

**Document Identifier:** Associated College Degrees Committee Terms of Reference

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# Associated College Degrees Committee Terms of Reference

## 1. Context

In April 2010, the Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin (hereafter referred to as Trinity) [University Council](#) and College Board approved the initial terms of reference for the Associated Colleges Degrees Committee (ACDC) which included three Associated Colleges namely Marino Institute of Education (MIE), Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE) and the Froebel College of Education.

The regulatory context for Linked Providers<sup>1</sup> changed with the introduction of the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act, 2012](#) (QQI Act, 2012) and associated Quality Assurance Guidelines namely the:

- [Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines \(April 2016\)](#);
- [Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies \(July 2016\)](#).

Generic proposed Terms of Reference were presented at the ACDC meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016 for introduction for the 2016/17 academic year, to reflect these regulatory changes. The committee approved the revised terms of reference with minor amendments. The generic proposed Terms of Reference were subsequently presented and approved by the Quality Working Group on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

Given the shift to a regulatory framework, it is no longer appropriate that Associated Colleges share attendance at the ACDC. It is within this context the terms of reference and the addition of the [Trinity International Foundation Programme](#) as a change in provision and arrangements with Trinity, that a review of the terms of reference has been undertaken and the name of the committee changed to MIE ACDC. The revised terms of reference will be presented at the MIE ACDC on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016, subsequent to which they will be approved by [University Council](#) via the Quality Working Group minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

## 2. Principles

- 2.1 Trinity does not wish to be involved in any arrangement that simply amounts to a straight validation of courses carried out in colleges external to our own systems. Any validation must therefore be embedded in a developing partnership of collaboration and complementarity and located within a

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<sup>1</sup> Linked Providers are higher education providers that do not have the power to award degrees, but provide a programme of education and training that satisfies all or part of the prerequisites for an award of the designated awarding body through arrangements with a designated awarding body

strategy which has a clear rationale across a range of courses: undergraduate, postgraduate, and research.

- 2.2 The robust system of quality assurance and enhancement of external college provision needs to be underpinned by current College policy and the regulatory framework. Its objective is to protect the academic standards and reputation both of Trinity and of its linked providers and the education provision of learners enrolled in validated programmes. It addresses issues of programme design, delivery, recruitment, assessment, evaluation, provision, teaching, representation and support, not the actual work of students themselves. We are assuring ourselves of the quality of delivery, assessment, support and administration, not managing the systems themselves.
- 2.3 Quality Assurance (QA) implies Quality Enhancement (QE) and seeks to identify and agree procedures and approaches to ensure effective monitoring and periodic review of educational programmes<sup>1</sup>. While based on a legislative framework that requires compliance, procedures should be set within a developing professional relationship of self-evaluation and guidance, be sufficiently flexible to apply to a range of delivery contexts (face-to-face, online/blended<sup>2</sup>, on-campus, off-campus including in professional placement locations and where applicable in other jurisdictions); and across a range of courses: undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

### **3. Procedures**

- 3.1 The minutes of ordinary committee meetings of the MIE ACDC will continue to be reported to the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee as compliance committees of the University Council. The minutes of the extraordinary meeting will be reported to the Quality Committee as a compliance committee of both the [University Council](#) and the College Board.
- 3.2 The *ex-officio* membership of the MIE ACDC will comprise the following representatives:
  - 3.2.1 Registrar, Trinity (Chair);
  - 3.2.2 Dean of Graduate Studies;
  - 3.3.3 Dean of Undergraduate Studies/Senior Lecturer;
  - 3.3.4 Quality Officer as the delegate of the Academic Secretary;
  - 3.3.5 Head of School of Education and the Director of Teaching & Learning (Postgraduate) as another representative from the School of Education;

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<sup>1</sup> See [Quality Assurance Procedure for Review of Validated Programmes](#) and [Procedure for Quality Review of MIE Corporate and Student Support Services](#)

<sup>2</sup> See [Blended and Online Learning and Quality Assurance Policy](#)

- 3.4 The MIE to include the President and the Registrar and representatives of the course groupings to include
- 3.4.3 the [Trinity International Foundation Programme](#)
  - 3.4.4 Further Education
  - 3.4.5 Undergraduate programmes
  - 3.4.6 Postgraduate taught and
  - 3.4.7 Postgraduate dissertation/final year projects, as appropriate.
- 3.5 The Vice President of Global Relations (or nominee) only for the standing Agenda item on the [Trinity International Foundation Programme](#) (as agreed by [University Council](#) 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016 CL/15-16/080).
- 3.6 Other subject matter experts and a student representative may be co-opted onto the committee from the linked provider and Trinity as required (refers to the annual extraordinary meeting below).
- 3.6 This committee will normally meet three times per year with respect to the ordinary academic business to cover matters outlined under 5(i) below.
- 3.7 A fourth annual extraordinary meeting will be held to discuss/monitor institutional-level quality assurance matters outlined under 5 (ii) below or any other matters as required under changes to the [QQI Act, 2012](#), quality assurance guidelines, policies or codes.
- 3.8 The terms of reference of the committee will include
- 3.8.1 All ordinary academic matters with respect to new course proposals and/or changes to previously approved courses and monitoring activities associated with same, such as:
    - a. Learning outcomes at programme or module level;
    - b. Regulations impacting on new or existing Calendar entries;
    - c. Nomination for new External Examiners<sup>1</sup> for new programmes and for replacement of external examiners upon completion of their term;
    - d. Assessment criteria<sup>2</sup> and/or framework aligned with learning outcomes and pedagogy;
    - e. External Examiners' reports, reports of professional or statutory accreditation body that apply to the course/programme and periodic review reports (annual and/or cyclical);

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<sup>1</sup> See [MIE Role of External Examiners](#) and [Guidelines for External Examiners on European General Data Protection Regulation 2018](#)

<sup>2</sup> See [Academic Assessment and Academic Progression](#) and [Assessment Handbook](#)

- f. Outcomes of student evaluation activities at programme and/or module level, in addition to the [StudentSurvey.ie](#) and/or International Student Barometer, if applicable;
- g. Student progression, retention and achievement outcomes, annually and by cohort<sup>2</sup>;
- h. Recruitment, admissions, induction procedures for domestic, visiting and international students<sup>1</sup>;
- i. Programme handbooks and other published material on the student portal or web that communicates the requirements of the course, programme and Award to applicants and students;
- j. Marketing and/or published content on web that informs potential applicants and the public of matters related to the course/programme.

3.8.2 Matters relating to monitoring of institutional quality assurance of the linked provider will be discussed at an annual extraordinary meeting of the committee at a date to be agreed annually and will include:

- a. Linked provider's strategy with respect to teaching, learning, research and partnerships that have the potential to impact on arrangements with Trinity, validated programmes, the enrolled students and ongoing accreditation by professional and statutory bodies, the QQI or Higher Education Authority<sup>2</sup>;
- b. Risks (financial, operational, contractual or reputational) that impact on the sustainability of the linked provider, the validated programmes and/or Awards granted by Trinity and recognised on the [National Framework of Qualifications](#) or listed on the Interim International Register;
- c. Any new or revised policies and procedures planned for approval under §8 of the Trinity Policy/Procedure on the [Approval of Higher Education Institutions QA Procedures](#);
- d. Action Plans (retrospective and prospective) to address/redress issues related to academic standards, quality assurance and/or enhancement outcomes, QQI policies, procedures and codes;
- e. Staffing Profiles, [Continuing Professional Development](#), staff [Recruitment](#) and retention, quality assurance;

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<sup>1</sup> See [Admission, Access and Transfer Policy](#)

<sup>2</sup> See [Academic Assessment and Academic Progression](#), [Admission, Access and Transfer Policy](#) and [Quality Assurance Procedure for Review of Validated Programmes](#)

- f. Third-party partnerships with national, European or international higher education providers that could result in recognition of Trinity ECTS by another party with whom Trinity does not have an existing partnership or on whom Trinity has not conducted due diligence;
- g. Compliance of student record systems with the [National Framework of Qualifications](#), [Data Protection](#)<sup>1</sup> and [Freedom of Information Legislation](#) and European requirements under Bologna e.g. European Diploma Supplement;
- h. Fitness for purpose of the learning environment on and off-campus (professional placement locations) including formal and informal learning spaces, equipment, IT systems ([Virtual Learning Environment](#), computing, wifi), access to library resources (hard copy and online), other student learning supports.

Any issues or risks identified as requiring action from the annual extraordinary meeting are to be responded to in writing (Action Plan) by the linked provider within three months to the Registrar of Trinity in the capacity as Chair of the committee, with progress on implementation to be reported and assessed at the next annual extraordinary meeting.

#### **4. Related Documents**

- 4.1 [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act, 2012](#)
- 4.2 [Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines \(April 2016\)](#)
- 4.3 [Sector Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies \(July 2016\)](#)
- 4.4 [Quality Assurance Procedure for Review of Validated Programmes](#)
- 4.5 [Procedure for Quality Review of MIE Corporate and Student Support Services](#)
- 4.6 [Blended and Online Learning and Quality Assurance Policy](#)
- 4.7 [Academic Assessment and Academic Progression](#)
- 4.8 [Admission, Access and Transfer Policy](#)
- 4.9 [Protection of Enrolled Learners Policy](#)
- 4.10 [Data Protection Policy](#)
- 4.11 [MIE Role of External Examiners](#)
- 4.12 [Guidelines for External Examiners on European General Data Protection Regulation 2018](#)
- 4.13 [Assessment Handbook](#)
- 4.14 [Approval of Higher Education Institutions Quality Assurance Procedures](#)
- 4.15 [Continuing Professional Development](#)
- 4.16 [Recruitment Policy](#)
- 4.17 [Virtual Learning Environment](#)

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<sup>1</sup> See [Data Protection Policy](#)