the Executive Group.

2.5.2 The Executive Group

2.5.2.1 Terms of Reference

The Executive Group is the primary forum for the functional management of the College. It is also the body at which management information is shared and to which members are encouraged to raise issues for general consideration and to bring forward topics for discussion. The Executive Group monitors departmental performance in achieving overall operational targets as defined by the Executive Team. The Group will work to ensure interdepartmental effectiveness in managing performance.

The Executive Group has responsibility for:

- the management of academic and administrative matters for the effective operation of the College;
- development and implementation of academic and administrative policies and procedures;
- approving new programmes in conjunction with Academic Council;
- monitoring academic performance, benchmarking and financial performance;
- contributing to executive decisions , including allocation of resources; and communicating those decisions to teams
- generally, ensuring that the activities of the College function optimally

The Executive Group will help also ensure that the College responds appropriately to specific initiatives and opportunities proposed by external agencies and are proactive in anticipating new opportunities. The Executive Board will ensure that effective channels of communication are established with the wider College community.

2.5.2.2 Membership

The Executive Group consists of the following members:

- President (Chair)
- Vice President Academic Affairs & Research
- Registrar
- Deans of School

- Director of Marketing
- Director HR
- Commercial Manager
- Director of Finance
- Director of Quality Assurance & Statistical Services
- Director of International Development
- Director of Development & External Affairs

2.5.2.3 Frequency of Meetings

The Executive Group will meet monthly.

2.5.3 Academic Operations Committee

2.5.3.1 Terms of Reference

Chaired by the VP Academic Affairs & Research, the Academic Operations Committee (AOC) will report to and advise Executive Group on issues relating to operational academic matters that arise from the deliberations of Academic Council and its subcommittees. It will be a forum for the sharing of best practice between Schools. It will also report back to Academic Council.

The AOC will specifically manage:

- Programme development and review
- Issues arising from the assessment process
- Issues arising that affect teaching & learning
- Issues arising from the implementation of policy

2.5.3.2 Membership

The AOC consists of the following members:

- Vice President Academic Affairs & Research (Chair)
- Deans of School,
- Vice Deans
- Head of Cloud Competency Centre
- Registrar
- Director Centre for Research & Innovation in Learning & Teaching.
- Member of Faculty from each School
- IT manager

2.5.3.3 Frequency of Meetings

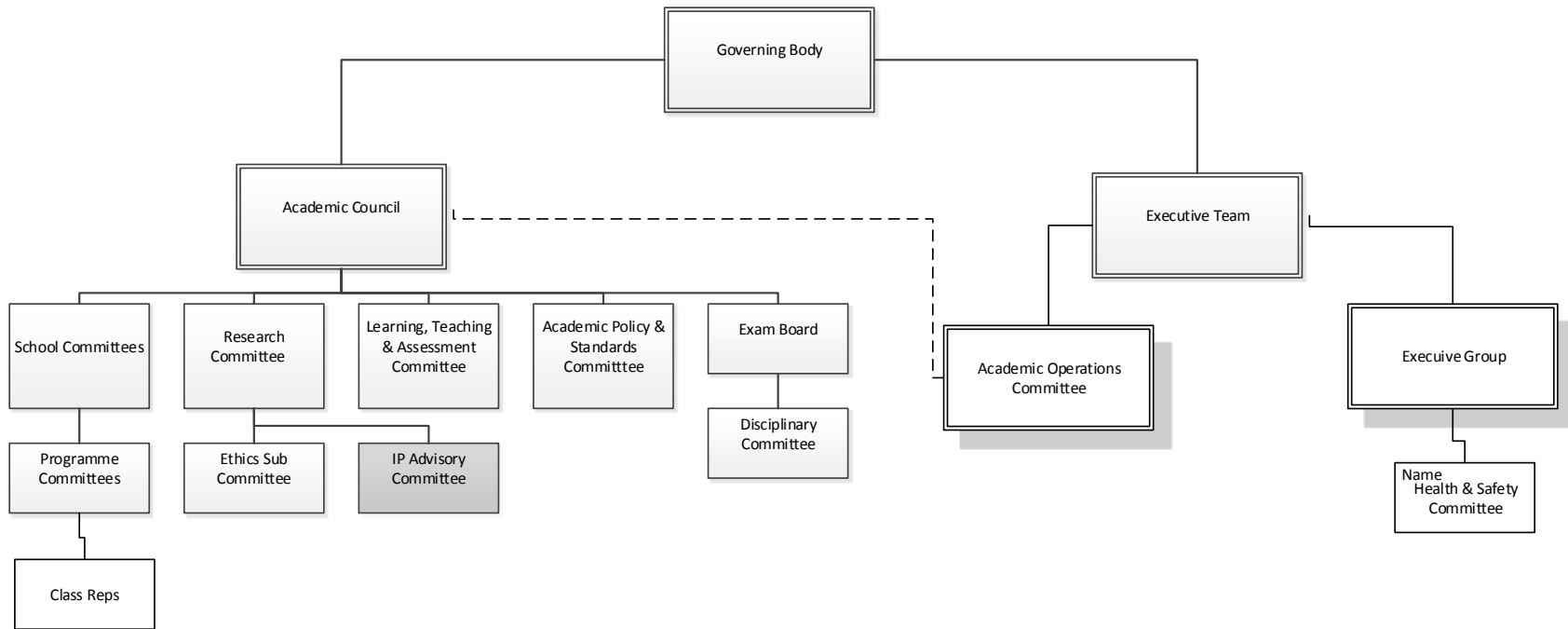
The AOC will meet at monthly intervals at least and as required. The Head of Library & Information Services and the Director of Student Services will be invited to attend as the agenda dictates.

2.6 ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE

The College's QAES is implemented via the academic governance structure outlined in Figure 2.3. To ensure that the highest possible standards are being maintained, there are separate roles for each of the following groups within the QAES:

- Academic Council
 1. Academic Standards & Policy Committee
 2. Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee
 3. Research Committee
 - Ethics Committee
 - Intellectual Property Advisory Committee
 4. School Committee
 - Programme Committee
 - Class Representative Liaison

Figure 2-3: Academic Governance Structure



National College of Ireland
Academic Governance

2.6.1 Academic Council

The Academic Council is the ultimate authority for academic quality assurance within the college. A number of sub-committees derived from Academic Council ensure that the quality standards espoused in this manual are maintained. The Registrar has responsibility for ensuring the effective functioning of these committees and that college managers are compliant with decision, actions and initiatives that derive from such structures.

2.6.1.1 Terms of Reference

The role of Academic Council is written into the Memorandum of Articles for the company and is described as follows. The College shall appoint a body of persons to the Academic Council to assist the Governing Body of the College in the planning, co-ordination, development and overseeing of the educational work of the College.

The principle functions of the Academic Council shall be to:

- a) design, develop and implement appropriate programmes of study;
- b) make representations to the Governors for the establishment of appropriate structures to implement the programmes of study referred to above (a);
- c) make recommendations to the Governors on programmes for the development of research;
- d) make recommendations to the Governors for the selection, admission, retention and exclusion of learners generally;
- e) subject to the approval of the Governors, to make and to implement the academic regulations of the College;
- f) agree with the Governors the form of regulations to be made by the Academic Council for the conduct of examinations and for the evaluation of academic progress;
- g) make recommendations to the Governors for the award of fellowships, scholarships, bursaries, prizes or other awards;
- h) to make general arrangements for tutorial or other academic counselling; to exercise any other functions which may be delegated to it by the Governors;
- i) to implement any regulations which may be made by the Governors concerning any of the matters aforesaid;
- j) subject to the approval of the Governors, to establish such and so many committees, consisting either wholly or partly of persons who are not members of the College as it thinks proper to assist it in the performance of its functions; and
- k) subject to the approval of the Governors, to determine the functions of any committee established under paragraph (k) of this sub-section.

Under the direction of the Governing Body, the Academic Council may regulate its own procedures. The main duty of the Academic Council is to direct, regulate and promote the teaching and research of the college. It acts as the authoritative body for purely Academic matters such as the admissions of learners, the nature of programmes and the quality around requirements for award structures. The Academic Council has engaged in a process of developing appropriate procedures for academic quality assurance. The

underlying principal of these procedures is one of continuous review with the intention of improving existing practices in relation to the development and delivery of programmes and the encouragement of uniformity of good practice and high academic standards across NCI.

The general responsibilities of the Academic Council in this regard may be summarised as follows:

- establishing and maintaining procedures for the assessment and validation of programmes and awards;
- ensuring that programmes are designed and operated in accordance with the **college's approved regulations**;
- maintaining the standards and quality of all awards;
- maintaining the highest standards of delivery;
- establishing and maintaining procedures for the regular monitoring of programmes;
- ensuring that when a programme has been approved, any conditions of approval are implemented, and that any recommendations arising from the validation/review processes are fully considered and acted upon;
- ensuring that External Examiners' reports are received and formally considered and that appropriate action is taken in relation to comments and suggestions contained in such reports; and
- ensuring that the documentation for each programme is maintained as specified.

The Registrar has overall responsibility for co-ordinating these processes and reporting to the Academic Council.

2.6.1.2 Membership of the Academic Council

Persons who hold the following positions may be members of the Academic Council, regardless of the permanency of their position:

- a) The President
- b) The Vice President Academic Affairs & Research
- c) The Registrar
- d) The Deans of Schools
- e) Director Centre for Research and Innovation in Learning and Teaching
- f) The Head of Library and Information Services
- g) Three full-time members of the Academic Staff of the College as appointed by the President, of which one will be an associate faculty member
- h) Six full-time members of the Academic Staff of the College elected by the Members of the Academic Staff of the College
- i) Director Quality Assurance and Statistical Services
- j) Two learner representatives to be elected to the Academic Council of the College
- k) Such additional Members of Staff as the President may from time to time appoint as non-voting Members of the Academic Council.

The President of the College shall be the Chairperson of the Academic Council but may

delegate this role to the Vice President. Where the office of Registrar is vacant, the President shall nominate an alternate to carry out the Registrar functions as required by **College's Policies and Procedures**. Every reference to Registrar shall be deemed to include a reference to the nominee.

Appointed and elected members will serve a 3-year cycle and may be re-appointed or re-elected. A faculty member of Academic Council may normally serve on one committee of Academic Council. Normally, elected members that miss more than 2 meetings will be replaced by another representative.

2.6.1.3 Frequency of Meetings

Academic Council will meet at least 4 times per academic year. The Council will meet more often if required. Each meeting will have an agenda of items and will be minuted. The Registrar will be responsible for ensuring that agendas and minutes are in place for each meeting.

2.6.2 Academic Standards & Policy Committee

The Academic Standards & Policy Committee (ASPC) is a sub-committee of the Academic Council and shall have general responsibility to Academic Council for developing and monitoring policies relating to Quality Assurance, Programme Development, Admissions, Assessment, Student Support and the overall maintenance of academic standards.

2.6.2.1 Terms of Reference

The ASPC is a sub-committee of Academic Council and has the following responsibilities and shall have responsibility for advising the Academic Council on Quality Assurance matters. It will have particular responsibility for the following:

- advising the Academic Council on matters related to academic standards having regard to the requirements of QQI and other external validating bodies or organisations with which the college has validating agreements;
- being responsible to the Academic Council for monitoring all matters relating to the maintenance of standards of taught programmes, their quality and the academic environment in which they operate including admission, retention, progression, fair & consistent assessment and learner support policies;
- monitoring the Quality Assurance Handbook of the College and keeping under review all academic quality assurance procedures of the College, as will be described in the handbook;
- keeping under review procedures for ensuring the appropriateness of various forms of academic association with external organisations and the accreditation of courses offered by other organisations;
- considering feedback and its impact on policy and academic standards from external examiners, learners and other stakeholders;

- Liaising with other committees of the Academic Council programmes;
- Developing and maintaining **the College's procedures for Programme Development and Review**;
- Monitoring the implementation of recommendations of external agencies; and
- Advising the Academic Council on matters relating to the implementation of the Institutional Review.

The ASPC may establish sub-committees and working parties. In the case of sub-committees and working parties whose members may be from outside the committee or the College, Academic Council should be notified.

The Chairperson shall be responsible for reporting the decisions and views of the committee to the Academic Council, and for transmitting the relevant decisions and views of the Academic Council to the committee.

2.6.2.2 Membership

Persons who hold the following positions may be members of the ASPC, regardless of the permanency of their position:

- Vice President Academic Affairs & Research (Chair)
- Deans of School
- Registrar
- Director Student Services
- Director Quality Assurance & Statistical Services
- Director Centre for Research & Innovation in Learning & Teaching
- Head of Library & Information Services
- Manager IT
- Vice-Deans
- Head of Cloud Competency Centre
- 1 Academic member of Academic Council
- 1 Academic member of staff from each School (this can include associate faculty)
- Learner Representative

As required, specialist staff from admissions, disability support and other services will attend as the agenda dictates.

Elected/selected members will serve on a 3-year cycle and may be re-elected or re-appointed. Selected Faculty members of the Committee may normally serve only on one other committee of Academic Council. Normally, elected or selected members that miss more than 2 meetings will be replaced by another representative.

2.6.2.3 Frequency of Meetings

The ASPC shall meet at least once per academic year and as other times as required.

2.6.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee

The overall purpose of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee (LTAC) is to **formulate and oversee the implementation of the College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy** (see Chapter 5 (5.1)).

2.6.3.1 Terms of Reference

The responsibilities of the LTAC include but are not limited to:

- developing, monitoring and evaluating implementation of **the College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy** for the approval of Academic Council;
- consideration of feedback from learners arising from module evaluations and feedback from the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)
- formulating new policy and initiatives in relation to regional, national and international developments in learning, teaching and assessment for the approval of Academic Council;
- overseeing applications for external funding to support initiatives for the enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment;
- advising Academic Council on matters related to responses to consultative processes in respect to learning, teaching and assessment;
- identifying staff and educational development needs to enhance quality of learning, teaching and assessment; and
- making an annual report to the Academic Council in respect of the above.

2.6.3.2 Membership

Persons who hold the following positions may be members of the LTAC, regardless of the permanency of their position:

- Vice President Academic Affairs & Research
- Deans of School
- Vice Deans
- Head Cloud Competency Centre
- Director of Centre for Research & Innovation in Learning & Teaching
- Four members of full-time Academic Faculty - one of whom is a member of Academic Council and one from each School
- Two student representatives
- A representative from Quality Assurance & Statistical Services Office
- A Representative from Learner Support Services

2.6.4 Research Committee

The Research Committee is appointed by Academic Council and shall have responsibility

for the **development and monitoring of the College's policy, regulations and procedures** for Research and advising the Academic Council on matters related to Research.

2.6.4.1 Terms of Reference

The Research Committee is responsible for the following:

- **Developing and administering the College's regulations for postgraduate study** by research and the development of a research ethos within the College.
- Liaising with appropriate external institutions in matters relating to collaborative postgraduate research and development.
- Keeping under review, the procedures for monitoring the standard of postgraduate awards.
- Approving courses developed by Academic centres in research techniques and management of research and postgraduate projects, and foster a culture of commitment to research & development within National College of Ireland.
- Promoting participation in research and Postgraduate development as part of staff professional development, particularly with regard to the acquisition of higher degrees through research and shall advise on measures to facilitate access to Research & Development by staff members. Particular focus on research carried out in NCI.
- Assisting in the establishment and maintenance of internal standards of research which are consistent with national and international standards and shall review research activities for compliance with College research strategies.
- Function as the Ethics Committee of the College and support researchers with ethical issues across all fields of research in accordance with the guidelines from and within the same terms of reference as the Ethical Sub-Committee.
- Facilitating working relationships with other national and international higher education, professional institutes, relevant state bodies, Government departments and private sector bodies and companies to provide support for Research and Development.
- Encouraging, promoting and reviewing intra- and inter-school / departmental initiatives in research and postgraduate Studies.
- Developing and monitoring College Policy in relation to the intellectual property, patents, copyright and trademarks, technology transfer, campus companies, consultancy and commercial exploitation of research generally.
- Recommend to Academic Council new learners on the basis of application before the committee with relation to funding, resources and supervision.
- The Chairperson, his/her designated nominee, shall be responsible for reporting the decisions/views of the sub-committee to the Academic Council and for transmitting the relevant decisions and views of the Academic Council to the sub-committee.

The Research Committee may establish sub-committees and working parties. In the case of sub-committees and working parties whose members may be from outside the College, Academic Council should be notified.

2.6.4.2 Membership

Persons who hold the following positions may be members of the Research Committee, regardless of the permanency of their position:

- Registrar
- Deans of Schools
- Vice Deans of School
- Head of the Cloud Competency Centre
- Finance Officer
- Director of the Centre for Research & Innovation in Learning & Teaching
- Faculty members, 1 of whom shall sit on Academic Council and 2 others as selected from each School and one of whom shall act as Chair
- Head of Library & Information Services
- IT Manager
- Director of Quality Assurance and Statistical Services
- Up to 2 external researchers who hold senior posts in Ireland and/or internationally
- Learner representative who is currently undertaking postgraduate research

Normally, elected or selected members that miss more than 2 meetings will be replaced by another representative. Selected Faculty members of the Committee may normally serve only on one other committee of Academic Council.

2.6.4.3 Frequency of Meetings

The Research Committee will meet at least 4 times per academic year and at such other times as may be required.

2.6.4.4 Ethics Sub-Committee

The terms of reference for the Ethics Sub-Committee are:

- To develop a Code of Practice for dealing with allegations of research misconduct
- To develop, implement and evaluate operational structures for research ethics approval within the College
- To develop and promote guidelines of good practice in research ethics within the College
- To act as the final body of appeal and final decision on any disputed matter concerning research ethics and governance.
- To promote awareness of all aspects of governance and ethics among the College community
- Consider proposals for faculty, staff and student research on human subjects

Members of the Ethics Sub-Committee include:

- Deans of Schools
- Vice Dean for Postgraduate Programmes & Research (Chair)

- Vice Dean for Academic Programmes & Research
- Head of Cloud Competency Centre
- Director Centre for Research & Innovation in Learning & Teaching
- External Representatives
- Faculty members of Research Committee

The Ethics Sub-Committee will meet at least once per semester. A calendar of meetings will be published to which researchers should plan submission of proposals. It is recognised that due to the nature of some research, it may be required to consider applications outside of this calendar. In these cases, the researcher should request a **meeting with two weeks’** notice.

2.6.4.5 The Intellectual Property Advisory Committee

The Intellectual Property Advisory Committee (IPAC) is involved in:

- The identification of intellectual property (IP) and evaluation of commercial potential.
- Appointing experts to review the IP.
- Determining IP agreements with industry regarding collaborative research projects.
- Facilitating a fair and equitable return to those involved in commercialisation of their research/work.
- Nominating negotiators with third parties and ensuring a reasonable financial return to the personnel involved (where appropriate) and to NCI.
- Protection of intellectual property including processing of patent, registered design and trade mark applications with the assistance of patent attorneys and other professionals where appropriate.
- The formulation and implementation of strategies for commercialisation in a timely manner and in partnership with the inventor(s).
- Negotiating assignments and licences, options for licences or other commercial arrangements with third parties to assist in producing a financial return to the creators of the intellectual property and NCI. In this regard, consideration will be given to the need for NCI to retain access to know-how and research material for on-going research purposes.
- Assisting in the marketing and business support of NCI Intellectual Property for commercialisation.

The IPAC shall be a sub-committee of the Research Committee consisting of the following members:

- Director of Research/Chair of the Research Committee
- School of Business representative
- School of Computing representative
- Commercial Manager

2.6.5 School Committee

A School Committee is primarily a sub-committee of Academic Council within the School and shall have responsibility for developing and monitoring the implementation of academic policy matters and in particular academic quality assurance procedures set out in this manual, in respect of programmes and initiatives delivered by the school.

2.6.5.1 Terms of Reference

A School Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Advising Academic Council on academic matters relevant to the work in its area;
- Monitoring the teaching, learning and research in the module areas encompassed by the Faculty for which it is primarily responsible
- Carrying out such duties as agreed in conjunction with other Schools, in relation to joint programmes
- Monitoring the academic progress and welfare of learners registered on the programmes for which it is primarily responsible
- Recommending to Academic Council regulations regarding programmes of study in its area
- Approving internal and external examiners, and submitting names of approved external examiners to the Academic Operations Committee, for each programme for which it is responsible
- Reviewing examination results, before sending broadsheets of the overall results to the Examinations Board
- Monitoring the functioning of all Programme Committees for which it is responsible
- Carrying out such other functions as are considered appropriate subject to the approval of Academic Council
- Recommending progression routes for all existing and new programmes for validation
- Recommending exemptions to all existing and new programmes for validation
- Carrying out preliminary programme evaluations and co-ordinating and evaluating new programme developments. The Dean of School will liaise closely with the DQASS to ensure that appropriate quality standards are in place for the submission of a new programme for external validation
- Preparing and submitting an annual report on its work to Academic Council
- Ensuring the highest standards of academic excellence for the learner from all faculty.

A School Committee may establish sub-committees and working parties with some external stakeholders subject to the approval of Academic Council and Governing Body. The Dean of School shall be responsible for reporting the decisions and views of the School Committee to Academic Council, sub-committees and for transmitting the relevant decisions and views of Academic Council and its sub-committees to the committee.

2.6.5.2 Membership of School Committee

The membership of each School Committee shall comprise of the following staff members who are appointed by the Dean of School:

- Dean of School (Chair)
- Programme Directors from the school
- Faculty members from the school
- Programme Co-ordinators
- Co-opt members as necessary

2.6.5.3 Frequency of Meetings

A School Committee meets at regular intervals, but no fewer than twice per semester. The Dean of School will be responsible for ensuring that regular meetings take place.

2.6.6 Programme Committee

The Programme **Committee is at the heart of the School's academic quality assurance** system. A Programme Committee is established for each programme offered by NCI, and it is responsible, in conjunction with the relevant Dean of School, for developing and assisting in the operation of the programme. The Programme Committee ensures the quality delivery of the academic programme and that learners are well informed that their progress is being monitored, a reasonable balance of work is offered to the learner, and that assessments are appropriate, consistent and fair. The committee ensures the relevance and quality of the programme by a process of periodic evaluation.

2.6.6.1 Terms of Reference

Each Programme Committee is in effect a sub-committee of the School Committee and is assigned the following academic responsibilities, within the framework of the regulations laid down by Academic Council:

- Advising the School Committee, and as appropriate, Academic Council, on matters relating to proposed or existing programmes
- Developing programme proposals after they have received outline planning approval from the School Committee in advance of presentation to Academic Quality Committee
- Assisting in processing such proposals through the appropriate programme development process with a view to securing approval of the programme from Academic Council and external validation
- Monitoring the implementation of the programme and regularly report on matters to the School Committee who in turn will report to the Academic Council
- Incorporating approved modifications in the programme after annual monitoring
- Supporting the critical self-evaluation of the programme and the preparation of revised documentation and other tasks in relation to the five-yearly programme

- evaluation process
- Ensuring the highest standards of academic excellence for the learner from all faculty
 - Preparing an annual Programme Monitoring report in October outlining the following:
 - Changes to the curriculum and its component parts that have been approved subject to the procedures outlined for programme review and evaluation
 - Presentation and analysis of Retention, Progression and Completion statistics for the previous session
 - Abstract of external examiner reports for the programme for the previous session
 - Review of the learner intake for the current session
 - Continuation of Professional Exemptions available
 - Planning a timetable of assessments at the beginning of the academic year to ensure that there is a reasonable balance of work for learners taking the programme.
 - Preparing a list of texts and equipment that learners will be required to purchase and use in sufficient time for planning purposes
 - Preparing and maintaining a programme handbook for learners (suggested contents include: College calendar, an introduction to the Department running the programme, where to get help, schedule of assessments and examinations, approved programme schedule, grading schemes, aims and objectives of the programme, regulations for special purpose areas, required equipment and books, approved syllabus details.)
 - Carrying out such other functions as are considered appropriate, module to the approval of the School Committee

The Programme Committee may establish sub-committees and working parties, some of whose membership may, with the approval of the School Committee, be from outside the Committee or from outside the College, subject to approval of Academic Council and Governing Body. The committee shall be responsible for reporting its decisions and views to the faculty transmitting the relevant decisions and views of the School Committee to its members and stakeholders.

2.6.6.2 Membership of Programme Committee

The membership of each Programme Committee shall comprise of the following members who are appointed by the Dean of School:

- Programme Director Chair)
- Members of faculty involved in the delivery of the programme
- Co-opted members as necessary (Dean of School approves such positions)
- Programme Co-Coordinator

- Learner Representation via Class Representative Liaison mechanism
- IT representative
- Library representative
- Where a programme involves collaboration with another organisation, that organisation will be represented on the programme committee

2.6.6.3 Frequency of Meetings

A Programme Committee will meet at least once each semester and/or at such other times as required. A Programme Committee may take submissions from associate faculty who are unable to attend a scheduled meeting. These submissions should be submitted to the Programme Director.

2.6.7 Class Representative Liaison

Each class year within a programme shall elect at least two representatives who will meet with the Dean of School and all relevant academic and support staff for consultations about learner views relating to programme content, delivery, assessment and development, and to identify areas of concern for the class groups. This liaison will take place at least once a semester or more often as required. The election of the Class Representative is facilitated by the Student Services department.

Class Representatives shall have the following responsibilities:

- **Consideration and referral to Programme Committee when necessary, of issues relating to the Programme.**
- **Referral of suggestions for specific changes for consideration by the**
- **Dissemination of information affecting learners within the scope of the Programme.**
- **Provision of responses to issues previously referred to the Programme Committee or School Committee**
-
- **Please refer to Chapter 7 (7.17) for further information about the Class Representative mechanism and its function in the QAES.**

2.7 KEY ROLES SUPPORTING QUALITY ASSURANCE & ENHANCEMENT

The College's QAES is implemented via the academic governance structure outlined in Figure 2.3. However, to ensure that the highest possible standards are being maintained, there are separate responsibilities and activities for each of the following roles within the QAES.

- President
- Vice President – Academic Affairs & Research
- Registrar

- Director Quality Assurance and Statistical Services
- Deans of School/Director of Centre
- Programme Directors
- Faculty Members
- Programme Co-Ordinators
- Academic Partnership Manager
- Apprenticeship Manager

2.7.1 President of the College

In conjunction with the Governing Body, the President of the College is responsible for the planning and implementation of the policy and administrative decisions of the Governing Body. They exercise overall responsibility for the day-to-day running of the College and play a pro-active role as a member of the Governing Body, as well as chairing the Executive Team, the Executive Group, Academic Council and its Sub-Committees as appropriate. Responsibility for chairing these bodies may be delegated to the Vice President – Academic Affairs & Research.

2.7.2 Vice-President, Academic Affairs & Research

Reporting to the President, the Vice-President will take responsibility for the academic and administrative management of NCI. In the absence of the President, the Vice President will assume the responsibilities of Acting President.

2.7.2.1 Strategy

- Work collaboratively with the President, Executive Team and Faculty to develop an annual academic plan for the campus consistent with the mission and strategic plans of the College.
- Develop and implement innovative teaching and learning strategies in order to improve the student learning experience.
- Develop, implement and monitor policies for maintaining the academic quality of the College.
- Liaise with the Deans of Schools and with other senior academic staff to define short and long term academic goals and strategies for their attainment.
- Proactively participate as a member of the Executive Board, which is the senior management committee of the college and accountable to the President.
- Work proactively to seek and develop inter-institutional collaborative relationships in line with College strategy.

2.7.2.2 Leadership

- Chair the Academic Council, Academic Operations Committee and other College Committees (as delegated by the President) that oversee Academic Quality Assurance within the College.

- Foster an environment which promotes excellence in Learning and Teaching.
- Encourage and nurture all members of staff to ensure optimal career development, growth of talent, focus of talent for results and career management to ensure realisation of potential.
- **Foster an environment that promotes the College's values.**

2.7.2.3 Research

- Development, initiation and implementation of strategies to enhance research productivity within all academic departments of the College including recognition of achievement.
- Liaison with Deans of School to establish ambitious, but realistic, targets for taught and research graduate students.
- Development and implementation of sound policies to ensure optimal benefit for the National College of Ireland related to intellectual property, commercialisation of College derived research and overhead on research contracts.
- Leadership for the development and preparation of institutional submissions for research funding.
- Liaison with the finance function to ensure responsible management and administration of all research grants and contracts.
- Liaison with national and international agencies concerning opportunities for funding of research.

2.7.2.4 Management

- Oversee the implementation of Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement policies and procedures in accordance with QQI guidelines and policies.
- Assume responsibility for the academic affairs and research of the College, the achievement of all goals in his/her areas of responsibility including staffing, financial planning, budget control and the development and monitoring of policies and procedures.
- Undertake line management responsibilities for all direct reports.
- Oversee all activities related to academic administration; including admissions, registration, scheduling (exams and timetables), student awards, student life and all other student services.
- Oversee the implementation of internal academic accreditation processes and procedures and ensure compliance with all external accreditation and professional exemption obligations.

2.7.3 The Registrar

The Registrar is responsible for the academic administration of the college in accordance with the policies and procedures approved by Academic Council. The office ensures that there is an effective quality assurance process in place dealing with, academic affairs, examinations, student experience, academic appeals, academic discipline and the effective implementation of all policies and procedures pertaining to academic excellence throughout the college.

2.7.3.1 Student Services

Ensure the effective operation of the Student Services Department:

Academic Affairs

- Oversight of all academic affairs including learner admissions, registration and examinations
- Integrity and security of the student information database system and records
Graduation schedules and ceremonies

Careers and Opportunities

- Oversee the provision of a Careers and Advisory service to learners to ensure that a professional high quality service is provided.
- Collaborate with other schools and universities on learner service issues.
- Ensure that learner needs are being met in relation to their welfare and academic needs, through various activities and communication channels..

Library & Information Service

- Overseeing implementation of a strategic plan for the Library
- Reviewing management of day-to-day activities in the Library

Committee Business

- To be Recording Secretary to Academic Council and Secretary to its Standing Committee.
- To be an ex-officio member of relevant College committees

Policy & Planning

- To ensure that the Academic Regulations approved by the Academic Council are implemented and kept under periodic review; and to ensure the proper conduct of, and adherence to, NCI policy and standards in all areas dealt with the Office.
- To research and develop policy papers on all aspects of the academic life of the College, and explore and identify new academic undertakings and ways of **promoting these through the College's structures.**

Quality

- To ensure a high quality learner support structure for learner life through the provision of the careers and opportunities services, learner services and a wellness

- centre
- To be consulted in relation to the content and publication of College publications
- To ensure an excellent learner support service through the provision of a high quality information service
- To assess and monitor quality in respect of:
 - Programme content, instructional process, timetabling structure;
 - Examinations – failure and transfer rates
- To promote and monitor the learner transfer process from Universities / Institutes of Technology, etc. to NCI; similarly, for mature learners
- To liaise on behalf of the College, with various external agencies, such as the HEA, on all appropriate matters relating to academic planning and quality.
- To undertake such specific research projects associated with academic administration, planning and quality as may be specified from time to time by the President

2.7.4 Director of Quality Assurance and Statistical Services

The Director of Quality Assurance & Statistical Services (DQASS) is responsible for **maintaining and enhancing the College’s quality assurance policies and procedures in the context of the College’s overall Mission and Strategic Plan and developing a culture of quality across all services in liaison with other relevant College staff members. The position also has responsibility for the College’s statistical services unit.**

- Management of a College-wide quality assurance and improvement framework, which directs the implementation of the College's Strategic Plan
- Maintaining and enhancing the Quality Assurance policies and processes on a College wide basis covering all units, both academic and service.
- Overseeing an annual programme of quality reviews, covering academic and service units.
- Advising on and supporting the College's organisational units on Quality Assurance.
- Identifying relevant models of best practice in other institutions or organisations.
- Establishing links with other organisations and institutions in regard to Quality Enhancement.
- In co-operation with the Director of Human Resources, developing training and development programmes for all staff in relation to Quality Assurance.
- Embedding the framework throughout the College by assisting areas with the formulation of local plans
- Developing useful indicators of excellence, and monitoring the achievement of College-wide targets
- Assisting the College in its preparation for reviews and external audit
- Identifying any policy gaps, and remedying same and ensuring that there is widespread awareness of policy
- Identifying a structure that facilitates communication about quality practices
- Communicating the College policy, goals and achievements on Quality Assurance

- to the College community
- Providing an Annual Report to the Risk Committee of the Governing Body on Quality Assurance.
- Ensuring that the College complies with all aspects of current education legislation in relation to Quality Assurance.

Within the context of the College's mission and strategy and the requirement to develop key markets, the core activity is the provision of management information, planning support, and statutory reporting.

- Providing management information in relation to learner and staff statistics, providing one-stop-shop for statistical information.
- Providing planning support to the College by estimating learner loads by Faculty/School/Centre, modelling the intake expected through CAO, part-time, In-company and off-campus to help control enrolments.
- Preparation of reports for DOES annually and other institutions & agencies e.g. HEA
- Organising the semester surveys of learners and providing the analysis of the information and follow up on action plans arising.
Reviewing international/national/regional trends to support programme planning and development

2.7.5 Quality Officer

The Quality Officer supports the Director of Quality Assurance & Statistical Services in discharging their responsibilities above through day to day management of learner evaluation mechanisms, training of student representatives, programme validation document proofing & production and liaison with programme development teams. They may be delegated to write reports arising from internal quality assurance processes, undertake audits of processes, sit on sub-committees of Academic Council and will deputise for the DQASS as required at external events and meetings.

2.7.6 Dean of School

The Dean of School is responsible for the effective day-to-day management of the School and implementing the quality assurance processes of NCI within the School. Their key areas of responsibility include:

- Development of strategy for the School within overall College strategy;
- Encouragement and promotion of the highest standards of performance and achievement in every aspect of the Schools operations;
- Encouragement and nurturing all members of departmental staff so as to ensure optimal career development, growth of talent, focus of talent for results and career management to ensure realisation of potential;
- Facilitating the engagement of Associate Faculty with the School/College
- Ensuring that College-wide communications on School matters are regular, relevant and reliable;
- **Development, maintenance, documentation and research of NCI's unique learning**

- environment within the School;
- Reviewing all programmes to ensure the learner is at the centre of the learning process;
 - Programme and faculty timetabling/scheduling to maximise utilisation of hours;
 - Recruitment of academic faculty in accordance with H.R policies and procedures to strengthen academic team;
 - Management of human, financial and physical resources to ensure optimal deployment towards achievement of academic goals;
 - Ensuring representation of interests of the School and its members at institutional and national levels when appropriate;
 - Maintaining effective channels of communication within the School and between the School and the senior management;
 - Promoting the School with a range of agreed professional bodies, so as to maximise future opportunity for development of new and existing School programmes.
 - Maintaining an active academic role by acting as programme manager of one programme and delivery of 4 learner contact hours during term.
 - Improving awareness of available services, and ensure equality of access;
 - Building better processes for dialogue and communication with learners within the School;
 - Development and implementation of clearly defined academic goals for the School **in accordance with the College's Learning and Teaching Programme Strategy**
 - Development of Research, in association with the Vice President Research, and implementation of clearly defined research goals for the School in accordance with **the College's strategic plan and Learning and Teaching research strategy**
 - Development and implementation of clearly defined enterprise goals for the **School in accordance with the College's strategic plan and Learning and Teaching enterprise strategy**;
 - Embedding enterprise development and entrepreneurship into all programme modules; and
 - Contribute to the overall welfare of the College through collegial sharing of resources and striving for institutional goals.

2.7.7 Vice-Dean, Postgraduate Studies & Research (School of Business)

The Vice-Dean, Postgraduate Studies & Research in the School of Business will be responsible for the management of all full-time and part-time postgraduate programmes and supporting the implementation of the College research strategy within their School. The key areas of responsibility are:

2.7.7.1 Academic Oversight and Planning

- **Timetabling and allocation of teaching responsibilities for the School's** postgraduate programmes in conjunction with the Dean and Vice-Dean of UG Studies
- Undertaking line management responsibilities (as agreed with the Dean of School)

- for permanent and **associate faculty engaged in teaching the School's** postgraduate programmes.
- Fulfilling the role of Subject leadership through the provision of general academic oversight across all Level 9 and 10 programmes and modules. This involves leading and advancing the scholarly research and learning & teaching in postgraduate subject areas of the School.
 - Ensuring implementation of and **day-to-day oversight of NCI's QA policy and procedures for the School's postgraduate programmes.**
 - Leading, managing and overseeing the day-to-day operations for postgraduate programmes within the School.
 - Ensuring that the views of postgraduate students within the School are appropriately acted upon.
 - Working collaboratively with other internal Schools and Departments.
 - Attending and contributing to Academic Council.
 - Attending and contributing to Academic Operations Committee.

2.7.7.2 Research

- Actively participating in the development of a College Research Strategy and lead its implementation at School level.
- In conjunction with the Dean of School and Vice President identify, agreeing and sourcing streams of research funding in fulfilment of the institutional research plan.
- Overseeing and co-ordinating all School research activities including funding bids, publications, papers and theses in accordance with procedures and as required by the College Research Office.
- Providing oversight for the quality of all level 9 and 10 theses to ensure continuous improvement of the standard of research being produced.
- Working with faculty in the School to develop individual research strategies and action plans.
- Liaising with the Vice President on research matters.
- Representing the School and taking an active role on the College Research Committee.

2.7.8 Vice-Dean, Undergraduate Studies (School of Business)

The Vice-Dean, Undergraduate Studies in the School of Business will be responsible for the management of all full-time and part-time undergraduate programmes within their School.

The key area of responsibilities is:

2.7.8.1 Academic Oversight and Planning:

- The timetabling **and allocation of teaching responsibilities for the School's** undergraduate programmes in conjunction with the Dean and Vice-Dean of PG

Studies

- Undertaking management responsibilities (as agreed with the Dean of School) for permanent and associate faculty **engaged in teaching the School's undergraduate programmes**.
- Fulfilling the role of Subject leadership through the provision of general academic oversight across all Level 6, 7 and 8 programmes and modules. This involves leading and advancing learning & teaching in undergraduate subject areas of the School.
- Ensuring implementation of and **day-to-day oversight of NCI's QA policy and procedures for the School's undergraduate programmes**.
- Leading, managing and overseeing the day-to-day operations for undergraduate programmes within the School.
- Ensuring that the views of undergraduate students within the School are appropriately acted upon.
- Working collaboratively with other internal Schools and Departments.
- Attending and contributing to Academic Council.
- Attending and contributing to Academic Operations Committee.

2.7.9 Vice-Dean, Academic Programmes & Research (School of Computing)

The Vice-Dean, Academic Programmes & Research in the School of Computing will be responsible for the management of all full-time and part-time programmes and supporting the implementation of the College research strategy within the School.

The key areas of responsibility are:

2.7.9.1 Academic Oversight and Planning

- **The timetabling and allocation of teaching responsibilities for the School's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes** (except programmes within the Cloud Competency Centre) in conjunction with the Dean.
- Undertaking line management responsibilities (as agreed with the Dean of School) for permanent and associate faculty engaged in **teaching the School's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes**.
- Fulfilling the role of Subject leadership through the provision of agreed academic oversight across all Level 6, 7, 8 9 and 10 programmes (except Cloud Competency Centre Programmes) and modules. This involves leading and advancing the scholarship/ research and learning & teaching in agreed subject areas of the School.
- Ensuring implementation of and **day-to-day oversight of NCI's QA policy and procedures for the School's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes**.
- Leading, managing and overseeing the day-to-day operations for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes within the School.
- Ensuring that the views of undergraduate and postgraduate students within the School are appropriately acted upon.

- Working collaboratively with other internal Schools and Departments.
- Attending and contributing to Academic Council.
- Attending and contributing to Academic Operations Committee.

2.7.9.2 Research

- Actively participate in the development of a College Research Strategy and lead its implementation at School level.
- In conjunction with the Dean of School, Head of Cloud Competency Centre and Vice President identify, agree and source streams of research funding in fulfilment of the institutional research plan.
- Oversee and co-ordinate all School research activities (except those within the Cloud Competency Centre) including funding bids, publications, papers and theses in accordance with procedures and as required by the College Research Office.
- Provide oversight for the quality of agreed level 9 and 10 theses to ensure continuous improvement of the standard of research being produced.
- Work with faculty in the School to develop individual research strategies and action plans.
- Liaise with the Vice President on research matters.
- Represent the School and take an active role on the College Research Committee.

2.7.10 Head of Cloud Competency Centre

The Head of the Cloud Competency Centre (CCC) is responsible for establishing and sustaining the NCI Cloud Competency Centre as a centre of excellence for advanced learning and research in Cloud Computing. In addition to setting-up the centre, this role has responsibility for:

2.7.10.1 Strategic Management

- Implementing the Vision and Strategy of the Centre together with the Dean of School of Computing
- Achieving and realising the objectives of the Centre.
- Implementing the roadmap to realise the programmes in the Centre
- Obtaining the external funding necessary to sustain and further develop the Centre
- Contributing strongly to overall Pedagogical direction and Research direction of the Centre
- Establishing strong collaborative relationships with industry and academic institutions

2.7.10.2 Operational

- Directing the Centre's operational day-to-day activities including promotion of the Centre
- Creation of Academic Programmes
- Interfacing with School of Computing Faculty
- Academic programme direction and teaching
- Focus research directives towards outcomes relevant to industry
- Generate income for collaborative research
- Play a key leadership role working with industry and staff in driving income growth for the Centre
- Optimise performance against Key Performance Indicators for the Centre
- Manage staff in the Centre
- Engagement with Industry - Maintain good communication at both strategic and operational level with ICT industry in Ireland
- To produce world-class research outcomes
- To be an active researcher capable of leading on, and winning, major new research projects for the Centre
- To be responsible for expanding the Centre's network

The Head of the CCC must also:

- Undertake personal research and maintain research profile and research outputs
- Undertake PhD supervision
- Report project progress to Dean of School of Computing on a regular basis
- Undertake administrative duties appropriate to the post and any other duties as may be deemed appropriate by the Dean of School of Computing
- Participate in the School's Annual Review process and undertake relevant staff development

2.7.11 Programme Director

The Programme Director provides academic leadership for a programme through planning and chairing the Programme Committee meetings so that faculty lecturing on the programme can actively participate in the ongoing development of the programme, monitor learner feedback and ensure that delivery of the programme is in accordance with

the quality assurance procedures of the College and the Approved Programme Schedule as issued by the awarding body.

The key areas of responsibility are:

2.7.11.1 Academic Leadership

- Primary responsibility for convening and chairing Programme Committee meetings which take place at least once each semester and/or other times as required.
- Primary responsibility for ensuring that the minutes of Programme Committee meetings are taken by a Programme Coordinator or nominee and are recorded on the School portal site by the Programme Coordinator.
- Primary responsibility for ensuring adherence to the Terms of Reference for Programme Committee meetings set out in 2.6.6 above of the Quality Assurance Handbook. The work of the Programme Committee encompasses:
 - Periodic evaluation of the of the relevance and quality of the programme
 - Ensuring there is a reasonable balance of work for the learner and that assessments are appropriate, fair and varied to meet the learning outcomes
 - Ensuring that the assessment and feedback timetable is scheduled and communicated to students at the beginning of the academic year and that the assessment structure is available to students
 - The preparation, maintenance and publication of a Programme Handbook
 - Review interim External Examiner Reports
- Take an overview of exam broadsheets to identify and query any anomalies Support the Vice-Dean with programmatic review
- Escalate programme compliance issues e.g. exam deadlines not being met to the appropriate Vice Dean
- Write annual monitoring report with feedback and input from the Programme Committee and follow through on the implementation of any recommendations
- Co-ordinate with the Marketing Department the preparation of course marketing material and ensure that marketing material in brochures and on the web-site is up to date
- Deal with academic concerns relating to the Programme and liaise with the Vice-Deans as appropriate.

2.7.11.2 Programme Management

- Approve direct entry applications that do not meet the minimum programme entry requirements
- Participate in interviews for mature students/RPEL as appropriate
- Liaise with Vice-Deans on approval of programme admissions with advanced standing
- Advise the need to recruit Associate Faculty, Teaching Assistants, Lab Assistants to the relevant Vice-Dean

- Input to updating Job Descriptions as needed
- Sit on interview panels for Associate Faculty
- Give guidance to new Associate Faculty and Teaching Assistants by giving them an overview of the programme, an outline teaching content, cover assessment types, dates, deadlines and giving student feedback, importance of attending Programme Committee meetings, schedule for Programme Committee meetings, clarify any queries from Associate Faculty regarding their job description.
- Sign-off time-sheets for Associate Faculty, Teaching Assistants and Lab Assistants

2.7.11.3 Student Relations & Pastoral Care

- Present to students at Orientation and cover course content, assessment structure and dates, how student academic queries/problems are handled, student discipline, plagiarism
- Liaise with appropriate Departments regarding student supports and pastoral care
- Ensure that Class Representative meetings are planned and attend them, that minutes are taken by a Programme Coordinator and that a response is given and action taken on issues that arise

2.7.12 Faculty Member

The faculty member sits on the programme committee and is responsible for the quality of the delivery of the module being taught and acting on feedback from learners. They may also be appointed as module guardian. As module guardian, it is the faculty **member's** responsibility for its review and development and acting on feedback from learners, internal or external reviewers.

The key areas of responsibility are:

2.7.12.1 Teaching

- Lecture to learners within the School and other relevant areas.
- Design and deliver executive education **programmes both 'in company' and for 'public' programmes.** (Please Note: Unless specifically contracted to do so, Associate Faculty do not engage in these activities).
- Provide a professional support to learners in their learning activities.
- Facilitate tutorials associated with lecturers.
- Participate in committees appropriate to programmes.
- Engage in research consultancy and development work as appropriate.
- Make available information as required by the NCI's management in a professional context.
- Participate in appropriate activities necessary to the furtherance of the NCI.
- Prepare reading lists and handout materials for learners.
- Set and correct examinations for programmes taught.
- Set and correct projects for programmes taught.
- Set correct and give written feedback on project work, research work and

- dissertation.
- Facilitate skills development workshops.
- Liaise with library re: reading materials, booklists, etc.

2.7.12.2 Programme Development

- Assist in the development of existing programmes.
- This may involve drafting submission documents, liaison with the validating bodies, promoting, implementing and reviewing programmes.

2.7.12.3 Research

- Carry out research relevant to College activities including regular publications and presentations. (Please Note: Unless specifically contracted to do so, Associate Faculty do not engage in these activities).

2.7.12.4 General

- Act as a Programme Director/Leader (Please Note: Unless specifically contracted to do so, Associate Faculty do not engage in these activities).
- Assist in the development of NCI's School.
- Participate in relevant professional development activities.
- Participate in Academic Council meetings and staff meetings
- Contribute to academic and disciplinary committees as requested.
- Be available to learners at notified times outside of class contact hours for guidance and support.
- Attend College functions such as various exhibitions, school visits and other external events
- Work on short programmes, training and consultations which may arise

2.7.13 Programme Coordinator

The Programme Coordinator is responsible for providing Administrative Support to faculty members within the School and is a primary point of contact with learners.

Key Responsibilities:

- Provide high-quality co-ordination support for programmes in the School
- Provide a high quality of service to students of the College.
- Respond professionally to enquiries from students, Class Representatives, off-campus contacts and faculty on a range of issues.
- Effective interaction with other units in the College such as the other School, **Student Services, Registrar's Office, Fees and Examinations.**
- Deal appropriately with incoming calls.
- Ensure that all duties within the office are performed in a professional, efficient

manner.

- Support the promotion of programmes to target audiences through all available communication channels.
- Ensure that College Policies, outlined in the QA Handbook, for programme management and delivery are adhered to.
- Provide Faculty with information regarding timetables, course notes, student numbers and location of lectures.
- Assist the Programme Directors in the production of examination results and broadsheets.
- Act as secretary to assigned Programme Committees.
- Introduce themselves to and regularly attend the class groups they support.
- Be alert to developing problems and raise to the appropriate level as soon as possible.
- Respond to and address student complaints.
- Check availability of resources e.g. Library, IT.
- Alert Faculty and Students to planned assessment schedules and deadlines.
- Assist in orientation and registration.
- Record and follow up on exam/assessment absence, medical records and attendance.
- Compilation and maintenance of all Programme material, module descriptors and distribution to the student body.
- Assist in the timetabling process of relevant programmes assigned.
- Assist with programme co-ordination for other programmes for other areas as required.
- Assist with assessment processes in the School.
- Accept and record receipt of projects and assignments.
- **Provide administrative support for the College's formal student feedback mechanisms** such as Class Representative meetings and student surveys.
- Provide cover for Reception.
- Any other duties as assigned by Senior Administrator or Dean.

2.7.14 Academic Partnership Manager

As part of the Learning & Teaching Team, the Academic Partnership Manager works in liaison with International Development office, Schools to promote effective academic partnerships internally and with external partners. This involves developing and managing effective inter-institutional partnership processes across relevant schools and units in the college and international partner institutions. It is also concerned with academic and language readiness of inward international students.

2.7.15 Apprenticeship Manager

The Apprenticeship manager has day to day responsibility **for discharging NCI's role as coordinating provider**. They are also a key point of contact between the Programme Director, the team responsible for developing, delivering and reviewing the programme,

i.e. the Consortium Steering Group, and individual employers. Rather than a range of Programme Directors interacting with the same employer, it is a more effective use of resources to appoint a single point of contact to be the liaison.

The Apprenticeship manager will represent NCI on the Consortium Steering Group and be the main point of contact for the funding and Statutory Agencies. They will also chair the Apprentice Implementation Group (AIG) and be a member of the National Programme Committee. These responsibilities do not, however, undermine the individual responsibility that a Programme Director has for the apprenticeship programme, their learners or the normal academic relationships between Deans, Vice Deans and their programmes and academic committees.

2.8 OTHER COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

2.8.1 Committees Related to Assessment & Discipline

The composition and role of the Examination Board, Disciplinary Committee and Appeals Committees are described in detail under the Learner Code of Disciplinary Policies and Procedure section of this manual.

2.8.2 Health and Safety Committee

The function of the Health and Safety Committee (HSC) is to discuss matters relevant to the safety and health of all people working and attending the National College of Ireland. The committee will be chaired by the Commercial Manager, who will set agendas and ensure that actions are completed.

The HSC is made up of 17 representatives from departments within the National College of Ireland. There are 6 meetings held calendar year. More meetings are held if required

2.8.2.1 Membership of Health and Safety Committee

The HSC shall be comprised of the following staff members:

- Commercial Manager (Chair)
- HR Manager
- Premises Manager
- IT Department Representative
- Library Representative
- Learner Life Department Representative
- Facilities Manager
- Security Team Leader
- Students' **Union President**

2.9 ROLE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND STATISTICAL SERVICES (QASS) OFFICE

The QASS Office supports and promotes the QAES at NCI through a variety of means.

2.9.1 Policy Creation

The QASS Office creates and maintains the Colleges portfolio of policies relevant to the development and delivery of programmes and services to learners. Policies are created with reference to existing legislation, QQI policy and guidelines and review of practice in Ireland and in other jurisdictions. It liaises with the HR and Finance functions with respect to HR, finance and corporate governance policies to ensure consistency with QQI policy and guidelines.

2.9.2 Programme Development and Validation/Revalidation

The QASS Office is responsible for the co-ordination of:

- applications for validation of new programmes,
- programme review processes
- applications for professional body recognition

In doing so, it supports programme development teams through these processes through advice and guidance on interpretation of policy and providing editorial services.

2.9.3 Service and Business Process Improvement

The QASS Office supports service functions through:

- The co-ordination of service function evaluations
- business process improvement through facilitated workshops

2.9.4 Institutional Review

The QASS Office is responsible for the co-ordination of institutional review processes by QQI or other awarding and professional bodies.

2.9.5 Representation

The QASS Office represents NCI at quality assurance and enhancement fora at national and international level. These activities provide opportunity for benchmarking and gaining insight into how improvement can be further driven at NCI.

2.9.6 Institutional Research

The QASS supports the information requirements of quality process through the following:

- Gathering and reporting on module evaluation data to individual staff members and Deans of School
- Coordination of Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)
- Provision of programme and module level statistical data for annual programme monitoring
- Provision of ad-hoc management information requirements for specific initiatives

2.9.7 Contribution to Strategic and Academic Planning

With representation on the Executive Group, Academic Council and its sub-committees, the QASS Office contributes to and informs policy, practice and decision making throughout the organisation.

2.9.8 Monitoring and Evaluation

The QASS Office uses the following tools to monitor and evaluate effectiveness of policies and procedure.

2.9.8.1 Audit

Compliance with the College's quality assurance processes is monitored internally via a system of internal audit. The audit cycle is published annually. Audit reports are presented to Academic Policy & Standards Committee, Academic Council, Executive Board and the Risk Committee of Governing Body. The purpose of the audit of records relating to a policy and/or procedure is to:

1. Ensure compliance with stated policy and procedure
2. To evaluate continued fitness for purpose
3. To evaluate requirements for staff training
4. To evaluate requirements for resourcing

2.9.8.2 Critical Incident Reporting

The critical incident report is used where a single incident has arisen which requires investigation into the events that lead up to the outcome. It allows the QASS Office to examine where there was a breakdown in process and what can be learned from understanding why this breakdown took place. Investigation may be undertaken by the DOASS or nominee. Where appropriate this nominee may be external to the College and be appointed by the President.

2.9.8.3 Thematic Analysis

Thematic evaluation is used on a range of outputs to inform training requirements, policy and process change. This method is particularly useful on qualitative reports such as

programme validation reports, external examiner reports, programme committee meetings etc. The outputs of such activities are reported to Academic Policy & Standards Committee, Academic Council, Executive Group and the Risk Committee of the Governing Body

2.9.8.4 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is used in a variety of ways to inform the QAES and alert colleagues to good practice. Benchmarking of award classifications and graduate outcomes is undertaken against publicly available data.

Benchmarking of services is a key component of the Service and Support Function Quality System (see 2.12 below).

2.9.9 Outputs from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement System

Table 1 below lists the outputs that are available to the QASS Office to evaluate the effectiveness of the QAES. The table outlines:

- the name of the output,
- the process in which it is used,
- the role responsible for providing the output
- the Committees which consider the outputs
- the role responsible for actioning the recommendations/issues raised from an output
- the operational areas of the College which are impacted by these actions

Output	Process	Instigated By Whom	Frequency	Committee Reviewed	Follow up by	Informs Area 1	Planning	Informs Planning Area 2	Informs Planning Area 3
Reports on Learner evaluation	Learner Feedback	QASS	End Semester/Annual	Learning, Teaching & Assessment;	Vice Dean/Dean to Workbased Mentor & Apprentice Advocate	Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	Resource Planning
ISSE reporting	Learner Feedback	QASS	Annual/February	Learning, Teaching & Assessment	Relevant Dean of School	Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	
Minutes Class Representative liaison	Learner Feedback	Programme Director/Vice Dean	Per Semester	Programme Committee	Programme Director	Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	Resource Planning
Minutes Programme Committee Meetings	Programme Management	Programme Director	Per semester	Academic Operations CSG	Apprenticeship Manager to CSG Programme Director to Dean	Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	Resource Planning
Programme Modification Requests	Programme Management	Programme Director Module Owner	Per semester	Programme Committee	Dean of School DQASS to QQI where required	Learning Teaching	&		Resource Planning
External Examiners reports	Assessment	Registrar	Per assessment session	Programme Committee Academic Standards	Programme Director Dean of School	Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	
No Complaints	Learner Feedback	QASS	Annual	Academic Operations Academic Standards & Quality	DQASS	Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	Policy development
No Appeals	Programme Management Assessment	QASS	Annual	Academic Operations Academic Standards & Quality	DQASS	Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	Policy development
No Disciplinary cases	Programme Management	QASS	Annual	Academic Operations Academic Standards & Quality	DQASS	Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	Policy development
Annual programme report	Programme Management	Programme Director	October, Annually	Academic Council CSG	Apprenticeship Manager Programme Director	Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	Resource Planning
Annual Budget Process	Programme Management	President	Annually, Dec-March	Executive Group	Finance Sub Committee/Governing Body	Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	Resource Planning
Programme Proposal	Programme Development & Validation	Programme Proposer	Ad hoc	Executive Group Academic Operations	Programme Director	Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	Resource Planning
Interim Checkpoint	Programme Development & Validation	Programme Proposer	Ad hoc	Executive Group Academic Operations	Programme Director	Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	Resource Planning
Internal Validation Report	Programme Development & Validation	DQASS	Ad hoc	Academic Operations Academic Council	Programme Director	Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	Resource Planning
Independent Evaluation Report	Programme Development & Validation/revalidation	DQASS	Ad hoc	Academic Council		Learning Teaching	&	Staff Development	Resource Planning
Annual review of College Wide	Programme Monitoring	Director of QASS/Apprenticeship	Annual	Academic Operations	Vice President to Academic Council				

Output	Process	Instigated By Whom	Frequency	Committee Reviewed	Follow up by	Informs Area 1	Planning	Informs Planning Area 2	Informs Planning Area 3
Apprenticeship Provision		Manager		Executive Team Relevant CSG	Apprenticeship Manager to relevant CSG				
Review of Apprenticeship Capacity	Programme Monitoring	Chair of CSG	Annual (February)		Apprenticeship Manager Chair of CSG				
Review of Occupational Profile	Programme Monitoring	Chair of CSG	2 years	CSG Programme Committee	Chair CSG Programme Director				
Review of the CSG	Collaboration Management	Chair of the CSG	5 years	CSG	Apprenticeship Manager				
Programme Review	Programme Monitoring	Programme Director	5 years or earlier if review of OCP requires						
Service quality review	Service /Process review	Service Owner	5 years	Academic Operations Executive Team		Learning & Teaching	Resource Planning		
Audit Reports	System evaluation	DQASS	Annual according to schedule	Academic operations	Member of Executive group impacted	Staff development	Policy Development	Resource Planning	
Critical Incident	System evaluation	DQASS	Ad hoc	Executive Group Academic Operations	Member of Executive group impacted	Staff development	Policy Development	Resource Planning	

Table 1: Summary of Outputs of the QAES system

2.10 THE CREATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE OF COLLEGE POLICIES

2.10.1 Purpose ¹

The purpose of this policy, also known as the 'Policy on Policies', is to define the process by which College policies are to be developed, approved and maintained. Through using a consistent policy development process and format it should be possible to assemble policies that:

- Are appropriately developed and regularly updated;
- Are easy to find, read, communicate and understand;
- Are consistent with the College's mission;
- Are compliant with applicable laws;
- Are compliant with applicable policies of regulatory and awarding bodies
- reduce risk; and
- promote best practices across the College community.

It is acknowledged that full compliance with this policy may take a period of time following its approval and introduction. However, it is expected that as new policies are developed or existing policies are amended, that they shall adhere to the provisions set out in this policy.

2.10.2 Scope

This Policy applies to all departments and Schools of the College, academic, support and commercial. These are all hereinafter collectively referred to as the 'College'.

2.10.3 Policy Statement

College policies shall be:

1. Developed according to the process set out in this policy;
2. Presented in a standard and common format using plain English;
3. Formally approved by an appropriate level of College management or governance;
4. **Accessible to all parties with an interest in the policy's subject matter;**
5. Kept up to date and current within a framework of an organized system of change control;
6. Clearly described as policies and kept separate from related documentation such as procedures, guides and other types of related documentation.
7. Capable of being monitored for their effectiveness

All individuals who are responsible for the drafting, updating, approval and distribution of College policies shall comply with this policy. Internal policies, where they exist and apply to the operations of College units, shall not be in conflict with this policy. The requirements for the creation and update of policies set out in this policy shall not apply to those College policies in existence before this policy was approved. However, where an existing policy is revised or replaced in future after the date of approval of this policy, the requirements set out in this policy shall be applied.

¹ Adapted and used with the kind permission of the Risk & Compliance Unit, Dublin City University

2.10.3.1 Policy Development

The Policy Owner shall be responsible for the drafting of new or revised College policies, ensuring policies are up to date, consulting with interested parties, including learners and for steering the policy through the levels of College management and/or governance structure **required for approval. The Policy Owner shall also arrange for the policy's publication**, when approved, on the College website in consultation with the Quality Assurance & Statistical Services Office.

2.10.3.2 Policy Format

The drafting of College policies shall adhere to the format set out in the Policy Template referred to below in the section on related documentation. The format may be amended but only to the extent necessary to add clarity to a policy. Certain sections of the policy template are mandatory and shall be used when drafting a policy. Other sections of the policy template are optional and the Policy Owner is not required to apply them unless they add further clarity to the policy and they deem it appropriate to do so.

2.10.3.3 Policy Approval

The process for reviewing & approving draft College policies may vary depending upon the nature of the policy. Policies that have a College wide scope shall be approved by the Executive Team. Policies relating to academic matters are approved by Academic Council. Policies whose scope is limited to a single department may be approved by the Head of Department. In general, the responsibility for promoting compliance with a policy will rest with the Policy Owner unless as specified otherwise within the policy.

2.10.3.4 Accessibility

The majority of policies will be accessible and published on the College website and by any other means as deemed appropriate. Confidential policies, which are for staff use only, will also be published on the College website but controls will be implemented to the extent that only current members of staff will have access to that category of policies.

2.10.3.5 Regular Review

The Policy Owner for each policy shall be responsible for keeping the policy up to date and for ensuring that only approved versions of the policy are accessible via the College website. The Policy Owner shall periodically review policies which fall under their remit. Each policy shall state the date on which it was approved and when it is expected to be reviewed. Except where a separate process or authority for making changes to a policy are included within the policy, the amendments to existing policies and the development of new policies shall follow the development and approval process as outlined in Section 2.11.3.1 and 2.11.3.3, respectively. The DQASS shall assist Policy Owners in implementing a process of regular review and shall provide guidance to Policy Owners in relation to complying with the requirements of this policy.

2.10.3.6 Separation of Policies from Related Guidance Material

Policies are to be clearly designated as a policy in their title. Other guidance material which assists in the understanding or implementation of a policy shall not be inserted as text within the policy.

2.10.4 Definitions

2.10.4.1 College Policy

A policy is a statement of intent which can be used to guide decisions. A policy may stand on its own or can be implemented through procedures, protocols or one of the other document categories shown under **'Policies' in the College's document hierarchy**.

A college policy has a broad application or impact throughout the University across both academic and / or support units. They can assist in promoting compliance with applicable laws or regulations, best practice, ethical norms, pursuit of the College's **mission or in the** promotion of efficiencies. They can also assist in the reduction of risk.

College-wide policies are approved by the College Executive whereas departmental or school level policies are usually developed, approved and adopted at that level. Policies relating to academic matters are approved by Academic Council.

Once approved compliance with a College policy is mandatory.

2.10.4.2 Procedure

A procedure is a guideline or series of interrelated steps which can assist in the implementation of a policy. Procedures establish who, what, where and when in relation to a given activity as well as establishing accountability in support of the implementation of a policy. College procedures shall:

1. be written in a format that is easy to follow;
2. be supported where appropriate with visual aids and workflows
3. be implemented in consultation with those affected by the procedure
4. be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to check for effectiveness and compatibility with the most recent versions of the related policy; and
5. generally do not require formal approval by senior executive levels of the College

2.10.5 Policy Owner

The Policy Owner is the appropriate responsible officer of the College whose remit / responsibility covers the subject matter of the policy. The Policy Owner shall be responsible for the substance of policy documents and for promoting compliance with the policy unless as specified otherwise within the policy.

2.10.6 Related Documentation

2.10.6.1 Policy template

The policy template sets out the prescribed layout to be used when drafting College policies.

2.10.6.2 Document hierarchy

The document hierarchy sets out the various categories of documents which are generally in use within the College and their place within a structured document hierarchy. In addition, it also outlines definitions for the categories of documents referred to in the hierarchy.

2.10.6.3 Guidelines on Policy Development

The guidelines on policy development sets out the issues to consider when drafting College

policies.

2.10.7 Contacts

If you have any further queries in relation to this policy, please contact the DOASS.

2.10.8 Review and Indicators of Effectiveness

This policy will be reviewed every three years. Effectiveness of this policy will be evidenced through:

- the evolution of a standardised presentation of policies
- reduced number of enquires to the QASS Office regarding policy location and interpretation
- practical applications of how the policy has been applied
- analytics on the number of times a policy document is accessed

2.11 PROJECT AUTHORISATION AND MANAGEMENT PROCESS

2.11.1 Introduction

This Project Authorisation and Management process and form should be used in all cases where a project or expenditure is being considered to which any one or more of the following points apply:

- **Total spend (incl. VAT) is expected to equal or exceed €5,000 (five thousand euro); and/or**
- Qualifies as capital expenditure (i.e the purchase of an asset with an expected useful life of greater than one year); and/or
- Involves sourcing from more than one supplier; and/or
- Requires the involvement of more than one department of the college; and/or
- Involves any building works / reconfiguration of space or facilities.

This form & process is not intended to be used for normal routine operating expenditure, which would be included in the annual income & expenditure budget. This process complements but does not replace the Purchase Order (PO) process; POs must still be used in respect of the ordering of component parts of a project, but only once the overall project has been approved.

2.11.2 Objective of the Process

The objective of this process is:

- (a) prior to any commitment to spend College funds, to act as a checklist to ensure that full consideration is given to all elements of any project likely to incur material cost, and/or have an impact on, or require the involvement of, other College departments; and
- (b) once the project has been approved, to provide a framework whereby the project can be managed by the Project Sponsor and monitored financially and kept within agreed cost limits, with responsibilities clearly assigned and accepted.

2.11.3 Summary of the Approval Process

1. Request for Allocation of project number – signed by Head of Department
2. Allocation of project number – by Director of Finance
3. Consultation with all relevant departments & completion of appendices
4. Approval Sign off by appropriate level of management (subject to overall spend level*)
Note: splitting of projects to reduce authorisation level is not permitted
5. Schedule of progress review milestones to be agreed and followed up
6. Monthly updates will be provided to Executive Board on all projects in progress.

2.11.4 Spend-Level Authorisation Hierarchy

1. **Up to €25,000** (including vat) – must be authorised by both the Line Executive for the relevant department and the Director of Finance. Such approvals will be then be noted at Executive Board.
2. **Greater than €25,000** - Executive Board discussion and approval required for projects **with anticipated spend in excess of €25,000 (including vat), and/or that would have a significant impact on the College.**

2.11.5 Project Initiation and Management Process

Fig. 2.5 outlines the project initiation and management process at a high level. Fundamentally the following phases are identified.

2.11.5.1 Project Initiation Phase

This is the first phase where a project is proposed. The proposal form requests information at a relatively high level, however it does require that significant consideration is given to the activity. It is expected that at this stage the project proposal form will not reach Executive Board without having the prior approval of the Project Sponsor, which in the main will be the line manager of the project proposer. This may be different depending on the size of the project or its cross college impact.

The attached proposal form once approved will be followed up by a Project Initiation Document. (PID) This document begins to flesh out the detail of the project, partner selection and should give greater insight into resources and other costs. It may be that at this stage, the project is deemed not to be viable so it may be withdrawn at this stage. Once the PID is approved with all known costs, resources, risks and dependencies the project will enter the implementation phase.

2.11.5.2 Implementation Phase

The implementation phase allows for project management where governance of the project is by a Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC is chaired by the project sponsor. The purpose of the PSC is to monitor progress, approve change management of the agreed plan and make decisions/remove any barriers to the success of the project. It may require escalation to Executive Board or Finance Sub Committee depending on the nature of the change.

Project reporting must also be conducted on a weekly basis with the Project Manager and monthly to the Steering Committee and primarily by exception and evaluation of the project risk register.

2.11.5.3 Project Evaluation Phase

Once complete, the project will be evaluated based on the deliverables in the initial charter, initial plans and costs. Feedback from the process will inform future projects and practice. The Project Steering Group will authorise final signoff of project completion.

2.11.5.4 Overall Management of Projects

Management of a register of projects will be explored using the tools available on the College Portal. This will allow high level overview of all projects underway and their status.

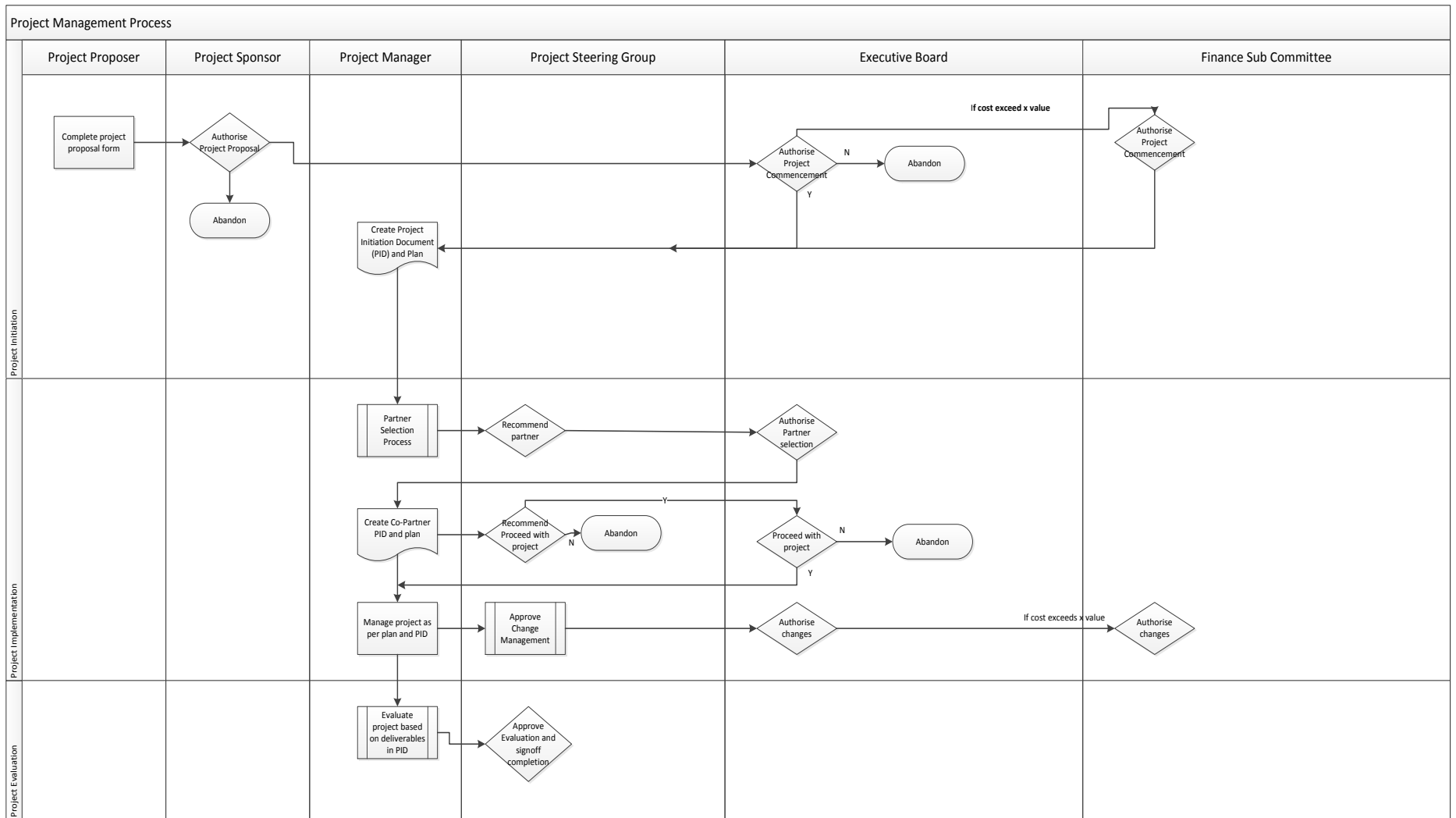


Figure 2-5: Project Authorisation and Management Process

2.12 SERVICE AND SUPPORT FUNCTION QUALITY SYSTEM

NCI's QAES is reflective of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, 2015 (ESG) published by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). In order to support the academic activities of the College, each of the administrative and support functions must also engage in systematic evaluation of its services and operations. This must be completed by each function once every five years or as directed by Academic Council and/or the Executive Group.

2.12.1 The Evaluation Process

Whilst recognising the diversity of functions that support academic activities, the evaluation process will follow these guidelines:

- Creation of Terms of Reference for the review
- The self-evaluation process
- Production of the self-evaluation report and supporting documentation
- Peer review group visit
- Production of peer review group report
- Response to the peer review group report
- Follow up report one year later

2.12.2 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference should address evaluation of the following:

- a. Strategic direction of the function
- b. Organisation and Management of the Function
- c. **Functions' services to internal/external stakeholders** as appropriate
- d. The use of evidence to support decision making
- e. Cross College engagement and communication
- f. How the function supports compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) and QOI core and topic specific quality assurance guidelines.

2.12.2.1 Strategic Direction of the Function

Functions should evaluate their strategy and its alignment to the strategy of the College.

2.12.2.2 Organisation and Management of the Function

The staffing complement and structure should be evaluated to ensure that it is fit for purpose and supports the activities of the function. Standard operating procedures should be identified, reviewed and any gaps should be identified. Staff development should also be evaluated. Existing quality assurance procedures should be described with a commentary on their effectiveness or otherwise.

2.12.2.3 Services to Internal/External Stakeholders as appropriate

Each function should evaluate the user experience of the function, both internal and external.

2.12.2.4 Use of Evidence to Support Decision Making

Each function should evaluate how decisions are made, the information used to make the decisions and the quality and source of this information.

2.12.2.5 Internal and External Engagement

The contribution of the function to College should be reviewed e.g. participation in committee structures, reviews etc. The function should also consider how it engages with external agencies, its contribution to external bodies etc.

2.12.2.6 Compliance with European Standards & Guidelines (ESG)

In evaluating the preceding terms of reference, functions should refer to the ESG and articulate where appropriate how these are supported e.g. public information, assurance of appropriate learner supports, use of evidence based decision making.

2.12.3 Self-Evaluation Process

Functions are guided to use the self-evaluation methodology described in ***A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities*** (IUQB, 2007, p47). The process² itself should:

- Be conducted in partnership in a manner that promotes innovation and improvement
- Add value to the College and the function and minimise overhead
- Be conducted in an open and transparent manner
- Be evidence based
- Reflect national and international best practice
- Should involve all stakeholders including learners

The process should address five areas:

- a. What are you trying to do?
- b. How are you trying to do it?
- c. How do you know it works?
- d. What requires change in order to improve?
- e. How and when will this change be implemented?

2.12.3.1 Suggested Approaches to Evaluation

- SWOT analysis

² Adapted from HETAC (2008) Supplementary Guidelines for the Review of the Effectiveness

- Survey of users using questionnaires
- Focus groups
- Interviewing key stakeholders
- Benchmarking with similar service providers, national and international.
- Review of literature, reports and good practice guidelines in the area of practice under review.

2.12.3.2 Steering Committee

Each process should have a steering committee which will normally be chaired by the Head of Function. The Committee will oversee the progress of the evaluation and act as liaison to Academic Council and Executive Group. The QASS Office will provide consultative services to this committee as required. These services will include:

- Facilitation of workshops
- Facilitation of focus groups
- Assistance with project planning for the self-evaluation process
- Submission documentation review and proofing
- Training on document management
- Project planning of the change implementation process

2.12.3.3 Timeline of the Process

The process should normally take no longer than nine months from initiation to completion of the response to the panel review group. Any plan will take the resources available for the review process into consideration at the commencement of the process and timelines will be adjusted accordingly.

2.12.3.4 Outputs of the Process

The following outputs should be available at the completion of the self-evaluation process:

- a. Self-evaluation document of c. 15-20 pages
- b. Evidence from the process e.g. questionnaire evaluation, sub group reports and deliberations, standard operating procedures etc.
- c. Action plan outlining actions and timelines for implementation (see template)

2.12.4 Peer Review Group³

The Peer Review Group (PRG) will visit the function which has prepared the self-evaluation report.

2.12.4.1 Membership & Selection of the Peer Review Group

The PRG will normally consist of at least three external experts who are capable of evaluating the function and to make national and international comparisons. The group

³ Adapted from IUQB(2007) A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities. Concerted Action for Institutional Improvement. Dublin 2nd edition.

may also include senior staff of the College not directly associated with the function, one of who will normally act as rapporteur. The review group should be independent and should not include existing clients, external examiners or any person currently associated with the function.

2.12.4.2 Objectives of the Peer Review Group

- a. Clarify and verify details in the self-assessment report
- b. Verify how well the aims and objectives of the function are fulfilled, having regard to the available resources, comment on the appropriateness of the functions mission, objectives and strategic plan.
- c. Confirm identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats outlined in the self-evaluation report.
- d. Discussed perceived strengths or weaknesses not identified in the self-evaluation report
- e. Check suitability of the working environment.
- f. Comment on the recommendations for improvement proposed by the function.
- g. Make any additional recommendations for improvement as appropriate but with due recognition of the resource implications of any such recommendations.

2.12.4.3 Functions of the Peer Review Group

- a. Study the assessment report.
- b. Visit the function over a period of normally 1 day to meet staff, senior staff and representatives of the users of the function as appropriate.
- c. Clarify and verify details in the self-assessment report.
- d. Review the activities of the function in the light of the self-assessment report.
- e. Prepare a draft report and orally present the main findings at the end of the visit.
- f. Write the peer review group report.

2.12.4.4 Contact with the Peer Review Group

The QASS Office contacts the nominated members of the PRG in order to confirm their participation and independence. The QASS office will send all documentation and act as liaison between the review group and function being evaluated. Documentation will include a brief outline of the College and the terms of reference for the review. The QASS office may meet with the Chair of the review group prior to the review event in order to clarify issues or ascertain if additional information is required.

2.12.4.5 Structure of the Site Visit

The structure and the timetable for the site visit are organised in conjunction with the function and the PRG. Stakeholders who will meet the review group are selected by means of a consultation process with the QASS office.

The PRG usually meets with:

- a. The Head of Function and members of staff of the unit under review

- b. Users and other stakeholders of the function

It will also view the facilities of the function and completes the first draft of the report and orally present its principal findings and recommendations to the staff of the function.

2.12.4.6 Peer Review Group Report

The PRG Report should be expressed in a formative manner recommending improvements that will encourage quality enhancement. The PRG will be asked in their report to:

- Confirm and comment on the details of the self-evaluation report
- Provide an overview of the present state of the function under review
- **Comment briefly on each aspect of the function's activities**
- Acknowledge achievement and examples of good practice where they exist
- Unambiguously point out any deficiencies or inadequacies in management or operations that may be improved or eliminated
- Identify critical resource limitations, if any, that may impede improvement
- Comment on the action and implementation plan that the function has proposed in the self-evaluation report
- Emphasise recommendations for improvement that the PRG consider appropriate

The report should be written as an independent document and categorise deficiencies as:

- Strategic, i.e. involving College policy, regulation or practice, dependencies on other functions;
- Due to limited resources; or
- Caused by poor management, policies or operations within the function that can be rectified within existing resources

A template for the report will be provided by the QASS office as an aid to the PRG and to ensure that all major aspects are covered. The report may include other issues that the PRG deems appropriate.

A draft report will be forwarded to the Head of the Function and other members in order to correct any errors of fact. The final report is then circulated to the Function for consideration and response. This response should be completed within six weeks of the receipt of the final report. The report and response will then be circulated to Academic Council/Executive Board and Governing Body. This will include a presentation by the function evaluated.

2.12.4.7 Publication of the Report

The documentation will be made public on the College website.

2.12.4.8 Ongoing Monitoring

The function reviewed should prepare a report for Academic Council/Executive Group a year after the production of the response report outlining progress against the action and implementation plan. This report should include a commentary on any change circumstances, reasons for achieving plans ahead or behind target or any changed priorities.

IUQB (2007) *A framework for quality in Irish Universities. Concerted action for continuous*

improvement. Dublin. 2nd edition. Downloaded from
<http://www.iuqb.ie/GetAttachment.aspx?id=9fd43f6e-8514-4f25-a069-87e822ad3e0a>
(accessed Sept 2011)