1.

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

QUALITY REPORT

2020/2021

2. Faculty Quality Overview

This report has been compiled based on information submitted by all twelve Schools in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Faculty Executive

The special Faculty Executive on Quality took place on Wednesday 16 March 2022, with c.30 people in attendance, including Heads of School, SAMs and Directors of UG and PG teaching and learning.

In line with a decision of Council, the Faculty Executive added 'Quality' as an agenda item to its monthly meetings, and under this item, a range of College areas were invited to the meeting to discuss issues which had arisen in the Quality Report:

The dates and attendees were as follows:

Date of Faculty Executive	Invited Guest
4 November 2021	Dean of Graduate Studies
09 December 2021	Senior Lecturer
24 February 2022	Bursar
16 March 2022	Director of Academic Registry

Academic Registry Faculty Liaison Officer

The Faculty is delighted to welcome the new Academic Registry Faculty Liaison Officer to her role, and hopes that some of the issues raised in this report will be resolved in due course with her assistance.

COVID-19

The academic year 2020/2021 was another one which was severely affected by COVID-19 and all staff (both academic and professional) must again be congratulated on their response to the situation. Many of the initial issues that had arisen in the previous academic year had been resolved and, on the whole, student feedback has been positive. COVID-19 has introduced many positive practices with which Schools would like to continue, e.g. online Courts of Examiners, online assessments, Online/Hybrid meetings.

COVID-19 has also raised some issues – e.g. while students are glad to have face-to-face teaching reinstated, there are issues around recording of lectures – whether this should be standard, how long they should be made available for and so on.

The pandemic and the subsequent return to face-to-face teaching has also highlighted serious concerns regarding the standard of the IT Infrastructure in College, and the provision of support for teaching rooms. Having up-to-date, functioning equipment is becoming ever more important as our reliance on technology increases. Academic staff work assiduously to provide high-class, informative, innovative lectures, and it is extremely disheartening to have to begin a class attempting to fix faulty equipment, or waiting for the software to update. As well as affecting staff members, students are left with an unfavourable impression of the College and the student experience is adversely impacted. The Faculty strongly urges the College to make improvements in this area a top priority.

Evaluation Response Rates

One of the items which raised the most concern at the Faculty Executive was the poor response rates to student evaluations and whether or not we could use the data to draw any conclusions, this is discussed further in the report. The Faculty also urges a review of student feedback for open modules, as return rates for these were particularly low.

Athena SWAN

Seven schools in AHSS have been awarded Bronze awards since 2020.

Format of the Faculty Quality Report

The 2021-22 Faculty Quality Report involved a significant reduction in the volume of data requested from Schools, and feedback on this, at the Faculty Quality Executive, was most positive; Schools were very appreciative of the reduced workload. The Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences strongly advocates for the continued use of the 2021-22 template, as we believe it focuses directly on issues of quality.

The new report template asked each School to highlight the quality enhancement initiatives it implemented during the year, and also provided each School the opportunity to raise issues which were beyond its own and the Faculty's remit to resolve. These are summarised below.

3. Quality Enhancement Initiatives

Each School has outlined up to three quality improvement initiatives relating to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, some of which have been highlighted here.

Enhancements expedited due to COVID-19

Online teaching and assessment: Schools moved most of their teaching and other activities online. While there were inevitable teething problems, student evaluations demonstrate that students are satisfied with the new processes and are keen to see a blended approach continuing into the future.

Likewise, many assessments were moved online, and this has been identified through evaluations as having been successful.

One advantage of this move to online teaching was being able to offer courses, particularly PGT, to a wider audience, across the island and beyond. Another was the ability to engage international guest speakers who might not usually be accessible.

External Examiners: Many External Examiners now have access to Blackboard modules, and Courts of Examiners can take place online, which reduces costs and carbon footprint.

Recording Lectures: Many Schools have started recording lectures, and the School of Law has developed a lecture recording policy. It was agreed that all lectures would be recorded in accordance with the policy and made available online for at least 1-2 weeks after any given lecture. Principles were also set out to guide lecturers in making recordings available beyond this, encouraging appropriate use.

Communications: many innovative methods of communication were used to keep students engaged and reduce social isolation. For example, the School of Creative Arts engaged with PGR students through a dedicated WhatsApp group and online Research Forum. School of LSCS had a weekly drop-in Zoom space, where a staff member was available.

Student Placements: the School of SWSP developed a hybrid module of placement practice, which was adopted by all Irish Universities, led by the team in TCD.

Other Enhancement highlights

School of Histories and Humanities: Several MPhil programmes introduced a new Research Design module in response to External Examiner (EE) recommendations, which the teaching staff and EEs confirmed has had a positive impact on the quality of dissertations.

School of Languages, Literature and Cultural Studies: Promotion of Modern Foreign Languages at second level through the award of a Transition Year prize.

School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences: The format of the Capstone project in CSLS was changed to that of a journal article (instead of a traditional dissertation format). The implementation has been successful.

School of Social Sciences and Philosophy: Developing a pilot for a non-credit bearing internship programme, aimed at enabling students to apply their studies outside academia and to bring relevant real world experience to bear on their studies.

Trinity Business School: TBS reviewed and updated the 'Framework for Quality in Trinity Business School' – which provides a comprehensive framework of QA processes at University, Faculty, School, Programme and Module levels. Some of these processes are in addition to those required by the University – such as the production of Annual Programme Review Reports for all UG and PG programmes.

Faculty Level: the Faculty manages a PhD research space in 7-9 Sth Leinster St. In response to student feedback, the Faculty introduced a booking mechanism for one meeting room, and also got permission to use one of the seminar rooms as a lunchroom from 1-2 each day, to allow the PhD students from disciplines across the Faculty to integrate and network.

4. Quality Issues - (Beyond the Scope of Schools to Resolve)

Each School has also outlined up to three significant issues affecting quality in their school, some of which are raised here.

Academic Registry: Issues are still reported about delays in PGT applications – however, the FLO has organised a number of information sessions for assessors in the Faculty, which it is hoped will improve turnaround times.

Online Module Enrolment remains an issue, both for students in general, but in particular for Study Abroad students.

The late registration of PGR students was also raised as an issue.

As mentioned above, it is hoped that the recent appointment of a Faculty Liaison Officer will help to improve relationships between the AR and the Faculty and to ensure that efficient and effective processes are in place on both sides.

IT Infrastructure: This remains a huge issue, with more investment needed to allow for true Hyflex teaching. There are three prongs to this problem – firstly, the equipment itself should be up-to-date and capable of providing the best possible experience for both staff and students. Secondly, the equipment needs to be functioning and support must be available for any technical issues. Finally, training is needed for lecturers to help them to move to full hyflex teaching.

Another issue mentioned was the requirement for invigilation support or Proctoring software for online exams.

TEP/Academic Year Structure/ Fixed Timetable: an issue which is raised each year is the turnaround times in the new Academic Year Structure – the timelines for marking, moderation, Courts of Examiners and Courts of First Appeal are tight and place a huge burden on staff and unnecessary pressure on students. Workloads throughout the year have also been made heavier due to TEP, for example with cross-year teaching no longer possible, and the compulsory Capstone project.

The impact of TEP and the Fixed timetable are reported to limit student choices, e.g. the European Studies programme is challenged by the current range of options available and the Law programmes are said to be less attractive to prospective students.

Staff: Student Ratios: this remains a significant issue for the Faculty – some FAHSS schools have the highest ratios in the College, way out of line with our international peers. Student numbers were raised as an issue at the Faculty Quality Executive, with one DUTL noting that she has over 500 students in one of her classes. As well as the burden this places on existing staff and the potential risk to the quality experience for the students, these ratios also prevent any significant further expansion in student numbers in the Schools in question.

Quality and Availability of Space: A number of Schools have requested designated spaces for PGT students. The Faculty unfortunately does not have any additional, available space to allocate to this. Furthermore, much of the Faculty's space needs modernisation. There was a refurbishment of the Arts

Building, and this has impproved much of the appearance of the building – however, significant infrastructural work is requested to bring the building up to modern sustainability levels and to comply with Health and Safety.

Delays in election of GSU staff reps: Heads of Schools expressed dismay throughout the year at the delays in electing post graduate student representatives, and this was reflected in their Quality Reports.

The Faculty Executive would like the support of the VP/CAO and wider Quality Committee to seek resolution of these issues, and would welcome the opportunity to contribute to problem-solving in a meaningful and constructive way.

5. Quantitative Data

Undergraduate/Postgraduate Student Evaluations

There are 1,325 undergraduate modules offered across the Faculty and 95% of modules were evaluated in 2020-21. Evaluations were carried out on 69 of the 72 postgraduate programmes (96%).

Feedback mechanisms and response rates were two of the main areas of concern at the Faculty Quality Executive. It is generally accepted that paper-based, in-class surveys give the best response rates, but these are not always feasible, particularly with more on-line teaching. Response rates for Open Modules were particularly low, and FAHSS suggests that the evaluation method evaluation for these be reviewed.

Some suggestions to improve overall response rates were:

- Shortening the online surveys
- Ensuring that the first question is whether the student is happy with the module, and giving the option not to provide further feedback if they don't wish to
- Having one survey per year of a course, with questions relating to different modules included (for example this is done in the School of Pharmacy)
- Use Student/Staff liaison groups rather than surveys
- Trying different survey software, e.g. Qualtrics(TRiSS has a licence for this which it can share with member Schools).

UG Student Module Evaluations

UG Modules	Total	CA	Ed	Eng	HH	LLCS	Law	LSCS	Psy	Rel	SSP	SWSP	TBS
No. taught	1325	213	29	80	164	334	45	98	35	41	198	37	51
No. evaluated	1264	213	29	80	110	327	45	98	35	41	198	37	51
Proportion evaluated (%)	95%	100	100	100	64	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Open Module Evaluations

Open Modules	Total	CA	Ed	Eng	HH	LLCS	Law	LSCS	Psy	Rel	SSP	SWSP	TBS
No. offered	184+	14		9	37	66	4	5	6	17	17	9	
Response rate		33		10	<20		24-57	10-40	28-56	17-50	14-50	15	

Postgraduate Programme Evaluation

PGT Programmes	Total	CA	Ed	Eng	HH	LLCS	Law	LSCS	Psy	RTPS	SSP	SWSP	TBS
No. taught	72	1	3	3	9	5	5	7	9	6	5	6	13
No. evaluated	69	1	3	3	9	5	5	7	6	6	5	6	13
Proportion evaluated (%)	96	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	66	100	100	100	100
Response rate		14	35	49	22	44	32	41	40	35	53	21	21

Undergraduate/Postgraduate External Examiner Reports

Undergraduate External Examiner Reports

UG EE Report	Total	CA	Ed	Eng	HH	LLCS	Law	LSCS	Psy	Rel	SSP	SWSP	TBS
No. expected	57	5	1	2	10	14	6	8	2	2	5	2	3
No. received	53	5	1	2	9	14	6	6	2	2	5	2	2
(%) returned	93	100	100	100	90	100	100	75	100	100	100	100	66
Did School respond in writing to EE recommendations?	9		Y		Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Did the EE(s) have or request access to Blackboard?	9	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Nine Schools gave access to their EEs to Blackboard – other Schools share documents using Sharepoint. Feedback from External Examiners seems to have been positive. Schools continue to implement suggestions from the External Examiners where possible.

Postgraduate External Examiner Reports

PGT EE Reports	Total	CA	Ed	Eng	HH	LLCS	Law	LSCS	Psy	Rel	SSP	SWSP	TBS
No. expected	73	1	4	3	9	5	5	6	12	6	5	4	13
No. received	69	1	4	3	9	5	5	6	12	6	2	3	13
(%) returned	95	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	40	75	100

Feedback overall was very positive. Feedback is being discussed at course/PG meetings and changes will be implemented where appropriate.

Appendix 1: Comments from School Directors of UG/PGT

Comments from Schools: Online Module Evaluations

School	Comments/Actions arising Evaluations
CA	The response rate to online module evaluations continues to remain much lower than responses obtained in person, prior to COVID-19. The School will revisit methods for student evaluation for future terms with a view to increasing the response rate.
Educ	Over last year and this year (to date), the area of reported concern on student evaluations has centred almost exclusively on uncertainty owing to Covid. These principally fell into three related categories, (1) access to the online platform reported by students in RIAM (connected to the ongoing building project and consequent impact on their infrastructure – this matter has been resolved); (2) uncertainty on whether school placement which represents a considerable amount of the credits on this initial teacher education programme, was going to be face to face or online, and the impact this had on student planning and preparation for their placement classes. Additional support was provided by the School to help students deal with the uncertainty when arrangements changed at short notice; and (3) students were concerned about lack of clarity to do with their role in schools when on placement, especially whether they could use instruments or singing in classes, whether they were to do additional duties if requested such as corridor and yard supervision or take on additional teaching cover when teachers were out sick. They reported variation and inconsistency of approach in different schools which was challenging for them. They met with the HoS and programme coordinator who issued guidance from the School of Education's perspective, and the School also engaged with the DES, Teaching Council, HEA and IUA to put student concerns to these bodies and seek clarity and guidance as available to support students in schools.
Eng	The main concern raised related to assessment deadlines – an issue that lies outside of the School's control. Some Covid-specific concerns, relating to the use of recorded, as opposed to in-person, lectures were also raised – again, these were beyond the School's control. In general, student feedback on the way in which the School navigated the challenges of the pandemic was very positive.

Students generally advocated for a combination of in-person and online delivery for the long-term, as a way to accommodate different kinds of students with different responsibilities. The School is interested in exploring these ideas further, and thinks that blended delivery is certainly going to be a key aspect of teaching from now on, but also believes that College should think through the implications of blended learning at an institutional level. If there is indeed an appetite for blended learning, then more investment in technology and training is going to have to take place. |
| H&H | All evaluations were conducted solely online, using Blackboard. Response rates were disappointingly low, an outcome also apparent with online evaluation in 2019-20. It had been anticipated that this would result in reduced uptake as against earlier, classroom/paper-based evaluations, and |

	this proved to be the case. There was also a decline in the percentage of modules evaluated, with several modules showing no student responses at all.
	Whilst online evaluation will continue in the present semester, the School will recommend that teaching staff ensure space during class time for this to take place, to increase the proportion of modules evaluated, and the participation rate. In the medium term, and post-pandemic, the School will re-evaluate the mode of conducting module evaluations.
	Although evaluations indicated strongly positive responses to modules, including much evidence of positive response to School efforts to provide online teaching during pandemic conditions, low uptake will qualify any findings to be drawn from 2020-21 evaluations.
LLCS	No meaningful data could be extracted from the very limited responses returned. 7 modules are capstone and were not evaluated (oversight).
Law	Upon review of module evaluations, there were several issues that emerged.
	Three major points emerged about online and remote teaching specifically:
	• Students most commonly enjoyed a mix of recorded and live lectures; • Students reported recording of lectures helped them in many cases with comprehension; • Students repeatedly reported that two hours of live online lectures back to back was too long and they could not focus; • Students reported (on balance) a preference for cameras being turned on in live lectures; • Students noted a problem with access to books, with few ebooks available.
	These are useful points of future reference in the event of future online or hybrid teaching, and helped to influence the School's lecture recording policy for the next academic year.
	Two modules stood out in the review. The approach to hybrid recorded and live teaching in Equity was extraordinarily positive, with students praising in the highest terms the approach to essay and problem-based learning in the live classes. This might serve as a model for any online modules in future.
	Private Law Remedies had very mixed feedback, resulting in a restructuring of the module separating it into two separate 5 ECTS modules, one of which is a skills based mooting module. See good practice/enhancement section below.
	Other notable points that emerged from this review were:

	- Students noted in certain modules that they disliked having one research assessment with no prior feedback. This was flagged to the lecturers involved, and solutions were discussed. Similarly, in several modules students noted that feedback on a first assessment was not received before the second one was due, limiting its usefulness. - There was an exam scheduling issue in one module, Insolvency law, where it had previously been organised as a one day take home assessment, and was then changed to a scheduled exam due to changing rules around pandemic assessments. This is unlikely to recur. - Students expressed anxiety about modules that had 100% of the assessment by way of an exam. - Many students in capstone modules asked for: a later deadline; and clearer indications that changing module weightings for the capstone does not change deadlines or workloads, only credit allocation. Both points have been flagged to the module leader, with the latter to be remedied in future communications and documents going to students.
LSCS	Feedback across the School was largely positive with students acknowledging the help and support received from teaching staff as the pandemic continued. They valued group work and group assignments and the prompt responses from lecturers. Students requested more in-person teaching and this was facilitated where government restrictions allowed and where feasible in terms of physical accommodation taking safety guidelines into account. In Clinical Speech and Language Studies, students also indicated that they would like more videos and real-life clinical examples to help learning. The School purchased a license for an online learning platform (Simucase) that provides videos and simulations, which are based on real people's stories, in a safe virtual environment and this has been received positively by staff and students.
Psych	- Consider variable deadlines across modules, to avoid pressures created by a single deadline. - Review fit between learning objectives and assessment modes. - Review of assignment workload across modules. - Ensure students have access to feedback on assignments. - Seek to provide increased opportunities for staff-student interactions - e.g., recommend staff to offer "office hours."
RTPS	Overall, very positive feedback received from students along with some constructive comments (re delivery of lecture (recordings); clarity re assignment requirements - which will be considered by the DUTL / USC and addressed accordingly. (positive quotes from students provided).
SSP	Evaluation reports were read by the DUTL and Heads of Department and any issues arising were addressed

Comments from Schools: Open Module Evaluations

School	Comment/Actions arising from Evaluations
Eng	The issue most consistently raised in student evaluations was that of assessment deadlines. This is a College level issue which is beyond the School's control. There were also some concerns about communication with students – the traditional use of email lists to capture particular cohorts (for example, SF SH English Studies) actually misses students who are taking approved modules – we have adapted our procedures to address these issues, using Blackboard a lot more.
H&H	• To seek to enhance the uptake in student evaluations. Though responses were predominantly positive (86% found their module(s) appropriately challenging; 88% strongly/agreed that the content of the module matched their original understanding of what the module would involve), it was thought important that coordinators ensure continued, or even fuller, clarity in setting out expectations (especially as regards participation, assessment, and deadlines), making use of Blackboard and/or module handbooks, given that expectations may vary significantly from those in students' home disciplines.
LLCS	Response rate data not calculated separately to standard modules Response rate to all module evaluations was so low, it was deemed to be ineffective for any action to be taken.
Law	Constitutional Law II This is the only "Law" module offered as an Open Module. All other modules are designed as bespoke Open Module for non-law students. 50% of the cohort found it too challenging and the majority would not recommend it. Feedback from students taking it as an Open Module differed greatly from Law student's experience of it and they seemed to struggle with it. Accordingly, it was not offered in 2021/22 as an Open Module.
	Introduction to Law Students positive and majority likely to recommend. Content etc challenging. Good use of VLE, multi media and online resources.
	Aspects of Irish Law in European Capacity Feedback largely positive. Workload and appropriately challenging. Content matched module outline.
	Introduction to Business Law No students taking this module as an Open Module responded to the survey. General feedback indicated student satisfaction.

LSCS	Three out of four students enrolled in our Open Modules were satisfied with all aspects of the module they selected. Students gave constructive feedback on LIU11001, *Language, the Individual and Society*. Teaching staff at the Centre for Language and Communication Studies took this feedback on board and re-designed the module for the current academic year. On foot of feedback that a large number of students reported not engaging with the recommended reading, the assessment was changed from one long essay to shorter weekly assignments integrating required readings.
Psych	• Follow-ups with individual lectures about feedback and actions • Recommend staff upload lecture slides in advance of class • Consider variable deadlines across modules, to avoid pressures created by a single deadline. • Review fit between learning objectives and assessment modes • DUTL to address some common student concerns and misconceptions through direct communications
RTPS	Overall the School's Open Modules have received very positive feedback from students (including the Trinity Electives (TE)). The School to consider: • the development / provision of further TEs. • How best to promote the School's Open Module offerings to Junior Sophister and Senior Fresh students across College.
SSP	Evaluation reports were read by the DUTL and Heads of Department and any issues arising were addressed
SWSP	Separate Survey for OM students to general students undertaking the module is more work for Schools and the rationale between separating the two groups of students is unclear to us.

Comments from Schools: Undergraduate External Examiner Reports

School	Comment/Actions arising from EE Reports
CA	Most student work in the School was shared via OneDrive, which worked very well. For the more complicated tech projects in Music and Film, the Externs liaised with the relevant lecturers or Heads of Discipline who gave them the necessary links. In Drama, certain materials were shared with the EE as HEAnet secure files.

Educ	The extern reported that he was satisfied that the academic standards achieved were appropriate for a course at this level. He noted his satisfaction with the standardization achieved across the three partner institutions (RIAM, TCD and TU Dublin) – and its positive outcome on students working across partner institutions. Suggested that if the partner institutions could access SITS it would a single platform across all three partners which may further enhance quality. He was impressed by the range of choices of assessment and presentation modes offered to students in certain modules such as in Inclusive Education and curricular studies. He offered to be involved in the Teaching Council reaccreditation of the B.Mus. Ed. (Ceim review) currently ongoing, and his suggestions from the 2020/21 are being incorporated into new the revised programme of which he is maintaining a degree of oversight.
Eng	Feedback from both EEs was very positive. Two recommendations were made – a) that discrete marking criteria should be provided for creative writing and b) that the School should think about how the higher end of the first-class scale is used. In response to these recommendations, the School has developed a new set of marking criteria for Creative Writing elements of the undergraduate degree. We have extensively discussed the issue of higher first class marks and agreed to maintain our current marking practice.
H&H	Comments from externals were gratifyingly positive and did not recommend any significant changes in course structures or the conduct of the assessment process. However, some items raised for consideration by individual departments included: • Continued progress in using the full range of marks in assessment. • Consideration of further expansion of the range of modes of assessment used. • Reflection of allocation of dissertation supervision. All these issues were discussed in the relevant department meetings, and written responses provided to the EEs in question.
LLCS	See Appendix B for Departmental Responses
Law	Oral responses given to EEs. No requests for BB access, however all course materials and related assessments available from BB were provided to EE in secure manner. The reports of the EEs were carefully considered and their comments noted. Significant points raised were: • High number of first class honours grades, possibly due to pandemic accommodations; • Bunching of grades in 70-75 range rather than using the full marking scale

	• Written guidance on marking for internal and EEs • Inflationary effect of the Capstone module's components • An EDI issue with stereotyping in an exam paper. Actions taken on these matters include: • A commitment to review the grade profiles of students at the end of the next academic year to see what trends might be observable about a greater number of first class honours grades; • A proposal will be brought to School USC and, if favoured, later to LSC, about considering "step marking", and with it, more detailed descriptions of grades for examiners, internal and external; • The module weightings for the capstone project were changed to avoid the inflationary effect of the journal and presentation components, as suggested by the EEs; • The EDI issue was corrected in the exam paper and will be kept under review.
LSCS	The feedback from EEs was extremely positive across the School. In CLCS, several externs recommended that staff use the full range of the upper marking band (85% +) for excellent work. Academic staff have taken this suggestion on board for this academic year. One extern commented on the challenges of conducting the work of EE with electronic versions of assignments and feedback, preferring access to paper copies. While some adaptations are possible to electronic versions of marking rubrics, this may remain a challenge this year.

Psych	• EEs' reports are overwhelmingly positive - praising the depth & breadth of our programme, diversity of assessment, and the quality of the students work.
	• Suggestions for further improvements are consistently actioned. Some actions in 20/21:
	  o Addition guidance/structure on assignments to be provided to students.
	  o Recommendations have been made to staff regarding the provision of more detailed feedback on assignments.
	  o A sophister module on qualitative methods has been moved from HT to MT.
	  o The word limit for Final Year Projects has been increased to 7000.

RTPS	Externals felt that the Court of Examiners went well: As one noted, 'The court of examiners was conducted very well. I was able to access everything. Any glitches were sorted out very quickly.' The Externals were complimentary on how the School continues to manage in the pandemic and felt that the work produced was of high quality:

	'*In my impression and compared to similar programs in Germany, academic standards and achievements of students were very high*'**.** *The work is of a very good standard. Standards are certainly in keeping with comparable institutions. Indeed, student performance is probably on the higher end. The course and assessments give students every opportunity to succeed."* '*I also had the impression that the overall quality of the essays and dissertations was better on average this year than the year before*'. This kind of improvement speaks to student experience and the ability of staff to guide student through modules and our overall programme. While the EEs did note that School practices of feedback were, in the words of one, "generally excellent" both did raise a few (what the same referred to as "concrete, minor") points specifically about feedback and marking, These all are part of and emergent form ongoing conversations in the implementation of our new degree and with the implementation of the new Common Architecture. The School notes that both Examiners made similar points in the previous year and that the Examiners had noted improvement in the area of clearer and fuller feedback: One remarked, "concerning feed-backs I had the impression that the practice improved." This signals ongoing process and reflection on the Examiners' feedback. One Examiner noted, for a second year in a row, that it might be helpful to think of a higher 'ceiling' for marks, and using the 'full range of marking' to better signal outstanding work up to the mark of 80. The Examiner had noticed a threshold of lower to mid 70s for Firsts in the School and wondered if this might expand, given some high quality of student work. The Examiner noted in their report this year that this takes culture shift, but staff is taking this suggestion on board in their reflection and consideration of marking. **Actions:** The DUTL found the constructive suggestions 'heartening' in that they are naturally part of an ongoing pedagogical conversation and do not signal any major faults in the high standards of our teaching and learning as a School. In general we see the quality of the programmes improving even as we wrestle with new kinds of creative constraints.
SSP	Departmental representatives reported on feedback from EEs at the Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Committee and this was minuted. Where the Quality Office contacted departments directly e.g. Sociology, a detailed written response was given.
TBS	The EEs have commented positively on the process, modalities and grading of assessment and none have identified issues to progress

Comments from Schools: Postgraduate Programme Evaluation

School	Comments/Actions rising from Evaluations
CA	The PGT feedback was very positive overall and no significant issues were raised. As a result of reflection on teaching and learning, we have created two strand-specific Research Methodologies modules, where some sessions are shared across the programme and some are strand-specific, in order to meet the needs of each cohort as effectively as possible.
Educ	On the PG Certificate a number of the practical assignments across a number of Modules were changed to focus on an individual Key Skill per assignment (as opposed to 3) and for the reflections to focus on professional growth from assignment to assignment. This was in response to some feedback on the similarity of the assignments. On the Professional Master in Education (PME) student feedback addressed and identified aspects of online provision which were viewed positively and showed scope for enhancement. This feedback reflected the desirability of synchronous modes of delivery and the significance of the communications piece around online teaching and learning. On the Master in Education (M.Ed.) review of module evaluation forms confirmed that students were more than satisfied with their module content, teaching and assessment approaches. The main issue that affected students was the transition to online teaching methods. Students consistently reported their satisfaction and gratitude to everyone involved in the School of Education, noting the pastoral care offered, and the solution focused and student-centered approach to transition issues - e.g., connectivity, family health and well-being concerns, increased work commitments for those involved in schools and the move to remote teaching generally.
Eng	The DPTL discussed individual programme ISSE evaluation results via email with the director(s) of each M.Phil. course. Directors were also required formulate a response for detailed discussion at the Michaelmas Term PG Teaching and Learning Committee meeting (which took place in December 2021). The responses were generally positive, and across the 3 programmes, issues which arose were overwhelmingly related to access and teaching challenges directly related to the C-19 crisis. When asked to rate their overall experience of the institution, 50% of Creative Writing students rated it as 'Good' and 50% at 'Fair'. 50 % of Children's Literature students rated their experience as 'Good' with 25% at 'Fair' and 25% at 'Excellent'. For Irish Writing, the response was 30% 'Excellent', 20% 'Good', 40% at 'Fair' and 10% (one student) rated their experience of the course as 'Poor'. We have discussed these findings in depth internally and we believe that understandable student frustration at the move online/lack of 'normal' student experience was the major concern across the board.

	The need for improved access to library content was also cited as an important issue (unsurprisingly, as for a period during the year, physical library access was very restricted or impossible). Several students also mentioned long College waiting lists for mental health support. We will continue to advocate for increased student counselling support at College level, and whilst the library access issues which were problematic last year have now eased, we will raise the student desire for further enhancement of online resources with our subject librarian. The desire for a reduction in tuition fees due to the temporary move to online teaching necessitated by Covid restrictions was mentioned by 4 students. Such requests (which were also made by M.Phil. students from a range of other courses across the wider College community) are beyond the remit of the School. The issue was discussed at the Graduate Studies Committee level in 20/21 and it was made clear to students by the College that there would be no fee reduction. We will again be working to further increase the student engagement rate ISSE evaluations, particularly for the Creative Writing programme, which had the lowest engagement rate in 20/21. The issue of space was a persistent one in student evaluations, and relates to the School's now decade-long request for a School-specific seminar room for PGT programmes. That the highest ranked School in the University (and the highest ranked Humanities School in the country) is still without a PGT seminar room is extremely concerning and the College needs to address it as a matter of urgency.
H&H	Module evaluations were put on the Blackboard page, but the response rate overall was very poor despite the best efforts of module coordinators and of the School to elicit responses. As a result, we uploaded evaluation forms earlier in term this year and encouraged colleagues to dedicate seminar time to their completion.
LLCS	Online delivery of modules seems to have affected students' satisfaction with some modules. Comments included issues such as lack of opportunity to mix with other students, lack of participation/discussion and insufficient depth of analysis of the topics covered. Better integration of lectures and reading materials suggested. Clearer instructions/guidelines and sample briefs for each section of the Literary Translation Portfolio suggested.
Law	• All 5 PGT programme survey responses received positive feedback regarding the relevant and range of modules available. • On average 90% of those surveyed indicated that they believed the knowledge and skills acquired will contribute towards their employability. • 50% of participants indicated they did not get useful feedback from their module leader.

	Action: Although the School follows the Return of Coursework Policy, and clear reference to same is provided to colleagues in the staff handbook, the matter will now being flagged at the beginning of each semester. It is worth noting, some modules are assessed by singular piece of coursework, feedback is therefore not possible before final release of marks.
LSCS	L2 Curriculum Planning & Implementation (LI7858): Following student feedback and input from EE, a previously ungraded group class project is now included as part of the module's assessment pattern. Research Methods 1 (SL7014): Additional self-directed workshops were added on request from students in the module feedback. Evidence Based Practice (SL7017): Further workshops were requested by students and have been integrated into the timetable. Advanced Clinical Skills Dysphagia (SL7018): Non-EU students reported a need for foundation skills in dysphagia. Clinical Speech and Language Studies have now set up an online one-week intensive entry level course to meet this need to be run in July.
Psych	Feedback/comments were taken on board and implemented where possible/suitable.
RTPS	The general feedback from all module surveys was very positive. This year, more than others, the comments were often based on the student experience in the context of the pandemic rather than the module content. Some major themes emerged. **Flexibility in delivery:** It was noted that faculty were great at facilitating the online experience and encouraging non-academic discussion in class for a more relaxed and 'real' experience. **Zoom Fatigue:** Students shared that the demands of online learning were challenging. **Assessment Requirements:** Every respondent agreed or agreed strongly that 'the assessment requirements of each module were made clear'. There are regular opportunities for students to provide feedback across the School's programme offerings – specific 'focus group' meetings etc. Staff continuously explore how they might build on / increase opportunities for further student engagement particularly related to programme quality issues. In relation to ensuring consistency of marking approaches across the School's PGT offerings, the School Postgraduate Committee decided to implement a shared marking schema within Blackboard for all MPhils. This is now being implemented in AY21-22.'

Comments from Schools: Postgraduate External Examiner Reports

School	Comment/Actions arising from EE Reports
CA	The EE report was very positive overall and no significant issues were raised.
	We have arranged for the EE to have access to all module information and assignments on Blackboard from 21-22. At the EE's request, we will arrange student meetings with the EE in advance of the CoE in 21-22.
Educ	For the PG Certificate the feedback sheet provided to students was simplified to remove a standardised table that only confused students (according to the EE interviews with students) as although the categories were the same, the weighting was different across modules. It was also deemed that the written feedback was more constructive and helped the students know how to improve their work going forward, therefore the table was removed and more focus was put on the written feedback to students.
	Also on the PG Certificate more support was provided around APA referencing, this covered in more detail in the Orientation evening at the start of the programme as well as putting on an optional Academic Writing support session to support those returning back to academia, where referencing was again covered in more detail. This was a request from the EE based on student feedback.
	On the Professional Master in Education (PME) the EE recommended that micro-teaching may have an enhanced role within the programme to support student preparation for School Placement – this is being considered formally at the programme level.
	Also on the PME the EE recommended enacting a system of second-reading/moderation for the dissertation component – this is being considered formally at the programme level.
	On the Master in Education (M.Ed.) the External Examiners have reiterated that the programme has high educational, experiential, and quality assurance standards. External Examiners have commented favourably on the integration of theory, policy, research, and practice in the modules and specialist strands. The External Examiners have noted the quality and coherency of the programme, with students speaking positively about the variety of assessment modes and new developments in education - e.g., application of Universal Design and the opportunity for students to work to their strengths and offering varied means of action and engagement. Students welcomed these multi-component assessments and had a positive experience of them. As noted by the External Examiners, some further work is required on the rubrics for these assessments and our grading scheme (Fail, Pass, Distinction).

	Also on the M.Ed. the External Examiners noted in their observations that both students and assessors are more focused on the written feedback that accompanies the work, rather than the grade received. Assignment feedback provided to students was excellent, and this was the case uniformly across the various strands and modules.
Eng	The Irish Writing MPhil implemented a new curriculum last year. The examiner for the Irish Writing M.Phil submitted an extremely positive report, summarizing his findings as follows: 'The MPhil in Irish writing is a truly impressive operation, I read lots of excellent work and wish to congratulate the faculty on delivering a really searching and impressive programme'.

There were no recommendations for further improvement/actions made in relation to teaching or marking. 'I sampled a wide variety of work across modules and found the marking fair and judicious throughout. What was especially pleasing was the amount of targeted feedback given to students, often pointing them towards improvements that might be made in assembling the final dissertations.

The EE for the Children's Literature M.Phil. concluded that, 'This is a superbly coherent programme and I enjoyed reviewing the curriculum very much. Strengths of the program include its historical and generic range, in addition to the emphasis in the learning outcomes on academic writing and independent research. I applaud the programme's focus on Irish children's literature and for encouraging engagement with archival materials held at Trinity and Dublin'. The examiner did report finding the 'odd inconsistency' in relation to marking criteria, particularly in one module ('Creative Writing for Children' and suggested marking a rubric available to students on this module, as well as considering introducing additional guidelines re: critical commentary on the course. The examiner also stated that they 'notice[d] a gap in the curriculum and in student work relating to critical race theory, disability studies, and LGBTQ+ approaches to children's literature research and criticism'.

The Children's Literature M.Phil Directors have discussed these comments in detail with our M.Phil director, and their response is as follows:

'The EE's response to the programme as a whole is positive and we welcome the constructive feedback on aspects of the curriculum. We are particularly pleased that the Examiner has praised the programme's focus on Irish children's literature and the ways we encourage students to engage with archival materials. The Examiner's feedback reminds us of the importance of highlighting the existing diversity of the curriculum and clarify the inclusion of formative coursework and other opportunities for students on the programme to develop their skills as writers and researchers. The Examiner noted "a gap in the curriculum and in student work relating to critical race theory, disability studies, and LGBTQ+ approaches to children's literature research and criticism." While the programme will continue to highlight Irish contributions to children's literature, the Directors have significantly revised the core course offering and material on the option modules in recent years to include material that speaks to and of global experiences as well as material dealing with disability, gender, and race and to foreground issues of diversity within an Irish context. We engage directly with critical race theory and (extensively) with gender and sexuality. The Core Course includes a session on 'Storytelling': one text deals with BLM and the treatment of young black men in the justice system; another engages with Queer identity - both exploring the relationship between language and form through innovative storytelling techniques; the session on visual texts includes material from Korea and from North America the |

	centre on people of colour; the session on New Canons features texts about disability and texts written by Mincéirí; other material covered in the Core Course includes African-American YA fantasy and texts that engage directly with stories of empire and slavery. Dr Whyte's option module was designed to take into consideration the issues mentioned (and with a global and translation element) and includes texts, for example, by a Chinese-Australian author; a YA novel written by an African-American author and that engages directly with Social Justice and BLM; and another that explores (dis)ability and the city space. On Dr Carroll's option module, there is a session dedicated to the material cultures of slavery as well as texts written by Black authors and authors with disabilities. We will, of course, take the Examiner's comments on board and use this as an opportunity to highlight the presence of this material on the programme. The EE also suggested we might introduce more formative opportunities. We would like to note that formative assignments are already built into the core module and the option modules, and students get extensive feedback on practice writing samples during both terms. We will make these formative opportunities more explicit in the Handbook for future years. The Examiner also suggested that we could develop marking rubrics for the programme. The programme directors are puzzled by this since the Handbook and all rubrics were provided to her in advance of the meeting, and Dr Whyte answered a query from the Examiner about the marking system in TCD and how grades translated to the Canadian model in advance of the exam board meeting. For next year we can highlight the inclusion of the rubrics and Handbook in the material prepared for the Examiner. The Directors will also ensure there is transparency when it comes to the rubric for all assessed elements of the option modules'. The examiner for the Creative Writing M.Phil noted that the standard of achievement attained by students was 'commendable'. The programme was also said to be 'exemplary in relation to committed writing practice and development'. It was also noted that the Oscar Wilde centre is a cornerstone of the programme which is 'essential' and an 'invaluable resource' for staff and students. Refurbishing/maintaining the OWC is already a stated aim in the School's strategic plan, but this will require considerable investment either from philanthropic sources or by the College as the School is not in a position to fund anything other than incremental improvements. The reports on all three M.Phils. will also be discussed at the Hilary term PG Teaching and Learning committee meeting.
LLCS	Introduction of new Research Design module in several MPhils, which has had a positive impact on dissertation quality according to the EEs. The externals sent their reports to the Quality Office email address provided but the Quality Office has no record of them. In one case, the extern had not sent his report to the MPhil director as well, so we obtained it from him after some delay, which was a little embarrassing.
LLCS	MPhil in Identities and Cultures of Europe: EE suggested that the course team pursue the possibility of including a language-learning component to the MPhil programme.

	MPhil in Digital Humanities and Culture: EE suggested more technical teaching, designed specifically for Digital Humanities students, to help students with the technical aspects of their dissertations.
Law	The five EEs' reports received for the academic year 2020-21 presented, overall, a very encouraging evaluation of the programmes, modules, assessments, administration, examining and marking processes. Notably, one EE commented that internal examiner feedback had improved based on the previous year. This is something we have sought to encourage further amongst colleagues at LLM level and the Director of the LLM programmes has recently communicated with colleagues concerning the importance of delivering feedback and suggesting points to consider this regard. Another EE commented favourably on "the heterogeneity of the modules and their methods of assessments" which were identified as providing "much of the interest of the LLM programme".
LSCS	Clinical Speech and Language Studies EEs describe the M.Sc. as well run, organised, and of a high standard. Evaluation process robust, transparent, fair. The EE suggested that the assignment for SL7015 could be better mapped onto the module's LOs. The module has been restructured to incorporate this feedback. M.Phil. Chinese Studies The EE's report was very positive but requested that next year she receive information about the double marking policy. The course committee will share this information. Centre for Language and Communication Studies Overall evaluation by EEs was extremely positive, with approval of the range of assessment tools, the "unique perspectives" embodied in the curricula, the individual and collective response to COVID, and that the course team has been responsive to previous feedback, with issues raised being considered and addressed appropriately and the approach to external moderation being changed to make it easier for EEs to take an objective overview of the assessment process. Points for consideration and action: 1. the observation that the full range of marks is not used, particularly at the upper end

	2. that alignment between course LOs, module LOs and assessments could be made clearer in some cases 3. a suggestion that the dissertation grading scheme Pass/Fail/Distinction could be enhanced by the introduction of a Merit grade 4. a suggestion that dissertations should be double-marked internally before sending to the EE These points will be fully considered at the M.Phil. course committee in Hilary term.
Psych	Individual courses responded to the EEs. Overall, there is a high level of satisfaction and occasional suggestions for considerations that are reflected by the course directors.
RTPS	The EEs shared that the CoE was well prepared and conducted with care. There was ample opportunity to ask questions and give feedback. **Programme Content:** It was commented that the curriculum appears to be well-balanced, stimulating, and comprehensive. The individual modules cover an excellent range of issues and skills. The PG courses are very well designed, with a strong interdisciplinary focus. **Grading Scheme** Given the difficulties caused by the coronavirus pandemic during both the 2019/2020 and the 2020/2021 academic year, the examination process was conducted efficiently and thoroughly. The marking was consistent across modules. The process of second marking is to be applauded and there were very few discrepancies between first and second markers. As far as it is possible to tell, the assessment tools appear to be varied and appropriate, and to encourage the students to carry out their own analysis. There was one inconsistency with Extern remarks, some found the grading scale to be clear and transparent while one found that clarity is needed. This will be addressed at PG Committee level. **Dissertations:** The PG dissertations were remarked to be of good to very good / excellent quality. The research questions were carefully and successfully designed to critically and constructively apply course content to issues of wider societal relevance. At the COE, there was discussion regarding the required length of the dissertations and whether it would be beneficial to shorten them and whether the two markers should work independently using blind marking. These will be discussed further at the PG Committee.
SSP	Chased up all pending EE Reports. Philosophy and Sociology pending.
SWSP	Final extern report relates to a 12-month course and won't be received until Feb 2022.

Appendix 2: Professional Accreditation

SCHOOL	ACCREDITED PROGRAMME	PROFESSIONAL OR STATUTORY BODY	NEXT ACCREDITATION DUE	DID ACCREDITATION TAKE PLACE IN 2020/21? IF SO, SPECIFY WHETHER IN PERSON OR VIRTUALLY	Comment if any conditions resulted from Accreditation Report outcomes
Educ	Professional Master of Education (PME)	Teaching Council of Ireland	21/22-22/23		
Psych	B.A. Psychology (Single Honours)	Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)	Accreditation granted from September 2021 for a period of 5 years	Yes; virtually	None
Psych	TSM Psychology	Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)	Accreditation granted from September 2021 until cessation of the programme in September 2022	Yes; virtually	None
	Higher Diploma in Psychology	Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)	Accreditation granted from September 2021 for a period of 5 years	Yes; virtually	None
	MSc Applied Behavioural Analysis	Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)		Yes; virtually	None
LSCS	B.Sc. Clinical Speech & Language Studies	Irish Association of Speech & Language Therapists (IASLT)	Re-accreditation in 2020 postponed (due to Covid-19) to 2021.	No	
SWSP	Bachelor in Social Studies	CORU	September 2022	No	

	Master in Social Work (MSW)	CORU	May 2023	No	
RPST	PG Diploma Conflict and Dispute Resolution Studies	Mediators' Institute of Ireland	January each year.	No formal visit. Renewal occurs via submission of relevant documentation.	
TBS	Masters in Business Administration (MBA & EMBA))	Association of Masters in Business Administration (AMBA)	September 2025	A virtual accreditation visit took place in September 2020. The School was reaccredited in December 2020 for a five year period, without conditions. A desk review of the new Flexible Executive MBA took place in 2021, it did not involve a visit. The existing AMBA accreditation was extended to include this programme.	N/A
	Whole School – All Programmes	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)	2025/2026	Virtual visit in AY 2020/2021, with School accredited in February 2021 for a five year period, without conditions.	
	Whole School – All Programmes	EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS)	December 2023		

	PG Diploma in Accounting	Professional bodies: Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)	December 2026	
		Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)	School awaiting notifications of next accreditations dates.	
		Charted Accountants Ireland (CAI)	2025	
		Certified Public Accountants (CPA)	School awaiting notifications of next accreditations dates.	
		Irish Taxation Institute (ITI)		
	MSc Business Analytics	Institute of Management Consultants and Advisers (IMCA)	October 2024	
	MSc Human Resource Management	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development CIPD	July 2022	