



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Institute of Technology Blanchardstown

ANNUAL INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY REPORT (BRIDGING)

Contents

1	QA Management, Governance and Public Information.....	5
	Governing body	5
	Academic council.....	5
	Quality assurance	5
	Activities: Programme validations.....	6
	Activities: External authentication (SOLAS)	7
	QA activities looking forward.....	8
	Programmatic review – 2015	8
	External accreditation	9
	Merger with DIT	9
	Management, monitoring and assuring of consistency	9
	Public information	10
2	External Environment and Other Factors Impacting on Quality.....	10
	Programme specific factors.....	10
	Early Childhood Care and Education.....	10
	Social and Community Development	11
	Applied Social Studies in Social Care	11
	Engineering programmes	11
	Business programmes	11
	Sports programmes	12
	ICT programmes	12
3	Quality assurance activities.....	15
	Workshops on writing learning outcomes	15
	Examination process review	15
	Review of progression carrying credits	15
	Student engagement	15
	EvaSys – QA3 online.....	15
	ISSE	16

Department of Engineering 16

Department of Informatics 17

Department of Business 18

Department of Humanities 19

Teaching and learning..... 20

 Sharing practice 20

 Collaboration..... 21

 Key Initiatives in Teaching and Learning 21

 Expansion in online and flexible offerings 23

 Engagements with the National Forum on Teaching and Learning..... 23

 New facilities 24

 Other new facilities include: 25

 New Technologies 25

External engagement with QA..... 25

4 Access transfer and progression..... 26

 Access 27

 Advanced entry 28

5 Collaborative provision..... 29

6 Significant developments, achievements, successes and issues since last Institutional review... 30

 ITB Successes 30

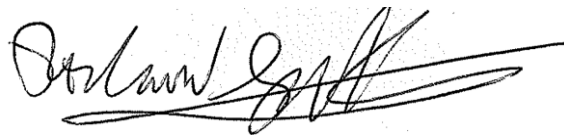
 TU4Dublin 31

7 Suggested items for inclusion in the planned annual institutional quality report. 32

Institution Name: Institute of Technology Blanchardstown

Registrar Name: Mr Richard Gallery

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Gallery', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Date: March 2015

1 QA Management, Governance and Public Information

ITB operates a QA system which supports our Delegation of Authority from QQI to offer awards at levels 6, 7, 8 and Taught Level 9 (Taught Masters). ITB has further QA processes to support Apprentice Training at level 6, and also to support Masters by Research (level 9) and PhD (level 10), where the awards are made by QQI.

As a matter of policy, ITB publishes its QA documentation and related output wherever possible. Consequently, many references will be made throughout this document to published material, through the use of web-links.

Governing body

A statutory Governing Body appointed by the Minister for Education & Science oversees the policies and business of ITB. The Governing Body has members representing ITB, the state, the community and business and meets regularly to ensure that ITB develops along agreed lines.

Membership of the Governing Body is as outlined in section 6 of the Regional Technical Colleges Act.

Academic council

The Academic Council is the Statutory Body appointed by the Governing Body under the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992, to assist in the planning, co-ordination, development and overseeing of ITB's educational work. Among its many roles, it has to protect, maintain and develop the academic standards of the courses and the activities of ITB. The Academic Council advises ITB's Governing Body on all matters relating to the academic standards within ITB. The Academic Council meets regularly to review academic activities. The composition of Academic Council includes representatives of academics and other staff and students.

Link to academic council terms of reference

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/3GB13%20Academic%20Council%20and%20Academic%20Council%20subcommittee%20terms%20of%20reference%20and%20standing%20orders%2030%20July%202013.pdf>

Quality assurance

ITB has developed a comprehensive approach to quality assurance of its academic programmes and other services. We are committed to implementation of quality assurance processes that are consistent with International best practice, and in this regard we have developed processes that involve external experts as well as students, staff and other key stakeholders. These processes include a commitment to publish information relating to quality assurance policies and reports in an accessible manner. The

Institute quality assurance procedures have been agreed with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI - the body with awarding and quality assurance responsibilities previously governed by HETAC and SOLAS (previously An Foras Áiseanna Saothair FÁS), where appropriate.

ITB Quality policy can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/1QM01%20Quality%20Policy%20%203rd%20April%202014.pdf>

For further information on QA policies, procedures and relevant reports see links below:

QA policies: <http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

QA reports: <http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssuranceReports/qar.asp>

Activities: Programme validations

BN752 Certificate in Quality Management (Lean Practice)

Lean Thinking is the understanding of how to deliver value to the customer through the creation of efficient and waste-free business processes. Six Sigma is a methodology developed to focus on the elimination of variation in production and other processes. Lean Six Sigma is the combination of both methodologies resulting in the elimination of waste and the elimination of variation.

This programme is aimed at applicants who have at least 2 years' experience in a suitable industry, business or other organisational environment within which Lean Six Sigma can be applied.

The validation report for this programme can be accessed through the following link:

[http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssuranceReports/MinorSpecPurValidations/Validation%20Report%20BN752%20-%20Certificate%20in%20Quality%20Management%20\(Lean%20Practice\)%20-%20March%204th%202014.pdf](http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssuranceReports/MinorSpecPurValidations/Validation%20Report%20BN752%20-%20Certificate%20in%20Quality%20Management%20(Lean%20Practice)%20-%20March%204th%202014.pdf)

BN031 Higher Certificate in Science in Computing – Associate Professional in Networking Technologies

This programme was designed as a dual education pathway to provide learners with essential IT knowledge, skills and practical hands on experience acquired through a combination of academic delivery and work placements.

The validation report for this programme can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssuranceReports/Validation%20Report%20BN031%20-%20Higher%20Certificate%20in%20Science%20in%20Computing%20-%20>

[%20Associate%20Professional%20in%20Networking%20Technologies%20-%2016th%20June%202014.pdf](#)

BN032 Higher Certificate in Arts in Applied Social Studies

This exit award facilitates students who have successfully completed years one and two of BN107 Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Social Studies in Social Care OR BN011 Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies in Social Care who wish to prematurely exit their programme of study with an award.

The validation report for this programme can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssuranceReports/Validation%20Report%20BN032%20-%20Higher%20Certificate%20in%20Arts%20in%20Applied%20Social%20Studies%20-%2017th%20June%202014.pdf>

BN773 Certificate in Training in Low Energy Buildings

This programme was originally proposed by an IOT consortium (made up of IT Blanchardstown, Limerick Institute of Technology and Dublin Institute of Technology) involved in the ‘QualiBuild Project’, validated by Limerick Institute of Technology and adopted by the Academic Council of ITB.

This programme up-skills trainers of construction related craft apprenticeship in low energy building technology and standards and the delivery of training on the fundamental principles of this subject area to construction workers.

Activities: External authentication (SOLAS)

External authentication is an independent, authoritative confirmation of fair and consistent assessment of learners, in line with national standards. Following an evaluation process SOLAS produced an external authentication report in 2014 for ITB apprenticeship programmes.

This external authentication report can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssuranceReports/SOLAS%20External%20Authentication%20Report%20for%20ITB%20%20%2014th%20Apr%202014.pdf>

QA activities looking forward

Programmatic review – 2015

It is ITB policy to review academic programmes that have been previously approved under authority delegated by QQI on a 5 year cycle.

Programmatic review consists of three phases¹:

1. an internal self-evaluation phase leading to a self-evaluation report
2. an external evaluation phase leading to a final programmatic review report
3. a period of change implementation leading to a final follow-up report to Academic Council.

The schedule for the external phase of programmatic review 2015 is as follows:

School of Informatics and Engineering

Department of Informatics programmes 24th and 25th March 2015

Panel composition as follows:

Chair	Dr Dermot Douglas	Higher Education Consultant
Academic - IOT	Ms Janice O'Connell	Limerick Institute of
Technology		
Academic – IOT	Mr Tim Horgan	Cork Institute of Technology
Academic – Uni	Dr Jeremy Jones	Trinity College Dublin
Academic – Uni (Intl)	Dr Clive Rosen	University of Derby - UK
Industry	Mr Stephen Howell	Microsoft
Industry	Mr David Kendellen	Liberty IT
Academic – Uni (Intl)	Mr Simon Perkins	Bournemouth University – UK
Academic – IOT	Mr Trevor Hogan	Cork Institute of Technology
Student rep	Mr Kevin Conway	Institute of Technology Carlow

Department of Engineering programmes 28th and 29th April 2015

Panel composition to be finalised.

School of Business and Humanities

Department of Business programmes 21st April 2015

Panel composition to be finalised.

Department of Humanities programmes 22nd April 2015

Panel composition to be finalised.

¹ Extract of policy document 2MP31 Institute Review Policy – full text available at:
<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

External accreditation

Engineers Ireland accreditation for ITB Higher Certificate and Bachelor of Engineering programmes is scheduled for November 2015.

Merger with DIT

Under the proposed merger of the DIT, ITT and ITB, and looking forward to the TU4Dublin application, it has been agreed that, for an interim period of one year, DIT will recognise the ITB QA system related to assessment, examination and awards. This will allow ITB to continue to operate its programmes for an interim period whilst a new, common (to the new, merged, DIT), QA system is developed.

The Registrars of the DIT, ITT, and ITB meet regularly to discuss issues in connection with the forthcoming merger. They have been asked by their Presidents to commence work towards a unified QA system. This activity is just commencing.

The Registrars have also been asked to work towards a unified Academic Calendar, which work is also commencing.

Management, monitoring and assuring of consistency

Academic Council has adopted a programme monitoring process that allows regular consideration of course quality. It is the policy of the Institute that a programme monitoring report on the operation of each programme be maintained. This monitoring and evaluation activity, carried out by the course boards and the programme board, provides an objective basis for maintaining and enhancing the quality of the educational provision. Each programme is reviewed annually with a comprehensive report produced providing statistical analysis on items including CAO applications, registrations, examination performance, progression rates and external examiner feedback.

Institute policy 3CD05 ‘Academic Programme Boards – Policy and Procedures’ records Institute policy and procedure as it applies to the operation of academic programme and course boards and support structures in all academic departments.

For further information this policy document (3CD05) can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

A central repository of all Institute policy and procedural documentation is maintained on the Institute’s document management system (DMS) on the intranet.

Recommendations emanating from reports generated as part of the Institute’s quality assurance processes and procedures are captured, recorded on a ‘Recommendation Tracking Database’ and followed up on by the Quality Assurance Officer.

Public information

It is Institute policy to publish reports relating to quality assurance in the public domain. Reports are available through the following link:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssuranceReports/qar.asp>

Programme information and module descriptors are published using Akari Document and are available to the public at:

<http://courses.itb.ie/>

2 External Environment and Other Factors Impacting on Quality

The context we are currently operating in is one of change in relation to our forthcoming merger with DIT and IT Tallaght in addition to the subsequent application for designation as a technological university. The various performance criteria and foundation themes that have been set out for a technological university play a key role in influencing the external environment of all ITB programmes. It should be noted that the Academic Council of DIT have recently agreed to recognise ITB and ITT academic quality policies and procedures for one academic year post merger which is scheduled for September 2015.

Programme specific factors

Early Childhood Care and Education

The Department of Education and Skills established the Early Years Education Advisory Group in 2014 and a review of education and training programmes in ECCE was commissioned to start in 2015. Given that the review currently being carried out by the Department of Education and Skills referenced CoRe as a key document in identifying the essential skills and competencies required by ECCE graduates, and given the lack of other literature in this area, the CoRe report was utilised by the staff team as a framework for reviewing the current programme learning outcomes, the overall Approved Course Schedule and individual module learning outcomes. A number of other legislative and policy developments have also fed into the current programmatic review. In particular the following legislation and policy documents have impacted on same:

- Department of Education and Skills (2011) The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020. Dublin: DES
- Government of Ireland (2014) Children First Bill. Dublin: Government Publications
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2013) Right from the Start: Report of the Expert Advisory Group on the Early Years Strategy. Dublin: Government Publications
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2013) Better Outcomes Better Future. Dublin: Government Publications
- NCCA (2009) Aistear in Action Report (2009) Dublin: Government Publications

- Department of Education and Skills (2013) Final Report on the Development and Implementation of the Síolta Quality Assurance Programme Dublin: Government Publications

Social and Community Development

Recent developments such as the passing of the Children's Rights referendum, the Children's First Bill (pending) and Better Outcomes, Brighter Future (2014) place a greater emphasis on not only the rights of young people but also on the standards and professional role and responsibility of those working with young people. Current policy also reframes the conceptualisation of youth to extend youth to those up to age twenty four. A key change being proposed under programmatic review is to change the course title to 'Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Community and Youth Development'. By making this change, the programme can develop a distinct identity and prospective students, placement organisations and employers will have a clearer understanding of the focus and content of the programme. Young people as a specific group within communities will be recognised, reflecting developments in the wider policy landscape. Changing the title also allows for the process of attaining accreditation through the North / South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work (NSETS) to progress. It is intended that the course board will seek this accreditation in autumn 2015 once the programmatic review process has been successfully completed.

Applied Social Studies in Social Care

Whilst undertaking programmatic review ITB has been cognisant of the anticipated requirements for professional registration with CORU. Underpinning the programme and embedded in the modules is a recognition of the importance of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council Draft Standards for Education and Training, (CORU, 2010).

Engineering programmes

As stated earlier in the QA activities looking forward section Engineers Ireland accreditation for the Higher Certificate and Bachelor of Engineering programmes is scheduled for November 2015.

Business programmes

The level 7 and 8 programmes, Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Business in Accounting and Finance, are highly relevant to the needs of business and industry, and, consequently, and in recognition of this graduates of the programme are accredited a significant number of exemptions from the examinations of professional accountancy bodies.

Professional bodies offering exemptions include:

- Chartered Accounts Ireland (CAI)
- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
- Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)
- Institute of Certified Accountants in Ireland (ICPAI)

Irish Tax Institute (AITI)

Sports programmes

Graduates from the level 7 and 8 Bachelor of Arts in Sports Management and Coaching degree programmes are accredited the REPs Ireland Education Provider Code of Practice , who are a quality assured Register of Exercise Professionals.

ICT programmes

ITB became a regional Cisco academy in 2002 with a view to extending access for computer network training to more students in the wider Dublin area. As a regional Cisco academy, ITB has delivered CCNA and security courses at the highest professional training level to both industry and the Irish education sector.

ITB has established a strategic partnership for industry relevant education in conjunction with a number of colleges of further education in the city of Dublin and bordering counties. The partnership now offers CCNA and other industry certified courses in the following colleges listed below in order to provide access to relevant IT knowledge and skill-sets.

Further Education

- Dundrum College of Further Education
- Senior College Dun Laoghaire
- Liberties College
- Crumlin College of Further Education
- Killester College of Further Education
- Whitehall college
- Monaghan Institute
- Cavan Institute
- Blackrock Further Education Institute
- Templemore College of Further Education
- Rathmines College
- Colaiste Dulaigh

Institutes of Technology & Universities

- Athlone Institute of Technology
- Cork Institute of Technology
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT)
- Institute of Technology, Carlow
- IT Sligo
- Institute of Technology Tallaght
- Institute of Technology, Tralee
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology

- Limerick Institute of Technology
- LIT Thurles
- University Of Limerick
- Waterford Institute of Technology

Northern Ireland

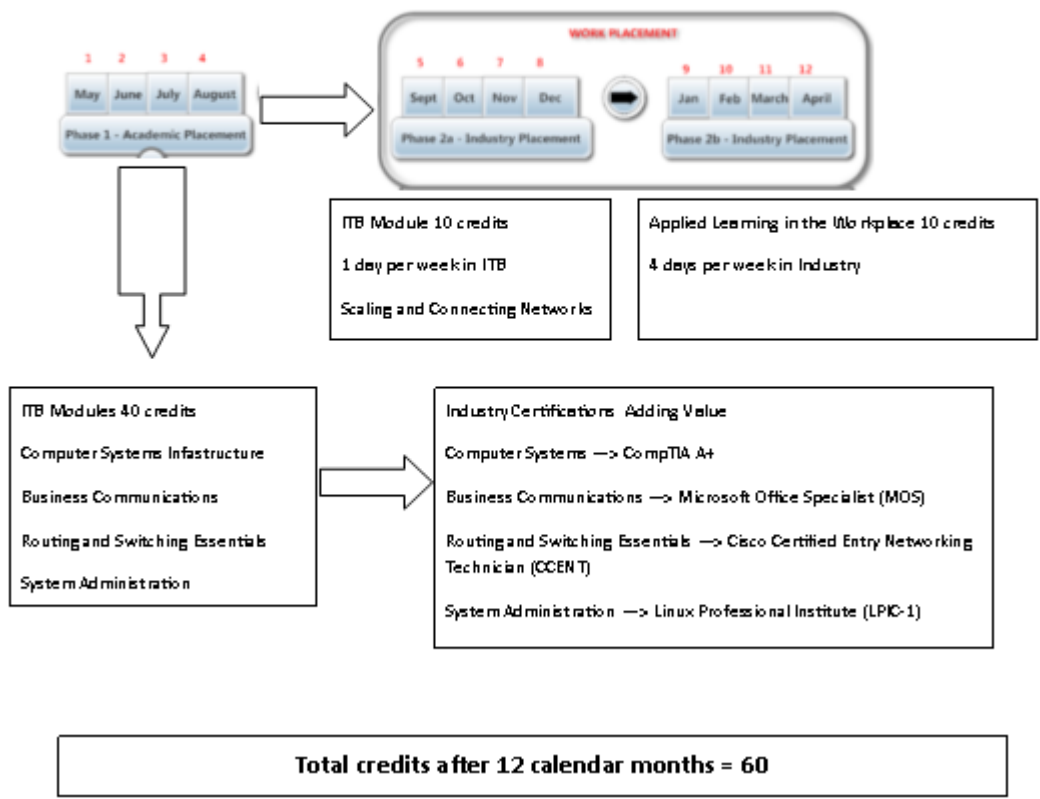
- Southern Regional College Newry
- Belfast Metropolitan College
- North West Regional College
- South Eastern Regional College

BN031 (Associate professional in networking technologies) referred previously in this document is a good example of programme links to industry certifications. This programme combines accredited academic modules with the following eight Industry Certified awards:

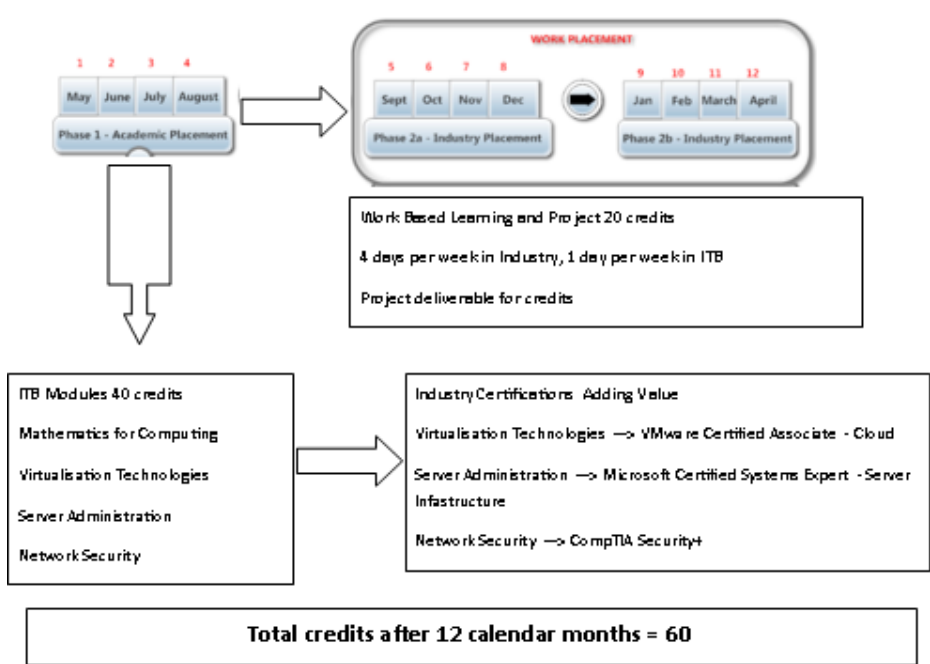
1. CompTIA A+
2. Linux Professional Institute (LPIC-1)
3. Cisco Certified Entry Networking Technician
4. Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS)
5. Cisco Certified Networking Associate
6. VMware Certified Associate – Cloud (VCA-Cloud)
7. Microsoft Certified Systems Expert Server Infrastructure (MCSE)
8. CompTIA Security+

Indicative programme overview:

Year 1 Associate Professional In Networking Technologies



Year 2 Associate Professional



3 Quality assurance activities

Workshops on writing learning outcomes

Teaching and learning workshops held on 4th December 2014 and 13th January 2015 on writing programme and module learning outcomes. These were followed up with information sessions for academic staff on populating programme and module information on 'Akari Document' including the linkage between assessment events and module learning outcomes.

Examination process review

In 2014 a review of the examination process was undertaken in order to streamline the overall operation of exams so that the interests of students and staff are balanced to the maximum extent possible, taking account of the constraints of time in the academic calendar, the demands of quality assurance in the academic programme and the limitations of resources in the institute.

Review of progression carrying credits

Following on from an analytical review of students who progressed with less than 60 credits from year 1 in 2012/13 to year 2 in 2013/14, presented to the QA sub-committee of Academic Council by the QA Officer it was decided to extend this analysis across all years from 2010/11 to present. Following further analysis a position paper will be presented to Academic Council later this year.

Student engagement

Student involvement in QA processes is documented here.

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/quality.html>

(go to 'For information on student involvement in our quality assurance processes click [here.](#))

EvaSys – QA3 online

The QA Forms (QA1 and QA3) are the primary method used to gather student feedback. The Institute has administered the QA Forms manually on paper over the last number of academic years. ITB procured "EvaSys" an education survey software programme in 2013, allowing ITB to offer the QA3 survey online. This is in response to a recommendation emanating from the HETAC Institute Review Report - Feb 2011 (IR2011 Rec25 Pg45 - "Develop a more effective system of learner feedback including a learner-friendly online system"). The online QA3 survey is anonymous and was made available to all eligible students both full and part-time registered for the academic year 2013/14. The online QA3 survey corresponds exactly with the agreed paper based QA3 form. Heads of Departments automatically received reports on student feedback per programme of study. Additional reports from

EvaSys compiled by the QA Officer and sent to the Heads of Departments provided student feedback per discipline. Recommendations were made by the QA Officer to roll out the use of EvaSys to provide feedback in other initiatives and service departments including, 1st Year Experience, retention strategies and student services.

ISSE

ITB engaged with the Irish Survey of Student Engagement in the academic year 2013-2014, achieving 21% response rate (from full and part-time students combined). Although, generally, the Institute felt that the report reflected favourably on the Institute, there were, however, areas in which we felt we could improve the overall student experience at the Institute, ITB identified a number of areas for improvement, and implemented projects to carry out those improvements. This included:

- In response to increased demands for access to study areas we have created new breakout areas for group.
- Extended shuttle bus times and plan to extend evening opening hours to allow students greater access to facilities between 5pm and 8pm.
- Students can select electives on Moodle rather than the old system of completing and submitting a paper form.
- Worked with Students Union to discuss the student common room and how it can be improved and how to best develop the gym in Block C after the new Sports Pavilion is completed. Both these new, improved, student facilities have since opened.
- Library launched a new student PC booking system which will be much more user-friendly for our students.
- Library has started lending laptops and Galaxy tablets to students to give them greater access to the online resources – strong demand!
- Wireless LAN Upgrade - faster connect to services and allows a user to move between buildings without losing connection to the WLAN service.
- Office 365 Upgrade - ITB student email service is currently provided by the Microsoft Office365 platform. A license upgrade provides the following additional services:
 - A team work website for each student, to enable collaboration on projects or to simply announce personal interests.
 - Access to an enhanced SkyDrive Pro facility store and organize your work documents (SkyDrive Pro provides access to the service across the internet).
 - Office Web Apps - Create a Word, Excel or PowerPoint document from any internet enabled device and save the content to SkyDrive Pro.
- Remote Access to ITB Software Applications: Project underway to upgrade the ITB vdi-ericom portal application to provide a better user experience to together with an increased range of services.

Department of Engineering

The department has continued to participate in professional and National learner engagement programmes, including (among other participatory activities): Engineers Ireland STEPS Programme (<http://www.steps.ie/>); Science Foundation Ireland SciFest Programme (<http://scifest.ie/>); DIT

coordinated resource to support higher education engagement activities SWITCHOnSTEM (<http://www.switchonstem.ie/>); National Network for Civic Engagement CampusEngage (<http://www.campusengage.ie/>).

Dr Catherine Barry-Ryan (DIT), Pat Walsh (DIT) and Dr Philip Owende (ITB) were awarded DIT College Teaching Fellowship Award 2014, for a collaborative study “Tracking student engagement in learning resources and its correlation to their performance (TrackEngage)”. The project is intended to: Develop an efficient student attendance recording system; Develop a protocol to capture student interaction with Web based teaching & learning resources; Pilot these tracking tools on lab based modules in DIT & ITB; Survey Self-Direct Learning on both pilot groups and correlate data with student performance, and; Disseminate & roll out an optimised tracking system for assessing student engagement.

Horticulture

Students participated in the following activities as part of their practical assignments:

- James Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown 2012-15:
Complete redesign, clearance, renovation and replanting of two large courtyard gardens within the main hospital complex to provide therapeutic gardens for patients, staff and visitors.
- Blanchardstown Good Food Network (and Blanchardstown Area Partnership) 2012-14:
Students were involved in the design and delivery of workshops for local adults and schools in growing food as part of the Healthy Food for All Initiative funded by Safe Food. Second year horticulture students planted a new orchard with heritage apple trees propagated by the college in the grounds of St Patricks Senior National School in Corduff, with the participation of over 200 local school children.
- Daughters of Charity Integrated Learning Project at ITB 2013-14:
Horticulture and Social Care staff delivered a horticulture course to learners with cognitive difficulties from the Daughters of Charity, Navan Road. ITB students designed, delivered and evaluated the workshops as part of the Horticulture Therapy module, and gained hands-on experience in training people with special educational needs.

Department of Informatics

Within the department of informatics the following is an overview of projects/initiatives involving student engagement:

Website development project for a local drug rehabilitation group called Tolka River Project (<http://tolkariverproject.ie/>)

iOS and Android mobile phone app development for National Museum of Ireland.

James Connolly Memorial Hospital Meal Ordering System project, the development of a smartphone application for convenient meal ordering.

CoderDojo at ITB celebrated its 2nd year anniversary in 2014. The primary source for mentors for these sessions has been ITB computing students (16 students in the last year).

ITB Computing students have participated in a number of National Programming competitions and Cyber Security Challenge competitions:

- XNA at GamesFlead
 - Robocode
 - ACM Collegiate Programming Contest
 - IRISSCON Cyber Challenge
- Students from our Digital Forensics and Cyber Security degree programme won top prize at the 6th Cyber Security Challenge held as part of this year's IRISSCERT's annual Conference on Cybercrime. The Cyber Crime Conference was held on Thursday the 20th of November 2014 in the D4Berkley Court Hotel, Ballsbridge Dublin.
- OWASP

The second year Creative Digital Media students have submitted their short films for consideration to the Fingal Film Festival.

An example of one student's film can be accessed here <https://vimeo.com/92509288>

Department of Business

Sports Management and Coaching students are engaged with the following external activities throughout their degree:

1. Year 1

Coaching theory and Practice module
Engagement with Dublin 15 Secondary Schools

2. Year 2

Coaching and Exercise Psychology module
Students complete 12 practical coaching sessions with a local primary school.

3. Year 3

Personal training module
Students complete 20 fitness training sessions with a staff member.

Coaching Special Populations module
Students engage with Fingal Community Office to establish Activity Workshops for seniors in the Dublin 15 area.

4. Year 4

Strength Speed & Power module

Students complete 20 training sessions with an elite/amateur athlete with the following teams Ballymum Kickhams GAA, Saint Brigids GAA, St. Peregrines GAA, Castleknock GAA, and Saint Margarets GAA

Applied Performance Analysis module

Students link with local Sports teams providing video analysis and feedback on their performance over a series of games.

Department of Humanities

ITB has established strong links with the Economic and Social Development Division, at Fingal County Council, and it's designated RAPID (1) Area board. A number of lecturers and students of Social and Community Development have been involved in the organization of events around knowledge exchange and community based research.

Teaching and learning

Sharing practice

The Institute publishes an annual report on teaching and learning that documents and disseminates many of the teaching and learning initiatives that are taking place across the campus. The report is printed and distributed to all ITB academic, support and admin staff while digital copies are also distributed.

The 2013/2014 report included 23 submissions on a range of topics including

- Community outreach and civic engagement
- Engagement using mobile applications
- Rich media learning objects
- Online teaching
- Auto grading for software engineering
- Using online discussion forums
- Reflective journals and blogs
- Flipped classroom techniques
- First year experience initiatives

The report aims to provide some evidence of our ability to recognise and respond to the changing needs of our students and the world around us. This annual report gives us an opportunity to share our innovations, experiences and practices with colleagues. In this report you encounter innovations in design thinking, online forums, creativity, online teaching and learning, civic engagement, photos journals, reflective writing, learning objects, flipped classrooms and much more. It gives a sample of the teaching and learning innovation taking place across the institution.

The Teaching & Learning Innovations report for 2013 can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssuranceReports/Teaching%20and%20Learning%20Innovations%202013.pdf>

A call is currently out inviting submissions for the 2014/2015 edition of this report.

Collaboration

ITB has collaborated closely with DIT LTTC centre staff and ITTD. In addition the activities of working groups from the TU4Dublin Foundation Themes – Re-Imagining our Curriculum and the Digital Campus have provided a unique opportunity to disseminate and share resources.

The annual Teaching and Learning showcase in 2014 and 2015 was hosted by DIT LTTC and represented a joint initiative with ITB and ITTD.

In addition the TU4Dublin Steering group have developed international linkages with Canada – and will be hosting a 3 day International Symposium on 30/31st March and April 1st 2015 to explore three primary thematic areas:

- (i) The Enterprising University
- (ii) Re-Imagining our Curriculum and
- (iii) The Globally Engaged University.

Papers on universal design for higher education and the virtual university, are also welcome.

Further information is available: www.tu4dublin.ie

And the conference website: <http://www.highereducationintransformation.com/>

Key Initiatives in Teaching and Learning

Peer Mentoring

ITB has established a first year experience group in response to calls for improvements to the transition experience to higher education. Following consultation with a number of other Irish HE partners, the institute recently engaged in a pilot peer mentoring initiative aimed at incoming year 1 students. The programme commenced on Tuesday 16th of September and concluded on Tuesday 21st of October.

The mentoring programme was made available to first years enrolled in the following programmes in the Department of Business:

- Higher Certificate in Business
- Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of Business (Hons)

These programmes had been identified as having particular retention issues prior to running of the pilot. The pilot involved the selection of 16 student mentors from years 3 and 4 of the programme.

Incoming students were provided with information about the programme when they first registered at ITB in September 2014. Students were also sent emails (to ITB accounts) and text messages and invited to join the programme's Facebook group.

The 6-week programme had the following themes:

- One: Getting to know you and Clubs and Societies
- Two: Getting organised
- Three: Who can help me?
- Four: My Business career and Referencing
- Five: Coping with stress
- Six: Time Management and Presentation of Certificates to Mentors

One quarter of the surveyed students said they had found it hard to settle in at ITB and that participating in the programme had helped them. 14 of the 40 surveyed students said that they had felt worried or anxious during their first six weeks at college and that participating in the programme had helped them feel less so. 5 of the 40 surveyed first years said that participating in the programme had helped them change their mind about leaving ITB.

84% of surveyed first years agreed that the programme helped them settle in to their course, 78% agreed that it helped them meet other new first years. 75% of surveyed first years agreed that the programme helped them to find out useful information about their course, while 92% agreed that it helped them find out useful information about services for students.

Overall, 31 of the 40 surveyed first years said that participating in the programme was worthwhile.

Succeed@ITB

Providing accurate, timely and relevant information to first year students can assist in their transition into higher education. While induction and scheduled support sessions can assist the majority of students, many struggle to assimilate the range of information presented to them during their first weeks in higher education. Responding to this, the institute launched 'SUCCEED@ITB', a resource based on materials donated to ITB by Southampton Solent University under a creative commons licence. The resource consists of a series of online lessons and downloadable materials on a wide range of topics relevant to the academic side of student life in ITB. Lessons and resources covered include:

- Research skills
- Literature reviews
- Referencing and understanding plagiarism
- Writing strategies
- Writing academically
- Dissertation proposals & writing dissertations
- Reflective thinking and writing
- Giving presentations
- Working in groups
- Managing your learning
- Using Feedback
- Passing Exams

- Critical Thinking.

The materials have been viewed 13,000 times by ITB students in the past 12 months and materials are also distributed in printed form.

Expansion in online and flexible offerings

The institute now has 1048 modules which are supported by a VLE presence. Moodle (our VLE) continues to grow in terms of academic usage and student access.

Key stats for 2014

- 4193 active user accounts
- 205 academic accounts
- Average of 100,000 logins per month
- Average of 650,000 page views per month

Delivery of online and virtual classroom supported modules continues to show growth in 2014. Key points of interest:

- 112 modules were supported via virtual classroom delivery
- 2135 hours of online lectures were delivered between 1st Jan 2014 and 31st December 2014

Key areas for expansion include general business, horticulture and informatics.

Engagements with the National Forum on Teaching and Learning

ITB has engaged with the National forum since its inception. Key engagements include

- Participation in teaching hero awards
- Applications for funding for workshops under the 2013 and 2014 seminar series. Two sponsored workshops were run at the institute:
 - Integrating Design Thinking into Education
 - Supporting students through peer mentoring
- Participated in several applications for the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund 2014
 - Playful Transitions
 - Team-based programme (re)development initiative
 - Designing a Blended Learning Curriculum For Higher Education: Web-based Toolkit for Lecturers & Pilot Shared Module Construction
 - The TU4Dublin team also submitted two applications for funding addressing key strategic areas of importance (i) transition to higher education and (ii) team based curriculum design for online programmes.

Other contributions include contributions to the National Survey and consultative workshops. Institute staff continue to support a range of sectoral initiatives such as EDIN, LIN, AISHE, ICEP and ILTA.

New facilities

An exciting new state of the art facility to greatly enhance the learning experience of the Institutes horticulture students was officially launched in September 2014.



Tom Collins, Chairman and Dr. Mary Meaney, President, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown's (ITB) are pictured with Tanaiste and Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton T.D., as she officially launches the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown's (ITB) new Horticulture facilities on the occasion of the 100th meeting of the Governing Body, September 22, 2014.

To date, the college has invested in excess of €1.25m in the building and fitting the facilities which includes: glasshouses, poly-tunnels, workshops and welfare facilities, as well as a range of outdoor practical work areas for field experiments in fruit and vegetable production and sports turf management. ITB's hands-on and practical horticulture courses are designed to enable students to acquire knowledge, skills and practical competences needed to work in the dynamic and expanding horticulture sector. The programme is designed to immerse students in the science, technology and business contexts of food/fruit crop cultivation, sports turf development and management, and other plant and landscape management, including aspects of environmental protection and conservation.

The horticulture programme also allows for civic engagement, primarily with the local community and community support initiatives, drawn on real life practical projects, designed and built to budget by students.

Other new facilities include:

New sports block

September 2014 saw the opening of a new sports pavilion including team changing facilities adjacent to the recently constructed playing fields. The pavilion also includes a state of the art fitness facility with the latest gym equipment and free weights area. The pavilion was officially opened on 12th December 2014 by the Minister for Health, Leo Varadkar. The gym serves as an excellent facility for sports management and complements the recently upgraded facilities in D Block.

New common room for students

A new student common room was designed, installed and commissioned.

New early childhood area

A specially designed learning space dedicated to the Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Care and Education programme was opened.

Additional Facilities

Additional new facilities commissioned over the last few years included new and refurbished lecture theatres, a new CAD lab, new sports classroom facilities, and student breakout areas.

New Technologies

Launch of mobile app for Moodle

In September 2014 the institute rolled out support for the Moodle mobile application for IOS and Android users. Just under 20% of all access to the VLE is now carried out on mobile or tablet devices and the institute is responding to the needs of mobile learners via support for these applications.

External engagement with QA

Staff attended the following events

- QQI workshop – review of reviews – Bewleys Hotel Ballsbridge, Dec 2014
- IHEQN workshop on student feedback mechanisms - at RCSI on December 10th 2014

4 Access transfer and progression

The link to published policies on access, transfer, and progression is given below.

<http://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssurancePolicies/qap.asp>

Access

The table below shows the percentage of ITB student coming into first year of programmes from various entry routes, including the Leaving Certificate, FETAC, Mature etc. Statistics are given for one year only, but they are a representative sample. It clearly shows that non-standard (i.e. non Leaving Certificate) entry is a strong part of the ITB first year numbers.

CAO Nett Acceptances Statistics 2014 (15/10/14)

CRS	TOTAL	Mature	Deferral	FETAC	REACH	Med	LC	% mature	% FETAC
BN001	18		2	1	1		14	0%	6%
BN002	27	10	2	5			10	37%	19%
BN003	15	2	0	5			8	13%	33%
BN009	25	4	1	1			19	16%	4%
BN010	19	2	0	3			14	11%	16%
BN011	39	15	2	17			5	38%	44%
BN012	28	1	2	1			24	4%	4%
BN013	49	12	2	5	3		27	24%	10%
BN014	41	2	0	5			34	5%	12%
BN015	42	2	0	2			38	5%	5%
BN016	65	1	4	7			53	2%	11%
BN017	24	1	0	3			20	4%	13%
BN020	27	10	0	12		1	4	37%	44%
BN021	32	14	1	7			10	44%	22%
BN022	21	6	0	4			11	29%	19%
BN025	17	0	0	9	2		6	0%	53%
BN030	29	1	0	13	2		13	3%	45%
TOTALS	518	83	16	100	8	1	310	16%	19%

CRS	TOTAL	Mature	Deferral	FETAC	REACH	Med	LC	% mature	% FETAC
BN101	21	2	1	2			16	10%	10%
BN103	12	5		2			5	42%	17%
BN104	46	13		2			31	28%	4%
BN107	69	25	1	22			21	36%	32%
BN110	8	1		0			7	13%	0%
BN111	69	10	3	12	1	2	41	14%	17%
BN112	43	10	1	4			28	23%	9%
BN113	10	3	0	0			7	30%	0%
BN114	23	5	0	3			15	22%	13%
BN115	31	7	0	13			11	23%	42%
BN117	8	1	2	1			4	13%	13%
BN118	67	4	2	12			49	6%	18%
BN120	25	10	0	2			13	40%	8%
BN121	22	1	1	0			20	5%	0%
TOTALS	454	97	11	75	1	2	268	21%	17%

TOTALS	972	180	27	175	9	3	578	19%	3%	18%	1%	0%	59%
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Advanced entry

ITB allows advanced entry where appropriate. For example, there is an entry route for qualified Electricians into year 2 of our Mechatronics degree programmes.

A particular highlight is that, due to our relationship with the Further Education sector a significant number of students have progressed to second year of Computing in ITB with advanced entry. The Cisco training obtained by the students has been a great advantage in this process, with the students having not only completed ITB first year at further education, but a significant number in addition are also CCNA certified. As can be seen below, 111 students have benefitted from this agreement with our further education partners since 2007.

Number of students that have obtained advanced entry to year 2 of the Higher Certificate in Science in Computing in Information Technology (BN002)

Year	Number of students
2014	23
2013	13
2012	16
2011	17
2010	13
2009	10
2008	12
2007	7

It should also be noted that a significant amount of students have entered BN002 year 1 as well.

5 Collaborative provision

ITB offers apprentice training in co-operation with SOLAS, in the field of plumbing only. Currently only one group of plumbers are getting sent to ITB, three times a year (48 students maximum per year).

Previously, ITB offered apprenticeship training in Electrical Installation, Carpentry and Joinery, and Brick and Stone. ITB has withdrawn from provision of Carpentry and Joinery (C&J) and also from Brick and Stone (B&S). We still retain Institutional capacity in Electrical Installation. The C&J and B&S facilities have been decommissioned, and the space has been re-allocated to other uses.

The process of ceasing teaching in trades has resulted in a significant redeployment of staff. This was an involved process for the staff involved, and also for their colleagues, including management, who supported it. Staff have been redeployed to areas such as Communications, Sports Management, Mathematics, Informatics, Engineering, and Horticulture (19 staff have been fully redeployed).

ITB does not offer any other collaborative provision.

6 Significant developments, achievements, successes and issues since last Institutional review.

ITB Successes

This subsection details a snapshot of success stories for the Institute since 2011.

Our biggest success: *Three Thousand and Eighteen Graduates* since 2011!

Other highlights include:

- Nov 2011 - ITB Team win laurels at HackEire Competition - Ireland's premier Cyber Security Challenge and part of IRISSCERT's annual Conference on Cybercrime.
- Dec 2011 - ITB and Hubei University China join educational forces.
- Dec 2011 - CDM students win 2011 Heads Up Movie Awards – Winning entry broadcast on RTE Two's Two Tube.
- May 2012 – Niamh Reid Burke – Sports Management Students & ITB Sports Scholarship Recipient nominated by Fingal CC (Sports Dept.) to carry the Olympic torch in Dublin.
- May 2012 – ITB wins Gold in the Educational Category at BLOOM 2012.
- June 2012 – Minister for Social Protection Joan Burton TD launches courtyard garden in Connolly Hospital. Garden designed by ITB Horticulture students
- Dec 2012 – CDM students bag top 3 prizes at the Anti-Trafficking Video Awards - as part of EU Anti-Trafficking day.
- May 2013 – ITB wins Gold at BLOOM 2013 and launches new Horticulture facility.
- July 2013 – ITB students return after successful trip to Tanzania, Africa.
- Oct 2013 – ITB lecturer Dr Matt Smith presents paper at European Commission Technology Research Conference.
- Nov 2013 - ITB Researchers host and run Ireland's premier Cyber Security Challenge.
- Dec 2013 - ITB a finalist at the 2013 Social Media Awards (Facebook Page for a Non-Profit/Organisation)
- Jan 2014 - Computing students develop phone app for National Museum of Ireland.
- Jan 2014 - Computing lecturer invited to deliver Computing Module in France.
- Feb 2014 - CDM students win Silver at Digital Media Awards.
- Feb 2014- ITB receives its fifth Government of Ireland Scholarship for international students. To date 80 scholarships have been awarded
- May 2014 – Research Student wins best PhD paper at Intl Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security.
- Sept 2014 - 2 ITB lecturers recognized for excellence in teaching at the 2014 Teaching Heroes Awards.
- Sept 2014 - Humanities lecturer receives Graduate Scholar Award by the Aging & Society Knowledge Community.
- Sept 2014 – Joan Burton TD launches new Horticulture facility on the occasion of the 100th meeting of ITB's Governing Body.
- Nov 2014 - ITB Digital Forensics students bag top honours at premier Cyber Security Challenge.

- Sept 2014- ITB has over 75 international students on campus from over 13 countries

TU4Dublin

Following publication of the National Strategy for Higher Education in January 2011, a framework for reform within the Irish Higher Education landscape has been established. Included in that framework is a different type of university for Ireland – a Technological University. Three institutions in the Dublin region – DIT, ITB and ITT - have come together to explore the benefits of structured cooperation and collaboration and to jointly seek designation as a new unitary university, providing educational opportunities that are practice-based and research-informed.

DIT, ITB and ITT established a formal alliance in October 2011 and since then colleagues from the three institutions have been working together to develop a programme of work which will culminate in the submission of a joint application for designation as a Technological University.

A website has been established to serve as a focal point for information and discussion with regard to the proposed Technological University

<http://www.tu4dublin.ie>

The following link to an on-line published document sets out the initial submission to the HEA

<http://www.tu4dublin.ie/contentfiles/publications/TU%20Dublin%20Submission%20to%20HEA%2031%20July%202012.pdf>

This initial submission was received favourably. More recently the three partner Institutes met with an International panel to present the TU4Dublin plan, who submitted their report to the Board of the Higher Education Authority. The HEA has communicated to us that the Board welcomed what they described as a “credible plan”, and we are now moving forward to Stage 4 of the designation process.

An implementation support team has been formed from staff from all three Institutes supporting engagement of staff across Institutes in preparation for the transformation required in this exciting opportunity to become a Technological University. As part of the preparation both for the forthcoming merger and the TU designation process, we have active groups looking at the important, challenging and stimulating issues arising in such areas as Organisational Design, Academic matters, Curriculum development, Administrative support, HR issues, library related issues, and others.

As part of this process the three partner Institutes have established a Joint Graduate Research school. All future ITB postgraduate research students will be registered with the DIT also, and will receive DIT (and later Technological University) awards on graduation. Existing postgraduate research students have the option of receiving either QQI or DIT awards. As part of the criteria for TU status we must reach a higher percentage of postgraduate research students, and the establishment of the Joint Graduate Research School is part of our effort to meet this.

Prior to application for Technological University status it is required that the three Institute should merge. This is expected to be facilitated by the Technological Universities Bill, of which we are awaiting publication. ITB is working with our partners towards a merge date of Sept 1st 2015, but, the timing of this is subject to the bill being enacted.

7 Suggested items for inclusion in the planned annual institutional quality report.

Each of the Institutes are engaged in collaborative activities, both in terms of Clusters, and also, such as in the case of ITB, in work towards mergers and application for Technological University status. It would be useful to have a section in the document that explicitly asked for information in regard to such activities (we have included it in any case).