HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING AWARDS COUNCIL, IRELAND

Comhairle na nDámhachtainí Ardoideachais agus Oiliúna, Éire

Institutional Review of Providers of Higher Education and Training

Institutional Review of Carlow College
6-8 March 2012
Report of Expert Panel

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Contents

HETAC Institutional Review

Introduction

This is the Report of the Expert Panel appointed by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), which carried out the Institutional Review of Carlow College in March 2012.

HETAC is the qualifications awarding body for third-level educational and training institutions outside the university sector in Ireland. All providers offering HETAC awards are subject to external quality assurance review of their institutions. HETAC carries out such reviews as part of its Institutional Review process.

HETAC appointed an Expert Panel to carry out the Institutional Review on its behalf. Under the chairmanship of Mr. David Parry, membership of the panel reflected a wide range of expertise and experience, in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the review. HETAC wishes to record its thanks to the members of the panel for accepting this task and for their generous and professional commitment to the review.

Carlow College will submit a follow-up report to HETAC not more than 12 months after the publication of this report. Its follow-up report will outline how it has implemented the recommendations, as set out in its response to the Institutional Review, and evaluate the initial impact of such implementation. The follow-up report, including a commentary by the HETAC Executive, will be considered by the Academic Committee of HETAC. The Academic Committee may adopt the College's follow-up report and may consider further conditions. Following adoption by the Academic Committee of HETAC, the follow-up report will be published on the Council's website.

Note

HETAC's Institutional Review process is designed to address only those objectives described in the Terms of Reference included in Appendix A.

The Expert Panel points out that it cannot make any findings regarding:

1. *The financial standing and commercial viability of the institution reviewed*
2. *The institution's compliance with its general statutory obligations*

or

3. *The general fitness of the institution's systems and arrangements for the governance and management of financial matters.*

The Report of the Expert Panel contains no assurances, warranties or representations, express or implied, regarding the aforesaid issues, or any other issues outside the Terms of Reference.

While HETAC has endeavoured to ensure that the information contained in the Report is correct, complete and up-to-date, any reliance placed on such information is strictly at the reader's own risk, and in no event will HETAC be liable for any loss or damage (including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage) arising from or in connection with the use of the information contained in the Report of the Expert Panel.

Executive Summary — Report of the Expert Panel

This is the Report of the Expert Panel appointed by HETAC to undertake the Institutional Review of Carlow College on 6-8 March 2012. The review process was carried out in accordance with the HETAC *Policy on Institutional Review of Providers of Higher Education and Training*, 2007.

Findings

Overall recommendation to Awards Body, including details of any conditions attached

The following is an Executive Summary of the panel's key findings:

- The effectiveness of the Quality Assurance arrangements operated by Carlow College has been assessed and the arrangements have been found to be generally effective in accordance with the seven elements of Part One of the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance* 2009, Helsinki, 3rd edition, and the HETAC *Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance Procedures*, 2011.

- Carlow College has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression, as determined by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.

Commendations and Recommendations

The panel makes a total of 11 commendations and 14 recommendations, identified in the body of the report, in relation to the Objectives for Institutional Review to which each corresponds.

The panel is grateful to Carlow College for the cooperation and assistance provided to the review team and wishes it well in its future work.

Background to Carlow College

Carlow College is situated in the centre of Carlow Town in the South-East region of Ireland. It is a private, self-funding college with charitable status. Founded in 1782 as both a lay college and a seminary for the education of clergy, its role has changed over the period of its history. The College states that, over the past two decades, it has established itself as a provider of programmes in Humanities and Social Studies with the particular remit of serving parts of the South-East and Midlands regions of Ireland.

The College has qualified for the Free Fees Initiative since 1995. In Spring 2011, Free Fees were drawn down from the Department of Education and Skills for 667 of the 709 full-time learners attending the College in 2010-2011.

Programmes

The College offers a range of programmes at Levels 6-9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). A full list of the programmes, including learner numbers, is given in the Terms of Reference in Appendix A.

At the time of the review, the following programmes were being delivered to learners:

Bachelors of Arts (Level 7) – after three years of study, and Honours level (Level 8), after four years in Humanities; in Applied Social Studies in Social Care; in English and History (*Level 8 only*); and in Citizenship and Community Studies.

Higher Certificate in Arts (Level 6) in Applied Social Studies in Social Care; and in Citizenship and Community Studies.

Masters programme (Level 9): Masters in Therapeutic Child Care (MATCC).

The College also has approval to support Level 9 Research degrees in the fields of English, History, Philosophy and Theology.

Learners

Learner numbers have increased significantly in recent years: in 2006-2007 the College had 446 full-time learners, rising to 800 (709 full-time and 91 part-time) in 2010-2011. Learners are drawn from all

over Ireland with 50% coming from the immediate catchment area of Carlow and the adjoining counties of Wexford, Kilkenny, Laois, Kildare and Wicklow. Over the past five years, 35% to 47.5 % of all College learners have been mature students.

Staff

The academic staff of the College comprises 18 full-time lecturers, 11 of whom have a PhD and 6 of whom were engaged in doctoral studies at the time of the review. There are 13 part-time academic staff. In addition, there are 18 administrative and support staff and 8 maintenance and housekeeping staff.

Partnerships and links

The College is involved in a range of partnerships and links described in the Institutional Review Terms of Reference and in the Self Evaluation Report (SER).

Local

The College says it has built strong links with the local community, local authorities, schools, health service providers and cultural organisations. In 1997 the College donated a site on its campus to the Carlow Local Authorities for the development of a €18m Arts Centre and Theatre (VISUAL). This facility opened in September 2009 and according to the College has further established its claim to be 'the humanities hub for the region' (Terms of Reference, Appendix A).

The provision of third level education locally by the Institute of Technology in Carlow (ITC) is regarded by the College as complementary to its own, with the Institute offering programmes in science and business disciplines while the College offers programmes in the humanities. The Carlow College President was, for a time, a member of the ITC governing body.

National

The College signed a strategic partnership with Trinity College Dublin (TCD) in 2007 resulting, *inter alia,* in the development of the Slattery series of public lectures.

International

Carlow College also has international partnerships for student transfer and other projects with St Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa; Carlow University, Pittsburgh; and with more than 30

community colleges and universities through the Illinois Consortium for International Studies and Programs (ICISP). A partnership agreement with ICISP was signed in 2011.

According to the College a 'corridor' of cultural and educational co-operation has developed between staff on either side of the Atlantic. The numbers of learners from the United States visiting Carlow College are expected to increase over the next five years. To date, numbers have ranged between 10 and 20 learners per semester.

<u>Research</u>

The College describes itself as 'a College of teaching and research' (Quality Assurance Handbook, p2). Staff are encouraged to be research active and supervise research theses in the fields of Philosophy, Theology, English and History. The College has graduated eight research learners in total with the first PhD student graduated in 2009.

Additional background on the profile of Carlow College is set out in the Terms of Reference, Appendix A.

Institutional Review Methodology

The Institutional Review process was carried out in accordance with HETAC's *Policy on Institutional Review of Providers of Higher Education and Training*, 2007. The process consisted of the following six phases, with the report of the panel coming at the end of phase three.

1. HETAC sets the Terms of Reference following consultation with the institution.
2. Self-evaluation carried out by the Institution, followed by the production of a written Self-Evaluation Report (SER).
3. Visit of the panel appointed by HETAC, followed by the written report of the panel.
4. Institutional response to the panel's report, including its implementation plan.
5. Publication of the report of the panel and the institution's subsequent response.
6. Follow-up report submitted by the institution.

The Terms of Reference for Carlow College were discussed with HETAC over the period from January 2011 to November 2011. The objectives of the Institutional Review of Carlow College were set by HETAC as follows:

1. To enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by the Institution and the standards of the awards made.
2. To contribute to coherent strategic planning and governance in the Institution.
3. To assess the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance arrangements operated by the Institution, with the following special consideration for Carlow College:

   Carlow College established an Academic Resource Office (ARO) in September 2007 to provide an institution-wide academic support and learning assistance service for all learners including those with special educational needs. The ARO promotes the academic development of learners through the provision of 'Essay Doctor' and Learning Support Tutor services. Since 2011-12 a mandatory (not for credit) module 'Academic Skills for Third Level' is being delivered to all year one learners by the Academic Resource Officer. Learning support workshops are offered during the year in order to assist learners adapt to the demands of third level and to support them as they plan and manage their studies. The ARO is also responsible for the administration of ESF funding and co-ordination of assistive technology and human supports for learners with special educational needs.

4. To confirm the extent to which the Institution has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and its procedures for access, transfer and progression.

6. To provide recommendations for the enhancement of the education and training provided by the Institution.

(Objective 5 '*To evaluate the operation and management of delegated authority where it has been granted*', does not apply to Carlow College and is therefore not included in this review.)

For the complete Terms of Reference for Carlow College, see Appendix A.

HETAC appointed a panel of experts to carry out the Institutional Review on its behalf. Under the chairmanship of Mr David Parry**,** membership of the panel reflected a wide range of expertise and experience, in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the review. Panel members were asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest prior to their appointment - no conflicts of interest were noted. Panel members received induction training on the conduct of Institutional Reviews in advance of the site visit. The panel membership is outlined in full in Appendix B.

Prior to the panel's visit, the College engaged in a self-study exercise during September – November 2011. The College's Self Evaluation Report (SER) was finalised and submitted for consideration and approval by the College's Academic Council on 6 December and by the Management Board on 8 December 2011.

In advance of the site visit, Carlow College submitted its SER and additional supporting documentation. A desk-based review of the SER was undertaken by HETAC prior to forwarding the report to the review panel. Members of the panel assessed the SER in advance of the site visit, and forwarded their initial thoughts to HETAC and the Review Chairperson and Secretary.

The SER set out the preparation process for the Institutional Review and then addressed each of the objectives of the review in turn, describing the College's position under each and reflecting on the considerable change that had taken place within the College in recent years. The College set out the ways in which it addressed Objective 1: Public Confidence and the evidence it used to demonstrate this. A brief description of the College's history, together with an overview of the College's committee and governance structures were given under Objective 2: Strategic Planning and Governance. The section on this objective also reflected on progress against the 2006-2011 Strategic

Plan and progress on the development of the 2012-2017 Plan. Where the College was still in the process of making changes, this was identified in the SER. For example, the section on Objective 3: Quality Assurance, included a table of actions and progress to date, and the section on Objective 6 listed nine recommendations and identified action to be taken by the College, including the locus of responsibility and timescales. A number of other documents were submitted in support of the Self Evaluation Report including: Quality Assurance Handbook, Student Handbook and Academic Guide; directories for social care and teaching practice placements; induction pack as well as information on learning resources and learner support. A list of documents submitted in support of the SER is contained in Appendix C.

An advance meeting was held between the Review Chairperson, Secretary, HETAC Head of Institutional Review and representatives of Carlow College on 8 February 2012. This meeting considered the following matters:

- The President of Carlow College provided a background on the history of Carlow College up to the present day and including the Charitable status (with no conditions attached) which was inherited as part of the long standing legacy of Carlow College;

- The Terms of Reference and special consideration under Objective 3 were discussed, including Learner Support. Themes to be addressed by the review panel were identified including: governance, strategic overview and demonstrating effectiveness;

- The Chairperson of the panel provided feedback from the panel on the SER submitted by Carlow College and highlighted key themes and issues raised by panel members;

- The Chairperson also identified additional documentation to be available at the time of the site visit (as detailed in Appendix D) and agreed that an index to this documentation would be provided one week before the visit (the index is available in Appendix E);

- The meeting confirmed the panel composition and noted that there were no declarations of any conflict of interest for HETAC or the College;

- The agenda and arrangements for the site visit were considered and agreed;

- HETAC confirmed that all contact with the Review Chairperson, Review Secretary and all other panel members would be through the HETAC Institutional Review Team before, during and after the site visit up to the publication of the final report on the HETAC website; and

- The timeframe for producing the panel's report and the College's response was discussed and noted.

The site visit took place on 7-8 March 2012 at Carlow College. The panel met with members of the College, learners and other stakeholders according to an agenda drawn up by the panel in consultation with the College. The agenda for the site visit, agreed in advance with representatives of Carlow College, is set out in Appendix F. With minor changes, that agenda was followed during the visit. Lists of persons with whom the panel met are provided in Appendix G.

The members of the panel were satisfied that they received full cooperation from Carlow College and that they had the necessary documentation and discussions to reach their conclusions and produce their report.

Findings in relation to objectives of Institutional Review

Objective 1 — Public Confidence

To enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by the College and the standards of the awards made

This overarching objective covers all areas of the College's activity. The quality of the Institutional Review process itself is a critical part of this, as is the publication of the Self-Evaluation Report, the Report of the Panel, and the College's own response and action plan. The information provided by the College to the public is part of this objective.

Summary of Objective 1 — Public Confidence

<u>The institutional self-study and the Self Evaluation Report</u>

1.1   The institutional self-study took place between September and November 2011. The process was initiated by a three-day workshop in September with input from senior academics and from the university and Institute of Technology sectors. It was attended by 42 members of Carlow College staff, including management, administrative and academic staff, together with members of the Student's Union. The workshop included consideration of a new mission statement and a new strategic plan for the College for 2012-2017. Staff and learners were involved in working groups which reflected on each objective and element of the review. Feedback from learners and stakeholders was analysed and working groups were invited to examine and comment on documentation. The major part of this work was the review and updating of the College's quality assurance policies and procedures.

1.2   The documentation was refined in the light of feedback and was made available to all staff and learners for comment during October. A further workshop was held in November 2011 for all administrative, lecturing and management staff together with invited members of the learner community. The purpose of the workshop was to consider the SER. There was a special focus on the College's Quality Assurance Handbook and the Strategic Plan, 2012-2017. The Institutional Review documentation, comprising the SER, SER Appendices,

Quality Assurance Handbook and supporting documentation, was approved by the Academic Council on 6 December 2011 and by the Management Board on 8 December.

1.3   In the view of the panel, the SER was concise, clear and readable and was supported by a wide range of documentation provided to the panel in advance of the meeting. The SER included details of ongoing and planned activity in relation to a number of objectives. While it was evident that the College had undertaken a period of extensive review, the SER itself provided a largely narrative account rather than critical reflection. Representatives of the College commented to the panel that they had found the preparation for Institutional Review to be a useful catalyst for review. The self-study in particular, had facilitated greater ownership and understanding of quality assurance processes within the College and staff are continuing to develop this. The panel, however, noted that because the College was in the early stages of implementing new, more formal processes, it was not possible to measure the impact of such processes in all cases.

Information provided by the Institution to the public

1.4   The College provides information to the public through:
- publications such as prospectuses;
- its website;
- admission and application activities including visits to schools, application seminars, open days; and
- activities relating to aspects of provision, such as placement agency visits in social care and catechetics.

1.5   In addition to publications, which are primarily focused on learners, alumni and staff, the College takes up opportunities for more diverse publicity such as media appearances by members of staff in local and national broadcast media. The College encourages these appearances in the media where staff are identified as Carlow College academics, as it is seen as helpful in building the academic and public profile of the College.

1.6   The College identified the website as a major point of initial contact for external stakeholders. The College uses Google Analytics™ to assess its effectiveness in terms of the volume of people viewing information and the accessibility of that information. The College

acknowledged, however, that the website is a 'work-in-progress'. It was redesigned and launched in 2011 and the intention is that in future, all relevant public information will be included on the website. The plan is for there to be an interactive site for learners. Planned enhancements to the content of the external site include programme details, staff profiles, learner testimonials, a virtual tour, video footage of important College events and a College news stream.

1.7   The House Manager/Marketing and the Admissions Officer/Marketing have institutional responsibility for the accuracy of information and for ensuring that it meets national requirements as defined by the NQAI *Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners* (2003). Review and updating of the information is undertaken by the admissions office and the marketing department.

Key Findings of Objective 1 — Public Confidence

1.8   In support of its claim to justify public confidence in the quality of the education and training provided and the standard of the awards made, the College cited:

- the increase in learner numbers by 53% over five years (2006-2007 to 2010-2011) and its success in retaining learners throughout their study;
- its strategic links with Trinity College, Dublin and with colleges and universities in the USA;
- its good working relationships with statutory bodies and the local community;
- the engagement of its staff in educational and cultural activities within the Greater Carlow area; and
- its links with local businesses (SER, p1-2).

1.9   The panel met with external stakeholders and also with current learners and graduates who supported these claims of public confidence. External stakeholders referred to the important role of the College in the region, enabling many learners to participate in third-level education who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to do so. Moreover, the caring environment supports learning while providing a strong preparation for their future working lives. Stakeholders also referred to the significant contribution of the College, both culturally and economically, to the Carlow area.

1.10   The learners and alumni met by the panel were positive about their experience and referred in particular to the academic and pastoral support provided by academic staff; and to the employability skills developed during their programmes. Learners met by the panel included some who had transferred from other institutions and mature learners who talked with exceptional warmth and affection about their experiences at the College. They referred, in particular, to the personal care and accessibility of staff and to the support and encouragement to recognise and fulfil their academic potential.

Commendation— Public Confidence

The panel commends the College on:

1. The strong support of its stakeholders, including those external to the College, in particular its graduates, who recognise not only the positive learning experience it provides for its learners, but also its contribution to local and regional cultural life and the economy.

Recommendations — Public Confidence

The panel recommends that the College should:

1. Review its current and future partnerships within a strategic context in order to clarify the purpose of the partnerships and ensure that they add value to the College.

2. Promote the strengths of the College more widely with a view to raising awareness nationally of the strengths and distinctive character of Carlow College in the twenty-first century.

3. Further develop its website and monitor the impact and effectiveness of public information provided by the College.

The above recommendations are also relevant to Element 7 of the European Standards and Guidelines in respect of public information.

Objective 2 — Strategic Planning and Governance

To contribute to coherent strategic planning and governance in the College

The review may address the coherence of institutional mission, vision and values and overall institutional strategic planning.

Summary of Objective 2 — Strategic Planning and Governance

2.1   At the time of the Institutional Review, the College was in the process of undergoing major changes to its governance and was in the latter stages of developing its Strategic Plan 2012-2017. The strategic planning process is a function of the College's Management Board (see paragraphs 2.9-2.10 below) and takes into account the views of staff, learners and external stakeholders. A strategic planning and implementation committee was established with membership drawn from the College's senior management team. The SER indicates that there are plans to expand the membership of the committee to include appropriate external expertise.

2.2   A strategic plan document was not available at the time of the Institutional Review visit. The SER states that the:

'plan includes detailed aims and objectives around clearly stated goals/strategies. Mechanisms for monitoring progress around each goal have been identified as well as the timeframe in which each goal will be achieved. The Assistant Registrar will monitor compliance with agreed strategies and evaluate outcomes on a continuous basis.' (SER, p7)

2.3   The SER identifies 10 areas of strategic focus which form the basis of the new Strategic Plan as follows:
- contribution to society;
- human resources;
- infrastructural resources;
- strategic alliances;
- programme;
- advertising;

- placement practice and supervision;

- international learners;

- cultural integration; and

- governance (SER, p7-8).

2.4   The Strategic Plan was being developed at a critical time in the College's history when changes were taking place in the external environment which could have a significant impact on the College's ability to continue to operate. In the view of the panel, the new Strategic Plan is, therefore, critical in determining the College's future direction in changing times. While the College has sought the views of its external stakeholders, the panel was of the view that even greater use could be made of their considerable expertise, particularly given their declared strong support for the College.

Governance

2.5   The SER describes the governance structure of the College comprising the Board of Trustees and the Management Board.

2.6   The Board of Trustees has eight members and is chaired, in an *ex officio* capacity, by the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Membership of the Board comprises former presidents and staff of the College and of Knockbeg College. Knockbeg College is a voluntary Catholic secondary school for boys, owned by the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. The trustees are the legal owners of Carlow College and are responsible for safeguarding its ethos. They also approve all major financial expenditure and the appointment of all full-time staff, including the President and the nomination of the Vice-President. They meet annually, when the President makes a report to the AGM and on other occasions as necessary. During the 2010-2011 academic year the Board met twice in addition to the AGM.

2.7   The SER also notes that
'...the trustees... have directed the President to explore the establishment of a Governing Body which will be more representative of the wider community and its past students.' (SER, p4)

2.8   It is envisaged that a Board of Governors will make available to the College financial, educational, legal, administrative and strategic expertise. The panel was informed that it would also enable greater formal representation of the wider community and would be able to undertake some of the management functions currently exercised by the Management Board. In addition, it was intended that some powers currently exercised by the Board of Trustees would be delegated to the Board of Governors. The new governing body will be in place by the start of the 2012-2013 academic year. The SER refers to the constitution of the governing body as being a 'work-in-progress' (SER, p9).

2.9   The Management Board is the executive body in the College. It is chaired by the President and its membership comprises: the Vice-President/Bursar, Secretary, House Manager, Registrar, Assistant Registrar, the President of the Student's Union (*ex officio* from January 2012) and other members invited by the President.

2.10   The function of the Management Board is to assist the President in the effective co-ordination and delivery of the educational programmes of the College. It meets fortnightly and is responsible for the day-to-day governance of the College, the maintenance of staffing levels, the estate and the Strategic Plan. In the period until the end of the 2011-2012 academic year, it also manages the human resources function on behalf of the College, after which a member of staff will be appointed with specific responsibility for human resources.

Academic management

2.11   The panel noted the considerable change that has taken place in the academic structure of the College over the past two years with the merging of the two former departments of Humanities and Social Studies in September 2010 and the establishment, on a pilot basis, of academic clusters. In January 2011 the Academic Council (see paragraphs 2.15-2.16 below) established four new Programme Boards, in addition to the two existing Programme Boards at postgraduate level and replacing the former clusters.

2.12   A further development of the Programme Boards (see paragraphs 2.17 and 3.6 below) was agreed in June 2011 when it was decided 'to invest Programme Board Chairs with direct authority over their programmes' (Registrar's presentation to the panel during the site visit).

Following advertisement and an appointment process, Programme Board Chairs were appointed for five years with effect from September 2011.

2.13   The aim of the re-structuring was to enable '.....greater democratisation of the College's academic and administrative structures', (SER, p9). Reference is made in the SER to the work over the last two years to

'..put in place a more collaborative organisational structure and has invited more participative involvement of staff in the day to day running of the College. The response of staff has been generous and it is intended to streamline the developments already in place and to continue to promote creative and participative governance of the College.'(SER, p9)

During the site visit, the panel met with a range of staff who attested to the success of the new structures in achieving this aim, a view with which the panel would concur, based on the evidence it considered.

The deliberative committee structure

2.14   The deliberative committee structure consists of the Academic Council and the Programme Boards.

The Academic Council

2.15   Reporting to Management Board, the Academic Council has college-wide responsibility for quality assurance and academic standards. This includes implementing regulations, monitoring the quality of academic programmes and appointing external examiners. The Council discharges this remit acting on the advice of the Registrar who has primary responsibility for the College's Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures.

2.16   The Academic Council is chaired by the President with the following membership:
- the Vice-President,
- the Registrar,
- the Assistant Registrar,
- the Chairs of the Course Boards,

- the Librarian,

- the Chair of the Library Committee,

- the Chair of Student Affairs Team,

- Admissions and the Academic Resource Officer,

- Staff representative, and

- Student representative.

Programme Boards

2.17   There are six Programme Boards:

- Humanities

- English and History

- Social Studies

- Citizenship and Community Studies

- Masters in Therapeutic Child Care

- Postgraduate Research (Quality Assurance Handbook 2011, p6).

Each Programme Board has an appointed Chair. The roles and responsibilities of Programme Board Chairs are discussed in paragraph 3.6 below.

Key Findings of Objective 2 — Strategic Planning and Governance

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2.18   At the time of the Institutional Review, the College was in the process of developing its strategic plan and no strategic plan document was available for the panel's consideration. Information on the future strategic direction of the College was provided in the SER and through meetings with senior staff. From evidence available, it appeared that there would be a strong emphasis on the further development of existing partnerships, but it was not always clear to the panel how this would be achieved or the strategic benefits the College would derive from them. Given that the new plan would be implemented in the new academic year, a relatively short space of time remained for the College to finalise the plan and the panel was of the opinion that the external stakeholders could provide valuable support in this regard.

2.19   The new strategic plan would also be coming into place at the same time as the new Board of Governors. This development was welcomed by the senior staff met by the panel. Reference was made to the potential contribution of the Board of Governors in the day-to-day management of the College. However, the panel would urge the College rather to focus on the strategic support and guidance that a governing body could contribute which would, potentially, be of particular benefit in the current uncertain external climate.

2.20   The changes to the deliberative committee structure appeared to have been effective and staff regarded them as working well, providing greater opportunities for discussion and facilitating the development of a quality culture. The panel did have some concerns, however, that it was possible for the operation of such a structure to become burdensome in a small institution, particularly in light of the establishment of a new governing body.

Commendation — Strategic Planning and Governance

The panel commends the College on:

2.   The radical review of its organisation and committee structure undertaken in recent years (referred to in sections 1 and 2 above).

Recommendations — Strategic Planning and Governance

The panel recommends that the College should:

4.   Involve external stakeholders formally in developing the College's future strategic direction and in its governance arrangements.

5.   Ensure that the Board of Governors, once established, focuses on the medium and long-term organisation and development of the College, rather than on day-to-day management issues. This should include, as immediate priorities, the development of a Strategic Plan, succession planning and high-level risk management.

6.   Following the establishment of the Board of Governors, review the College's current deliberative committee structure to ensure its continuing relevance and appropriateness in the light of the College's size and the role of the new governing body.

Objective 3 — Quality Assurance

To assess the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance arrangements operated by the College

This is based on Part One of the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance* (QA).[1] By including this in the Institutional Review process, the statutory requirement for the review of QA is met. How the College reviews the effectiveness of its QA for the *seven elements* of the *European Standards and Guidelines* should be explicitly addressed by the review process.

Summary of Objective 3 — Quality Assurance

Introduction

3.1   This section of the report considers how the College reviews the effectiveness of its quality assurance for the "seven elements" of the European Standards for Quality Assurance, namely:

   i.   Policy and procedures for quality assurance;

   ii.   Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards;

   iii. Assessment of learners;

   iv.   Quality assurance of teaching staff;

   v.   Learning resources and support;

   vi.   Information systems; and

   vii. Public information.

Element 1: Policies and procedures for quality assurance

Overview

3.2   The Quality Assurance policies and procedures, approved by the Academic Council, are set out in the *Quality Assurance Handbook 2011*. The College describes the procedures as having evolved over the last five years. Primary responsibility for the formulation of quality assurance policy and for maintaining and improving institutional quality rests with the

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1 *"Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area". European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009,* Helsinki, 3rd edition.

Registrar acting under the aegis of the Academic Council and Management Board. The Registrar is supported by the Assistant Registrar who has specific responsibility for monitoring quality assurance.

3.3   The Quality Assurance Handbook has sections with policies for learners and staff and policies relating to learning resources and learner support. It is made available to each member of College staff in hard and soft copy. Learners can refer to a hardcopy kept in the library or online via the College website.

3.4   The SER indicates that the review and updating of quality assurance policies and procedures formerly approved in 2006 was a major focus of preparations for Institutional Review. As part of this process, staff spent one day of the three-day workshop referred to above (see paragraph 1.1), focusing on consideration of the College's quality assurance system in relation to the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*. A member of staff was assigned to carry out an internal review of the alignment of College policies with each of the seven elements. The Registrar, in his presentation to the panel, referred to the fact that, as part of the preparation for Institutional Review, all quality assurance policies and procedures were reviewed and re-approved. He referred to the College's aim to be a 'policy-driven' college which encouraged a 'culture of QA through an action, reflection, action cycle'.

3.5   The SER states that, as part of the preparation for Institutional Review, there was considerable change to the College's academic organisation which included the establishment of four Programme Boards, each with a separate Chair with a broad threefold remit of:

- operational control and programme monitoring;
- learner feedback;
- programme planning and development.

3.6   Programme Board Chairs are members of the Academic Council and have both management and programme responsibilities, with 'local authority for decision making in the management of their courses' (SER, p12). The SER also referred to the appointment of the Assistant Registrar with specific responsibility for quality assurance, as a demonstration of its commitment to a quality culture. The Programme Board Chairs meet regularly with the

Registrar and Assistant Registrar. The panel was informed that the changes to the academic organisation and the development of posts with key responsibility for quality assurance had resulted in greater engagement in debate and discussion on quality issues and that the management team with responsibility for quality had formed a strong group. The panel was told that the development of quality assurance in the College was ongoing but there was a very strong determination to embrace quality in a meaningful way and to learn from best practice nationally and internationally, developing it on a democratic basis 'from the bottom-up'.

Findings – Element 1: Policies and procedures for quality assurance

3.7   The panel was of the view that the College was in transition; arrangements that had hitherto worked on an informal and personal basis, were no longer deemed fit-for-purpose and formal arrangements for quality assurance were in the process of being embedded. The College, led by the management team, is approaching this in a reflective and democratic way. While the College was seeking to learn from best practice elsewhere, it was keen to implement arrangements that will make sense in the light of the College's own culture and context, rather than simply to adopt existing arrangements from other institutions and systems.

3.8   The panel was concerned that the current deliberative committee structure might become onerous in an institution the size of Carlow College. The views expressed by staff met by the panel, however, were that the structure of Programme Boards reporting to Academic Council, and in some cases, the Management Board, had led to wider discussion and ultimately, to better informed proposals and decision-making. Discussion around programme level issues had, for example, led to more consistent decision-making across the College. In addition, it was stated that issues now discussed at college-level might not have surfaced under previous organisational arrangements. Representatives of the College told the panel that learner feedback would be used as an indicator of the efficacy of the quality assurance policies that had been introduced. At the time of the site visit, however, they had yet to be in full operation for an academic year.

Commendation - Element 1: Policies and procedures for quality assurance

The panel commends the College on:

3. Its collegial and reflective approach to the development of quality assurance, particularly in the management team.

Element 2: Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Approval

3.9   A five-stage programme approval process is set out in the Quality Assurance Handbook with a slightly modified process for the approval of new subjects or modules. The five stages are designed to take a proposal through from conception to consideration for approval by Academic Council and may include input from external agencies at different stages. A proposal that is approved by Academic Council goes forward to validation, with information set out in the New Programme Proposal Form.

3.10   The Quality Assurance Handbook states that this process was designed in line with HETAC guidelines and is compatible with the National Framework of Qualifications. The SER indicated that clearer communication channels throughout the whole process had been identified as an issue for action as part of the preparation for Institutional Review. Action taken to address this included the appointment of Programme Board Chairs (see paragraphs 2.11-2.13 above); the appointment of learner representatives on Programme Boards, Academic Council and various committees; and the extension of the membership of Academic Council.

Monitoring

3.11   The Quality Assurance Handbook sets out six elements for the ongoing monitoring of programmes, namely:
- external examiner reports and feedback
- programmatic reviews
- staff meetings

- the Registrar's Office

- Academic Council

- learner responses

External examiners

3.12   The appointment process and role of external examiners had been reviewed and revised as part of Programmatic Review (see paragraph 3.15) and a new policy and procedures implemented. The College has adopted a conscious policy of recruiting external examiners from a wider range, both in geographic terms and from different parts of the higher education sector. The Quality Assurance Handbook states that:

'The new policy and procedure has resulted in both an increase in the number of external examiners and in the level of academic qualifications and expertise of those appointed.' (Quality Assurance Handbook 2011, p15)

3.13   Academic Council approves the appointment of external examiners. External examiner reports are considered by Programme Boards and decisions taken in response to recommendations by external examiners are ratified by Academic Council. The panel was advised that the new processes for consideration of external examiner reports gave the College a better overview of issues. The panel was informed that the College was highly responsive to external examiner judgements, including those on individual learner marks. It was the view of the panel, however, that while taking due note of any valid concerns raised by external examiners, the College should continuously review its engagement with external examiners based on increasing confidence in the capacity of its staff to make appropriate judgments on the academic standards it sets and the standards achieved by its learners.

3.14   The College has a standard external examiner report pro-forma, but there was some evidence that its use is not yet fully embedded. Similarly, although the College advocates and strongly encourages external examiners' attendance at examination boards, in practice it is unable to ensure that this happens fully due to commitments at their home institutions.

Programmatic reviews

3.15   Programmatic reviews are conducted every five years and include self-assessment, input from external peers and learner feedback. The College identified Programmatic Review as a key element of quality assurance. The College's most recent Programmatic Review in 2011 was used by the College to undertake a 'root and branch' review of all modules and programmes which resulted in more effective and efficient arrangements for the delivery of modules and programmes. The process also brought about increased staff participation and integration in discussion on quality assurance.

Staff meetings

3.16   Meetings for all staff take place at least once per term and meetings of programme staff, in addition to the formal Programme Board meetings, take place every four to six weeks. These meetings also offer opportunities for staff to identify matters relating to ongoing programme monitoring. Such matters may be referred initially to the Registrar's Office and thence to Academic Council.

Registrar's Office

3.17   Matters relating to programme monitoring may be referred to the Registrar's Office through one of the routes noted above (i.e. Programme Boards and staff meetings) or through the fortnightly meetings held by the Assistant Registrar with Programme Board Chairs.

Academic Council
(see paragraphs 2.15 -2.16 above for the broad remit of Academic Council)

3.18   Academic Council's role in monitoring programmes is through its annual review of external examiners' and Programme Board reports.

Learner responses

3.19   The SER identifies four ways that learners can raise issues relating to their programme. These include an online questionnaire; the opportunity to raise issues individually with

academic advisors or through class or Student's Union representatives. Class representatives are members of Programme Boards and may refer issues for consideration. There is Student's Union representation at Academic Council where issues can also be considered.

Periodic review of programmes

3.21   The Quality Assurance Handbook sets out the Procedures for Periodic Formal Evaluation of a Programme. In addition, the SER identified action to be taken by Programme Board Chairs to review programmes on an annual basis.

Findings - Element 2: Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes

3.22   The panel noted the mechanisms identified by the College for the ongoing monitoring of programmes. In particular, the way that the Programmatic Review has been used as a catalyst, not only for a fundamental review of the structure and delivery of modules and programme content but also as an opportunity for greater participation by staff in decisions about the programmes. The panel was of the view that the College should develop a process for the ongoing monitoring of programmes to ensure that each programme is reviewed holistically on a regular basis and that this is carried out consistently across the College. Cumulative evidence from such a process will be valuable when the first periodic formal evaluation of programmes take place (see paragraph 3.21 above). At institutional level, it will provide management information to support the confidence of Academic Council and Management Board that quality is assured and appropriate academic standards secured.

Commendation - Element 2: Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes

The panel commends the College on:

4.   The way in which it engaged with the Programmatic Review process and is taking forward its recommendations.

Recommendation - Element 2: Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes

The panel recommends that the College should:

7.   Implement an effective annual monitoring system, including following up the recommendations of the Programmatic Review.

Element 3: Assessment of learners

3.23   As part of the 2011 Programmatic Review the College requested special consideration of its assessment of learners. The findings of the review in this regard were that the assessments and standards complied with requirements of HETAC *Assessment and Standards*, 2009. The Programmatic Review panel, which comprised membership from across the University and Institute of Technology (IoT) sectors in Ireland, noted, however, that the College was in the process of formulating an accessible document for learners setting out information on assessment, rather than relying solely on verbal communication between staff and learners. Academic Council approved the Assessment of Learners Policy in December 2011. The Policy is contained within the Quality Assurance Handbook and it is stated that 'these regulations are informed by, and are consistent with, the HETAC *Assessment and Standards* (2009) and the principles set down in the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. This act requires that the providers of education and training must establish procedures that are fair and consistent' (Quality Assurance Handbook 2011, p22). The Assessment of Learners Policy is available on the website and for reference from the library. The Institutional Review panel met with learners who confirmed that they were aware of the assessment policy and reported that clear information, verbally and in hard copy, is given at the start of each module, including relevant learning outcomes.

3.24   There is a standard pro-forma for feedback to learners on written assessments. External examiner reports comment positively on the detail and clarity of the feedback provided, although there are some indications that this is not always consistent across all levels and programmes. Learners indicated that, in the event of their marks declining, academics may use the feedback sheet to suggest they seek assistance from the Essay Doctor service (see paragraph 3.46 below). Learners on placements were less satisfied with feedback from placement supervisors and the College has put in place measures to address this.

3.25   The Programmatic Review also identified the ongoing monitoring of assessment and standards as an area that needs to be addressed. The College, in its SER, recognises the need for a named individual or body within the Registrar's Office to take responsibility for the regular review of assessment. Finally, the SER notes the need, identified at Programmatic Review, for staff development and training in assessment.

3.26   The assessment policy, in operation with effect from December 2011, sets out the arrangements for the assessment of all modules and taught programmes that lead to an award at Levels 7, 8 and 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications.

Findings- Element 3: Assessment of learners

3.27   At the time of the Institutional Review, the assessment policies and procedures and other developments introduced as a result of the programmatic review, were still relatively new and their impact will be clearer once they have been in operation for a full academic year. Nonetheless, there was evidence of growing confidence and competence within the College and with a commitment to its further development through the appointment of a member of staff with responsibility for assessment and through staff development.

3.28   The panel heard how immediate action is taken in response to external examiner comments and recommendations. While institutions must respond appropriately to external examiners, the panel felt that the College should take confidence from the expertise which is growing amongst its own staff members in the assessment of learners. An annual review of the respective responsibilities of external examiners, regarding areas such as the right to require a change of marks for an individual learner, for example, would ensure that the correct balance of responsibilities is maintained.

Commendation - Element 3: Assessment of learners

The panel commends the College on:

5.   The commitment to learner assessment including appointment of a staff member with responsibility for the oversight and consistency of learner assessment.

Recommendation - Element 3: Assessment of learners

The panel recommends that the College should:

8.   Monitor, on an annual basis, the respective roles and responsibilities of the College and its external examiners with a view to ensuring that the College's arrangements reflect HETAC guidance on external examiners are appropriate.

Element 4: Quality assurance of teaching staff

3.29   The College identified six elements in its quality assurance of teaching staff, namely:

- staff recruitment and appointment records;
- staff qualifications profile;
- strategy for continuing professional development (CPD) of staff;
- records of staff participation in CPD workshops;
- research publications and conference proceedings;
- projections of CPD requirements based on future directions;
- learner feedback on teaching.

Staff recruitment and appointment

3.30   The Quality Assurance Handbook includes the College's Policy and Procedure on the Recruitment and Selection of Staff. Short-listed candidates for teaching posts are required to demonstrate teaching as part of the selection process. The College has agreed that, in future, all full-time permanent teaching appointments will either hold a PhD or be in the advanced stages of completing one.

Staff qualification profile

3.31   The College has 13 part-time academic staff and 18 full-time lecturers, 17 of whom have PhDs while eight others are completing doctoral studies. The College supports existing staff undertaking doctoral research and offers full-time staff a bursary on completion of a PhD.

<u>Continuing professional development</u>

3.32   Both the documentation provided to the panel and discussions with members of staff indicated that the College regards both the attainment by staff of research degrees and their research activity as important strands in the College's continuing development. In discussions with the panel, it was noted that the primary purpose of staff research was to underpin and inform the academic programmes, with the subject of doctorates undertaken by staff being relevant to their teaching. The College also thought it important that when seeking to engage more with the wider academic community that college staff were able to demonstrate engagement in high quality academic research.

3.33   The College also recognises the need for wider ranging continuing professional development (CPD). Policies and procedures relating to CPD are published in the Quality Assurance Handbook. Proposed and ongoing enhancements to CPD in areas relating to non discipline-based pedagogical considerations, such as assessment, are noted in paragraph 3.34 below.

<u>Strategy for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of staff</u>

3.34   The SER outlines future action including arrangements to provide ongoing pedagogic CPD. The arrangements include: the appointment of a member of staff to take forward this area of CPD; the continuation of the workshops with IT Carlow and the implementation of a staff appraisal system to support staff in their identification and planning of CPD requirements. The SER outlines further targets including, for example, the encouragement of staff participation of wider activities within the sector such as external examining. The SER does not make further specific reference to records of staff participation in CPD workshops; and research publications and conference proceedings

<u>Learner feedback on teaching</u>

3.35   Arrangements for learner evaluation of teaching and learning are set out in the Policy and Procedure on Teaching Effectiveness. This identifies the following mechanisms:

- annual questionnaire via Moodle™ including suggestion boxes and use of the programme representation system for current learners;

- exit questionnaires for graduates and learners leaving the College;

- requests to former learners; and

- comparison of the performance of learner groups.

3.36 The collection of feedback from learners has been in operation since 2005, but the results have not always been available to management and it has not, therefore, been possible to gain an institutional view of learner satisfaction. Lecturers traditionally ran their own questionnaires to gauge learner satisfaction with programmes, as this was not a universal practice it led to different methods of generating feedback. Moreover, there was no consistent means of disseminating the results of such feedback and so it was not possible for the College to gain a clear overview of learners' views. Arrangements are now in place for a College questionnaire to be administered online via Moodle™. The results of the surveys will be available to individual teaching staff, to management and to staff with editing rights on Moodle™. The College will keep these arrangements under review and may make adjustments if there is felt to be a need to elicit more programme-specific information.

3.37 Programme Boards have responsibility for the monitoring and analysis of learner feedback which also includes feedback from learners who leave before the end of their programme.

3.38 Information presented in the SER included the results of a learner satisfaction survey conducted as part of the 2011 Programmatic Review. The results showed that 95% of respondents were either satisfied or highly satisfied with teaching in the College. The learners met by the panel spoke warmly of the teaching and learning at Carlow College. In particular, learners referred to the helpfulness and accessibility of staff and also to the ways in which they were given confidence in their ability to achieve academically when their previous experience in other institutions had led them to believe that they were not capable of such achievement.

Findings - Element 4: Quality assurance of teaching staff

3.39 The College has made a strong commitment to supporting and developing the research of its staff which it regards as important both for the academic underpinning of its programmes and for the greater awareness and standing of the College within the wider academic community. This strategy has resulted in an academically well-qualified staff base. A more

recent strand to the staff development approach by the College has been the identification of the need for continuing professional development for staff in non-discipline based pedagogic practice. The panel heard from staff and from learners and external stakeholders of good practice, particularly in regard to learner placements, which contributed to the integration of academic knowledge with professional practice The preparation of learners and the arrangements put in place with workplace providers were of high quality and placements provided an effective means of integrating professional practice with the academic underpinning provided by the academic programmes.

Commendation - Element 4: Quality assurance of teaching staff

The panel commends the College on:

6.   The encouragement and support for staff to undertake PhDs which has resulted in a significant upgrading of staff qualifications in the past five years.

7.   The experience and expertise of staff which enables effective support to be given for learner placement activity and the integration of professional practice with academic programmes.

Recommendations - Element 4: Quality assurance of teaching staff

The panel recommends the College should:

9.   Further develop and support staff to enhance their pedagogic skills and practice through ongoing CPD.

10. Implement the planned staff performance review and appraisal system with effect from the next academic year.

Element 5: Learning resources and support

The College requested that the Institutional Review give special consideration as follows:

Carlow College established an Academic Resource Office (ARO) in September 2007 to provide an institution-wide academic support and learning assistance service for all learners including those with special

educational needs. The ARO promotes the academic development of learners through the provision of 'Essay Doctor' and Learning Support Tutor services. Since 2011-12 a mandatory (not for credit) module 'Academic Skills for Third Level' is being delivered to all year one learners by the Academic Resource Officer. Learning support workshops are offered during the year in order to assist learners adapt to the demands of third level and to support them as they plan and manage their studies. The ARO is also responsible for the administration of ESF funding and co-ordination of assistive technology and human supports for learners with special educational needs.

3.40   The SER comments on the increase and improvement in learner resources and support since 2006, but equally acknowledges that there is a need for more systematic and rigorous review processes. The College used the opportunity afforded by the Institutional Review to establish more comprehensive arrangements for the quality assurance of learner resources and support including the:

- re-establishment of the Library Committee;
- expansion of the Student Affairs Team; and
- representation of both the Committee and the Team on the Academic Council.

3.41   The College has invested in the development of its library and learning resources provision, most notably with the opening of the Brophy Memorial Library and the Delany Archive within the last six years. It is however, aware of the need to develop the library provision further and this was reflected in action identified in the SER and in discussion with the review panel.

3.42   In addition to resources available in the library, learners have access to materials from other colleges and university libraries through a consortium agreement and through inter-library loans. The system for accessing e-materials is an aspect that is acknowledged to require further development. The current systems enable learners to have access to such materials on-site but not remotely.

3.43   The Delany Archive contains the archives of the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin dating back to the eighteenth century; the papers of the Brigidine Sisters from 1807 onwards and those of the Patrician Brothers since 1808 and the archives of the College since its foundation. The Quality Assurance Handbook includes the Delany Trust Policies and Procedures.

3.44   Learner feedback on the library provision is collected through questionnaires and the SER notes that 79% of learners responding to a questionnaire in 2011 were either satisfied or very satisfied with the library. This view was largely supported by the learners with whom the panel met. They were, in general, content with resources and access to materials. They indicated, however, two areas for further consideration:

- They would like longer opening hours as the library currently closes at 8:45pm, an issue also identified at Programmatic Review.

- Some learners identified the desirability of a quiet room, particularly for the use of Dragon[2] software. Connected with the latter, the need for support for use of the software was also identified.

3.45   Items identified by the Committee for improvement include the College's information technology system. An audit carried out in November 2011 identified inefficiencies including the need for updating the system and streamlining admissions data, which are being addressed as a matter of urgency. It was the view of the panel that improving the collection and analysis of academic management information would assist the College in the evaluation and enhancement of its new arrangements.

Academic Resources Office (ARO)

3.46   Established in 2007, the ARO provides support for all learners and co-ordinates arrangements and provision of:

- both human and technological study-related supports for learners with disabilities;

- additional learner support- e.g. the Academic Skills Module to assist the transition of learners to third level study; open access learning support sessions, including peer learning support groups; 'Essay Doctor[3]' and Learning Support Tutor services; and

- academic advice and information - e.g. covering academic and financial support available. This includes ensuring that staff are also aware of the support available to learners.

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[2] Dragon NaturallySpeaking is a speech recognition software package with three primary areas of functionality: dictation, text-to-speech and command input.

[3] The Essay Doctor service at the College supports students (on an individual or small group basis) with the preparation of assignments and the development of their academic writing skills.

3.47   The College noted that since 2007 there had been a rising proportion of learners with disabilities. The ARO information leaflet states that:

'Study-related supports for students with disabilities are financed through the ESF Fund for Students with Disabilities. This fund is sponsored by the Department of Education and Skills with assistance from the European Social Fund.'

ARO co-ordinates applications for funding to support learners and ensures that support is put in place as appropriate. Wherever possible and appropriate, the provision is consistent with arrangements previously made for the learner.

3.48   Staff are in contact with colleagues in other colleges and keep abreast of best practice elsewhere in the sector. Asked about goals for the future, the panel was told that developing literacy provision, particularly for mature learners coming to the College with relatively low leaving certificate points, was an aspect of the provision that staff would like to develop further.

3.49   Other aspects of learner support and learning resources offered by the College include an international office; academic advisors for each stage of the degree; a student affairs team which is responsible for developing the learner support system; the chaplaincy/campus ministry; counselling service and the learner health service.

Findings - Element 5: Learning resources and support

ARO (special consideration)

3.50   The Academic Resources Office offers a holistic approach to learner support which encompasses support for the specific needs of individual learners and also more generic support to enable learners to meet the academic requirements of the College. Academic and support staff work together to ensure that all learners needs are met. Learners met by the panel were aware of the support available and how to access it, with one learner saying that she had applied to the College because of the support available for learners with dyslexia.

3.51 Staff are well connected and make use of national networks in order to ensure that they are aware of the needs of particular groups of learners, e.g. those with Asperger Syndrome and how those needs are best supported. Staff also reported the support for Continuing Professional Development through conference attendance and support to undertake a professional doctorate. Staff are in regular contact with learners to check that the support in place is meeting their needs.

Findings in relation to learning resources in general

3.52 In its meeting with staff representatives, the panel formed the view that there is not currently a comprehensive system in place in the College for formal data collection. Staff had referred to rising demand for support and in the nature and range of support needs that learners required. While the current uptake did not present problems for the College, systematic data collection would provide the College with information on the impact of ARO services and would form a valuable basis for the College to plan strategically for the provision of learner support in future.

3.53 As part of the preparations for the Institutional Review, the College had re-formed the Library Committee. The re-established Library Committee is addressing identified areas for improvement, including aspects noted by the Programmatic Review. The work of the Committee encompasses the College Information Technology (IT) system and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The College plans to use Moodle™ and this will be rolled out in the 2012-2013 academic year. Arrangements for its implementation are still in the early stages and it was the view of the panel that it would be useful to develop a more formal implementation plan to ensure that all eventualities are anticipated.

Commendations - Element 5: Learning resources and support

The panel commends the College on:

8. The range and accessibility of learner support and the holistic approach to this aspect of provision.

9. The integrated approach of academic and support staff, working together to support learners.

10. The balance between the academic and professional education provided and, in particular, the preparation for employment that it gives learners.

Recommendations - Element 5: **Learning resources and support**

The panel recommends the College should:

11. Evaluate the impact of the various support initiatives, with a view to targeting such support in future.

12. Develop a project plan for the roll-out of Moodle™.

Element 6: Information systems

3.54   The SER records the ways in which the College collects data in relation to**:**

- learner progression and success rates;
- employability of graduates;
- learner satisfaction with programmes and the effectiveness of teachers;
- profile of the learner population;
- learning resources available and their costs; and
- key performance indicators.

3.55   Data on learner progression rates; graduate employment; the learner population; learner satisfaction and use of ARO is collected through surveys. While there was reference to the use of examinations data collected for HETAC being considered by Programme Boards, it was not clear to the panel how the College collates and uses data for planning purposes. The SER outlines plans for the development of such data collection, reflecting developments elsewhere in the College where it is moving to systems that are consistent across the College and which are intended to provide more useful and reliable data which may be used as a basis for future planning.

3.56   The College does not currently have the capacity to issue the Europass Diploma Supplement[4]. This is identified in the SER as one of the College's recommendations for enhancement.

Findings - Element 6: Information systems

3.57   The College recognises in its SER that college-wide data collection systems are yet to be fully developed. Such data collection and the increasing use of management information including benchmarking institutional performance with similar institutions elsewhere in the sector, will assist strategic and resource decision-making.

3.58   Similarly, as noted above, the College is aware of the need to take action in regard to issuing Europass Diploma Supplements. The panel endorses the need for this recommendation and encourages the College to produce the Europass Diploma Supplement for the 2012-2013 graduating cohort, and if possible, make its provision available for past graduates upon request.

Recommendation - Element 6: Information systems

The panel recommends that the College should:

13.   Develop systems for evaluating the impact of provision and initiatives across the College, benchmarking them against relevant external reference points.

Element 7: Public information

3.59   The provision of public information by the College is dealt with earlier in the report as part of the section on public confidence (see paragraphs 1.4-1.7 above).

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[4] The Europass Diploma Supplement is issued to graduates of higher education institutions along with their parchment and transcripts of results. It provides additional information regarding the award which is not available on the official certificate such as the skills and competences acquired, the level of the qualification and the results gained, and entry requirements and access opportunities to the next level of education etc.

3.60   The panel was satisfied with the accuracy and utility of the public information provided by the College, subject to the panel's recommendation that the College should further develop its website (recommendation 3, p16).

Findings - Element 7: Public information

See findings and recommendations under 'Objective 1 - Public confidence' above, which also relate to public information.

Objective 4 — Qualifications Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression

To confirm the extent to which the College has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications and its procedures for access, transfer and progression

This objective has two main strands:

1. Review of the College's activity in implementing the National Framework of Qualifications.
2. Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression.

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland has produced guidelines in relation to this.[5] These include issues such as credit, transfer and progression rules between levels and award types, entry arrangements, information provision, and policies and procedures for the Recognition of Prior Learning.

Summary — Objective 4 — Qualifications Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression

4.1   The Carlow College SER states that all HETAC accredited programmes it offers conform to the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The College is highly committed to equity of access and notes in the SER that, while the learner population includes diverse groups of learners, the College has been particularly successful in attracting and retaining mature learners, 43.1% of learners in 2010-2011 were mature learners. The College indicates that it explicitly encourages applications from mature learners and cites its Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programme as an accessible entry route for mature learners. The policy and procedure for RPL is set out in the Quality Assurance Handbook and the College states that it is one of the ways in which the College's admissions policies are aligned with the *Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners* (NQAI, 2003) and *Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training* (NQAI, 2005). The SER states that 'Practice in the College is consistent with the principles expressed in the National Qualifications Framework that access be provided to those learners who have in the past had limited access to education and training….' (SER, p44).

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[5] *"Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression"*. National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. 2003. www.nqai.ie

4.2   The SER also describes the Accumulation of Credits and Certification of Subjects (ACCS) programme which provides flexible opportunities for part-time study with the accumulation of ten-credit units leading to a HETAC award when sufficient credit has been accumulated. Demand for this particular form of provision has fallen in recent years and now accounts for around 5% of the learner population.

4.3   The panel met with staff who described how applicant interviews and assessment are conducted in ways that are both accessible and sufficiently rigorous to reassure both applicant and the College that, if offered a place, learners would have the potential to succeed.

4.4   The Programmatic Review (see paragraph 3.15) was seen by the College as an opportunity to review and standardise its modules into five and ten credits allowing for greater transparency and bringing arrangements into line with the NFQ. In particular, this allows for greater flexibility with regard to learner electives and also means that transfer between programmes and institutions can be more easily accommodated. Academic advisors explain the arrangements to learners in each year of their programme. In particular, advisors are mindful of the specific requirements of certain career paths and are able to advise learners accordingly.

Key Findings — Objective 4 — Qualifications Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression

4.5   From the evidence presented to it, the panel concluded that the College has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications and has in place appropriate arrangements for access, transfer and progression. However, the impact of the changes to standardise the credit weightings of modules will be better understood when they have been in operation for at least a full academic year. The College attracts a diverse learner body in terms of the socio-economic background and age range. Wheelchair access has improved but access to the upper floors remains a challenge and the possibility of streaming lectures to ground floor rooms is being explored.

4.6   The College has impressive retention and progression rates, with retention between levels one and two ranging from 92.3% to 95.8% in the five years from 2006-2007 to 2010-2011. The College attributes its success to the combination of academic and pastoral support

offered. This assertion was confirmed by staff, learners and stakeholders with whom the panel met. It was not clear, however, how data was systematically used to inform practice, and the panel would encourage the College to do so.

Commendation —Qualifications Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression

The panel commends the College on:

11. Its open access approach to learner admissions and its achievements in retaining and supporting learners to achieve their potential.

Recommendation —Qualifications Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression

The panel recommends the College should:

14. Monitor the retention and achievement of different groups of learners to inform future practice.

Objective 6 — Recommendations for Enhancement

To provide recommendations for the enhancement of the education and training provided by the College

This includes both the recommendations arising from the external peer review process and the recommendations arising from the internal self-evaluation process.

Summary — Objective 6 — Recommendations for Enhancement

5.1   The Institutional Review took place at a time of significant transition for the College, in particular as it seeks to establish a governing body for the first time and to develop a new Strategic Plan. The College recently used the opportunity for reflection and review afforded by the Programmatic Review. The SER identified nine recommendations for enhancement, each with associated timescales and identified responsibilities in the areas of:

- governance;
- strategic developments – including planning, collaborations, learner recruitment;
- the development of IT systems;
- staff CPD; and
- the public profile of the College.

Key Findings — Objective 6 — Recommendations for Enhancement

5.2   The absence of a Strategic Plan, in particular, made it difficult for the panel to evaluate the appropriateness of some of the College's recommendations for future development and the relevance of some of its recommendations for enhancement. The College will need to revisit these recommendations once a governing body has been established and a Strategic Plan agreed as a matter of immediate priority.

Conclusion

Carlow College is an institution with a pervasive, historic and distinctive ethos, committed to the highest academic standards and to open access to its programmes, particularly for mature learners. Current learners and graduates who met the panel were uniformly positive about their experience at the College and the study opportunities afforded them which might not otherwise have been available.

The panel found an institution moving from informal arrangements, more suitable for a small institution, to more formal policies and procedures appropriate to an institution which, whilst still relatively small, has increased rapidly in size in recent years. An institution in which, to quote the President, "whilst quality assurance may be the new mantra, tradition and instinct still remain strong" - and are rightly valued.

Some of the new procedures have still to be fully implemented and in some areas their impact and effectiveness is still to be measured. In the view of the panel, full implementation of those new arrangements, particularly as they assist in securing academic standards and the quality of the learner experience, requires confidence on the part of College staff in their relevance and reliability.

The College has senior managers fully capable of, and committed to, ensuring the effectiveness of the new procedures. This confidence is based, in part, on an observed willingness to look to best practice in other comparable institutions to evaluate and adapt its own procedures and to engage actively in issues relating to quality assurance.

Carlow College has a long history but has made significant strides in its very recent past. It faces major challenges, not least those posed by changes in the configuration and funding of higher education in Ireland. These challenges have to be faced at a time when the College is establishing new governance arrangements and still developing a new strategic plan. Swift progress on both remain critical to the continued success and sustainability of the College.

Appendix A   Terms of Reference

Higher Education and Training Awards Council
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF
Carlow College in March 2012

STATUS: SET

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to specify the Terms of Reference for the Institutional Review of Carlow College in March 2012. The HETAC Institutional Review policy applies to all Colleges providing HETAC accredited programmes, or programmes accredited under Delegated Authority. These Terms of Reference are set within the overarching policy for Institutional Review as approved in December 2007 and should be read in conjunction with same. These Terms of Reference do not replace or supersede the agreed policy for Institutional Review. The Terms of Reference once set may not be amended and any significant revision required to the Terms of Reference will result in a new Terms of Reference to be set by HETAC following consultation with the College. These Terms of Reference should be read in conjunction with the supplementary guidelines for Institutional Review.

The objectives of the Institutional Review process are

1. To enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by the College and the standards of the awards made;
2. To contribute to coherent strategic planning and governance in the College;
3. To assess the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance arrangements operated by the College;
4. To confirm the extent that the College has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression;
5. To evaluate the operation and management of Delegated Authority where it has been granted;
6. To provide recommendations for the enhancement of the education and training provided by the College.

It is possible that, within the objectives outlined above, Colleges may have specific sub-objectives to which they will attach particular importance and wish to emphasise in their TOR. To maximise the benefits of the review process, Colleges may also consider including additional objectives relevant to its context.

The approach taken by HETAC to Institutional Review will:

- Acknowledge that Colleges have ownership of and responsibility for their activity;
- Be conducted in a spirit of partnership with Colleges, with a view to improvement and enhancement, whilst acknowledging statutory requirements for accountability;
- Be conducted in a manner which adds value to the College, minimises overhead and assists in building Institutional capacity;
- Be flexible, adaptable and scalable in order to meet the needs of diverse Colleges;
- Be conducted in an open, consistent and transparent manner;
- Be evidence-based in accordance with established criteria;
- Promote learning and development for all involved;
- Reward innovation and experimentation when it seeks to enhance our understanding of good practice;
- Promote collaboration and sharing of good practice between Colleges;
- Take cognisance of international best practice and contribute to European and international developments in this area.

Section 2. College Profile

Carlow College - Providing Humanities and Social Studies Training

Background

Carlow College is a private college with charitable status. It is situated on parklands at College Street in the centre of Carlow Town. County Carlow is located in the centre of Ireland's South Leinster region (containing the counties of Carlow, Wicklow, Wexford, Kildare, Laois and Kilkenny) and midway between Dublin (80 kilometres) and Waterford (80 kilometres). The College is flanked by the Cathedral to the south and by VISUAL[6] (Centre for Contemporary Art and the George Bernard Shaw Theatre), the new Arts Centre and Theatre to the North.

Carlow College was founded in 1782 and is known locally as St. Patrick's College. It is Ireland's oldest third-level Catholic college, and along with Trinity College Dublin it is one of the country's oldest educational institutions. From the beginning the College was both a lay college and a seminary for the education of clergy. The College has been providing programmes in the humanities at the core of its academic curriculum since 1793. In 1841 Carlow College was accredited by the University of London and over several decades learners of the college sat examinations for primary degrees in Arts and Law from London. In 1892 the College became a seminary exclusively. One hundred years later, in 1989, it reclaimed its original role and once again opened its doors to lay students from all over the country. The College ceased to be a seminary in 2001.

Over the past two decades Carlow College has established itself as a provider of programmes in Humanities and Social Studies with the particular remit of serving the South Leinster and South-East Midlands region of Ireland. Since 1997 the College has embarked on a building and renovation programme which has seen the development of seven new lecture halls, a new public hall, new library, archives, and a student resource centre. The College is self-funding. It receives no State funding. It has qualified for the Free Fees Initiative since 1995. In Spring 2011, Free Fees were drawn down from the Department of Education and Skills for 667 of the 709 full-time learners attending the College in 2010-2011. Carlow College also had 91 part-time learners in 2010-2011.

Programmes

Carlow College offers a Level 7 Bachelor of Arts programme in Humanities after three years and at honours level after four years - Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Learners take Philosophy/Psychology, Theology, English and History as primary components on their degree programmes. According to the College, the versatility and interdisciplinary nature of the degree provision provides a number of options for learners at postgraduate level. The suite of programmes offered is set out below:

Carlow College currently offers the following programmes:

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[6]VISUAL http://www.visualcarlow.ie/

Programme title	NFQ[7] level	Date of original validation	Number of learners
Bachelor of Arts in Humanities	Level 7	22 March 1989	106
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Humanities	Level 8	30 April 1998	178
Higher Certificate in Arts in Applied Social Studies in Social Care	Level 6	9 July 1996	208
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies in Social Care	Level 7	7 July 1998	56
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Social Studies in Social Care	Level 8	3 July 2003	46
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in English and History	Level 8	7 July 2008	66
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in English and Spanish	Level 8	7 July 2008	*
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Theology	Level 8	10 July 1992	*
Higher Certificate in Arts in Citizenship and Community Studies	Level 6	7 April 2007	
Bachelor of Arts in Citizenship and Community Studies	Level 7	7 April 2007	
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Citizenship and Community Studies	Level 8	7 April 2007	45
Master of Arts by Mode A (Research and Thesis)	Level 9	1 October 1996	5
Master of Arts in Therapeutic Child Care	Level 9	28 June 2004	
Higher Diploma in Business in Parish Planning and Administration	Level 8	29 May 2000	*
Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Equality and Diversity in the Workplace	Level 9	23 July 2007	*
Certificate in Parish Ministry	Level 6	10 July 1992	*
Certificate in Advocacy Skills – Minor award	Level 6	7 April 2009	

* Programme is not currently running

For learners who wish to pursue a career in Social Care the College offers a suite of Social Care programmes at each level on the NFQ: Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies in Social Care (Level 7) and Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Social Studies in Social Care (Level 8). It also offers a Level 8, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Citizenship and Community Studies.

Programme provision at post-graduate Level 9 on the NFQ includes a two-year taught Master of Arts in Therapeutic Child Care. Carlow College also has approval to support Level 9 Research degrees in the fields of English, History, Philosophy and Theology. There were five registered research learners in 2010-2011.

Since 2004, the College has offered a taught Masters in Therapeutic Child Care (MATCC). This is a two-year programme which runs *ab initio* every second year. It is taught in College on one day a week during the academic year to professionals who are already working in the field.

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[7] NFQ: National Framework of Qualifications www.nfq.ie

Learners

Learner numbers have increased significantly in recent years: In 2006-2007 the College had 446 full-time learners, 2007-2008 (505), 2008-2009 (538), 2009-2010 (627). In the academic year 2010-2011 there were 800 learners at Carlow College. 709 of these were full-time and the remainder part-time.

Learners come from all over Ireland with 50% coming from the immediate catchment area of Carlow and the adjoining counties of Wexford, Kilkenny, Laois, Kildare and Wicklow. Over the past five years, 35% to 47.5 % of all Carlow College learners have been mature learners. In 2010-2011, 306 or 43.1% of the 709 learners were mature learners. The College is currently building a database of its alumni.

Staff

The academic staff of Carlow College comprises of 18 full-time lecturers, 11 of whom have a PhD and 6 of whom are engaged in doctoral studies. There are 13 part-time academic staff. There are 18 administrative, students' services and library staff. There are 8 general maintenance and house-keeping staff. These include kitchen and dining hall staff and the College gardener.

Staff members are encouraged to be research active. A research record is a pre-requisite for employment in the College. Only candidates with doctorates and research profiles are now being employed full-time by Carlow College. Staff who have completed PhDs are encouraged to publish their work. A grant in aid of publication is available from the College. Any existing staff members who have not already done so are urged to undertake and complete PhDs. As a result, virtually all those full-time staff members who have not already received doctoral degrees are registered as PhD students. The College allows flexibility of work arrangements to candidates engaged in doctoral studies.

Partnerships

Carlow College says it has built strong links with the local community, local authorities, schools, health service providers and cultural organisations. In 1997 the College donated a valuable site on its campus to Carlow Local Authorities for the development of a €18m Arts Centre and Theatre (VISUAL). This facility opened in September 2009 and according to the College has further established its claim to be the Humanities hub for the region. It incorporates the largest exhibition space in the country and the theatre seats three hundred and fifty patrons. The College's planned new lecture complex will also function as a conference/general purposes centre. The College is represented on the board of VISUAL.

Carlow College views its relationship with the local Institute of Technology in Carlow (ITC) as complementary in that the programme orientation of ITC is traditionally towards science and business whereas the orientation of Carlow College is towards the humanities. The President of Carlow College sat on the board of ITC from 2000 to 2005. Some staff members of Carlow College teach at ITC and lecturers of Carlow College also attend staff development days at ITC.

The College signed a strategic partnership with Trinity College Dublin (TCD) in 2007. This partnership with Trinity College Dublin has resulted in the development of the *Slattery* series of Public Lectures which the College says have proved very successful. Discussions are underway about the provision of postgraduate programmes from TCD at Carlow College.

Carlow College also has international partnerships for student transfer and other projects with St Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, Carlow University, Pittsburgh and with more than 30 community colleges and universities through the Illinois Consortium for International Studies and Programs (ICISP). A partnership with ICISP was signed in 2011. Every semester a new cohort of American students comes to the College and these learners become immersed in the social and cultural life of Carlow through the 'Irish Experience' programme. This programme is specifically designed to meet the needs of American learners. It is focussed on providing American learners with insights into Irish history, culture and society. It includes extra-curricular activities and though not currently validated, the College may present it to HETAC for validation as a minor award in due course. It is currently validated by a US regional accreditation agency - NCA (North Central Association of Colleges and Schools).

Over the past decade the College has hosted groups from the partner colleges and exchanged learners and faculty with the US colleges. In return, Carlow College staff members have visited America. According to the College a corridor of cultural and educational co-operation has developed between administration and academic staff on either side of the Atlantic. The numbers of learners from the US visiting Carlow College is expected to increase consistently over the next five years – at present numbers vary from between 10 to 20 learners per semester.

Research

Carlow College describes itself as a college of teaching and research.

At Postgraduate level, staff supervise research theses in the fields of Philosophy, Theology, English and History. The College has graduated eight research students in total and the first PhD student graduated in 2009. Staff also supervise dissertations on the taught Masters in Therapeutic Child Care. The MATCC programme team are currently editing for publication a book of the best theses completed on the programme to date.

Staff/Postgraduate Research Colloquia under the aegis of the Postgraduate Research Programme Board take place every three weeks during term. Academic staff and postgraduate students are expected and encouraged to attend and to read papers at the Colloquia. Staff members are urged to see these occasions as a form of on-going academic development before a paper is taken on the scholarly conference circuit. The College makes travel grants available to lecturing staff who are attending academic conferences to present papers in Ireland or overseas.

Quality Assurance

A Carlow College Quality Assurance Procedures Handbook was agreed with HETAC in 2006. The handbook has been updated on an incremental basis as required since that time. All Quality Assurance policies have been updated and revised for this Institutional Review. Carlow College conducted a programmatic review of the majority of its HETAC programmes in March 2011. The review, which was positive, was considered and approved by the HETAC Academic Committee in July 2011. As part of the Institutional Review process Carlow College will consider the effectiveness of the programmatic review process.

Carlow College Mission Statement

The Carlow College mission statement is as follows:

"In the shared enterprise of education, through teaching, learning, practice placement, and research activity we seek excellence in all we do and endeavour to respond creatively to the needs of our students and of society".

Section 3. College's Team

- President, Carlow College
  Mgr. Caoimhín Ó Néill

- Registrar
  Dr. Thomas Mc Grath

- Project Manager / Liaison for Institutional Review
  Dr. Thomas Mc Grath
  Carlow College
  College Street
  Carlow
  Tel: (059) 9153200

Section 4. HETAC objectives for Institutional Review

There are six prescribed objectives for Institutional Review as outlined below. Colleges may wish to highlight any areas of specific importance to the Institution within each of the objectives.

Objective 1: To enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by the College and the standards of the awards made
This objective is to enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by the College and the standards of the awards made. This is an overarching objective which covers all areas of the College's activity. The quality of the Institutional Review process itself is a critical part of this as is the internal self study, the publication of the Self Evaluation Report and Panel Report. The information provided by the College to the public falls within this objective.

Special considerations for Carlow College

- *None.*

Objective 2: To contribute to coherent strategic planning and governance in the College
This objective is to contribute to coherent strategic planning and governance in the College. The review may address the coherence of institutional mission, vision and values and overall institutional strategic planning. For recognised Institutions with Delegated Authority this objective also includes the Operation and Management criterion of the review of Delegated Authority (governance,

management, administration, planning and evaluation) and the Objects of the Qualifications Act criterion relating to national contributions *etc.*

Special considerations for Carlow College

- *None*

Objective 3: To assess the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance arrangements operated by the College

This objective is to assess the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance arrangements operated by the College. This will be based on Part One of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance. By including this in the Institutional Review process the statutory requirement for review of QA is met. How the College manages its QA for the "seven elements" of Part One of the European Standards and Guidelines should be explicitly addressed by the review process including: Policy and Procedures for Quality Assurance; Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes and Awards; Assessment of Learners; Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff; Learning Resources and Support; Information Systems; Public Information.

Special consideration for Carlow College

Learner Support
- Carlow College established an Academic Resource Office (ARO) in September 2007 to provide an institution-wide academic support and learning assistance service for all learners including those with special educational needs. The ARO promotes the academic development of learners through the provision of 'Essay Doctor' and Learning Support Tutor services. Since 2011-2012 a mandatory (not for credit) module 'Academic Skills for Third Level' is being delivered to all year one learners by the Academic Resource Officer. Learning support workshops are offered during the year in order to assist learners adapt to the demands of third level and to support them as they plan and manage their studies. The ARO is also responsible for the administration of ESF funding and co-ordination of assistive technology and human supports for learners with special educational needs. The College request the panel to review the operational management and effectiveness of the ARO as part of objective 3.

Objective 4: To confirm the extent that the College has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression

This objective is to confirm the extent that the College has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression. The National Qualifications Authority has produced guidelines in relation to this. For example, this includes issues such as credit, transfer and progression routes between levels and award types, entry arrangements and information provision. As part of this objective, HEA-funded institutions should be mindful of the goals of the HEA's National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (2008-2013) and pay particular attention to the objectives relevant to Higher Education institutions.

Special considerations for Carlow College

- *None*

Objective 5: To evaluate the operation and management of delegated authority where it has been granted [Not Applicable]

Objective 6: To provide recommendations for the enhancement of the education and training provided by the College

This objective is to provide recommendations for the enhancement of the education and training provided by the College. This will include both the recommendations arising from the external peer review process and recommendations arising from the internal self study process.

Special considerations for Carlow College

- *None*

Section 5. College-specific objectives

In addition to the prescribed HETAC objectives and the special considerations noted in relation to them, there is an option to include additional objectives to maximise the benefits of the review process.

Additional Institutional Objectives

- *None*

Section 6. Schedule for Carlow College

As outlined in the Institutional Review policy, the process consists of six phases
1. HETAC sets the Terms of Reference following consultation with College;
2. Self-study by the College;
3. Visit by expert panel appointed by HETAC and written panel report;
4. College response including implementation plan;
5. Panel report and response published;
6. Follow-up report submitted by the College.

The major milestones in the timeframe for the Institutional Review of Carlow College are outlined below. This should be read in conjunction with the supplementary guidelines for Institutional Review.

Relative timeframe	Actual Date	Milestone
At least 6 months before panel visit	October 2010	College indicates timeframe for Institutional Review as per overall HETAC schedule of reviews
Approx. 6 months before panel visit	November 2011	Terms of Reference set following consultation with College and post on HETAC website
3 to 6 months before panel visit	September-November 2011	College undertakes self study process and produces self evaluation report
Approx. 8-10 weeks before site visit *	15 December 2011	Submission of Self Evaluation Report (SER) and other supporting documentation
1 week following receipt of SER	21 December 2011	HETAC Desk based review of SER and feedback to College
Approx. 3 weeks before site visit	8 February 2012	Advance Meeting between Chair, Secretary and College
Panel Visit	7-8 March 2012	Site visit by external peer review panel (2 days approximately as determined by TOR) Preliminary (oral) feedback on findings
Approx. 12 weeks after site visit*	19 June 2012	Draft report on findings of panel sent by HETAC to College for factual accuracy
1 week following this	25 June 2012	Final report on findings of panel sent by HETAC to College
Usually 6 weeks following receipt of final report*	7 September 2012	Response by College to HETAC including plan with timeframe for implementation of any changes
Next available HETAC Academic Committee meeting	12 October 2012	Consideration of report and College response by HETAC Academic Committee

Publication of report, response and SER on website once adopted |
| 12 months after adoption | October 2013 | Follow up report by College to HETAC on implementation of recommendations |

* Extra time allowed during Christmas, Easter and Summer breaks

Appendix B   Panel membership

Chairperson
Mr. David Parry
Independent higher education and voluntary sector consultant

Secretary
Ms. Caroline Carpenter
Head of Research and Information Unit at Southampton Solent University, United Kingdom

Dr. Pat O Hara
Former Policy Manager at the Western Development Commission

Mr. Leon Cremonini
PhD. Student in Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at University of Twente

Dr. Vidar L. Haanes
Professor of Church History and Rector/President of MF Norwegian School of Theology, Oslo.

Mr. John Vickery
Registrar at the Institute of Technology Tallaght

Appendix C   Supporting documentation received before the site visit

1. Self evaluation report 2011
2. Self evaluation report appendices 2011
3. Quality Assurance Handbook 2011
4. 10 memory sticks
5. Folders containing the following information
   - Carlow College Prospectus 2012-2013 and Additional Promotional Literature
   - Carlow College Student Handbook and Academic Guides 2011-2012
   - Academic Calendar 2011-2012
   - Lecture Hall Capacity
   - Memoranda of Understanding with Partner Institutions
   - Letter of Recognition of BA (Honours) Humanities for Certification from Health Care Chaplaincy Board
   - Directory of Social Care Placement Agencies
   - Directory of Schools for Teaching Practice Placement
   - Carlow College Graduation Brochure 2011
   - Accumulation of Credits and Certification of Subjects (ACCS): Student Information Leaflet
   - Advanced Entry Applicant Information
   - Induction Pack 2011-2012
   - Carlovian Magazine
   - The Delany Archive Information Leaflet
   - Information Technology Review
   - Module Descriptor for Year 1 Academic Skills Course
   - Academic Resource Office Information Leaflets
   - Carlow College Students with Disabilities in Third Level Education Needs Assessment Report Form
   - Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007-2013: Procedures Manual for the Administration of Expenditure for the Fund for Students with Disabilities
   - Student Online Evaluation of Service 2010-2011
   - Educational Support Worker Online Evaluation of Service 2010-2011
   - Letters from Organisations and Educational Institutions
   - Module Descriptor for US Study Abroad Irish Experience Course.
   - Student Health Handbook
   - Carlow – Trails of the Saints and County Carlow Tourist Brochures.

Appendix D   Documentation requested by the panel

The panel requested the following documentation following the advance meeting

a.   Organisation Diagram - to be provided in advance of the site visit
b.   Current Document describing the College's strategy development/ engagement process
c.   Documentation indicating institutional feedback on third party engagements - reports - offering a perspective on the institution e.g. Teaching Council/ Professional Body/ collaborative partnerships. Feedback or reviews on existing partnerships - documentation indicating how the College knows the agreements are leading to the desired outcomes.
d.   Programme documentation on a mainstream bachelor programme provided by the College. In general, all documentation associated with the continuous (and periodic review) management and quality monitoring of the programme indicating an audit trail on issues raised by staff and student feedback and consideration at the internal and external committees. **For example**, follow-through on programme monitoring reports for staff meetings and issues raised by student feedback on modules and programme content - Quality assurance of teaching staff reports and consideration of same by appropriate committees. Extern Examiner appointment process for the programmes, External Examiner reports and minutes of meetings where these were considered. Please also include the College version of:
   - Example of a programme handbook for students
   - Examples of feedback from students and how it has been acted upon.
   - Minutes from programme committee meetings - the last three.
   - Example of a programme report, if any, or equivalent.
   - Documentation demonstrating QA. – changes from Programmatic Review. Indicating how changes progress through the internal QA processes - documents as appropriate in this regard.
e.   Programmatic review follow-up action on recommendations – (summary of)
f.   Reports on the impact of ESF funding (non-financial, more institutional reports).
g.   Sample of new lecturing staff member induction material/pack

Appendix E   Index to documentation provided to the panel at the site visit

1. Additional Information requested by the panel [as per Note of advance meeting]
2. Research publications by members of the academic staff
3. College documentation – Management / Academic Council/ Programme Board Minutes/ External Examiner Reports
4. Assessment of Students – examples of students' work
5. Programmatic Review, 2011
6. Public Confidence
7. Strategic Planning and Governance
8. Student Resources and Student Support Service
9. Information Systems
10. Public Information

Humanities Degree – BA/BA (Honours) Index of Programme Documentation 2011/2012

1. Programme Monitoring Reports
2. Mid-Year Programme Board Report to Academic Council
3. Minutes from last three programme board meetings
   - October 2011
   - January 2012
   - February 2012
4. Documentation demonstrating Quality Assurance
   a) Programme Board Meeting Follow-through Email Communication to Members
   b) Programme Board General Quality Assurance Email Communication to Members
   c) Quality Assurance Email Communication re Academic Advising
   d) Quality Assurance Email Communication re Examinations
   e) Quality Assurance Email Communication re Changes from Programmatic Review:
      - re Elective Modules
      - re Stage IV Seminar and Dissertation Module
      - re Continuous Assessment and Tutorials
   f) Quality Assurance re Externs:
      - Extern Examiner appointment process for the programmes
      - External Examiner reports and minutes of meetings Email Communication
   g) Minutes of Meetings of Undergraduate Programme Board Chairs and Assistant Registrar re Quality Assurance of Undergraduate Programmes
      - Quality Assurance follow-up Email Communication between Undergraduate Programme Board Chairs and Assistant Registrar
5. Quality assurance re teaching staff reports
6. Student Feedback
7. New Lecturing Staff Member Induction
8. Programme Handbook for Students

Academic Resource Office, Index of Additional Documentation:

Section A: ESF Funded Student Supports:
1. Example of a student needs assessment for application to the ESF Fund for Students with Disabilities 2011/2012.
2. Example of a record of application for continuing students to the Fund for Students with Disabilities 2011/2012
3. Example of communication from the Academic Resource Office to a student regarding their application for ESF funded supports (first-time applicant, ineligible applicant and renewal applicant).
4. Example of a student application for examination accommodations and subsequent communication from the Academic Resource Office regarding the accommodations granted.
5. Sample of Academic Resource Office records student review meetings.
6. Academic Resource Office Assets Register for ESF funded equipment 2008 – 2010.
7. Proposed implementation schedule for the introduction of a specialist model of support for students with Asperger's Syndrome transitioning to third level.

Section B: Educational Support Workers:
1. Example of documents relating to the application process for an Academic Personal Assistant position.
2. Example of an Educational Support Worker Induction Pack.
3. Examples of records for Educational Support Workers review meetings.

Section C: Financial Management and Records:
1. Records of communication relating to the external financial audit of Carlow College by the ESF Financial Control Unit 2010 and 2011.
2. Example of records from the internal allocation of ESF funding for student supports.
3. Academic Resource Office record relating to the impact of ESF funding - 2011 Programmatic Review.

Section D: Evaluation of Academic Support Module:
1. Mid-term Academic Support Evaluation Sheet 2008 (Social Studies Programme).
2. Academic Support Programme Student Evaluation Form 2009 (Social Studies Programme).

Admissions Office-   Index Samples of Additional Documentation

1. Admissions Office Handbook & Appendices
2. Statistics 2006-Present
3. Documented Deferrals & Withdrawals Sample
4. CAO timeline
5. Graduation-Sample of events
6. Online Enquiries (via Academy, Website) Sample
7. Registration
   - Pack
   - Sample of Academy Software/Database
   - Online Registration

Central Administration Office - Index of Sample of forms issued by Office in the course of the Academic Year September – August

1. Registration Letter
2. Student File Form
3. Elective Form
4. Reading Lists
5. Timetable
6. Letter Confirming Attendance
7. Essay Submission Dates
8. Essay Cover Sheets
9. Attendance Rolls
10. Tutorial Groups Roll
11. Tutorial Groups Booklets
12. Sample Notice for Noticeboard
13. Placement Information (Social Studies)
    - Supervisor's Letter
    - Assessment Form
    - Contract Form
    - Insurance Letter
    - Placement Attendance
14. Marking Criteria
15. Exam Registration Form
16. Mature Student Application Forms
    - Supplementary Piece (Social Studies)
17. Mature Student Cover Letter
18. Mature Student Interview Letter
19. Final Exams Timetable
20. Exam Memo
21. Exam Corrections Payment Form

Appendix F   Agenda for site visit

Institutional Review
Carlow College, 6-8 March 2012

The format of each session is a discussion in question and answer format unless otherwise indicated. Mr. David Parry, Review Chairperson, will chair all sessions unless otherwise indicated.

Tuesday 6 March	**Carlow College** **2.30pm- 3.30pm- Guided tour of facilities at Carlow College** **Panel depart for hotel** **Private meeting of panel in hotel** **4.00pm – 5.00pm – Formal induction process (TOR and process)** HETAC presentation/induction on Institutional Review criteria and background to Higher Education in Ireland. Review Secretary – Team approach to review Review Chairperson- Update from advance meeting with College **5.15pm – 7.30pm – Agenda discussion for each session with the College** Review of questions/issues for each session with College – proposed questions and assignment of role – highlight areas that need further clarification
Day One Wednesday 7 March	**Meetings take place at Carlow College** **8.30am-10.00am – Private meeting of panel – documentation follow-up/review. Tea, coffee and pastries.** Assign panel members to documentation review. Panel members review supplementary documentation provided and highlight any areas where further clarification is required **10.00am – 11.00am Session One with College Representatives - Objective 2: Strategic Planning and Governance. Brief presentation (10 mins max by College President)** Setting the scene - an overview of the College context, mission, and vision. Clarification on structure and roles and overall activities the College is engaged in. Environmental factors including competitive position. Strategic planning and governance. Links between internal reflection and strategic planning decision making. Brief presentation by President (10 minutes). **11.00am – 11.15am – Break for panel discussion** **11.15am – 12.00pm Session Two- Objective 1: Public Confidence** –Overarching objective. Demonstrating evidence of public confidence in the quality of education and training and standards of awards made. Information provided by the College; Stakeholder interaction. Overall approach taken to self study for Institutional Review

(outline of self study process etc).

12.00pm – 12.15pm - **Break for panel discussion**

12.15pm – 1.15pm Lunch at institution– Panel private lunch and opportunity for panel members to continue review of supplementary evidence – documentation.

1.15pm – 2.30pm Session Three- Objective 3 : Quality Assurance - Overview of Quality Assurance system/framework in place in the College **(Brief presentation 10 minutes maximum**) and management of change to QA system. The "seven elements" covered by the European Standards and Guidelines and the stage of development of the Colleges QA system in each area ; evidence of performance of QA system in each area; evaluation of effectiveness of QA system in each area; improvements identified; integration between processes and strategic planning etc. The session will also consider the special consideration.

2.30pm – 2.45pm Break for panel discussion

2.45pm – 3.45pm - Session Four- Objective 3: Quality Assurance continued - Meeting with Staff of Learner Support Services. Library/Welfare/IT and others.
This session will deal with the "seven elements" covered by the European Standards and Guidelines and the stage of development of the College's QA system in each area ; evidence of performance of QA system in each area; evaluation of effectiveness of QA system in each area; improvements identified; integration between processes, governance, management and planning etc)

3.45pm – 4.15pm Break for panel discussion

4.15pm – 5.00pm - Session Five – meeting with Learners and Graduates
Two parallel sessions with representative learners and graduates– maximum of 12 learners in each session.

5.00pm – 5.15pm Break for panel discussion

5.15pm – 6.15pm - Session Six - Meeting with External Stakeholders

6.15pm – 7.15pm Private meeting of panel in College

Day Two Thursday 8 March	**Carlow College** **8.30am – 9.00am Private meeting of panel** **9.00am – 10.00am Session Seven - Objective 3: Quality Assurance continued (Seven Elements Review)**: **Meeting with non committee/non management lecturing staff.** This session will deal with the "seven elements" covered by the European Standards and Guidelines and the stage of development of the Institutions QA system in each area; evidence of performance of QA system in each area; evaluation of effectiveness of QA system in each area; improvements identified; integration between processes, governance, management and planning etc) **10.00am- 10.30am Break for panel discussion**

10.30am – 11.15am Session 8- **Objective 4: Access, Transfer and Progression**: Review of Implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications and procedures for access, transfer and progression. Learning outcomes, learner assessment etc.

1**1.15am - 11.30am Break for panel discussion**

11.30am – 12.00pm - Documentation trail - Format: Opportunity for panel members to review supplementary evidence in private.

12.00pm - 1.00pm - Panel private lunch and opportunity for panel members to review supplementary evidence – documentation

1.00pm – 2.00pm - Private meeting of panel to consider its findings and recommendations

2.00pm – 2.30pm Meeting with President, Registrar and College's Senior Management team to provide preliminary feedback on findings and recommendations.

Appendix G   List of people met by the panel

Wednesday 7 March 2012

Session 1:   10.00 – 11.00am. Objective 2: Strategic Planning and Governance

Name	Department/Job Title	Committee Membership	Full-time/ Part-time
Monsignor Brendan Byrne	Chair of Trustees, Carlow College		
Monsignor Kevin O' Neill	President, Carlow College	-Management Board -Academic Council	Full-time
Dr Thomas Mc Grath	Registrar	-Management Board -Academic Council -Postgrad Research Programme Board	Full-time
Rev Conn Ó Maoldhomhnaigh	Vice-President Secretary to Board of Management	-Management Board -Academic Council -Student Affairs Team -Co-ordinator of Catechetics and Placement	Full-time
Dr Carmel Smith	Assistant Registrar	-Management Board -Academic Council -Postgrad Research Programme Board -Chair Research Ethics Advisory Committee	Full-time
Rev John Mc Evoy	Bursar	-Management Board -Academic Council	Part-time
Dr Margaret Murphy	Programme Board Chair, English and History		Full-time

Session 2:   11.15-12.00pm. Objective 1: Public Confidence

Name	Department/ Job Title	Committee Membership	Full-time/ Part-time
Ms Gertrude O' Neill	House Manager/Marketing	-Management Board	Full-time
Ms Karen Delaney	Admissions/Marketing		Full-time
Fr Conn Ó Maoldhomhnaigh	Vice-President Secretary to Board of Management	-Management Board -Academic Council -Chair SAT/Student Alumni -Co-ordinator of Catechetics and Placement	Full-time

Name	Department/ Job Title	Committee Membership	Full-time/ Part-time
Mr John McHugh	MA Prog Board Chair/ Student Advice and Information Officer	-Academic Council -Practice Placement Advisory Committee -Postgrad Research Programme Board	Full-time
Ms Elaine Callinan	Lecturer in History,		Part-time
Ms Clare Scully	Lecturer in Communications, Facilitator of IR Staff away days.		Part-time
Dr Eoghan Smith	Lecturer in English	-Library Committee	Part-time
Dr Thomas Mc Grath	Registrar	-Management Board -Academic Council -Postgrad Research Programme Board	Full-time

Session 3:   1.15-2.30pm. Objective 3: Quality Assurance Overview

Name	Department/Job Title	Committee Membership	Full-time/ Part-time
Dr Thomas Mc Grath	Registrar	-Management Board -Academic Council -Postgraduate Research Programme Board	Full-time
Dr Carmel Smith	Assistant Registrar	-Management Board -Academic Council -Postgrad Research Programme Board -Chair Research Ethics Advisory Committee	Full-time
Dr Amelia Fleming	PB Chair Humanities	-Academic Council -Postgrad Research Programme Board	Full-time
Dr Noel Kavanagh	PB Chair Citizenship and Community/ Examinations Officer	-Academic Council -Postgrad Research Programme Board	Full-time
Dr Margaret Murphy	PB Chair English and History	-Academic Council -Postgrad Research Programme Board	Full-time
Ms Catherine O' Sullivan	PB Chair ASS in Social Care	-Academic Council -Postgrad Research Programme Board	Full-time
Damien Mc Lellan	Course Leader, MA TCC	-MA TCC Programme Board	Part-time
Ms Helen Whelan	Central Administration Secretary		Full-time

Session 4:   2.45 – 3.45pm. Objective 3: Quality Assurance (Student Support Services)

Name	Department/Job Title	Committee Membership	Full-time/ Part-time
Ms Lisa Fortune	Admissions/Academic Resource Officer	-Academic Council -Student Affairs Team	Full-time
Mr David Murphy	Librarian	-Academic Council -Library Committee	Full-time
Ms Sarah Otten	Lecturer in Philosophy	-Academic Council -Library Committee	Full-time
Mr Seamus Dowling	IT Technician		Full-time
Ms Maree Marshall	College Counsellor	-Student Affairs Team	Full-time
Ms Monica Dowling	Lecturer in Applied Social Studies in Social Care, Placement Co-ordinator ASS in Social Care	-Practice Placement Advisory Committee	Full-time
Mr Aidan Doyle	Learning Support Tutor		Part-time
Ms Vivienne Lawlor	Educational Support Worker with ARO		Part-time
Sr Mary Murphy	Chaplain	-Student Affairs Team	Part-time

Session 5:   4.15-5.00pm. Students and Graduates (Parallel Session 1)

Group A

Name	Programme	Stage	Representing e.g. Part-time Students, International etc.
Ms Caroline Flinter	B.A. in Social Care 2011		Mature student
Ms Ann Power	Humanities		M.A. Graduate
Ms. Belinda Flinter	Social Care		Graduate
Ms Emer O' Rourke	MA TCC	2	MA in Therapeutic Child Care
Ms Helen Dunne	Humanities	4	Part-time ACCS student
Ms Chelsea Hummereier	Humanities		International Student from St. Ambrose University, Davenport, Iowa
Ms Theresa Connolly	B.A. Humanities	1	Full-time Student
Ms Rachel Nolan	B.A. (Hons) Humanities	3	Full-time Student
Ms Bridget Flannery	B.A. (Hons) in English and History	3	Full-time Student
Ms Niamh O'Sullivan	B.A. (Hons) in Citizenship and Community	2	Full-time Student
Ms Kimberley Barrett	B.A in Social Care	1	Full-time Student
Mr Nicholas Kiely	B.A. (Hons) in Social Care	4	Full-time Student

Group B

Name	Programme	Stage	Representing e.g. Part-time Students, International etc.
Ms Amy Farrell	Social Care	3	Student's Union Welfare Officer.
Ms Francoise Sheehan	Humanities	PG	Graduate and MA student at Carlow College
Ms Gillian Larkin	Social Care		Graduate
Mr Terry Behan			Student's Union President
Mr Joseph Farrelly	BA (Hons) Humanities	4	Class Representative
Ms Bridget Cullen	BA in Social Care	3	Class Representative
Ms Catriona Kelly	B.A. (Hons) Humanities		Graduate
Mr Christopher Mundow	Social Care	2	Full-time Student
Ms Giselle O' Connell	Social Care	1	Full-time Student
Mr John Bergin	B.A. (Hons) in Citizenship and Community Studies	3	Full-time Student
Mr Philip Ryan	B.A. (Hons) in English and History	2	Full-time Student

Session 6:   5.15-6.15pm. External Stakeholders

Name	Job Title	Link to Carlow College
Mr Thomas Barry	Carlow County Manager	Chairman Board of VISUAL, member of governing body of IT Carlow. Partner to College in VISUAL project. Advocate of education in County Carlow
Prof. David Dickson	Professor of History (former Registrar), TCD	Member of partnership talks with TCD
Dr Michael Howlett	Head of department of Applied Arts, WIT	Chairman of Programmatic Review Panel, 2011
Ms Marian Duffy	Adult Education Officer, Carlow VEC	President of Aontas, National Adult Learning Organisation
Cllr Michael Doran	Carlow County Councillor	Vice-Chair Governing Body of IT Carlow
Mr Raymond Murray	Principal Presentation Secondary School Askea, Carlow	Recipient of Carlow College students on Teaching Placement
Ms Bridget McAssey	Head of Religious Education, Carlow VEC	Recipient of Carlow College students on Teaching Placement
Ms Marion Dowd	Project Manager, Barnardo's, Carlow	Recipient of Carlow College students on Placement in Social Care
Prof Jody Littleton	Professor of Communications Parkland College, Illinois	Visiting Lecturer from Illinois Consortium for International Studies and Programs (ICISP)
Prof James Burke	Professor of Crop Science, UCD	Formerly Head of Research, Teagasc, Advisor to College on educational matters

Name	Job Title	Link to Carlow College
Ms Mary White	Former Government Minister, Carlow, 2011	Business woman and supporter of the College

Thursday 8 March 2012

Session 7: 9.00-10.00am. Objective 3: Quality Assurance: Non-committee/non management staff

Name	Department/Job Title	Full-time/ Part-time
Dr. Anne Coakley	Lecturer in Applied Social Studies in Social Care Staff Representative on the Academic Council	Full-time
Ms Lucy Hyland	Lecturer in Applied Social Studies in Social Care Practice Placement Advisory Committee Student Affairs Team	Full-time
Ms. Helen Maher	Lecturer in Citizenship and Community Studies Student Affairs Team	Part-time
Mr Gerry Morgan	Lecturer in Creative Studies/Drama Performance	Part-time
Ms Susan Ní Chuileann	Lecturer in Applied Social Studies in Social Care	Full-time
Ms Elaine Callinan	Lecturer in History	Part-time
Ms Mary Dooley	Placement supervisor in Catechetics and Placement	Part-time
Mr Eric Derr	Essay Doctor and previous international student at Carlow College from USA	Part-time

Session 8: 10.30-11.15am. Objective 4: Access, Transfer and Progression

Name	Department/ Job Title	Committee Membership	Full-time/ Part-time
Dr Thomas Mc Grath	Registrar	-Management Board -Academic Council -Postgrad Research Programme Board	Full-time
Dr Carmel Smith	Assistant Registrar	-Management Board -Academic Council -Postgrad Research Programme Board -Chair Research Ethics Committee	Full-time
Ms Karen Delaney	Admissions/Marketing		Full-time
Ms Gertrude O' Neill	House Manager/ Marketing	-Management Board	Full-time
Ms Lisa Fortune	Admissions/Academic Resource Officer	-Academic Council -Student Affairs Team	Full-time

Name	Department/ Job Title	Committee Membership	Full-time/ Part-time
Mr John McHugh	MA Programme Board Chair/ Student Advice and Information Officer	-Academic Council -Practice Placement Advisory Committee -Postgrad Research Programme Board	Full-time
Dr Noel Kavanagh	PB Chair Citizenship and Community/ Examinations Officer	-Academic Council -Postgrad Research Programme Board	Full-time
Dr Derek Coyle	Lecturer in English	-Student Affairs Team -Postgrad Research Programme Board	Full-time
Ms Michelle Daly	Central Admin Office Secretary		Full-time
Ms Helen Whelan	Central Admin Office Secretary		Full-time