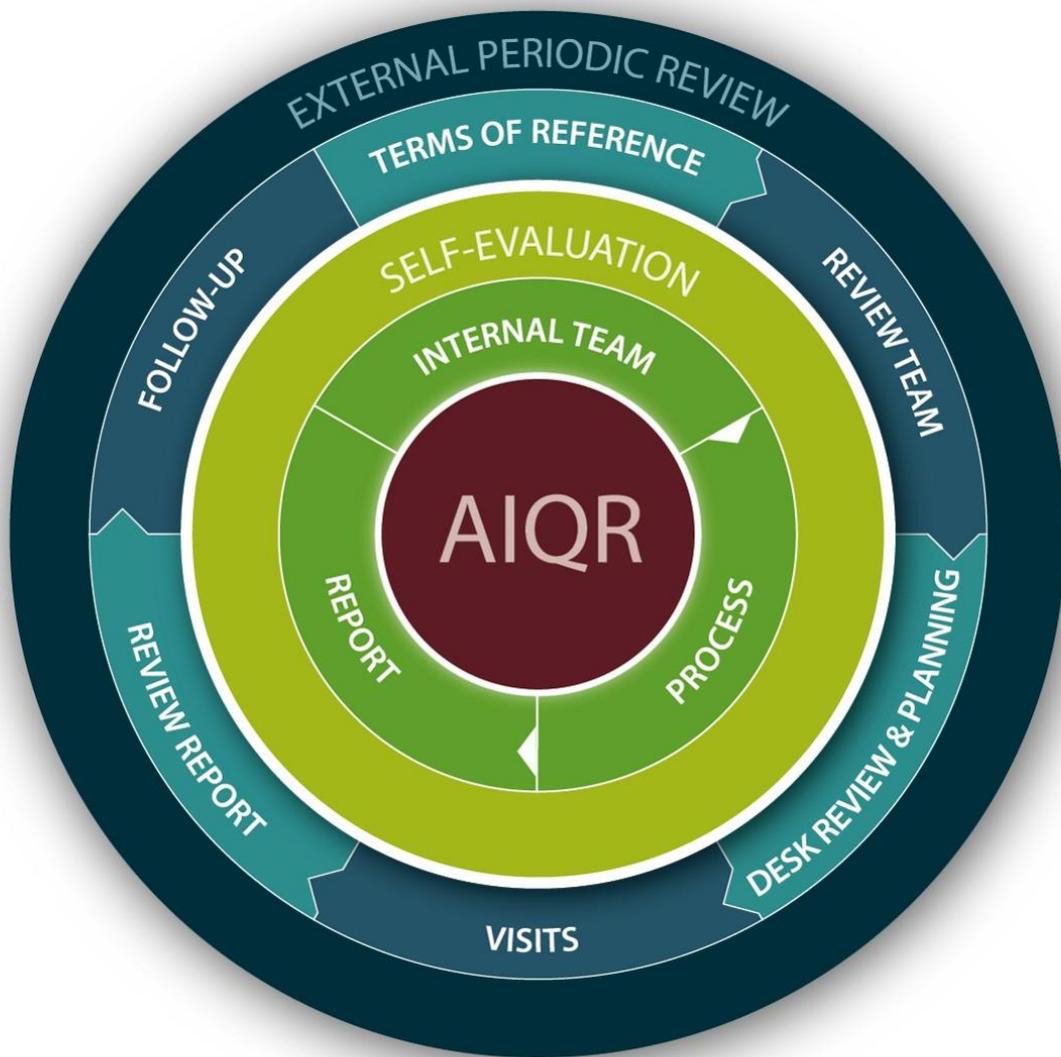


Limerick Institute of Technology

Annual Institutional Quality Assurance Report 2017

Based on the reporting period 1 September 2015 – 31 August 2016



The Cyclical Review Process

Please enter a brief synopsis of the overarching institution quality policy which sets out the links between QA policy and procedures and the strategy and strategic management of the institution.

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

LIT staff members are aware of national and international best practice in academia and in the profession (*LIT Vision and Strategy to 2020*, p. 17).

http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/LIT_Vision_and%20Strategy%20to_2020_FINAL%2030%20March%202011.pdf
LIT's QA documentation has been collected and collated into the *LIT Quality Assurance Handbook*.

The *LIT Quality Assurance Handbook* is annually reviewed, updated, and approved by Academic Council. As a consequence, relevant content areas are continuously improved through periodic reviews to assure their comprehensiveness, adequacy, and completeness. They are centrally maintained by the LIT Academic Council Sub-Committee on Academic Quality. The *LIT Quality Assurance Handbook* document is published in full on the LIT intranet.

The *LIT Quality Assurance Handbook* has been submitted to QQI to support its delegated authority and institutional review processes. This is required under ESG 1.1.

The *LIT Quality Policy* is included in the *LIT Quality Assurance Handbook*. The Quality Policy was revised and approved by Academic Council on 2nd October 2015. Details are available at:

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/Quality%20Policy%20Statement.pdf>

LIT has an agreed *Mission-Based Performance Compact* with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) that is dovetailed with *LIT's Strategy and Vision 2020*. The Compact has identified a number of quantitative and qualitative performance objectives and metrics which positively contribute to the enhancement of quality in LIT's strategic, tactical and operational planning. LIT is required to report annually to the HEA on these metrics to secure part of its ongoing funding. LIT has been deemed a "self-aware, reflective and mature Institution (HEA comment on LIT's Compact, March 2014). LIT has been externally assessed as having a "highly effective" quality system, having uniquely achieved a score of 5 out of 5 under the Institutional Review process (HETAC/QQI). LIT is a member of the Federated Limerick Graduate School (FLAGS) with University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College. Within FLAGS the University of Limerick carried out a Research Accreditation of LIT Level 10 programmes. UL's Academic Council has approved LIT as a Linked Provider with the authority to UL doctorate degree awards.

The key HEA performance objectives, and related metric categories, relate to:

- LIT students
- LIT teaching
- LIT student supports
- LIT knowledge transfer – Research
- LIT knowledge transfer – Enterprise Development
- LIT staff
- LIT places
- LIT funds.

Reference to specific qualitative and quantitative objectives in each of the respective areas outlined above are reflected in **Part 1 – AIQR** response by LIT. LIT's evaluation of its performance and achievement of these respective objectives, as measured by metrics, are also identified **Part 2 – AIQR** response by LIT.

Please enter a brief description of institution-level quality assurance decision-making fora.

LIT's Academic Council, by statute, maintains academic standards within the Institute. The Council is committed to continuous improvement with new initiatives being continuously designed and implemented to embed quality policies and practices throughout its operations.

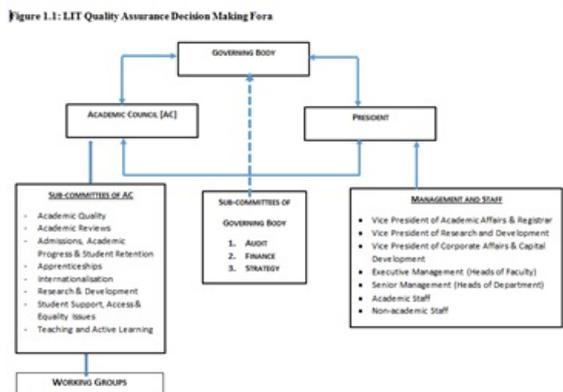
LIT's Academic Council Documentation 2014-2016 includes the Constitution, Membership, Sub-Committees, etc. ESG standards are referenced.
<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/Academic%20Council%20Documentation%202014%20-%202016.pdf>

The Academic Council has approved the establishment of Faculty/School Boards, Department Boards, and Programme Boards. The terms of reference of each are listed in *ACRP, Section 2: Management of the Curriculum*.

Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes Academic Year 2016/2017 (ACRP)

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/AcademicCouncilRegulationsandProceduresforTaughtProgrammes.pdf>

A pictorial summary of LIT's quality assurance decision making fora are captured in Figure 1.1 below:



Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Programme Design and Approval?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Programme Design and Approval

The Academic Council has approved regulations and procedures for the design and approval of taught programmes. These are consistent with ESG 1.2. The details are provided in *ACRP, Section 3: Development and Review of Programmes & Modules*.

Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes Academic Year 2016/2017 (ACRP)

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/AcademicCouncilRegulationsandProceduresforTaughtProgrammes.pdf>

The use of Academic Module Manager software for programme development supports the alignment of programmes to the ESG standards, NFQ levels and QQI award standards. These regulations and procedures are consistent with the *QQI Assessment and Standards (revised 2013)*.

LIT's - HEA Compact Performance Objectives for the reporting period 2015/16 also refer, namely:

- o Having Integrated Art and Design Teacher Education programme into National Institute of Studies in Education, LIT and UL jointly offered this programme with delivery across both institutions. The first cohort of graduates was conferred in 2016 with an LIT/UL Joint Award.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Programme Delivery and Assessment?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Programme Delivery and Assessment

The Academic Council has approved regulations and procedures for the delivery and assessment of programmes. LIT's programme consistent with these regulations and procedures and ESG 1.3.

Full details of LIT's Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes Academic Year 2016/2017 (ACRP) are available at:

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/AcademicCouncilRegulationsandProceduresforTaughtProgrammes.pdf>

The specific details related to the QA policies and procedures for the design and programmes are contained in *ACRP, Section 4: Assessment Regulations for Taught Programmes*.

These LIT regulations and procedures are consistent with the *QQI Assessment and Standards (revised 2013)*.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Research Quality?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Research Quality

The Academic Council has approved regulations and procedures for the design, approval, delivery and assessment of research programmes. Full details of LIT's Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Research Programmes are available at:

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Pages/Quality%20Assurance.aspx>

These regulations are currently under review in order to align the regulations and procedures with those of the University of Limerick. The Institute has reached an agreement with the University of Limerick and with Mary Immaculate College, as part of LIT membership of the Shannon Consortium with these Institutions, on the formation of the *Federated Limerick Graduate School*.

LIT's - HEA Compact Performance Objectives for the reporting period **2015/16** also refer, namely:

- 5.4.1: Increase post-graduate research opportunities in line with ambitions
- 5.4.2: Improve LIT's academic standing as a provider of research in niche areas
- 5.4.3: Successfully bid for external, non-exchequer research funding
- 5.4.4: Extend the collaborations within the Shannon Consortium.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Student Lifecycle?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Student Lifecycle

The Academic Council has approved regulations and procedures for admissions, transfer, progression, recognition and certification. These are consistent with ESG 1.4 and the QCI policy on Access, Transfer and Progression (updated 2015).

Cognisant of the national policy on Access, Transfer and Progression, LIT offers learners access and 'ladders of learning' progression pathways into and along the *National Framework of Qualifications* from Level 6-9 and Level 10. Within these pathways, flexible modular options are available for learners such as multiple entry points, electives, and part time and flexible study options. The *Academic Council Sub-Committee for Student Support, Access & Equality Issues* and the *Academic Council Sub-Committee for Admissions, Academic Progress and Student Retention* develop and address, through their policies and initiatives, quality assurance procedures related to the student lifecycle.

Academic Council and the Sub-Committees include student members, as per Academic Council Bylaw 1: Sub-Committees of Academic Council in the Academic Council Documentation 2014-2016.

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/Academic%20Council%20Documentation%202014%20-%202016.pdf>

LIT's- HEA

Compact Performance Objectives for the reporting period 2015/16 also refer, namely:

1. 5.2.1: Maintain market share in a growing demographic, supporting participation levels under national policy
2. 5.2.2: Continue to equal or exceed national benchmarks for % of entrants under-represented groups in Higher Education
3. 5.2.4: Enhance progression routes from PLC/Further Education sectors
4. 5.3.1: Achieve total enrolments and discipline mix of new entrants as set out in HEA Compact Agreement
5. 5.3.4: Improve first year and Institute overall progression rates year on year
6. 5.3.6: Provide uniform standards of student services across all campuses
7. 5.6.1: Increase intake of non-EU students.

Access:

LIT is committed to promoting equitable access to and successful participation in higher education for all members of society. It has a successful record in widening participation to

higher education, as is evident by the diversity of its student population. Through the work of the LIT Access Service, targeted strategies and initiatives are delivered to facilitate entry to and successful participation in higher education for underrepresented students. Primarily, these include:

- Students who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Students with a Disability and/or Specific Learning Difficulty
- Mature Students
- Members of the Travelling Community and Ethnic Minorities

Admissions:

The Admissions criteria for each programme are provided in the LIT Prospectus and are, for example, consistent with second-level qualifications for entry.

Chapters 1-4 of the Admissions Office Policies and Procedures (AOPP) outline the operational admissions procedures and the various categories of students entering LIT.

To assure the quality of LIT's induction processes, a Student Handbook is provided to all new entrants to ease their entry to third level education in LIT. In addition to the structured, activity-based Induction Programme that is delivered to LIT's new entrants in their first weeks of study, this handbook provides details related to LIT's:

- Operations (calendars, maps etc.)
- Student categories (Mature, International, Disabled etc.)
- Student Support services (Health, Chaplaincy, Counselling, Careers, Access, Disability, Sport, Accommodation, Transport, Catering)
- Learning Support services (Tuition in specific discipline areas including Maths, IT, Science; Peer Assisted Learning; Study Guides; learning related workshops including study skills, examination techniques, academic writing)
- Library and Information Resources services
- Computer services (including Moodle, VLEs)
- Health and Safety supports
- Relevant policies and procedures

As part of LIT's QA processes, this handbook and LIT's programme of induction are reviewed annually by the Student Services Unit of LIT.

Transfer:

The transfer criteria are specified in *Chapter 8 of the Admissions Office Policies and Procedures* document.

Progression:

The progression criteria are specified in *Chapter 8 of the Admissions Office Policies and Procedures* document.

Recognition of Learning (RPL):

○

LIT recognises the qualifications and prior learning of students. The related regulations and procedures are outlined in *ACRP, Section 5*:

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedures. Details are also provided in the Student Handbook on the treatment of prior learning of students, and the implications for entry and exemptions.

Certification:

The regulations and procedures for certification are outlined in *ACRP, Section 4.3: Standards for Awards at Different Classifications.*

Information relevant to Admissions, Transfer, Recognition, Progression and Certification is provided in detail to students in the LIT Prospectus, Student Handbook and on its website.

LIT Prospectus2017:

<http://www.lit.ie/Prospectus/LITProspectus/default.aspx>

LIT StudentHandbook2017:

<http://www.lit.ie/Prospectus/StudentHandbook>

Regulations and procedures related to Access, Progression, Recognition of Prior Learning and Certification of Awards are also outlined in LIT's Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes Academic Year 2016/2017 (ACRP)

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/AcademicCouncilRegulationsandProceduresforTaughtProgrammes.pdf>

The Institute, through the Academic Council, adheres to the national quality standards and admissions norms for the provision of student supports. The expectations and responsibilities for students are described in LIT's Student Charter.

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/Students-Charter-2014-2017.pdf>

-

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Teaching Staff?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Teaching Staff

LIT has a range of approved policies and procedures for academic staff, which are consistent with ESG 1.5. The Academic Council has a *Sub-Committee on Teaching and Active Learning* with specific terms of reference to assure the quality of its teaching and learning policies and practices.

Competence:

LIT works closely with the *HEA National Forum for Teaching and Learning* and with the Teaching and Learning Champions in each institution across the Shannon Consortium.

LIT organises a range of staff development events for *Teaching and Active Learning*, including the *Conversations in the Curriculum* talks. These events are open to and attended by staff from across the Shannon Consortium. Other staff development events include staff development days held in February and September annually which are designed to develop the competence of teaching amongst LIT academic staff.

Recruitment:

HR recruitment policies are consistent with the approved norms for the sector, including the conditions laid out in the Employment Control Framework operating in the public sector. All recruitment is supported by the definition of job specifications. Selection and recruitment practices are regulated and controlled in line with the State's governance requirements.

Development:

LIT maintains an *Employee Handbook* which assures the quality of its policies and procedures related to: (i) Staff supports and services, (ii) HR practices, (iii) Career Progression. LIT implements annually an approved *Performance Management Development Systems* (PMDS) and *Training Development Plans* (TDP) unique to the respective cohorts of its employees. Specifically, in relation to employee development, LIT maintains a *Continued Professional Development Policy*, which is available to all LIT staff via its intranet. This identifies the policies and procedures related to various types of development for LIT staff including short, medium and longer duration type development and educational programmes.

LIT's- HEA Compact Performance Objectives for the reporting period **2015/16** also refer, namely:

- (i) 5.4.2:
Increase postgraduate supervision capacity within LIT through recruitment and CPD

- (ii) 5.6.3:
Increase international staff mobility.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Teaching and Learning?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Teaching and Learning

LIT's Vision and Strategy 2020 highlights its mission and values that ensure it prepares learners for fulfilling and challenging futures, fostering the professional, intellectual, social, cultural and personal development of the individual. The hallmark of LIT's educational philosophy is **Active Learning** which is described in its **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy** document (TLA). This philosophy is aimed both at the acquisition of knowledge and a deep understanding and competency in the core area of study for the student, in addition to the acquisition of generic skills so that LIT produces rounded graduates. Active learning in LIT is a strategy which encourages students to be active participants in the learning process and allows them to take ownership of their own education. Connecting theory and practice, students apply their learning and develop their understanding through a range of active methods including the usage of case studies, problem solving exercises, work-placement, reflection, and other activities both on and off campus. As an outcome, graduates are equipped to continuously develop academically, personally and professionally. LIT continues to embed and implement this strategy in academic programme delivery and development across the wider organisation. (**LIT Vision and Strategy to 2020**, pg. 15)

LIT's- HEA Compact Performance Objectives for the reporting period **2015/16** also refer, namely:

- (i) 5.3.2: Continue to embed active learning strategies in curriculum and assessment under national policy
- (ii) 5.3.3: Maintain and enhance positive student perceptions of LIT, as measured by external benchmarks (**Irish Survey of Student Engagement & EU Student Barometer Study**)
- (iii) 5.6.2: Increase numbers of international student outbound exchanges and improve ratio to inbound
- (iv) 5.6.4: Increase international student work placements
- (v) 5.3.5: Ensure LIT graduates compete successfully in the employment market as reflected in the **First Destinations Survey**.
- (vi) 5.2.3: Increase number of flexible learners (including online and remote)

The Academic Council has approved its Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy. A Working Group has been established by Academic Council to review and revise the existing document. The work of this Working Group is on-going.

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/LIT%20Teaching%20Learning%20and%20Assessment%20Strategy%20Approved%20AC%202nd%20March%202012.pdf>

External examining verifies that the content, teaching, and assessment methods and their standards are appropriate for the nature and level of the academic award being reviewed. Feedback is provided annually on the quality of learning via external examiner reports, which are reviewed by the Academic Council Sub-Committee on Academic Quality. Any issues raised by external examiners are returned via Faculty and Department management to relevant staff members for identified action and response. Full details of LIT's External Examiner Policy are available at:

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/External%20Examiner%20Policy%202014%20-%202017.pdf>

LIT participates in the **Irish Survey on Student Engagement (ISSE)**. This is an annual, externally validated, national survey which measures and reports on LIT's performance re: teaching and learning as reported by targeted LIT students (first year and final year undergraduate and post-graduate) respondents. LIT results are notified to LIT's Academic Council annually and issued to relevant sub-committees of Academic Council and Faculties/Departments to address the results reported on teaching and learning, where appropriate, through their policies, initiatives, and activities.

Programme Boards monitor the student's assessment by module and programme. They routinely monitor the teaching and learning of modules and programmes in line with **LITs Academic Council Regulation and Procedures: Section 3.7 Programme Reporting**.

LIT has a policy of inclusion of work placement, where appropriate, in programme design and delivery. This allows for assurance of the learning achieved by students via its application in the workplace.

[Flexible Learning Department](#)

The Department of Flexible Learning, on behalf of LIT continued to work with the Shannon Consortium (UL and MIC) to implement the Take1Step programme of activities in 2015/16. The Take1Step programme (www.t1step.ie) was funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and involved a range of staff and student focused workshops and events to improve digital skills. Staff Development Day in LIT in February 2016 focused primarily on Digital Skills and further events throughout the consortium were recorded and resources made available on the www.t1step.ie website. Resources were also provided to Academic Departments to engage in a range of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) initiatives e.g. blended learning, development of digital resources etc. Furthermore student competitions were run to engage them in the initiative. Finally an Educational Technologies post was created and this person, positioned within the Computer Services Department, worked with Academic Departments to implement a range of TEL initiatives.

LIT launched its Staff CPD on-line programme focused on skills and knowledge development on Blended Learning in June 2016. This resources is available to all academic staff and has been developed by Epiguem, now part of Oxford University Press, who are world leaders in the development of on-line programmes which support staff development in various areas. An outline of the programme, which is now integrated into LITs VLE, is available at <https://www.epiguem.com/courses/teaching/blended-learning/>

A specific series of resources on the Staff Portal has recently included a Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Section which provides access to resources and materials to support faculty in the use of TEL in their teaching

<http://staffportal.lit.ie/Services/ComputerServices/TeachingResources/default.aspx> ;

LIT is represented on the Board of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and makes a strong contribution to National Forum developments and to the scholarship of teaching and learning. A specialist Department of Quality Teaching and Learning has been established within LIT. LIT's staff in this department work closely with their colleagues in the Teaching and Learning Centres in the Shannon Consortium partner institutions (UL & MIC). LIT has a teaching and learning champion contracted to work with the National Forum. The Institute participates in the national Teaching Excellence Awards and locally in the Peer Observation programme. The LIT Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy is undergoing a triennial review. Internal Academic Staff Development Days are organised on three days per year. These days focus on staff development requirements identified in the annual academic staff survey.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure in place for Resources and Support?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Resources and Support

Within budgetary requirements, the Institute is strongly committed to the provision of appropriate resources for all programmes. Resourcing is consistent with the provisions of ESG 1.6.

The use of Academic Module Manager software for programme development supports the identification of resource requirements for the delivery of each module and each programme. During module definition and validation these requirements are explicitly listed and reviewed. Relevant details are provided in ACRP Section Three.

During programme validations and revalidations, resources are considered, in line with the validation criteria for a programme to be viable. *LIT Academic Council Regulations and Procedures: Section*

3.2: Development and Validation of New Major Awards, refers. Any deficit is identified and reported to Academic Council.

The Institute endeavours to continuously improve available resources. The academic, social and cultural experience of the student is central to the ongoing development of its resources. For example, the Institute recognises the need for student academic support; the services of a Learning Support Unit are available free to all students. Details of supports for students are described in the Student Handbook.
<http://www.lit.ie/Prospectus/StudentHandbook/default.aspx>

The Institute is a growing and multi-campus institution. An additional campus at Coonagh, Limerick is to be acquired in 2017. Such infrastructural developments will provide for the expansion and improvement of the learning resources available to LIT students

LIT Library and Information Resource Centres:

LIT's Library Services have attracted over €8million in EU funding over the past ten years for the rollout of international library literacy projects and continued to rollout these projects in 2015/16. The quality and relevance of LIT's Library resources are ensured and informed by LIT Library's Collection Development Policy (CDP), which provides a framework for the collection management – acquisition, storage, de-selection of library items in consultation with academic staff. The quality of LIT's library services is enhanced by library representation on a number of academic sub-committees, including the sub-committee on Academic Reviews which ensures that additional library resources are made available to support new academic programmes in the Institute. LIT Library and Information Resource Centres not only provide quality information resources but are committed to ensuring students possess the core skills to locate and access the correct information when and where they need it, and the

supplementary skills to know how to evaluate and use the information effectively and ethically. LIT library supports these goals through its annual library induction programmes and our 'Learning to Learn – Information Literacy Skills Training Programme' which run across LIT library sites in co-operation with academic departments.

The LIT library is committed to seeking out new and innovative quality library services to make library resources and services as accessible as possible on and off its campuses. New innovative services such as 'Library Anywhere' enables students access a range of library services from their Smart phones.

The Information Discovery service 'Summon' enables a 'single search' across multiple library resources, providing fast access to content such as e-Journals and e-Books. LIT Library also supports learning, teaching and research in the area of referencing, citation and avoiding plagiarism through its publication: *Write it Right: A guide to the Harvard Referencing System* .

LIT's- HEA Compact Performance Objectives for the reporting period 2015/16 also refer, namely:

- (i) 5.3.6: Provide uniform standards of student services across all campuses
- (ii) 5.7.1: Manage budget processes and priorities to ensure essential equipment and infrastructure is delivered
- (iii) 5.7.4: Increase the income generated from non-recurrent State grant resources –reducing the dependency on the State recurrent grant
- (iv) 5.7.5 Development of internal resource allocation model.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Information Management?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Information Management

The QA procedures for collecting, analysing and using relevant information about LIT's programmes and its activities are consistent with ESG 1.7.

The Academic Council has approved the establishment of Faculty/School Boards, Department Boards, Programme Boards and Staff/Student Liaison Groups for effective information management. The terms of reference for each are listed in *LIT's Academic Council Regulation and Procedures: Section 2: Management of the Curriculum*

http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/ACRP_1516_Part%201_AC_150619_Approved.pdf

For example, examination statistics, retentions rates, etc. are reviewed by Academic Council Sub-Committees and Programme Boards and actioned as appropriate.

LIT participates in the annual, nationwide survey in the higher education sector entitled the *Irish Survey on Student Engagement* (ISSE). This survey is targeted at First Year and Final Year undergraduate and post-graduate students. This is an externally validated, voluntary national survey of third level academic institutions in the University, Institute of Technology, and other provider sectors. Annual results are notified to LIT's Academic Council and issued to relevant sub-committees of Academic Council and Faculties/Departments to address the results reported, where appropriate, in their policies, initiatives, and activities.

The survey measures and reports on LIT's performance on a number of key engagement and outcome indices including:

Student Engagement:

- Academic challenge
- Active learning
- Student staff interaction
- Enriching educational experience
- Supportive learning environment
- Work integrated learning.

Student outcomes:

- Higher order thinking
- General learning outcomes
- General development outcomes
- Career readiness
- Overall satisfaction.

Academic Council has approved the establishment of industrial advisory committees in a range of disciplines within the Institute. These committees provide data, information, and evidence which is used by the Institute to inform the nature and content of new and existing educational programmes. Further details are available on this policy at:

[http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/Industrial Liaison Advisory Committee Policy.pdf](http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/Industrial_Liaison_Advisory_Committee_Policy.pdf)

LIT committed in 2015/16 to publish more of its programme validation, programmatic review, academic audit and AIQR reports on the LIT website.

**Do you have a Policy/Procedure
for Self-evaluation and
Monitoring?**

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Self-evaluation and Monitoring

The Academic Council has approved regulations and procedures for self-evaluation and monitoring. The regulations and procedures are consistent with ESG 1.9.

LIT implements 'feedback loops' to enable its self-evaluation processes. Formal structures that are utilised include: (i) Staff and Student Liaison Groups, (ii) Programme Boards, (iii) Sub-Committees of Academic Council, (iv) Programmatic Reviews, (v) Industrial Liaison Committees.

New LIT programmes are validated in alignment with ESG Standard 2.1. New programmes are additionally validated in accordance with *LIT's Academic Council Regulations and Procedures (ACRP) Section 3: Development and Review of Programmes and Modules*.

Specifically, the validation criteria include:

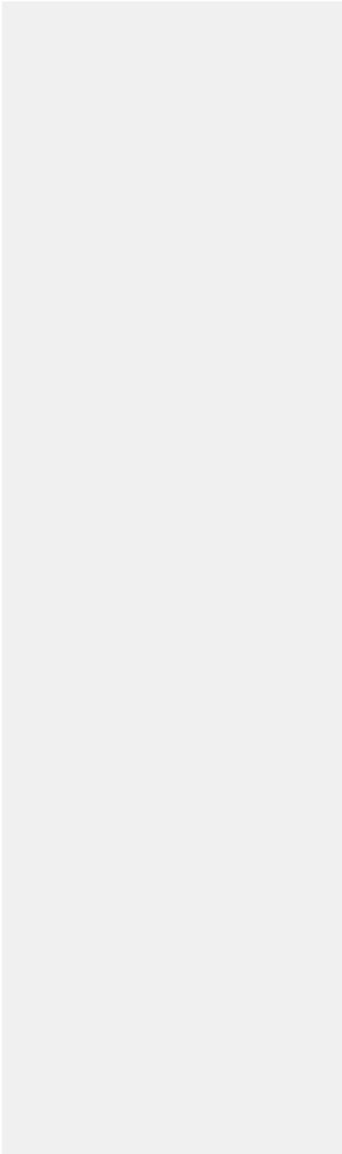
- **Standards:** The *minimum intended programme learning outcomes* must be consistent with the relevant *awards standards* and the *National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) award-type descriptors*.
- **Access standard:** The *prerequisite learning* for participation in the programme and any other assumptions relating to the programme's *target learners* must be explicit.
- **Learning:** The programme must enable its *target learners* to attain the *minimum intended programme learning outcomes* reliably and efficiently (in terms of learner effort). The concept of minimum intended programme learning outcomes and its relation to teaching, learning and assessment are in line with those identified by QQI's *Assessment and Standards* (Revised 2013).

All programmes are periodically reviewed in accordance with these regulations. Details are described in *LIT's Academic Council Regulations and Procedures: Section 3.8: Review of all Awards*.

http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/ACRP_1516_Part%201_AC_150619_Approved.pdf

In order to provide regular academic quality assurance for each LIT programme, programme reporting is carried out by the Programme Board, in line with *LIT's Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Section 3.7 Programme Reporting*

The validation and revalidation processes of academic programmes in LIT, includes a self-evaluation report (SER), an



internal review and an external review.
For example, the SER for a programmatic review includes a SWOT analysis.

LIT maintains a close and cordial working relationship with QQI. LIT has obtained delegated authority to make awards from QQI. The annual Order in Council maintained by LIT lists all of its approved programmes.

An institutional review of LIT is routinely conducted by QQI.

Annually, the Institute actively reviews the national and international QA policies and procedures and benchmarks its own policies and procedures against best practice. Any relevant changes are incorporated into LIT's own regulations and procedures with the approval of Academic Council.

Programme Boards monitor risk factors or incidents, which are reported and actioned.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) Mission-Based Performance Compact is the instrument through which it and the LIT agree on the institution's performance targets aligned to its mission, profile and strategy. LIT agreed a Mission-Based Performance Compact with the HEA in 2014 to cover the period 2014 to 2016. An annual compliance statement is required under the arrangements for the Mission-Based Performance Compact. This is being provided annually with actual and target figures reported under respective headings. The achievement and reporting on specific targets are identified under the relevant QA heading throughout Part 1 of LIT's AIQR response document.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Stakeholder Engagement?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Stakeholder Engagement

The LIT QA procedures for the involvement of external stakeholders in QA are consistent with ESG 1.1.

LIT's Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes: Section 3 Development and Review of Programmes and Modules identifies the formal inputs enabled during programme validations and revalidations from various stakeholders including industry, Alumni, professional bodies, etc.

Academic Council has approved the establishment of industrial advisory committees in a range of disciplines within the Institute.

http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/Industrial_Liaison_Advisory_Committee_Policy.pdf

LIT is committed to the professional accreditation of its programmes where appropriate. Accreditation panels routinely visit the Institute to review accredited programmes.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Engagement with other Bodies?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Engagement with other Bodies

The LIT QA procedures for the involvement of statutory and regulatory bodies and other QA and awarding bodies are consistent with ESG 1.1.

LIT's primary partner in the delivery of quality programmes is QQI.

QQI and NFQ standards are part of the LIT's Quality Assurance system and are included in the *LIT Quality Assurance Handbook*.

LIT has established associations with a range of nationally recognised professional bodies. Since LIT's early history of academic provision, many students have been prepared for external professional examinations and accreditation. Professional accreditation of a range of LIT's programmes, together with the entitlement for professional body examination exemptions and/or membership, provide students with a real competitive advantage in the employment market.

LIT has programme relevant arrangements with:

- Failte Ireland
- SOLAS (FAS)
- Chartered Accountants Ireland (CAI)
- The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
- Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)
- Certified Public Accountants (CPA)
- Irish Taxation Institute (ITI)
- Law Society of Ireland
- Institute of Public Administration (IPA)
- Marketing Institute of Ireland (MII)
- Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM)
- Association of Irish Festivals and Events (AOIFE)
- Sports Ireland
- Engineers Ireland
- Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI)
- Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)
- Chartered Institute of Civil Engineering Surveyors
- Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IoSH)
- Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE)
- Chartered Institute of Transportation and Logistics (CITL)
- Property Services Regulatory Authority (PSRA)
- The Teaching Council

The QA processes for professional accreditation are typically determined by the professional body adhering to QQI standards.

LIT was formed from schools of trades. Apprenticeship education remains an important part of the service of the Institute. This includes on-going development of Apprenticeship programmes as validated under QQI. There are close on-going links with SOLAS.

LIT's- HEA Compact Performance Objectives for the reporting period 2015/16 also refer, namely:

- (i) Put in place MOUs and governance structures for major alliances in the sector (Mid-West Regional Cluster prioritised)

- (ii) Shared and coordinated approach to the promotion of the region recognised by external stakeholders.

Two other strategic engagement arrangements in which LIT participates includes the **Mid-West Regional Skills Forum** and the **Shannon Consortium**:

The Mid-West Regional Skills Forum

The Mid-West Regional Skills Forum facilitates engagement between regional education and training providers, local authorities, local enterprise offices and relevant public and private sector organisations to support employers and job creation. A Mid-West Regional Skills Forum Manager has been appointed (an employee of LIT). Regular meetings of the Forum have been held since September 2015 with representation from LIT.

Shannon Consortium

Based upon a shared vision derived from strategic plans, national policy and regional/national skills needs, Limerick Institute of Technology, University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College have committed to a formalised alliance (Shannon Consortium). The Shannon Consortium spans across a defined range of core areas involving a programme of enhanced collaboration, co-operation and development. These areas are contributing towards enhanced and sustainable opportunities for current and future learners across the three organisations, aimed at benefitting industry and the wider community. The Shannon Consortium is led by the Steering Group comprising the three institutional Presidents with an independent chairperson. The work of the Consortium is directed by the Implementation Board which is jointly chaired by the three Registrars (Chief Academic Officers) of the three institutions. In addition to the three registrars, the Implementation Board has two further members nominated by each of the Presidents. The Steering Group and Implementation Board meet regularly throughout the academic year.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Provision and use of Public Information?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Provision and use of Public Information

The QA procedures for the provision of clear, accurate, up-to-date accessible information are consistent with the ESG 1.8.

The Institute provides a wide range of public information. The primary source for stakeholders is the LIT website.

The Institute publications include:

- LIT Annual Reports <http://www.lit.ie/Reports/default.aspx>
 - LIT Student Handbook <http://www.lit.ie/Prospectus/StudentHandbook>
 - LIT Undergraduate Prospectus <http://www.lit.ie/Prospectus/LITProspectus/default.aspx>
 - LIT Flexible Learning Handbooks <http://www.lit.ie/Prospectus/FLProspectus/default.aspx>
 - LIT Guide for International Students http://www.lit.ie/International/Docs/LIT_International_Guide_2016.pdf
-

Major QA documents, for example, The Academic

Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes (ACRP)

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/AcademicCouncilRegulationsandProceduresforTaughtProgrammes.pdf>

Please see www.lit.ie for further details.

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

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

Relevant national publications and reports are reviewed by relevant LIT personnel in the development, design and implementation of academic programmes. For example, *Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025* is actively used by LIT in the development and/or review of its academic programmes.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Linked Providers?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Linked Providers (DABs only)

The QA procedures for linked providers are consistent with ESG 1.1.

The Academic Council has approved regulations and procedures for collaborative provision of programmes.

LIT's Academic Council has approved a number of collaborations with national and international agencies, bodies and providers including:

- Atlantic Aviation
- Pallaskenry Agricultural College
- Gurteen Agricultural College
- Fáilte Ireland
- Mary Immaculate College
- Setanta College
- SOLAS
- University of Limerick
- Florida State University
- Yangzee University China

LIT has signed a number of MOUs with various providers regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for DA procedures for use of QQI award standards?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to DA procedures for use of QQI award standards (IoT's only)

The delegated authority procedures for the use of QQI Award Standards are described in the *LIT Quality Assurance Handbook*. The four key documents therein are:

- The Academic Council Regulations and Procedures for Taught Programmes (ACRP)
- The External Examiners Policy and Procedures for Taught Programmes
- The Student's Charter
- The LIT Research Degree Programme Regulations (under review)

Please see www.lit.ie for further details

Do you have a Policy/Procedure for Collaborative Provision?

Yes

Links for Policy/Procedure relating to Collaborative Provision

The QA procedures for collaborative provisions are consistent with ESG 1.1.

The Academic Council has approved policy and procedures for the collaborative provision of programmes. The policy "ensures that programmes delivered in collaboration are consistent with the Quality Standards expected of all LIT provision".

Further details are available at

http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/LIT_Policy_Collobarative_Provision_14-17_Approved_by_AC_20.06.14.pdf

PRSBs

14

Awarding Bodies

2

QA Bodies

0

Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	First Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Chartered Accountants Ireland, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland, Institute of Incorporated Public Accountants, Irish Taxation Institute, Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Second Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Association of Chartered Certified Accounts (ACCA), Certified Public Accountants (CPA).
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Business Computing
Next review year	2020
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Third Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Engineers Ireland
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BSc in Renewable Electrical Energy Systems BEng Industrial Automation & Robotic Systems BEng Electronic Engineering BSc (Hons) in Electronic Systems BSc (Hons) in Sustainable Electrical Power Systems LC250 Higher Certificate in Engineering in Civil and Environmental Engineering. LC251 BEng in Civil Engineering LC252 BSc (Hons) in Civil Engineering Management LC241 BSc (Hons) in Construction Management
Next review year	2018
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fourth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Chartered Institute of Building
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	LC241 BSc (Hons) in Construction Management LC252 BSc (Hons) in Civil Engineering Management LC243 BSc (Hons) in Quantity Surveying LC244 BSc in Sustainable & Renewable Energy A8244 Bsc in Energy Management (add-on)
Next review year	2020
Section: Arrangements with PRSBs, Awarding Bodies, QA Bodies	Fifth Set of Records
Type of Arrangement	PRSB
Name of the Body	Institute of Occupational Safety & Health
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	LC254 BSc in Construction Health and Safety
Next review year	2017
Joint research degrees	0

Joint/double/multiple awards	0
Collaborative programmes	0
Franchise programmes	0
Linked providers (DABs only)	2
Section: Collaborative Provision	First Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Linked providers (DABs only)
Name of the Body (Bodies)	Registration Council for Secondary Teachers
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	BBus (Hons) in Accounting & Finance;
Next review year	2017
Section: Collaborative Provision	Second Set of Records
Type of arrangement:	Linked providers (DABs only)
Name of the Body (Bodies)	University of Limerick
Programme Titles and Links to Publications	Level 10 Doctoral Programmes;
Next review year	2020
Articulation Agreements	12
Section: 1 Articulation Agreements	First Set of Records
Name of the Programme and Links to Publications	

LIT Links with Further Education Providers

Limerick Institute of Technology have agreed links with the following Schools:

1. Limerick College of Further Education
2. Central College Limerick
3. Nenagh Vocational School
4. Colaiste Mhuire, Askeaton
5. Ennistymon Vocational School
6. Abbeyleix Further Education Centre
7. Templemore College of Further Education
8. Mallow College of Further Education
9. St John's Central College
10. Waterford College of Further Education
11. Central Technical Institute Clonmel
12. Coláiste Stiofáin Naofa, Cork

Section: Internal Review Schedule

First Set of Records

Year

2015-2016

Areas/Units

Departments of Built Environment.

The programmes evaluated during the programmatic review event in the Department of Built Environment included:

- Masters of Science in Quantity Surveying (Sustainable Public Building) (Level 9)
- Masters of Science in Quantity Surveying (Sustainable Civil Engineering) (Level 9)
- Masters of Science in Quantity Surveying (Sustainable M&E Engineering) (Level 9)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Quantity Surveying (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Property Valuation & Management (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Civil Engineering Management (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Health & Safety (Level 8) (add-on)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Construction Management (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Built Environment (Stage 1-Undenominated) (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Energy Management (Built Environment) (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Science in Sustainable Building & Energy Engineering (Level 7)
- Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering (Level 7)
- Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering (Level 7) (add-on)
- Bachelor of Science in Construction Site Management (Level 7) (add-on)
- Bachelor of Science in Health & Safety (Level 7)
- Bachelor of Science in Management (Craft) (Level 7) (add-on)
- Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design & Technology (Level 7)
- Higher Certificate in Science in Construction (Level 6)
- Higher Certificate in Science in Construction Practice (Level 6)
- Higher Certificate in Arts in Interior Design & Technology (Level 6)
- Higher Certificate in Science in Property Valuation and Management (Level 6)
- Higher Certificate in Sustainable Building and Energy Engineering (Level 6)
- Higher Certificate in Engineering in Civil and Environmental Engineering (Level 6)
- Higher Certificate in Science in Property Valuation & Management (Level 6)
- Flexible Learning Programmes
 - o Building Information Modelling with Revit
 - o Certificate in Low Energy Building Construction
 - o Technology Enhanced Learning
 - o Construction Project Management
 - o Reflective Practice

Number

29

Link(s) to Publication(s)

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/LIT%20Programmatic%20Review%20Report%20Department%20of%20Built%20Environment%20May>

Section: Internal Review Schedule

Second Set of Records

Year

2015-2016

Areas/Units

Department of Information Technology:

The programmes evaluated during the programmatic review event in the Department of Information Technology included:

- Higher Diploma in Computing in Software Development (Level 8)
- Higher Diploma in Creative Multimedia Programming (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Software Development (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computing in Games Design and Development (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Business Information Systems (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Business with Computing (Add-On) (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computer Networks and System Management (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Interactive Digital Media (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Internet Systems Development (Add-On) (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Internet Systems Development (Level 8)
- Bachelor of Business in Business with Computing (Level 7)
- Bachelor of Science in Computing (Level 7)
- Bachelor of Science in Internet Systems Development (Level 7)
- Higher Certificate in Business, Business with Computing (Level 6)
- Higher Certificate in Computing in Software Development (Level 6)

Number

15

A piece in relation to the evolution of quality assurance and enhancement systems to support strategic objectives in the reporting period.

LIT's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures are implemented on all of its five campuses and learning centres across the counties of Limerick, Tipperary and Clare. These policies and procedures relevantly design, delivery and review of its academic programmes on the NFQ framework from Level 6 to Level 10, whilst also assuring quality across its craft apprenticeships, flexible learning and continuous education programmes.

LIT staff members are aware of national and international best practice in academia and in the profession (*Vision and Strategy to 2020*, p. 17).

http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/LIT_Vision_and%20Strategy%20to_2020_FINAL%2030%20March%2011.pdf

LIT's QA documentation has been collected and collated into the *LIT Quality Assurance*

The *LIT Quality Assurance Handbook* is annually reviewed, updated, and approved by consequence, specific content areas are continuously improved through periodic reviews to assure comprehensiveness, adequacy, and completeness. They are centrally maintained by the LIT Academic Council Sub-Committee on Academic Quality. The *LIT Quality Assurance Handbook* document is published in full on the LIT intranet.

The *LIT Quality Assurance Handbook* has been submitted to QQI to support its delegated authority and institutional review processes. This is required under ESG 1.1

The *LIT Quality Policy* is included in the *LIT Quality Assurance Handbook*. The Quality Policy was revised and approved by Academic Council on 2nd October 2015. Details are available at:

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/Quality%20Policy%20Statement.pdf>

LIT has an agreed *Mission-Based Performance Compact* with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) that is dovetailed with *LIT's Strategy and Vision 2020*. The Compact has identified a number of quantitative and qualitative performance objectives and metrics which directly contribute to the enhancement of strategic, tactical and operational planning. LIT is required to report annually to the HEA on these metrics to secure part of its ongoing funding. LIT has been deemed as a "self-aware, reflective and mature Institution (HEA comment on LIT's Compact, March 2014). LIT has been externally assessed as having a system, that is, it has uniquely achieved a score of 5 out of 5 under the Institutional Review process (HETAC/QQI).

The key HEA performance objectives, and related metric categories, relate to:

- LIT students
- LIT teaching
- LIT student supports
- LIT knowledge transfer – Research
- LIT knowledge transfer – Enterprise Development
- LIT staff
- LIT places
- LIT funds.

Reference to specific qualitative and quantitative objectives in each of the respective areas outlined above are reflected in the relevant **Part 1 – AIQR** response by LIT. LIT's evaluation of its performance and achievement of these respective objectives, as measured by metrics, are also identified in relevant areas of the response by LIT.

Significant specific changes (if any) to QA within the institution.

Academic Council approved changes to a number of documents during the 2015/2016 academic year, including the following:

- Academic Council Regulations and Procedures (ACRP) Part 1 14-15 (Approved by Academic Council June 15)
- Academic Council Regulations and Procedures (ACRP) Part 2 14-15 (Approved by Academic Council June 15)
- Quality Policy Statement (Approved by Academic Council - October 15)
- Quality Assurance Policy (Approved by Academic Council - October 15)
- Quality Assurance Handbook (Approved by Academic Council - October 2015)
- LIT Plan Related to the IHEQN (Approved by Academic Council - October 15)
- New Programme Guidelines (Approved by Academic Council - October 15)
- LIT External Examiners Policy & Procedures (Revised by Academic Council – October 15, December 15 and May 16)
- Academic Council Documentation 2014-2017 (Reviewed by Academic Council – December 15) – Addition of Apprenticeship Sub-Committee Terms of Reference.
- Terms of Reference of the Working Group on Student Retention (Approved by Academic Council - March 16)
- Definition of Desired Attributes of LIT Graduates (Approved by Academic Council – March 16)
- Academic Council Documentation 2014-2017 (Reviewed by Academic Council – March 16) – Amendment to the Terms of Reference of the Teaching & Active Learning Sub-Committee.
- Write it Right (A Guide to Harvard Referencing System) (Approved by Academic Council May 16)
- Governing Body Nominating Organisations (updated)

The Institute also conducted a two new programme validations and two programmatic reviews in the 2015/16 reporting period.

Institute Reviews:-

-

Programmatic Reviews 2015/2016

Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology

- Department of Built Environment
- Department of Information Technology

Programme Validations 2015/2016

Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology

- Department of Applied Social Sciences
- Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering

The Academic Council also received and reviewed the Annual Reports from the Faculties of the Institute.

The schedule of QA governance meetings for the period should be inserted here.

Governing Body Meeting Dates 2015/16 academic Year	
	<u>Meeting Dates and Times</u>
Governing Body Meeting	Tuesday, 15 th September 2015, 4.00pm
Governing Body Meeting	Tuesday, 27 th October 2015, 4.00pm
Governing Body Meeting	Tuesday, 14 th December 2015, 4.00pm
Governing Body Meeting	Tuesday, 23 rd February 2016, 4.00pm
Governing Body Meeting	Tuesday, 5 th April 2016, 4.00pm
Governing Body Meeting	Tuesday, 10 th May 2016, 4.00pm
Governing Body Meeting	Tuesday, 28 th June 2016, 4.00pm
Academic Council Meeting Dates 2015/16 academic Year	
	<u>Meeting Dates and Times</u>
Academic Council Meeting	Friday, 2nd October, 2015 at 2.00pm
Academic Council Meeting	Friday, 4th December, 2015, 2.00pm
Academic Council Meeting	Friday, 11 th March, 2016, 2.00pm
Academic Council Meeting	Friday, 6 th May 2016 2.00pm
Academic Council Meeting	Friday, 17 th June, 2016, 2.00pm
Academic Council Sub-Committees Meeting Dates 2015/16 academic Year	
<u>Sub-committee</u>	<u>Meeting Dates and Times</u>
Academic Reviews	Monday, 14 th September 2015, 2.00p.m.
Academic Quality	Wednesday 16 th September 2015, 11.00a.m.
Admissions, Academic Progress & Student Retention	Wednesday, 16 th September 2015, 2.00pm
Research & Development	Friday, 18 th September 2015,2.00p.m.
Student Support, Access & Equality Issues	Monday 12 th October 2015, 11.00am
Admissions, Academic Progress & Student Retention	Friday 23 rd October 2015, 11.00a.m.
Academic Reviews	Monday 9 th November 2015, 11.00am
Apprenticeship	Monday 9 th November 2015, 2.00pm
Academic Quality	Thursday 12 th November 2015, 11.00am
Teaching & Active Learning	Thursday, 12 th November 2015, 2.00pm
Research & Development	Wednesday 18th November 2015, 11.00a.m.
Internationalisation	Thursday 19 th November 2015, 11.00a.m.
Teaching & Active Learning	Friday 15 th January 2016,11.00a.m.
Student Support, Access & Equality Issues	Monday 18 th January 2016, 11.00a.m.
Admissions, Academic Progress & Student Retention	Wednesday 27th January 2016, 2.00p.m.
Academic Reviews	Wednesday 5 th February 2016, 11.00a.m
Academic Quality	Monday 15 th February 2016, 2.00p.m.
Research & Development	Tuesday, 16th February 2016, 10.00a.m.
Internationalisation	Thursday 18 th February 2016, 11.00am
Teaching & Active Learning	Friday 8 th April 2016, 11.00am

**PART 2 - Section 2:
Institution-led QA - Annual**

Reviews in the Reporting Period

**Area/Unit and links to
relevant publications**

The changes to LIT's Academic Council Regulations and Procedures (ACRP), following reviews in the reporting period 2015/16, and approved by Academic Council included:

Effective in the Academic Year 2015/2016:

- Revision of Section 6.2 Procedure Academic Council 12th Mar 2015
- Added a footnote on progression criteria to Section 4.2 Point 6(b) Academic Council 12th Mar 2015
- Revision of Section 3.2.9 Points 4 & 5 and Section 3.2.11 Academic Council 12th Mar 2015
- Added a new Section 4.1.2 Point 5(b) on Failed Elements and renumbered Point 5 Academic Council 13th May 2015
- Updated Section 4.4.2 Point 5 Academic Council 13th May 2015
- Reviewed Sections 4.7 to 4.14 and Section 7.6 Academic Council 19th June 2015

The changes in the other documentation are recorded in the minutes of the Academic Council as quoted earlier

**Links to published internal
reviews**

Second Set of Records

**Area/Unit and links to
relevant publications**

Programmatic Reviews

In May 2016 the Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology held the Department of Built Environment programmatic review. This review was conducted in line with QQI regulations and procedures.

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/LIT%20Programmatic%20Review%20Report%20D>

In June 2016 the Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology held the Department of Information Technology programmatic review. This review was also conducted in line with QQI regulations and procedures.

**Links to published internal
reviews**

Third Set of Records

**Area/Unit and links to
relevant publications**

Programmatic Validations 2015/2016:

In 2015/2016 programme validations took place in (i) the Department of Applied Social Science, and (ii) the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering in line with QQI regulations and procedures

Department of Applied Social Science

In November 2015 the following programme validations were conducted in line with QQI regulations and procedures:

- Master of Arts in Social Care Management (Level 9)
- Postgraduate Diploma in Social Care Management (Level 9)
- Postgraduate Certificate in Social Care Management (Level 9)

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/External%20Valid.pdf>;

Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering:

In June 2016 the following programme validation was conducted in line with QQI regulations and procedures:

- Bachelor of Engineering in Industrial Electrical Engineering (Apprenticeship) (Level 7)

<http://www.lit.ie/Reports/Documents/External%20Valid-1.pdf> ;

Links to published internal reviews

Fourth Set of Records

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications

SPECIAL PURPOSE AWARDS (MINOR) – PROPOSALS – GRANTED BY ACADEMIC COUNCIL (2015/16):

Certificate in Community Coaching

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty of Business & Humanities – Department of Sport and Finance for the development of the Certificate in Community Coaching as a Level 6, 20 Credit Special Purpose Award. (02.10.2015)

Certificate in Near Zero Energy Buildings

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty of Business & Humanities – Department of Flexible Learning for the development of the Certificate in Near Zero Energy Buildings as a Level 6, 20 Credit Special Purpose Award. (04.12.15)

Certificate in 3D Printing and Embedded Systems

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty of Business & Humanities – Department of Flexible Learning for the development of the Certificate in 3D Printing and Embedded Systems as a Level 6, 25 Credit Special Purpose Award. (04.12.15)

Certificate in Contemporary Marketing & Communications

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty of Business & Humanities – Department of Flexible Learning for the development of the Certificate in Contemporary Marketing & Communications as a Level 8, 10 Credit Special Purpose Award. (04.12.15)

Certificate in Aircraft Records Advanced Technician

Academic Council granted approval to the of Applied Science, Engineering & Technology – Department of Mechanical, Certificate in Aircraft Records Advanced Technician – Level 7, 10 Credit Special Purpose Award. (04.12.15)

Certificate in Electrical Technology

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering & Technology – Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering for the development of the Special Purpose Award (Level 6 – Certificate) in Electrical Technology (11.03.16)

Certificate in Jungian Psychology with Art Therapy

Academic Council granted approval to the School of Art & Design for the development of the Certificate in Jungian Psychology with Art Therapy as a Level 8, 10 Credit Special Purpose Award. (11.03.16)

Certificate in HRM & Organisational Behaviour

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty of Business & Humanities – Department of Flexible Learning for the development of the Certificate in HRM & Organisational Behaviour as a Level 8, 10 Credit Special Purpose Award. (17.06.16)

Certificate in Transition to Higher Education

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty of Business & Humanities – Department of Flexible Learning for the development of the Certificate in Transition to Higher Education as a Level 6, 20 Credit Special Purpose Award. (17.06.16)

Academic Council granted approval to the Faculty of Business & Humanities – Department of Flexible Learning for the development of the Certificate in HRM & Organisational Behaviour and the Certificate in Transition to Higher Education as a Level 6, 20 Credit Special Purpose Award. (17.06.16)

Links to published internal reviews

Fifth Set of Records

Area/Unit and links to relevant publications	<p>CHANGES TO APPROVED PROGRAMME SCHEDULES</p> <p>Changes to the Approved Programme Schedules for the following programmes were allowed post their implementation review, and approved by the Sub-Committee of Academic Reviews and Academic Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.Sc. in Medical Technology, • B.A. (Honours) in Community Development, • B.A. in Community Development • H.C. in Arts in Community Development
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Validation/Programme Approval	4
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Research Accreditation/Validation.	0
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Programme Review.	44
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of Research Review.	0
Number of internal approval/evaluations and reviews completed in respect of School/Department/Faculty Review.	10
Composition of Panels: % Internal	0
Composition of Panels: % National	94
Composition of Panels: % UK	0
Composition of Panels: % EU	3
Composition of Panels: % Student	3
Chair Profile: % Internal	0
Chair Profile: % Similar institution	100
Chair Profile: % Different institution	0
Chair Profile: % International	0

PART 2 - Section 3: Update on Institutional QA Overview

Other Implementation Factors

This institution can use this section to set out the ways in which data is used to support quality assurance and the management of the student learning experience.

The institution may choose to highlight in this section information relating to factors that have impacted on quality and quality assurance in the reporting period. These may be factors relating to national developments or initiatives, such as clusters/alliances/mergers, other external factors or intra-institutional factors.

Any other implementation issues of interest can be noted here.

The 2015 - 2016 Statistics for External Panel Members have shown that 41% were from Industry, 55% were from Academia and 3% were student representatives.

LIT Academic Council Regulations and Procedures (ACRP) provides for enrolled or formally enrolled learners in programme validation and programmatic review panels.

PART 3

Effectiveness and Impact

A commentary about the effectiveness of QA policies and procedures in the reporting period may be inserted here.

The Institute is committed to continuous improvement, reflective self-study and peer review in the operationalisation of its quality procedures and policies. Such self-reflection plays a pivotal role in monitoring the *effectiveness* of the quality of LIT's policies and procedures. LIT's quality assurance policies and quality assurance procedures are subject to the same internal rigorous monitoring and review processes as that conducted by external bodies for the validation and review of LIT's educational and training programmes.

The effectiveness and impact of LIT's quality assurance policies and procedures is reflected in the nature, breadth, depth, and rigour of its targeted QA activities, as reported through internal and external channels, including:

- LIT - HEA Performance Compact Reporting
- LIT Completion and Retention Statistical Returns to HEA
- LIT's annual primary research and findings related to *Irish Survey of Student Engagement*
- External Examiner Reporting
- Programme Development Validation Panels
- Programmatic Review Validation Panels
- Academic Policies and Procedures
- Academic Council
- Sub-committees of Academic Council
- Working groups associated with Sub-Committees of Academic Council
- Programme Boards, Staff-Student Liaison Boards, Department Boards and Faculty Boards.

Sample evidence of the effectiveness of these is provided through their respective implementation, as documented under their sub-headings, in the *Impact* section of this report.

In terms of external reporting, LIT agreed a mission-based Compact with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) for 2014 to 2016. Institutional performance was established under the seven domains of:

- Regional Clusters
- Participation, equal access and lifelong learning
- Excellent teaching and learning and quality of the student experience
- High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation
- Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge transfer
- Enhanced internationalisation
- Institutional consolidation.

Under each of the domains there are an average of seven sub-domains. Performance indicators and interim targets were set for each of the reporting years for each of the seven domains and sub-domains. The *Limerick Institute of Technology Compact with the HEA 2014-2016* document is available on the LIT intranet.

A Self-Evaluation Report (SER) setting out a review of LIT's performance against the first set of interim targets under the Compact was compiled by the Executive Management team and monitored by the Governing Body in June 2015. The *Limerick Institute of Technology Compact with the HEA - Institutional Performance Report June 2015* document is available on the LIT intranet. Colour coding is used in the *LIT Compact with the HEA – Institutional Performance Report June 2015* document so that the reader can identify easily where potential problem areas exist. Each sub-domain (theme) has been analysed in the document and colour coded in relation to its performance against the target set.

In 2016, LIT was given a Category 1 rating Performance Evaluation, just one of four institutes of technology to join the university sector in achieving a Category 1 rating.

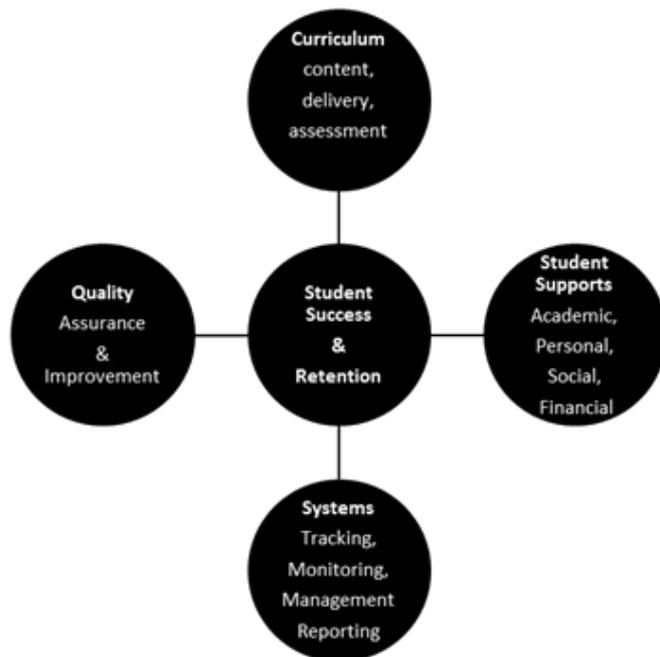
3.2.1 LIT - HEA Performance Compact Reporting:

The goals and objectives of the *LIT Vision and Strategy to 2020* document were aligned to the performance targets set out in the *LIT Compact with the HEA 2014-2016* document during the reporting year.

Included in the *LIT Compact with the HEA – Institutional Performance Report June 2015* document are details of progress against the performance targets for the reporting year and one page of narrative reflections for each of the seven domains which focus mainly on areas where LIT is struggling to meet targets. Explanations and action plans are presented, taking account of any external factors that may hamper performance.

3.2.2 LIT Completion and Retention Statistics for 2014/15:

The Institute is committed to providing a quality, enriching and successful educational experience to all of its students. Access, transfer, progression, retention and successful completion are key areas of the student experience. In March 2011, the Academic Council of LIT raised the profile of student retention and specifically authorised the *Academic Council Sub-Committee on Admissions, Academic Progress and Student Retention* to address key issues. The Council has also authorised an increased role and voice for student representatives throughout its activities. LIT's Student Retention Strategy is designed to be an over-arching strategy, serving to draw together relevant themes and key activities in order to support the retention of students and the completion of their studies. The intended audience for the retention strategy is *all* LIT staff. As an active and iterative strategy, it is designed to support LIT's commitment to provide excellent, inclusive higher education with first class student support and facilities, and outstanding opportunities for learning for local, national and international students. The strategy also supports the Institute's aim to provide an outstanding student experience, which is academically rewarding and personally fulfilling for students. Diagrammatically, the influence of QA and improvement is depicted in *Limerick Institute of Technology's Retention Collaboration Model*:



One of the key indicators that enables LIT to judge whether it is successful in achieving its ambitions in relation to student retention and completion are reflected in meeting the targets agreed in the Mission-based Performance Compact between LIT and the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Good retention rates should reflect a positive student experience and high levels of student satisfaction amongst our students.

To that end, one of the key objectives outlined in LIT's Compact with the HEA in respect of 'Our Student Supports' was to improve first year and overall progressions rates year on year within LIT from:

- The 2011/12 baseline percentage: (a) 83.78% overall completion rate; (b) 75.46% first year completion rate,
- The 2016 approved target of: (a) 84.35% overall completion rate; (b) 80.25% first year completion rate.

The 2014/15 completion statistics generated in December 2015 highlight the on-going progress made to realise the 2016 approved target, with a: (a) 81.81% overall completion rate; and (b) completion rate of 78.60% for first years.

Details of the overall and Year 1 completion targets, and achievements, for the reporting periods of the HEA compact are summarised below:

	Target	Actual Achieved
Interim target, end 2014:		
(a) Institute overall completion rate	(a) 83.95%	
(b) Year 1 Completion rate	(b) 79.75%	

This section should highlight an analysis of the key themes arising within the implementation of QA policies and procedures, primarily through a thematic analysis of key recommendations, commendations and conditions for the reporting period.

Submission

Part 3 Submission

PART 4

Quality Enhancement

A description of improvements or enhancements, impacting on quality or quality assurance, that took place in the reporting period, identifying the reasons for the improvements (for example an evaluation of effectiveness and impact from the previous period or objectives set out in strategic compacts).

3.3.1 Performance Management

The establishment of the HEA Compact has enabled the year on year benchmarking of LIT's performance against a set of core targets that contribute to the realisation of LIT's quality standards in its academic affairs and the wider student experience.

3.3.2 Benchmarking

LIT active involvement in the *Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)* has provided rich data annually. Such data has been translated to ensure the ongoing improvements of the institute's activities, in consultation with the student council. Specifically, these include the quality and effectiveness of LIT's: (i) student-faculty interactions; (ii) teaching and learning practices; (iii) the provision of a supportive learning environment (iv) accessibility and flexibility of learning; and, (v) further developing the institute management collaborative relationship with the students union.

3.3.3 Academic Standards

The conduct of ongoing programme development and programmatic reviews has provided both internal and external stakeholder feedback on the quality and adequacy of LIT's academic provision. Such annual activity has provided for double-loop learning for LIT in the design, delivery and implementation of quality offerings in the academic and learning space at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Changes to Academic Council Regulations and Procedures:

Effective in the Academic Year 2015/2016:

- Revision of Section 6.2 Procedure Academic Council 12th Mar 2015
- Added a footnote on progression criteria to Section 4.2 Point 6(b) Academic Council 12th Mar 2015
- Revision of Section 3.2.9 Points 4 & 5 and Section 3.2.11 Academic Council 12th Mar 2015
- Added a new Section 4.1.2 Point 5(b) on Failed Elements and renumbered Point 5 Academic Council 13th May 2015
- Updated Section 4.4.2 Point 5 Academic Council 13th May 2015
- Reviewed Sections 4.7 to 4.14 and Section 7.6 Academic Council 19th June 2015

An analysis of quality enhancement activities that were initiated by the institution. This could also include reference to any national or international quality assurance developments in which the institution is engaged. The institution is encouraged to highlight areas that may be of interest to other institutions and would benefit from wider dissemination.

PART 5

A piece in relation to strategic objectives in the coming period and plans for quality assurance and enhancement.

Review Plans: Area/Unit and Number

Quality Enhancement highlights:

LIT ensures that it continues to comply with relevant ESG and QQI requirements.

In the context of the issue of revised QQI Assessment Regulations, LIT implemented a review of its Academic Council Regulations and Procedures: Section 4: Assessment Regulations for Taught Programmes to ensure its ongoing compliance with any revised or new assessment requirements. A working group was established in 2014/15 to complete a 'root and branch' review. This group reported in 2015/16. Changes resulting from this review to existing policies and regulations were presented to relevant Sub-Committees of Academic Council. They were adopted post approval by Academic Council.

In 2015 LIT submitted seven New Apprenticeship proposals to the Apprenticeship Council. With the success of all proposals in 2015/16 LIT established itself as the largest national provider on New Apprenticeship under the governance of HEA and SOLAS. The seven LIT led apprenticeship consortium proposals being approved by the Apprenticeship Council and LIT was a partner in another GMIT led apprenticeship.

LIT continued to develop the collegiate academic culture of the institute through its participative academic structures and by increasing the emphasis on academic staff development from one dedicated staff development day per to three staff development days.

Objectives for the Coming Year

Review in 2016/17 of the following Quality Assured documents

These include targeted reviews of:

- Academic Council Documentation
- Academic Council Regulations and Procedures (ACRP) Part 1
- Academic Council Regulations and Procedures (ACRP) Part 2
- Student Retention Strategy
- Pilot Implementation of a Student Fitness to Study Policy
- Teaching Learning & Assessment Strategy
- External Examination Awards (Credit by External Examination)
- Admissions Office Policies and Procedures
- Industrial Liaison Advisory Committee Policy

Programmatic Reviews:

Scheduled Programmatic Reviews 2016/2017 in the including the:

Faculty of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology

- Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering
- Department of Mechanical
- Department of Applied Science

School of Art and Design

- Department of Design
- Department of Fine Art

Any further information with respect to plans for the coming period.

LIT will pilot a new examinations management system called GURU in 2016/17.

The New Department of Quality Teaching and Learning will bring together in a more structured approach LIT's commitment to continuous improvement of the student experience and the supports available to academic staff.