

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

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1: Introduction and Context

Dublin ISC has an exclusive partnership with UCD dating from August 2016. Prior to that, the Dublin-ISC had a relationship with Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and UCD. The Dublin ISC is now located on the UCD campus in Belfield, South Dublin. The academic standards of the centre are evaluated and maintained through periodic Provider centre reviews. The statutory provisions in Ireland governing institutions such as the Dublin ISC are outlined in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012; however, the implementation of the Act's provisions relating to the QQI reviews of the effectiveness of quality assurance in further and higher education and training providers in Ireland has been impeded by a number of issues. However, Dublin ISC will submit to the QQI requirements for award of the International Education Mark once the scheme is finally enacted. The Provider's strategies, principles, processes and procedures are key to the centre's development, specifically here to drive academic standards and further enhancement of the student experience.

Programmes offered by the centre are as follows: International Foundation Year (IFY) Programmes in a) Engineering and Science and b) Business, Economic and Social Studies that prepare students for study as undergraduates in their chosen progression routes at the University. Dublin ISC also offers a Language for Study (LFS) programme for students who need more development in their English language skills and proficiency prior to entering the full IFY.

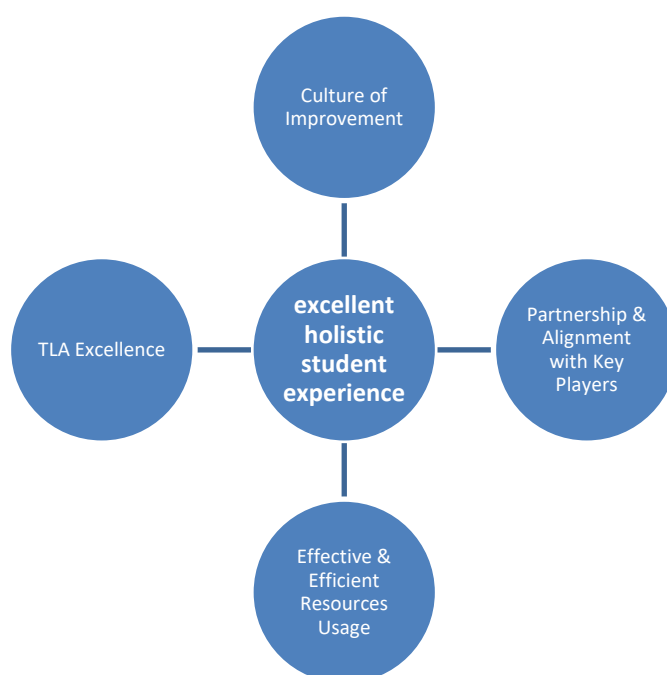
This strategy first sets out underlying core principles, followed by the objectives and outcomes of the strategy. The actions that must be taken to achieve these objectives and outcomes will then be detailed, with the document finally elaborating on the Study Group themes which are considered throughout, mapping these against the objectives set for centre action. This will be followed by a short description of the initial arrangements for strategy dissemination, collaboration and delivery.

2: Core Principles

The focus of the centre is on an **excellent holistic student experience** and that our students come first. This holistic student first focus is the fundamental principle underpinning all the activities of the centre. All activities in the academic, welfare, socio-cultural and extra-curricular domains should be aligned to support the achievement of student success.

This will be achieved through the following:

- a) The **pursuit of excellence in learner outcome-based teaching**, learning and assessment supported by research, reflection, innovation and best practice, and an aligned framework of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities informed by performance management process feedback.
- b) Creating and developing a **culture of improvement** in all areas of centre operations informed by evidence, innovative ideas, and feedback from stakeholders.
- c) **Working, communicating and cooperating** with partner (UCD), provider (SGG), key agencies (such as QQI, sponsorship bodies) and the wider community (e.g. employers and companies) in the achievement of goals, alignment with standards and requirements, and in the improvement of the centre in all its operations.
- d) Ensuring the **best use of resources**, in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, in order to achieve centre goals and objectives.



3: Key Aims

- Put students first
- Raise student achievement and readiness for academic life
- Support and develop the pursuit of TLA excellence
- Plan around deliverable objectives in all domains of academic and operational activities

This will support the centre to ensure:

- Development of curriculum and its delivery
- A dynamic learning environment

The focus of the centre is on the student experience in its entirety. It is therefore intended that all activities of the centre are aligned to ensure that students and staff are aware of their overall level of development. This holistic approach to the learning experience seeks to focus on the university environment as a resource for learning from anything from attending lectures to interacting with colleagues from different nationalities in their accommodation block.

We have identified 3 main areas of personal development that form the heart of harnessing the student experience centred around preparation for university life.

Participation

We aim that our students understand what it means to participate within a university environment both academically and socially.

Self-Directed Learning

We aim that our students are able to organise their time and use resources to achieve the learning outcomes of their programme.

Academic Skills

We aim that students are able to understand different levels of knowledge and develop their academic skills during the programme.

4: Strategy Objectives and Outcomes

OBJECTIVE: To....	OUTCOME: Students...
1. deliver quality discipline-related learning experiences and opportunities	understand their discipline and can question its principles, practices, and applications.
2. develop and follow creative and appropriate curricula	think independently, analytically, using methods of synthesis and creativity as described by relevant benchmarks
3. cultivate employability and lifelong learning competencies	engage imaginatively with the application of key, employability, and subject related skills.
4. develop cultural awareness and cross-cultural and intercultural intelligence	are cross-culturally aware and competent
5. offer quality effective curricula	achieve progression and acquire academic and learning skills to equip them for future study, work, and life
6. offer explicit and integrated learning opportunities entailing use of ICT	make effective use of familiar and emerging information and communication technologies
7. achieve excellence in QA processes and inspections	can be confident in a centre benchmarked against appropriate measures and standards of quality and achievement

5: Operational Delivery

OBJECTIVE: To....	HOW?
<p>1. deliver quality discipline related learning experiences and opportunities</p>	<p>Enhanced quality teaching through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Recruitment of quality qualified teachers b) Staff Performance Management Review Process encompassing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching & learning focussed goal setting • Peer and Teacher Observations • Continual Professional Development relevant to achievement of goals • Student Feedback on Teaching & Learning c) Use of ICT to enhance Teaching & Learning and through the VLE (Study Smart); Turnitin; and various educational applications d) Adhering to the Dublin ISC principles of assessment for learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Efficient and high quality.</i> It is essential that the assessment formats can be effectively resourced and also provide for a high level of quality. • <i>Strategic balance of workload.</i> Assessment must be considered against the weight of other assessment undertaken and the overall balance. • <i>Explicitly linked to learning outcomes.</i> It is the role of the module Leader to ensure that this is achieved. • <i>The purpose for assessment</i> is to monitor learning, assess competence, develop skills, provide a context for learning and provide feedback to the student. • <i>Diversity of assessment.</i> Students are given a variety of assessment formats.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Feedback.</i> Formative and summative feedback is provided within the assessment process. • <i>Incrementally appropriately demanding.</i> • <i>Reliable, consistent standards of achievement and fairness.</i> Achieved through production of marking schemes providing for transparency. • All assessment formats are tested against the importance of students <i>avoiding plagiarism.</i> • <i>Notification</i> of assessment requirements to all students. • <i>Integrating and aligning</i> with partner HEI assessment standards, modes and regulations.
2. develop and follow creative and appropriate curricula	<p>On-going improvement and development of curricula through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous module review process • Feedback and input from external examiners, link tutors, ISC teachers, and students
3. cultivate employability and lifelong learning competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing Career Ahead • Visits to and inputs from external organisations and companies (potential employers)
4. develop cultural awareness and cross-cultural and intercultural intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse and cross-national/cultural class groups • Cross-cultural group work and project work • Various centre social and cultural activities and events throughout the academic year

5. offer quality effective curricula	<p>Assessing the impact of curricula through various feedback mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student feedback • Feedback from UCD destination faculties and schools • Progression data • Feedback from external examiners and link tutors • Various module review processes
6. offer explicit and integrated learning opportunities entailing use of ICT	<p>Championing & requiring the use of ICT resources especially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLE for module related materials, activities and assignments • Various recommended applications and learning tools available on the Internet
7. achieve excellence in QA processes and inspections	<p>Engage in various QA initiatives and processes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal review • Network review • Partner endorsement • QQI validations

6: Strategy Delivery and Review

Delivery and review of the LTA strategy is discussed at the Curriculum & Progression Committee meetings.

The LTA strategy is also shared with the UCD Oversight Board and any significant proposed changes are reported to that Board.

Students are given the chance to respond to and to input into the strategy through the Staff-Student Liaison Committee which reports into Academic Board.

Academic staff given the chance to respond to and to input into the strategy through the Curriculum & Progression Committee which reports into Academic Board.

The implementation of the LTA strategy will be facilitated by staff training workshops.