

| Document Title/Reference | Governance, Oversight & Quality Framework |
|---|---|
| Purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a framework to underpin Quality Assurance (QA) in the IPA with appropriate governance and management structures and responsibilities. To establish processes for the creation, implementation and review of policies and procedures, while involving staff, students and other stakeholders. To provide a system to both ensure and continuously review quality. |
| Scope | Details the structures, responsibilities, oversight bodies and processes in the QA process. |
| Contents | <p>Part 1 Introduction Institutional Level Governance – An Overview of Structures and Relationships</p> <p>Part 2 QA Governance, Management & Implementation QA System QA Processes Review & Updating of Policies</p> |
| Contextual Guidelines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESG 1.1 ‘Policy for Quality Assurance’. QQI Core Guidelines No.1 ‘Governance and Management of Quality’. Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, s. 28 “Obligation of providers to prepare quality assurance procedures.” |
| Audience & Communication | <p>Applicable to Education Division staff, DG, Board, Education Committee, Students and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Governance, Oversight & Quality Framework will be available on the Institute’s website.</p> |
| Policy Owner & Implementation | The responsibility for the <i>Governance, Oversight & Quality Framework</i> lies with the DG and SMG (for Institute-wide governance) and Assistant DG/Head of the Education for Education Division governance and management and quality. |
| Key Implementation Actions | <p>The relevant Boards and Committees that make up the constituent part of the Governance, Oversight and Quality Framework meet on a regular basis as per their individual terms of reference.</p> <p>Quality Assurance also forms part of the IPA Strategy and receives high level input from both the Board and the Senior Management Group.</p> |
| Effectiveness | Programmatic Reviews. Institutional Reviews. |
| Revision History & Commencement Date & Date of Next Review | <p>2020 version – effective from September 2021</p> <p>2017 version – effective from September 2017</p> <p>2006 version – effective from December 2006</p> <p>Date of Next Review: 2026</p> |

Governance, Oversight & Quality Framework

Part 1

Introduction

The Quality Assurance system in place in a third-level institution must be determined by the institution's scale, scope and purpose. This is a fundamental principle outlined in QQI's Policy on QA Guidelines - the 'QA Context Principle'. The IPA's Governance, Oversight & Quality Framework facilitates implementation, oversight and monitoring of the quality assurance system.

Institutional Level Governance – An Overview of Structures and Relationships

Corporate Governance is defined as 'the system and procedures by which enterprises are directed, controlled and managed' (Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, 2016). State bodies, according to the Code of Practice, must serve the interests of the Government as shareholder, the taxpayer and all other stakeholders, pursue value for money in their endeavours (including managing risk appropriately), and act transparently as public entities. The Board and management must accept accountability for the proper management of the organisation. High standards of corporate governance in State bodies are critical to ensuring a positive contribution to the State's overall economic efficiency, competitiveness, social cohesion and regional development.

The Code sets out the basic framework of rules to be adopted by publicly funded organisations, such as the IPA, in the achievement of best practice corporate governance. The best practice provisions relate both to internal systems and to external relations with the Government, the relevant Minister (in the IPA's case the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform), and the Minister for Finance, where appropriate.

The following areas have been identified in the Code as the elements with which corporate governance must be concerned:

- Strategic and corporate planning
- Annual budgets
- Compliance with statutory obligations
- Procurement
- Major contracts
- Disposal of assets and access to assets by third parties
- Audit and risk management
- Reporting and accountability arrangements
- Appointment, remuneration and assessment of CEO performance and CEO succession planning
- Tax compliance
- Business conduct.

The IPA is fully cognisant of its obligations under the Code of Practice. Governance in the IPA is based on organisational structures, management arrangements, and processes, procedures and controls that address the above features and are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, equity and inclusiveness.

The Institute's Corporate Governance Manual sets out how the IPA endeavours to be as fully compliant as practicable with the Code. The Manual provides a clear and comprehensive summary of the principal aspects of corporate governance for the IPA Board, its senior management and staff. The Manual is also intended to ensure that Board members are fully informed of their legal responsibilities and that they are familiar with statutory provisions relevant to their position and the organisational issues, policies and procedures that inform their role. These policies and procedures provide the Board with a framework of governance structures and processes that allow it to objectively and effectively assess management and corporate performance. The Manual is maintained by the Director of Finance and Support Services.

The IPA has a dedicated HR unit which deals with human resources, not just for the Education Division, but for the Institute in its entirety. The HR unit manages a fair and transparent process for the recruitment, retention and development of permanent full and part-time staff within the IPA. The HR unit has documented policies and procedures on matters relating to the recruitment, development, management, and work and behavioural practices of IPA employees. These are accessible in the official staff handbook. Current documents in the handbook include:

- Recruitment Policy and Procedures; Transfer, 'Acting' Policy and Procedures
- Training and Development
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Dignity at Work
- Grievance Procedures
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Job-Sharing Scheme
- Health and Safety
- Flexible Working Hours: Guidelines to Scheme
- Leave Regulations (Annual Leave, Parental Leave, Paternity Leave, Bereavement Leave etc)
- Flexibility Agreement
- Staff Payments - Remuneration, Travel and Subsistence
- Policy on Email and Internet Usage
- Work Life Balance Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Partnership Committee
- Role of the HR Unit
- Role of the Union
- The Institute's Pension Scheme
- Income Continuance Plan.

These HR policies are routinely updated as required in line with legislation and DPER guidelines.

Oversight

The IPA also has a strong committee structure to underpin the Institute's Quality Assurance, thus supporting the separation of responsibilities, the provision of checks-and-balances in the decision-making process, and the monitoring and controlling of activity. These committees comprise internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders include the IPA Board, Education Committee, advisory committees, lecturers, students, and staff members in general. External stakeholders are considered to be anyone who has a vested interest in the development, functions, organisation and workings of the Institute; these include, inter alia, the accrediting university, employers, alumni, QQI, Department of Public Expenditure & Reform, Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) and so on.

The IPA Board of Directors

The IPA operates under a governing body constituted largely of independent non-executive directors, which is legally provided for in the Institute's *Constitution, Memorandum and Articles of Association*. The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) sets out the role of the Board as being 'collectively responsible for leading and directing the State body's activities'. The Board provides strategic guidance to the State body, and monitors the activities and effectiveness of management. Board members should 'act on a fully informed basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and in the best interest of the State body, subject to the objectives set by Government'.

Accordingly, the IPA Board is responsible for the setting of strategy, the monitoring of strategic performance, approval of the risk management framework, ensuring compliance, monitoring stakeholder relations and for overseeing the governance and management of the Institute. Specifically, the Board exercises its responsibilities through the following functions which shall be reserved for decision by the Board:

1. Approval of Corporate Plan (Strategic Plan)
2. Ensuring that effective arrangements are in place to both implement the Corporate Plan and review progress regularly
3. Approval of annual budgets and monitoring of implementation
4. Acquisition or disposal of assets, whether property or plant or machinery where the value of these assets exceeds €150,000. Determination of appropriate thresholds for the various levels of office-holders.
5. Approval of major investments and capital projects, and the terms of contracts related to these projects.
6. Approval of borrowing of money and banking arrangements.
7. Appointment of Director General and assessment of his/her performance.
8. Approval of appointments to grades of Executive Director and upwards, determination of the salaries of those grades, and approval of performance pay awards for those grades to which it applies.
9. General oversight of appointments and remuneration policy, and application of pay increases.
10. Approval to the terms of the superannuation scheme and variations to it, subject to approval by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.
11. Ensuring that good governance practices are in place and taking reasonable steps to ensure that the Institute complies with its statutory obligations.

The Board consists of not less than three members (who shall be unrelated and independent of each other) and not more than fourteen members comprised as follows:-

- (a) two shall be civil servants (not being officers of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform) of whom one shall be an officer of the Department with responsibility for Local Government and one an officer of the Department with responsibility for the Health services;
- (b) one shall be a secretary general;
- (c) one shall be a city or county manager;
- (d) one shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Health Service Executive or his/her nominee;
- (e) two shall be chief executive officers of state-sponsored bodies, of whom one shall be an officer of a commercial state body and one shall be an officer of a non-commercial

- state body;
- (f) one shall be representative of associations or unions of persons engaged in the public service;
 - (g) one shall be a representative of universities, faculties or colleges of universities or third-level educational institutions;
 - (h) one shall be an officer of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform;
 - (i) one shall be a representative of the students of the Institute;
 - (j) one shall be a member of the staff of the Institute elected by them;
 - (k) one shall be the Director General of the Institute;
 - (l) one who may be co-opted by the Board

The members of the Board (other than the Director General of the Institute and the member to be co-opted by the Board) are elected or nominated to office in accordance with regulations governing the Board. Each member of the Board holds office from and including the seventh day before the commencement of the Annual General Meeting held next after their election or nomination and ceases to hold office on the day on which the succeeding members of the Board take office prior to the commencement of the third Annual General Meeting held thereafter.

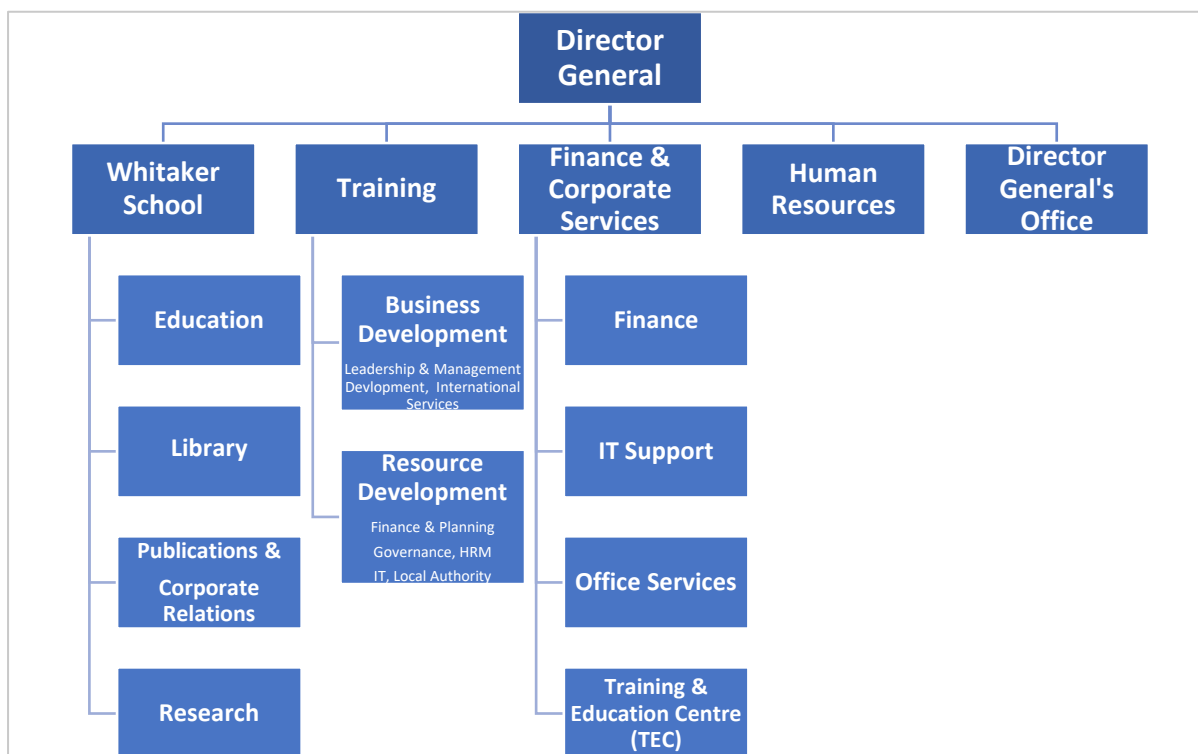
The Board operates through its scheduled monthly meetings and three standing Board subcommittees. The subcommittees include:

- Finance and Strategy Committee, which reviews strategic and financial management activity including the corporate plan, annual budgets, annual accounts, banking arrangements, financial controls and performance indicators.
- Administration Committee, which monitors the Institute's tactical operating performance, including capital works, land acquisition, pay and benefits, and human resource issues.
- Audit & Risk Committee, which reviews annual financial statements and strategic processes for risk, internal control and governance, and which advises the Board on matters relating to internal and external audit activity, management of risk, corporate governance requirements, anti-fraud policies, etc.

IPA Senior Management Group

The Institute's organisational structure has discrete and integrated divisions operating under a Director General and a team of senior managers. There are defined staff roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships for all staff. The organisation chart below provides a diagrammatic representation of the IPA structure. Note that the box marked Education Division is the focus of the QA Processes described in this document, as the Division is responsible for providing accredited programmes,. This is not to exclude the ancillary corporate QA processes, such as HR recruitment and development, financial management, risk management, data protection etc that support the Education Division.

IPA Organisation Chart



Each member of the Senior Management Group (SMG) is entrusted with driving business functions (education, research, training & consultancy, and corporate services such as finance and HR). The SMG works with the Director General on strategy related matters, which in turn are overseen by the Board. The SMG is responsible for the implementation of strategy, and the management of activities and resources required to fulfil the Institute's strategic objectives. Members of the Senior Management Group (SMG) of the IPA are invited to report to the Board, and advise on matters, when requested to do so by the Chairman.

The Director General

The Director General (DG) is responsible for day-to-day management of the Institute's business and for ensuring that the policies of the Board are effectively implemented. The DG is responsible for leading the delivery of strategy and the implementation of governance and risk-management processes. He/she is also responsible, with the Chairperson and the board secretary, for ensuring that the agendas for the Board are properly managed and that the Board has the necessary advice to carry out its functions. The DG exercises this role through the following responsibilities:

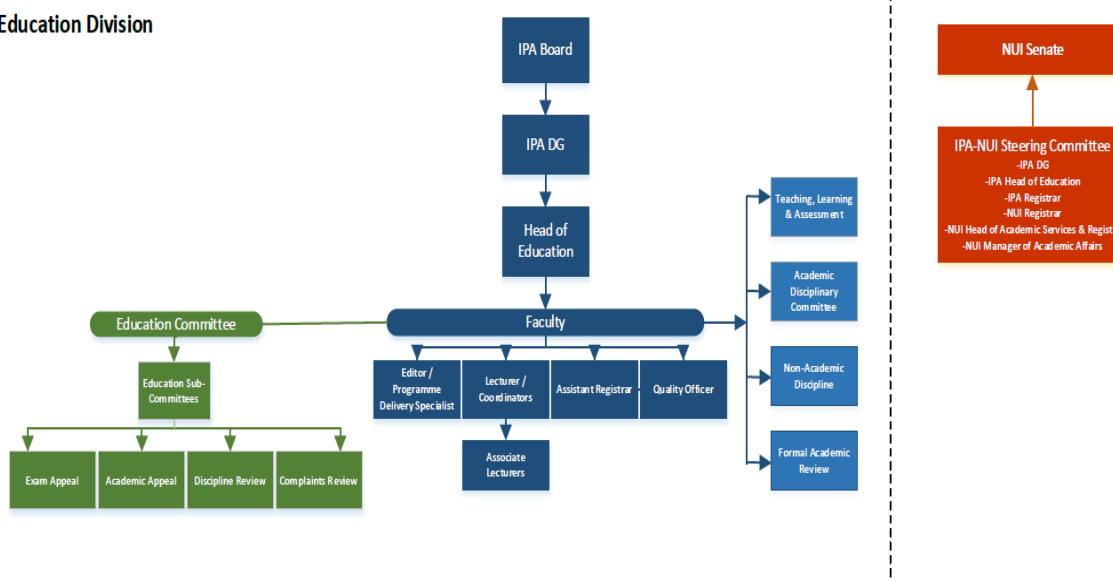
1. The direction and management of the Institute in accordance with policies approved by the Board.
2. The initiation and development of plans and proposals for the development and adaptation of Institute policies and activities to meet changing circumstances and to achieve approved objectives.
3. The organisation and control of the staff and work of the Institute to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of plans and programmes.
4. The control of capital and income and expenditure budgets as approved by the Board.

5. The development and maintenance of appropriate relationships between the Institute and various branches of the Irish Public Service to meet identified needs.
6. The development and maintenance, as appropriate, of contacts with bodies in Ireland and other countries to ensure access to knowledge, expertise and information relevant to the objectives and activities of the Institute.
7. The representation of the Institute, as required and the maintenance of good public relations.

The Education Division

The Assistant DG/Head of the Education Division is the SMG representative with responsibility for leading and managing the Education Division and its staff.

Education Division



The Faculty Committee

The Faculty Committee is the Institute's primary academic group. The Committee has responsibility for the development, management and review of the Institute's accredited courses and course material, namely course design, delivery, co-ordination & administration, assessment, quality assurance and related academic affairs. The Committee comprises the Head of the Education Division, Assistant Registrar, Programme Delivery Specialist/Senior Editor, and Lecturer/Programme & Module Coordinators.

The Faculty Committee works with and is directly responsible to the Head of the Education Division. It meets three times each academic semester. Representatives of the Faculty Committee are also members of the IPA-NUI Steering Group, a group of IPA and NUI academics and managers responsible for overseeing the delivery and quality of IPA programmes as part of the accreditation relationship between the two institutions (see below). All Faculty Committee members are also invited to attend meetings of the Institute's Education Committee, an advisory/consultative body of stakeholders.

The Faculty Committee is composed of:

- Assistant Director General/Head of the Education Division (Chairman)
- Assistant Registrar

- Lecturer/Programme & Module Coordinators in the following subject areas:
 - Irish Government & Politics, Law, Public Administration
 - Law & Administration of Justice
 - Healthcare & Management
 - Politics & Policy, Local Government Management
 - European Studies
 - Economics
 - Organisation & Employee Development
 - BBS programme and subjects in following areas: Quantitative Methods, Accounting, Financial Management, Marketing, IT & Systems, Business Management, Project Management
 - Human Resource Management, Industrial Relations
- Programme Delivery Specialist/Senior Editor
- Librarian
- Quality Assurance Officer
- Quality Assurance Project Officer

The terms of reference for the Faculty Committee are to:

- Ensure that standards appropriate to higher level courses are met in curriculum development and review, teaching methods and materials, student assessment and quality evaluation systems etc. and report on such matters to the Head of the Education Division and the IPA-NUI Steering Committee and IPA Education Committee.
- Co-ordinate the delivery and assessment of IPA accredited programmes.
- Participate in the development of new courses under the oversight of the Head of School.
- Review lectures and distance education courses, and advise on the preparation and review of texts and other teaching materials required by students.
- Oversee the work of associate lecturers and specialist subject teams in the interests of curricular and inter-disciplinary co-ordination.
- Review and develop appropriate delivery methods, student supports and assessment methodologies.
- Review the conduct of examinations and act as internal exam review board in advance of the formal Board of Examiners meetings.
- Adjudicate on matters relating to student discipline.
- Participate in the IPA-NUI Steering Committee towards maintaining and improving quality assurance in relation to the Institute's education services.

The Faculty Committee sub-divides into a number of sub-committees to deal with specific routine and non-routine matters. There is a standing Teaching, Learning & Assessment sub-committee. The other sub-committees allow for focus on specific issues that arise, and are constituted as required. Sub-committees report to the Faculty Committee with observations and recommendations. Faculty sub-committees are:

- Academic Disciplinary Committee – forum for the hearing of breaches of assessment regulations & procedures referred to it by the Head of the Education Division. The composition, scope and operating procedures for this group are outlined in the Institute's *Assessment Regulations and Procedures*.

- Non-Academic Discipline Committee – forum for the hearing of breaches of the rules of discipline of a non-assessment nature referred to it by the Head of the Education Division or an appropriate person delegated by the Head of School. The composition, scope and operating procedures for this group are outlined in the Institute’s *Disciplinary (Non-Assessment) Regulations and Procedures*.
- Formal Academic Review Committee – Faculty sub-committee which, under the direction of the Head of School/Registrar or assistant registrar, will review exam related disputes that arise after a re-assessment of scripts has been conducted. The composition, scope and operating procedures for this group are outlined in *Procedures for Appeal of Exam Results*.
- Teaching, Learning & Assessment Group – established to advance the IPA’s policies, procedures and critical reflections around teaching and learning and assessment. Terms of reference are to review IPA teaching, learning and assessment procedures and strategies, and report to the Faculty Committee on possible areas of improvement and development, taking particular account of:
 - developments nationally and internationally in teaching and learning
 - the teaching & learning & assessment methodologies of most relevance to the IPA student body and to programme delivery methods
 - student feedback on teaching, learning and assessment
 - e-learning developments
 - quality assurance requirements.

In its deliberations on teaching and learning and its recommendations to Faculty, the Group is guided in particular by the research undertaken by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and the resources provided by that body. Further information on the IPA’s approach to teaching, learning and assessment can be found in the Teaching & Learning Policy.

The Faculty Committees meet as directed by the Faculty Committee or Head of Education (with the exception of the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Group which meets at least twice every semester) and its members are drawn from suitably qualified members of the Faculty Committee agreed by the Committee.

The Assistant DG/Head of the Education Division

The Assistant DG/Head of the Education Division is the SMG representative with responsibility for leading and managing the Education Division and its staff; for developing, directing and managing the IPA’s suite of academic programmes; and for maintaining academic standards. The overall responsibility for QA development, implementation and evaluation also lies with the Assistant DG/Head of School. The Assistant DG/Head of School is a member of the Education Committee and IPA-NUI Steering Committee.

The Assistant Registrar

The Assistant Registrar manages the Education Division Registry and Administrative Office and is responsible for academic affairs and academic administration. The Assistant Registrar chairs the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Group, liaises with awarding/accrediting bodies, co-ordinates QA activity, and provides a secretariat for Faculty, Examination Boards and the Education Committee. The

Assistant Registrar co-ordinates the work of administrative staff to provide a range of services to students and staff including admissions, records, assessment and programme organisation.

Lecturer/Programme & Module Coordinators

IPA permanent lecturers comprise senior lecturers, lecturers and junior lecturers. They specialise in a range of public management related subjects, such as public administration and politics, law, economics, social policy, health policy, local government, finance, HRM, EU studies among others. These lecturers teach and assess on both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, alongside associate lecturers, and have roles in research and consultancy.

IPA permanent lecturers take the academic and management lead for the development and maintenance of modules and programmes and all associated course material. This involves acting as Programme/Module Coordinators to oversee the subject areas within their responsibility and the work of associate lecturers in those subject areas, which they carry out in conjunction with the Assistant Registrar and the administrative team.

Principally, they:

- Develop and deliver programmes to meet learning outcomes
- Recruit, manage and monitor associate lecturers
- Monitor standards of teaching and assessment by associate lecturers
- Ensure that courses and course manuals are kept up-to-date, relevant and of an acceptable standard
- Ensure the correct and timely dissemination of information to lecturers and associate lecturers in order for them to carry out their duties
- Assist in the planning of tutorials, seminars, distance and evening courses
- Assist in the delivery of tutorials at regional study centres
- Deal with issues that may arise in the development and delivery of educational courses under their remit
- Deal with students in relation to issues that may arise and give guidance and support where necessary
- Ensure that courses are handled by staff professionally and in accordance with the principles and ethos of the institute
- Provide direction and help to staff where necessary in order that education delivery is in keeping with quality assurance standards
- Carry out regular reviews of course effectiveness through standard QA processes and advising the Faculty committee on any issues that require attention
- Carry out assigned lecturing and assessment duties as required
- Participate in course reviews, committees and sub-committees as required.

The Programme Delivery Specialist/Senior Editor

The Programme Delivery Specialist/Senior Editor assists Lecturer/Programme & Module Coordinators in the creation and revision of high-quality course manuals. The specialist edits the material submitted by lecturers/authors and oversees the production and distribution of manuals. The specialist also advises and assists Lecturer/Programme & Module Coordinators in developing the web-based resources that the Education Division uses to deliver programmes through distance education.

Quality Office

The IPA QA Officer works under the Registrar's Office and is centrally involved in annual information gathering, analysis and implementation of quality assurance activities, and in periodic formal reviews. In these activities, the Quality Office is integrated with all Education Division processes, Faculty Committee, Education Committee and NUI.

Librarian

The librarian is responsible for the maintenance and provision of library services for staff and students, this includes:

- Ensuring the optimum availability of the library's services to staff and students
- The promotion of library services
- The development of library services including texts, research material and electronic databases
- The training and development of library staff
- Interaction with the institute community with the aim of identifying materials to support learning and research
- The promotion of the library's services.

The librarian reports to the Head of Education.

Associate Lecturers

The IPA delivers its suite of programmes by using subject matter experts and qualified practitioners drawn from other HEIs and the public service. Working under IPA Lecturer/Programme & Module Coordinators, they deliver classes, set and correct student assessment, and review and update learning materials on selected subjects.

The Education Committee

The Education Committee is a group of staff and stakeholders, including employers and students, whose primary role is to assist the Head of Education and the Faculty Committee by acting in a consultative/advisory capacity on a range of strategic and practical issues. The primary role of the IPA's Education Committee is to advise the Education Division on how best to respond to the education requirements of the civil service and wider public sector. The Education Committee primarily assists the Head of School and the Faculty Committee by acting in a consultative/advisory capacity on a range of strategic and practical issues. The Committee's terms of reference are:

- To advise the Institute on how it can best respond to the education requirements of the civil service and wider public sector
- To monitor developments in the public service in terms of their educational implications for public servants, and to advise on how the Institute might respond to such developments in educational terms
- To monitor the effectiveness of existing educational programmes and to advise on changes to meet the needs of the public service
- To monitor quality improvement procedures appropriate to the size of the IPA's education provision

- To review progress from time to time on the extent to which approved goals and objectives are being achieved

The Education Committee is composed as follows:

- Chairman
- Nominee of the Chief Executive Officers of the Health Service Executive
- Nominee of the City and County Managers Association
- Nominee of the Department of Finance/DPER
- Head of the Education Division/Registrar
- Assistant Registrar
- Representatives of Academic members of IPA Faculty
- Representative of part-time lecturers
- Representative of Graduates
- Representative of Students
- Representative of Civil Service departments
- Representative of Training Officers
- Representative of the Garda Síochána
- Representative of the Defence Forces
- Representative of State Agencies
- Co-opted member.

The terms of appointment of members are linked with their professional roles and are determined by the stakeholders. Individual members of the Faculty Committee are invited to attend meetings.

Meetings are held three times a year and additional meetings are held as required. The Head of the Education Division may establish task groups or committees from time to time to draft position papers and responses to issues raised at meetings for the Education Committee's information.

The Committee receives progress reports on IPA programme activity at each meeting. QA is a running agenda item at such meetings; the external stakeholders who make up the bulk of the membership provide clear and independent advice on QA related issues. They receive progress reports and review policies, procedures and analyses of data and trends. Their opinions and advice feed directly into development and evaluative activities. Education Committee discussions are minuted and reported to Faculty Committee and the IPA Board.

A sub-committee of the Education Committee can be formed at any time at the discretion of the Education Committee to carry out its assigned tasks under its remit.

There are presently four sub-committees that serve as independent and final arbiters in various student appeals processes relating to academic (and non-academic) breaches, discipline and complaints. These are constituted as required. These sub-committees include the Examination Appeals Committee, Academic Appeals Committee, Complaints Review Panel, and the Discipline Review Panel.

- Examinations Appeal Committee – considers appeals from students on foot of decisions made by the Formal Academic Review Committee. The Education Committee appoints three members to the Examinations Appeal Committee. Further information on the scope and

operating procedures for this group are outlined in the Institute's *Procedures for Appeal of Exam Results*.

- Academic Appeals Committee – considers appeals from students on foot of decisions made by the Academic Disciplinary Committee. The Education Committee appoints three members to the Academic Appeals Committee, two of whom are members of the Education Committee (third is independent of the IPA). Further information on the scope and operating procedures for this group are outlined in the Institute's *Assessment Regulations and Procedures*.
- Discipline Review Panel – considers cases where the student contests the decision of the Discipline Committee in formal cases of non-assessment related breaches. The composition, scope and operating procedures for this group are outlined in the Institute's *Disciplinary (Non-Assessment) Regulations and Procedures*.
- Complaints Review Panel – considers student appeals against the decision of the Head of School after investigating a formal written complaint from the student. The composition, scope and operating procedures for this group are outlined in the Institute's *Complaints (Non-Assessment) Policy & Procedures*.

The IPA-NUI Steering Committee

The **Terms of Reference** for the **IPA-NUI Steering Committee** are as follows:

Membership

- Director-General of the IPA
- Assistant Director-General, Registrar and Head of the Education Division, IPA
- Assistant Registrar, IPA
- Registrar, NUI
- Head of Academic Services and Registry, NUI
- Manager of Academic Affairs, NUI

NUI and IPA reserve the right to recommend co-option of an additional individual member to the Steering Committee for the benefit of gaining relevant expertise in defined areas eg Attendance may include IPA Quality Assurance Officer and Lecturer/Programme & Module Coordinators as relevant.

Terms of reference

- i) To act as the main forum for the conduct of business between NUI and the IPA and to advise the Senate on academic and other matters arising in the relationship between the NUI and the IPA. The following is a non-exhaustive list of such matters:
 - Matriculation and admissions
 - Academic programme validation and accreditation, and academic qualifications
 - Quality Assurance, including reports from periodic programme reviews and QA effectiveness reviews
 - Financial matters
 - IPA strategic collaborations and partnerships national and international
 - Conferings and student records
 - Governance and compliance matters, including FOI and Data Protection.

- ii) To reach decisions on issues and questions arising and, where necessary, in line with NUI and IPA policies, procedures and regulations, make recommendations to the IPA Board and the University Senate.
- iii) To identify and discuss matters of IPA strategy and planning and NUI strategy and planning, that are of mutual relevance.
- iv) To address and where possible, resolve, disputes arising out of or in connection with the IPA-NUI Memorandum of Agreement.
- v) To address Any Other Business referred to the Committee by the University Senate or the IPA Board.

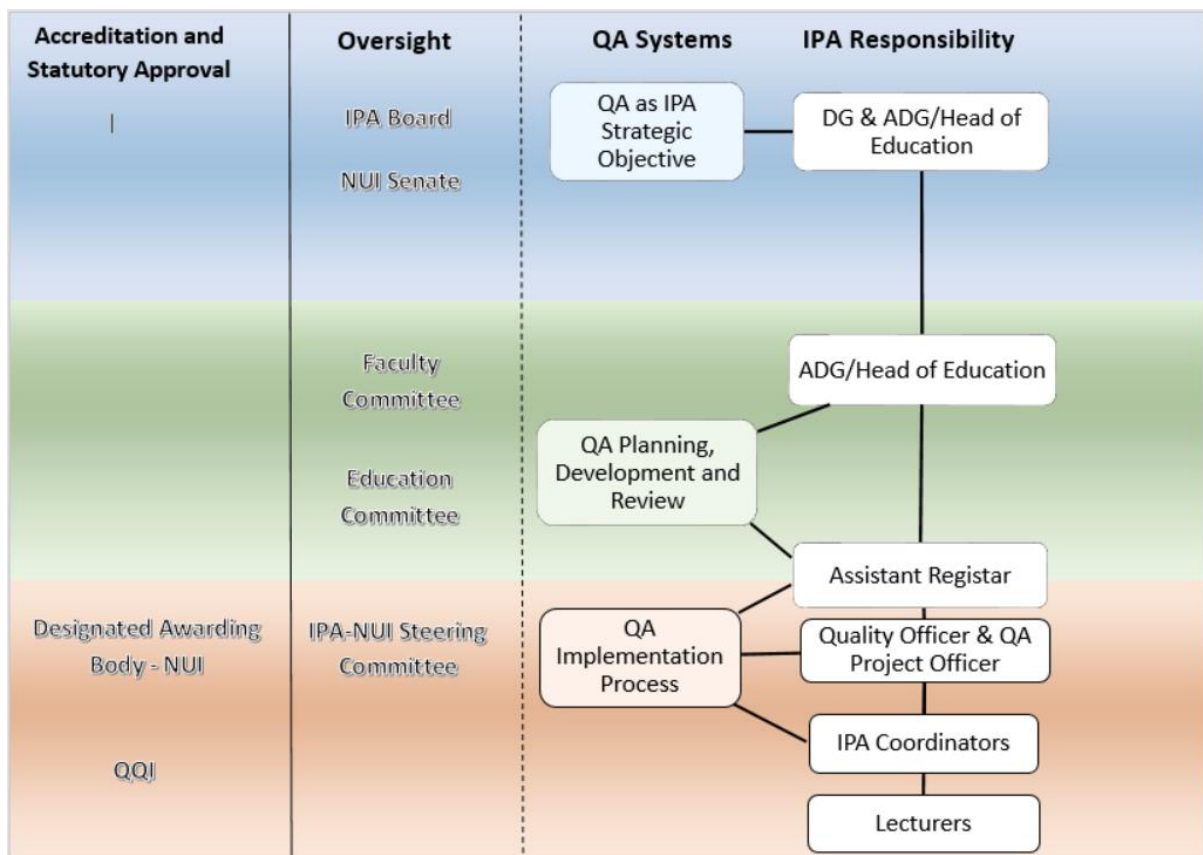
The Steering Committee meets at a minimum twice and normally a maximum of three times per academic year. Every effort is made to schedule meetings within one calendar month of a University Senate meeting. This means that the Steering Committee will normally meet in late November, early to mid-February and, where necessary, in May or June. Exceptionally, additional meetings of the Steering Committee may be convened as required.

Part 2

Quality Framework

QA Governance, Management & Implementation

Governance and oversight arrangements ensure that QA is embedded in each layer of the management structure in the IPA. At each level, there are clear lines of responsibility for appropriate QA related activities and there are defined reporting relationships and advisory/oversight committees, as can be seen from the illustration below:



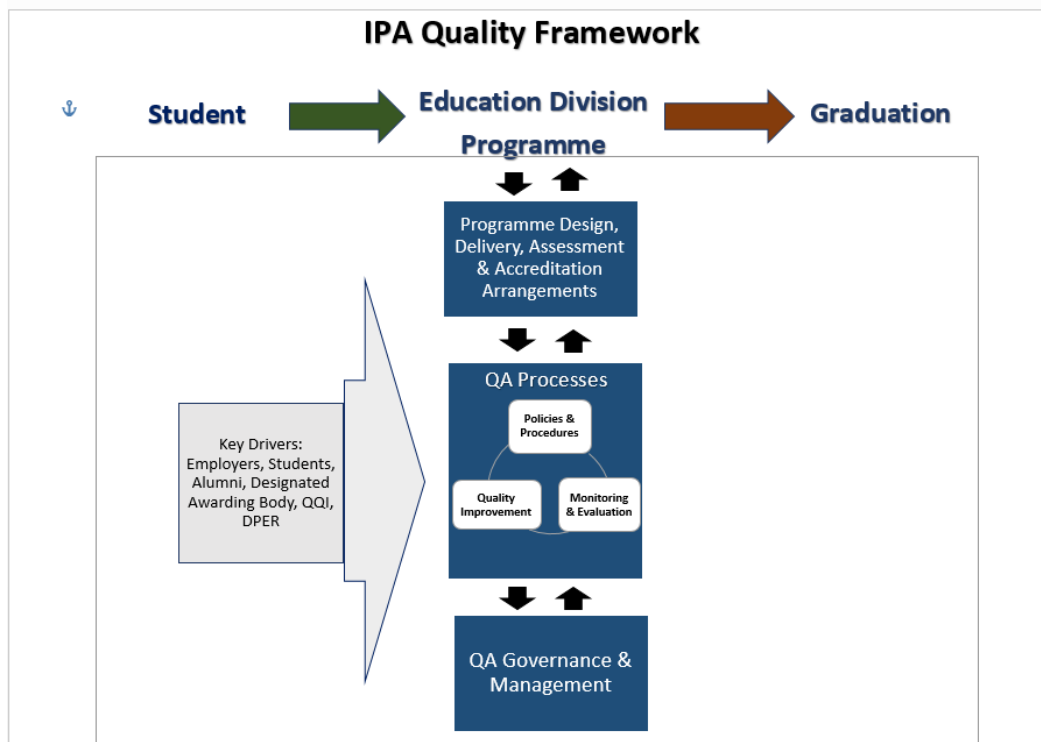
- At the top level, the Institute's Strategic Plan positions QA as a key strategic objective for the IPA.
- The DG has ultimate responsibility for corporate Institute-wide leadership and management. The DG, working in conjunction with the ADG/Head of Education, is also responsible for the delivery of Quality Assurance as a strategic objective, which is monitored by the Board.
- The overall responsibility for QA development, planning, implementation and review lies with the ADG/Head of Education, assisted by the Assistant Registrar, and is overseen primarily by the Faculty Committee. Members of Faculty contribute to and approve QA policies and procedures.
- The IPA's advisory stakeholder group, the Education Committee, also has a role in monitoring quality assurance. The IPA-NUI Steering Committee is kept abreast of QA work. QA is a standing item on the agenda for these Committees. These Committees receive oral and written reports

relating to QA such as progress reports and updates; development plans; draft policies and procedures; programme reports, student surveys and exam statistics.

- e) The Assistant Registrar oversees the work of a quality team to support and facilitate the implementation of QA. The Quality team comprises Education Division staff members (academic and administrative) who have quality-related duties.
- f) Individual members of Faculty, in their roles as academics and Lecturer/Programme & Module Coordinators, play a central role in the day-to-day delivery and assurance of quality in the IPA by giving effect to the policies, procedures and monitoring mechanisms that they have helped to develop. They are also involved in QA review activities.
- g) Faculty lecturers/coordinators are responsible for managing and monitoring the quality-related activities of lecturers/associate lecturers – teaching, course content, module reviews and revisions.

Quality Assurance Systems

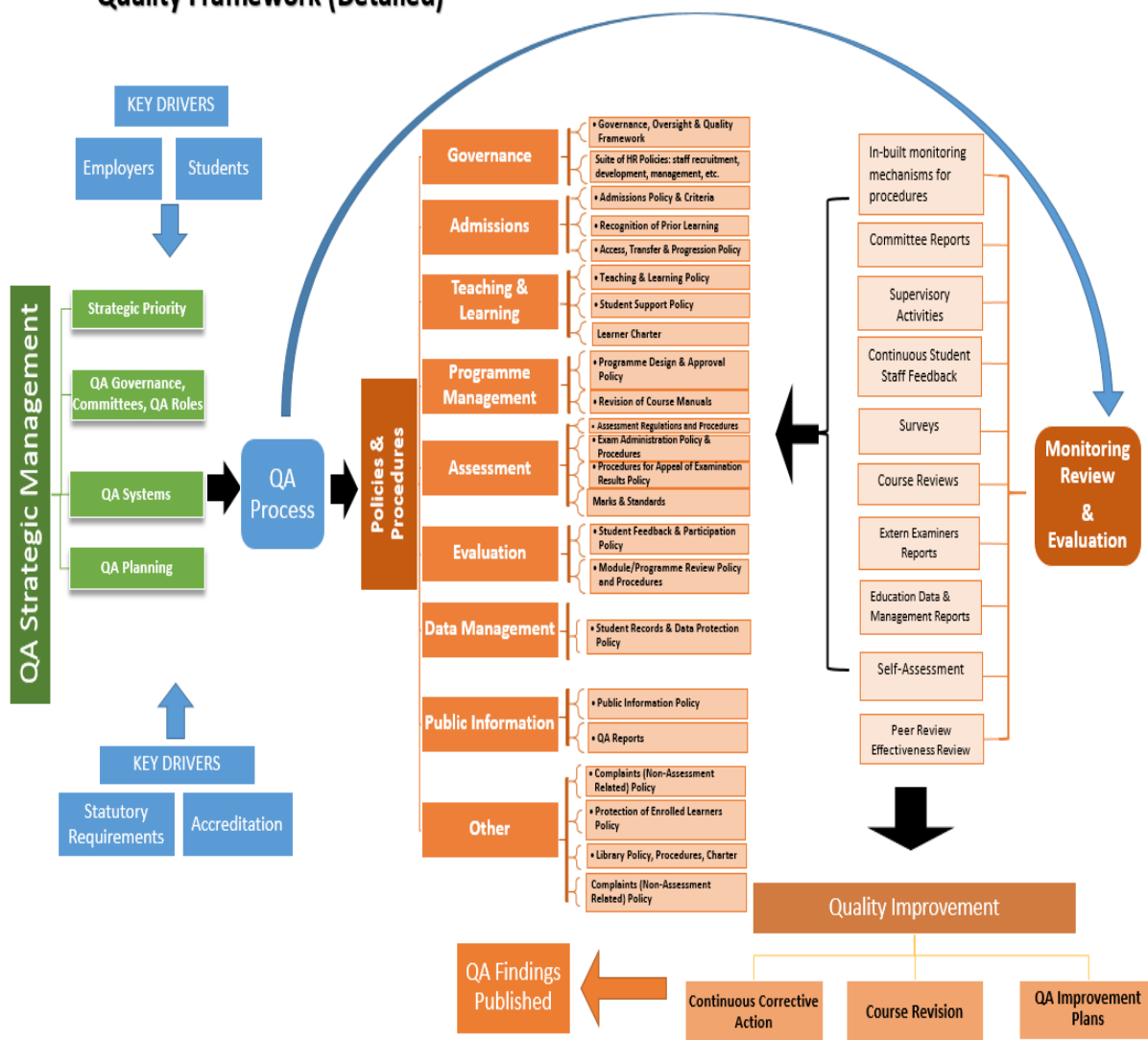
1. The act of embedding QA activities across a whole range of vital academic and administrative services delivered on a day-to-day basis is critical to the successful implementation of a quality-led culture. Indeed, such embedded activities are critical to the IPA's operational success and reputation in the public service.
2. Consequently, the IPA assures and enhances the quality of its education provision by embedding QA mechanisms that comprise clear, articulated policy statements; best-practice guidelines; regulations; procedures and actions, and in-built monitoring, evaluation and compliance procedures.
3. The IPA's QA system is informed by Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) guidelines (particularly the Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines), as well as NUI procedures International Best practice.
4. The IPA has devised a QA Framework, which provides for development and implementation of QA activities.



The Framework recognises the following principles:

- (i) a student's successful journey through third-level education is underpinned by effective management of programme design, programme delivery, assessment, student support, and evaluation and improvement exercises;
 - (ii) the effective management of education provision is achieved by having robust organisational structures and processes in place to ensure compliance with corporate governance codes and fulfilment of roles and responsibilities, but also by having QA structures to drive QA planning, development, allocation of resources, as identified earlier;
 - (iii) the Institute's QA processes are shaped by external and contextual forces, and QA managers need to be tuned to key 'drivers' such as demands of students, employers, accreditation requirements, statutory obligations, European and national standards & guidelines;
 - (iv) QA processes include the production and implementation of policies, procedures and guidelines; monitoring mechanisms; internal and external evaluation; and active self-improvement exercises that arise from the control, monitoring and evaluation activities.
5. The following diagram is a version of the QA operation in the IPA with more detailed reference to the individual components that constitute the infrastructure.

Quality Framework (Detailed)



The QA Process accommodates reviews of the effectiveness of IPA policies, procedures and monitoring mechanisms, as provided for under legislation.

6. In summary, specific features of the QA process include:

- A strong and continuous procedure for curriculum review and enhancement
- Systematic review, revision and production of learning materials to comply with our extensive provision of distance education material to students
- Mechanisms for annual external feedback on assessment via external examiner reports
- Systematic student participation and feedback
- Student representation at all levels including the Board of the IPA (and relevant sub-committees), the Education Committee and the NUI-IPA Steering Committee.

The accreditation relationship with our Designated Awarding Body imposes a robust and independent QA approval process. Furthermore, the joint representation by NUI and IPA on strategic management and academic programme boards provides oversight in terms of IPA direction and maintenance of academic standards.

Quality Assurance Processes

1. QA Policies & Procedures

The QA process involves the development of policies and procedures for critical areas such as QA governance and management, student admissions, course design, programme management and delivery, assessment, student feedback and participation, student support, complaints, access, transfer and progression, and so on.

The current Policies and Procedures are:

- *Access, Transfer & Progression Policy*
- *Admissions Policy & Criteria*
- *Assessment Regulations and Procedures*
- *Complaints (Non-Assessment Related) Policy & Procedures*
- *Disciplinary (Non-Assessment) Policy & Procedures*
- *Exam Administration Policy & Procedures*
- *Governance, Oversight & Quality Framework*
- *Library Policy, Procedures and Charter*
- *Marks & Standards*
- *Policy & Procedures for Design and Approval of New Programmes & Changes to Existing Modules and Programmes*
- *Module/Programme Review Policy & Procedures*
- *Policy for Protection of Enrolled Learners*
- *Procedures for Appeal of Examination Results*
- *Procedures for Creating and Revising Course Manuals*
- *Public information Policy*
- *Recognition of Prior Learning*
- *Student Feedback & Participation Policy*
- *Teaching & Learning Policy*

2. QA Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Monitoring review and evaluation encompasses:

- i. management and supervision of staff fulfilling their academic and support roles;
- ii. obtaining continuous feedback from students and staff during the delivery of a programme;
- iii. regular and minuted progress reports to oversight committees such as the Education Committee and IPA-NUI Steering Committee.
- iv. regular evaluation of key activities encompassing annual and periodic survey of students about academic and support services; annual module reviews; periodic course reviews; extern examiner review; analysis of examination statistics, progression rates, student feedback used by the IPA for accountability and enhancement purposes.
- v. effectiveness of IPA policies, procedures and monitoring mechanisms, as provided for under legislation. The new regime of QA effectiveness reviews, as provided for in the 2012 QQA Act, will be conducted at the Education Division level.
- vi. accreditation relationship with our Designated Awarding Body imposes a strong and independent QA approval process. Joint representation by NUI and IPA on strategic

management and academic programme boards provides oversight in terms of IPA direction and maintenance of academic standards.

3. Self-Improvement Activity

The QA process involves self-improvement activity encompassing continuous corrective action from staff supervision and staff-student feedback during programme delivery; module and programme enhancements from extern reports, annual module reviews, programme reviews, student surveys; self-improvement plans from programmatic and School evaluations.

4. Publication of Findings

QA policies, procedures, guidelines and regulations are publicly available on the IPA website in pdf format and communicated to students in programme documentation.

Review & Updating of Policies

The IPA has a formal system in place for reviewing and updating its QA policies and procedures. The formal system does not preclude any continuous corrective action required during the course of the academic year on foot of informal student, faculty, stakeholder feedback and/or changes in legislation. Under the formal system, every policy and procedure has a 'commencement date', 'date of next review' and 'revision history' to provide clarity around version control, the status of a document and to facilitate monitoring. Each policy and procedure also has a Policy Owner who is ultimately responsible, in conjunction with IPA staff, for ensuring that a review is carried out by the 'date of next review'. Where changes occur during the academic year, these are brought to the attention of students and all relevant stakeholders.

The policies, procedures, guidelines, and regulations that make up the IPA's QA process are reviewed on a continuous basis as required and also on a systematic basis every 5 years. This ensures a fit-for-purpose and contextually relevant QA system.

Process of Reviewing & Updating Policies & Procedures

During a systematic review, as specified in the relevant cover sheet, the owner of the document will:

- i. seek feedback from participants involved in the processes under review about the effectiveness of the QA policies and procedures and their usefulness
- ii. consult with the Quality Team to identify if the document is fulfilling its purpose, and ascertain whether any relevant changes are required.

There are 5 criteria under which a systematic review of policies and procedures occurs. They are as follows:

1) Relevance

- Relevance to the IPA based on its size, the profile of its student population, the suite of academic programmes offered etc.
- Relevance based on National and Designated Awarding Body guidelines as well as international best practice.

- 2) Practice
 - This relates to actual experience the IPA has had since a policy has been last reviewed.
- 3) User friendliness
 - This will be based on feedback from internal and external stakeholders from both formal (surveys) and informal sources.
- 4) Implementation
 - This relates to the degree to which a document has been implemented and any problems in the implementation of a document.
- 5) Effectiveness
 - This relates to the degree to which a policy does what it intends to do based on the purpose and scope as laid out on the cover sheet of each document.

Based on the above, the Policy owner will then implement the changes in conjunction with IPA Faculty.