



Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

Peer Review Group

Report for Academic Areas

2022-2023

Of

DCU Institute of Education

Date: 18th-21st of April 2023

Contents

1	Introduction and Context	1
2	Approach to Self-Assessment	6
2.1	Quality Review Committee	6
2.2	The Self-Assessment Report	7
3	Approach Taken By Peer Review Group	7
3.1	Peer Review Group Members	7
3.2	Overview of Approach Taken by Peer Review Group	7
5	Findings of the Peer Review Group	9
5.1	Strategic Planning and Effective Management of Resources	9
5.2	Teaching and Learning	12
5.3	Research and Scholarship	15
5.4	University Service and Engagement Relationship with the rest of the University	17
5.5	Communications and Provision of Information	18
5.6	External Perspectives	20
6	SWOC Analysis and Plans for Improvement	25
6.1	SWOC Analysis for Institute of Education	25
6.2	Plans for Improvement Identified by the Institute of Education	26
7	Summary of Commendations and Recommendations	29
	Appendices	33

1 Introduction and Context

The broad approach to quality assurance and enhancement at DCU aims to promote and develop a culture of quality throughout all aspects of the University. The framework derives from the spirit of Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement enshrined in the Universities Act (1997), which is the legislative basis for quality throughout the Irish University sector, and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

The DCU processes for quality reviews at DCU are further aligned to the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the published guidelines of Qualifications and Quality Ireland (QQI).

This Report presents the findings of a quality review of the Institute of Education, following a visit by the Peer Review Group undertaken on 18th- 21st of April 2023.

1.1 Overview of the Institute of Education

The Institute of Education (IoE) is one of the largest of the five faculties of the University. The Faculty comprises six schools, two Denominational Centres and the Faculty Office. The schools are:

- Arts Education and Movement,
- Human Development,
- Inclusive and Special Education,
- Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education,
- Policy and Practice
- STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies.

The schools are the site of teaching, research and engagement activities. Schools are generally cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary, with staff contributing collaboratively to research, policy and programmes in the key areas of Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, Post-Primary Education, and Further Education and Training.

The Denominational Centres were legally established at incorporation in order to ensure that the distinctive identity and values of teacher education in both the Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland/Reformed Christian traditions were maintained. Two Centres for Denominational Education are located within the Institute:

- the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education,
- the Church of Ireland Centre.

The Faculty Office has 32 staff organised across three functional teams with a central informal management group. This group is directly led by the Faculty Manager and comprises the managers in each functional area, the Senior Technical Officer, the SIS Support Officer and the Development Officer. Each of the three functional teams works closely with academic stakeholders to deliver core operations.

- The Academic Affairs team is primarily responsible for programme development and management, end-to-end programme administration, timetabling, secretariat provision for Teaching and Learning and Research committees, and graduate research administration.
- The Placements and Engagements Team is responsible for placement administration, the IoE Helpdesk, CPD programme administration, internationalisation support and secretariat provision for the Internationalisation and PDP committees.
- The Professional Services team delivers operational support such as HR, facilities management, payroll, contract requisitioning, account management and Gaeltacht Experience organisation, as well as support to Heads of Schools, Denominational Centres and the Executive Dean.
- Student Recruitment and Marketing is delivered across the Professional Services and Placements and Engagements teams.

Governance and leadership of the activities of the Faculty are overseen by the Faculty Management Board (FMB), which is the chief decision-making body of the Faculty. The Executive Dean is the Chief Executive Officer for the Faculty and is an *ex officio* member of the University Executive and the Senior Management Group. The Executive Dean is supported by the FMB. Membership of FMB comprises: Executive Dean, Deputy Dean, Faculty Manager, Heads of Schools, Directors of Denominational Centres and Associate Deans.

All Heads of Unit within the Faculty report to the Executive Dean. Faculty committees report to the Faculty Management Board through their chair (Associate Deans or the Deputy Dean) and have representatives from each school (convenors and coordinators). The IoE Faculty sub-committees are: Cross-School Programmes Resourcing Group (CSPRG), Teaching and Learning Committee (FTLC), Research Committee (FRC), Faculty Internationalisation Committee (FIC), Professional Developments and Partnerships Committee (FPDP), and Faculty Marketing, Alumni and Communications Committee (FMAC). The Faculty Research Ethics Panel (FREP) and Faculty Research Admissions Panel (FRAP) report into FRC.

The roles of Executive Dean, Associate Dean for Teaching & Learning, Associate Dean for Research, Faculty Management Board, Faculty Manager and Heads of Schools are mirrored across the other four faculties of the University. Other roles and committees reflect the specific needs of the IoE.

1.1.1 Location

The IoE Faculty is based on St Patrick's campus with the exception of the Church of Ireland Centre and the DCU Anti-Bullying Centre, which are located on All Hallows campus. The faculty space comprises:

- Office space in F-block, C-block and Merville on St Patrick's campus
- Specialist teaching spaces such science labs, the Minecraft and Lego Studio
- The Church of Ireland Centre and ABC offices on All Hallows campus
- The Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education on St Patrick's campus

1.1.2 Staff (FTE values)

In addition to the 32 staff of the Faculty Office mentioned above, the Institute has 158.2 academic staff, 23.3 research staff and 5.5 research support staff. Details are given in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 Current Staff FTE staffing – Core Funded

	Academic		Administrative		Technical & Related		Total
	Perm	Temp	Perm	Temp	Perm	Temp	
Faculty	2		24.1	4	1		31.1
School of Arts Education and Movement	16	3					19
School of Inclusive and Special Education	16	3					19
School of Human Development	27	5					32
School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education	21	3					24
School of Policy and Practice	21	5					26
School of Stem Education, Innovation and Global Studies	29	3.5			1		33.5
Church of Ireland Centre	2.7		0.5				3.2
Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education	1		0.5				1.5
Total	135.7	22.5	25.1	4	2	0	189.3

Table 2 Research-funded Posts (FTE)

School/Centre	Post Docs/ Research Assistants/ Research Fellows	Research Administrators/ Project Managers/ Technical Support	Total
Centre for Evaluation, Quality & Inspection (EQI)	1.1		1.1
DCU Anti-Bullying Research Centre	9.7	4.1	13.8
Mater Dei Centre For Catholic Education	1		1
School of Inclusive and Special Education	2	0.4	2.4
School of Human Development	1.1		1.1
School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education	3.5		3.5
School of Policy and Practice	0.3		0.3
School of STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies	4.6	1	5.6
Total	23.3	5.5	28.8

The Faculty also encompasses five university-designated research centres, seven faculty research centres and one affiliated centre, listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Faculty research centres

University Designated Research Centres
DCU Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre (ABC)
Centre for Advancement of STEM Teaching and Learning (CASTeL)
Centre for Evaluation, Quality & Inspection (EQI)
Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education (CHRCE)
SEALBHÚ: Lárionad Taighde DCU um Fhoglaim agus Teagasc na Gaeilge
Faculty Research Centres
Centre for Assessment Research, Policy and Practice in Education (CARPE)
Early Childhood Research Centre
Educational Disadvantage Centre
Further Education and Training Research Centre (FETRC)
International Centre for Innovation and Workplace Learning (ICIWL)
RCE Dublin
Irish Centre for Religious Education
Affiliated Centres
Centre for Talented Youth Ireland

1.1.3 Student Numbers & Taught Programmes

The Institute has 4,061 students, comprising 2727 undergraduate students, 1157 taught postgraduate students and 177 postgraduate doctoral students, up 18% on the equivalent 2017 figures of 2352, 947 and 140 respectively, and ahead of the University growth model projections to 2025.

The IoE offers a suite of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across the full continuum from Early Childhood, Primary, Post-Primary to Further Education (Tables 4, 5). The BEd in Gaeilge with French or German or Spanish d Gaeilge (BEDLAN) and the BEd in Technology, Engineering & Graphics (BEdeTEG) are new programmes developed in response to teacher supply issues. The full set of new programmes developed since Incorporation is in Table 6.

Professional Placements are a significant element across a number of these programmes where students undertake practice in early childhood, school or further education settings as a core part of their studies.

All initial teacher education programmes are subject to accreditation by the Teaching Council. The MSc in Guidance and Counselling is accredited by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC).

IoE offers MSc by Research, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Education (EdD) programmes.

The faculty is involved in co-delivery of some programmes with the Faculty of Science and Health (PEB/PEM/SE) and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (BEDLAN and BReEd) and delivers the subject Human Development on the HSS BAJH programme. The Institute will deliver the Education Policy Pathway on the HSS programme, MSc in Public Policy, and has worked with the Faculty of Engineering and Computing to deliver modules on the BEdeTEG which is chaired by the Institute and delivered with TUS, Athlone.

Table 4. Undergraduate Programmes

Programme	IoE School holding Chairship	
Early Childhood Education		
Bachelor of Early Childhood Education	LLECE	
Primary Education		
Bachelor of Education	Policy and Practice	Programme includes three restricted entry routes. All schools engaged in delivery.
Post-Primary Education		
BEd in Gaeilge with French or German or Spanish	Deputy Chair, LLECE	Jointly delivered with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) and chaired by HSS
Bachelor of Religious Education	Policy & Practice	Delivered with HSS.
BEd in Tech., Eng. & Graphics	SEIGS	Delivered in collaboration with TUS, Athlone.
BSc in Science Education	Policy and Practice	Delivered with the Faculty of Science and Health (FSH).
BSc in PE with Mathematics		Delivered with and chaired by FSH.
BSc in PE with Biology		This programme is delivered with and chaired by FSH.
Education and Training		
BSc in Education & Training	Policy and Practice	
Humanities		
Bachelor of Arts (Joint Honours)	Subject Lead: Human Development	Delivered by the IoE onto the HSS BAJH programme.

Table 5: Taught Postgraduate Programmes

Programme	School holding Chairship
Certificates and Diplomas	
Certificate in Religious Studies	Human Development
Professional Diploma in Education	Human Development
Graduate Diploma in Guidance Counselling	Human Development
Graduate Diploma in Social, Personal and Health Education/Relationships and Sexuality Education	Human Development
Graduate Certificate in the Education of Pupils on the Autism Spectrum	Inclusive and Special Education
Graduate Diploma in Inclusive Education, Learning Support and Special Education	Inclusive and Special Education
Professional Diploma in Inclusive and Special Education	Inclusive and Special Education
Full-Time Masters	
Professional Master of Education (Primary)	SEIGS
Professional Master of Education (Post-Primary)	Human Development
MA in Chaplaincy Studies and Pastoral Work	Human Development
Part-Time Masters	
MA in Chaplaincy Studies and Pastoral Work	Human Development
MSc in Guidance Counselling	Human Development
Masters in Special Educational Needs	Inclusive and Special Education
Masters of Education in Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)	Inclusive and Special Education
Masters of Education in Autism	Inclusive and Special Education
Master of Education in Literacy Professional Practice	LLECE
Master of Education in Early Childhood Education	LLECE
Master of Education	Policy & Practice
MSc in Education and Training Management (eLearning)	SEIGS
MSc in Education and Training Management (Leadership)	SEIGS

Table 6: New Programmes since Incorporation

Year	Code	Programme
2017	MEdLPP	MEd in Literacy Professional Practice
2018	MEdA	Master of Education in Autism
2018	BEdLAN	Bachelor of Education in Gaeilge with French/German/Spanish
2020	MEECE	Master of Education in Early Childhood Education
2021	BEdTEG	Bachelor of Education in Technology, Engineering & Graphics (Joint Programme with TUS)
2022	DISE	Professional Diploma in Inclusive and Special Education
2023	GDSPHE	Graduate Diploma in Social, Personal & Health Education/ Relationships & Sexuality Ed.

2 Approach to Self-Assessment

2.1 Quality Review Committee

The self-assessment phase of the Quality Review was led by an internal quality review steering group with membership as follows:

Prof. Anne Looney, Chair and lead on Strategy
Prof. Charlotte Holland, Deputy Dean and lead on Engagements/Internationalisation
Maeve Fitzpatrick, Faculty Manager and lead on Structures/Management and Resourcing
Dr Anna Logan, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning and TL lead
Dr Maura Coulter, Associate Dean for Research and lead on Research
Dr Shivaun O'Brien, Associate Dean for Professional Development and Partnerships and lead on Engagements/Partnerships
Dr Eleanor Healion, Assistant Faculty Manager, Academic Affairs, and project manager to the Teaching and Learning and Research sub-groups
Caitríona Ní Mhurchú, Assistant Faculty Manager, Placements and Engagements, and project manager to that sub-group
Colum Cronin, Development Officer and Project Support
Rev Professor Anne Lodge, Director of the Church of Ireland Centre
Dr Cora O'Farrell, Director of the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education
Dr Sandra Cullen, Head of the School of Human Development
Dr Geraldine French, Head of the School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education
Dr Una McCabe, Head of the School of Arts Education and Movement
Dr Margaret Leahy, Head of the School of STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies
Dr Aoife Brennan, Head of the School of Inclusive and Special Education
Dr Martin Brown Head of the School of Policy and Practice

The Steering Group established a set of sub-groups to manage the Quality self-assessment process. These were: teaching and learning; research; and internationalisation and professional development partnerships. Each sub-group had delegated responsibility for assessing the area under their remit and for producing a section of the self-assessment report. The steering group oversaw the process and was responsible for ensuring that the approach of each constituent sub-group met the agreed self-assessment principles, which were that the process should:

- focus on mission-critical and strategic areas
- be comprehensive
- identify effective recommendations, and
- facilitate staff and student engagement

Sub-groups worked with their constituent committees, extending membership as necessary, to ensure all relevant stakeholders had a voice. The IoE staff used a range of self-assessment approaches including student and staff surveys, facilitated feedback sessions and SWOCs. The Faculty Board, the Faculty Office and each School participated in facilitated SWOC sessions. The Faculty held an all staff meeting on Strategy and Quality in January to prepare for School SWOCs. A second all-staff meeting was held in March prior to report finalisation to present findings and main recommendations.

2.2 The Self-Assessment Report

Overall, the PRG found that the SAR and its appendices were very well prepared and professionally presented. Overall, the SAR was found to be comprehensive and thorough and an honest reflection of the reality of IoE as experienced by the PRG during meetings. There were some nuances to the information presented in the SAR that the PRG identified during the review process and these are discussed in the remainder of this PRG report. Overall, the report provides an excellent overview of the Faculty, its functions and structures, its six schools, its two denominational centres and its thirteen research centres. The multiple SWOC analyses showed evidence of critical self-reflection by faculty and staff in both determining their current position and identifying some of the opportunities for the IoE as it progresses towards its future vision. Overall, the SAR and its appendices were sufficiently detailed to allow the PRG to gain in-depth knowledge of the Faculty and its current position.

It is acknowledged that as the new DCU Strategy is still in development at this time, IoE is partly in a holding phase in terms of progressing development of its constituent strategies i.e. teaching and learning, research and scholarship, internationalisation and professional developments and partnerships. Nonetheless, the PRG considered that the SAR and the associated staff meetings could have engaged to a greater extent with exploring the key principles of the constituent IoE strategies and its future vision. In general the PRG felt that the SAR needed to better evidence statements and conclusions presented in the report, including but not confined to examples, feedback, qualitative and quantitative data, case studies, etc. Most especially, the SAR provided limited evidence from external stakeholders such as the inspectorate, schools, alumni, research centre stakeholders, employers and others listed in Section 5.6 below.

The SAR findings were reviewed by the PRG on a section-by-section basis. These findings were, in the main, endorsed and confirmed, but with nuances, which were identified during the course of the site visit, and which are presented in this report.

3 Approach Taken By Peer Review Group

3.1 Peer Review Group Members

Membership of the Peer Review Group for the Quality Review was:

- Prof. Gerry MacRuairc, Director of Western Institute for Education Studies, School of Education, University of Galway, (Chair)
- Prof. Tony Gallagher, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Queen's University of Belfast
- Prof. Elaine Munthe, Director of Knowledge Exchange for Education, University of Stavanger, Norway
- Mr Paddy Lavelle, General Secretary, ETB Ireland
- Mr Matt Riemland, PhD Candidate, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies, DCU
- Prof. Claire Gubbins, Professor of Organisational Behaviour & HRM, DCU Business School
- Dr Noel Murphy, Head of the School of Electronic Engineering, DCU

3.2 Overview of Approach Taken by Peer Review Group

The PRG were supplied with the report electronically in advance of the site visit and submitted initial impressions of the report document. The PRG met with the Director of Quality Promotion on the 18th of April. This meeting outlined the format of the visit, along with an overview of the aims and objectives of the review process. After this meeting the PRG met privately, and Professor Gerry MacRuairc was identified to chair the PRG. Following a general discussion of the SAR, the Initial Impressions document was discussed, with several themes emerging as areas for consideration over the course of the Quality

Review. (See Appendix 1 for details of the main meetings, parallel sessions and an overview of attendees.) It was agreed that one member of the PRG would lead out questions on each of the themes, and then other PRG members would pose follow-up questions or make contributions as necessary. Mr Paddy Lavelle took the lead on Strategic Planning and Management of Resources; Professor Elaine Munthe took the lead on Teaching and Learning; Professor Tony Gallagher took the lead on Research and Scholarship; Dr Noel Murphy took the lead on University Service and Engagement; Mr Matt Riemland took the lead on Communication and Provision of Information; Professor Claire Gubbins took the lead on External Perspectives. It was agreed that for the parallel sessions, the PRG would split as follows: Professor Gerry MacRuairc, Professor Elaine Munthe and Dr Noel Murphy; and, Professor Claire Gubbins, Mr Paddy Lavelle and Mr Matt Riemland. Professor Tony Gallagher first attended on the afternoon of Wednesday April 19th and alternated into both parallel session groups. A professional note taker (Mark Collins) was engaged by the QPO to take notes during the Quality Review. For parallel sessions the note taker attended one session and the panel members in the other session took their own notes.

Reflecting on the work achieved, the PRG considered that the overall review process undertaken by the IoE was thorough and that the PRG had full access to all appropriate stakeholders: Academic staff, some taught students, including Placement Coordinators, Programme Chairs, Heads of Schools, Directors of Denominational Centres, various committee members, Professional Support Staff, research students, some external stakeholders, central services staff, the President, Deputy President and Senior Management Group. Overall, engagement with the PRG was extremely positive, and participants were very open, engaged and gave frank and honest comments and feedback in response to questions posed and discussions emerging. Building on the work that had already underpinned the SAR, engagement with Faculty and QPO staff throughout the review was professional and accommodating; where additional evidence beyond that included in the SAR was required, it was requested of and fulfilled as far as was possible by Faculty via QPO staff.

4 Approach to Quality Assurance and Enhancement

This is the faculty's first Quality Self-Assessment Report and Quality Review following Incorporation in 2016. However, a number of other quality review processes which IoE have engaged in are used here to inform the PRG commentary on the effectiveness of quality assurance systems and processes within IoE.

Due to Incorporation the Faculty has had to implement and experience significant changes. The success of Incorporation in creating and building a new Faculty and the IoE— strategically, structurally, operationally and culturally – from the previously existing and incorporating units, cannot be underestimated and is to be highly **commended**. A review of the process of incorporation led by DCU Human Resources was initiated in 2022 and concluded early in 2023. The SAR reports that the Incorporation review findings identified incorporation as now a contextual matter. While the report on the review has yet to be considered by DCU Governing Authority the conclusions of the panel included that *“Incorporation has gone extremely well. DCU has significantly strengthened its Education and HSS Faculties and now offers a much broader range of subjects to its students. The research profile of the university has also been enhanced with an impressive growth in research outputs in recent years. Systems and processes have been harmonised and students and staff integrated across the three campuses. Enhanced student support services are now available to all students and the range of clubs and societies open to students has been expanded (p.15).* The Incorporation review panel also noted the importance of institutional leadership in delivering a transformation project of the scale and complexity of the incorporation process. The PRG would like to join the Incorporation Review Panel in acknowledging the success of the leadership team in delivering a successful completion of the transformation project.

Additionally, between September 2022 and March 2023 all initial teacher education programmes in the faculty have been engaging with re-accreditation under the Teaching Council Céim Standards (2020). The outcome of this process is pending. Furthermore, the IoE successfully had two initial teacher education programmes accredited by the Teaching Council including one which was developed with the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS): the first initial teacher education programme developed between an established University and a new Technological University. IoE programmes in guidance and counselling are subject to review by the Department of Education (DE) and the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC). The IoE guidance programmes were submitted to the DE for review in 2019, and accredited in 2020. Arising from this review, the DE invited the IoE to offer an outreach programme in Sligo, and subsequently, in Kilkenny to respond to shortages of available qualified guidance counsellors in these areas. An IGC review is due shortly. The DCU APR and PPR processes and how they are operationalised in IoE are to be **commended** as quality assurance processes and within IoE specifically the team based approach to the PPR and the feedback loop between the programme chair, team and Head of School and the FTLC including a reflection and approval is particularly strong.

Despite these undoubted achievements, there is still work to be done in moving forward to IoE's future vision (or IoE 2.0). Some of this work is unique to IoE and some is no different to issues that would occur in any DCU faculty. Some of the PRG recommendations therefore focus on issues pertaining to further developing the IoE quality assurance systems and processes. Internal to IoE is the need to improve cross-programme governance and communication protocols. With respect to teaching and learning, recommendations in this regard centre around reducing assessment and developing programmatic assessment, developing a more consistent approach to placements and reducing incidences of encyclopaedic teaching. Within research and scholarship, the PRG identifies the need for a review and revision of indicators of research quality in line with the IoE's focus on education and the new DCU Strategy focus on Impact. External stakeholder perspectives on IoE operations need to be more strongly integrated into IoE processes for the purposes of, but not confined to, informing, validating and/or enhancing the quality of IoE initiatives as viewed by external stakeholders. With respect to internationalisation and professional development, PRG identifies the need for a more strategic and proactive approach to decision-making with regard to high-quality, value-add external and international opportunities for IoE and DCU.

5 Findings of the Peer Review Group

5.1 Strategic Planning and Effective Management of Resources

It was very clear from the material provided to the PRG prior to and during the Review, and from colleagues who participated in meetings during the review, that the progress made over the last six years in realising the vision for a consolidated Institute of Education drawing together the four constituent institutions has been quite exceptional. The PRG felt that it was essential that this achievement be acknowledged as a very successful outcome of the collaborative work that has taken place since the establishment of the IoE. It is also noteworthy that the successful creation of the IoE is the most significant, and arguably the single successful outcome, of the national review of teacher education provision that began in 2012.

The SAR identified the significant progress made by the Institute of Education under the key priorities of its inaugural strategic plan (2017-2022):

- i. to provide a transformative student experience,
- ii. to value and develop their staff community,
- iii. to focus development and engagement, and
- iv. to advance their research reputation and impact.

The SAR provided a summary of achievements under four headings of programme development, research, engagement, and the continued enhancement of the national and international profile of the IoE. The PRG commends the IoE in relation to each of the four areas. While the summary provided in the SAR gives a flavour of the quantity and quality of ongoing efforts to respond to the key priorities, it was evident in the meetings with the PRG, just how much more had been achieved. Hearing the stories of these substantial achievements over the five years was a very rewarding part of the review process for the PRG and hopefully for the participants in the different sessions. It is important that the opportunity to reflect provided by the quality review process should allow for the explicit acknowledgement of achievements.

The structures and systems that were put in place during the early stages of the formation of the IoE have played a significant role in drawing together and subsequently consolidating the different parts of the Institute. The strategic plan that was developed in 2017 has also contributed to the articulation of what has emerged as a shared sense of identity for the IoE. The Institute is now ready to embark on the next phase of its development and the appetite to move to this phase was clearly identifiable in PRG meetings with faculty and staff. To this end, the next strategy for the IoE will play a vital role in framing its future trajectory. It is essential that support is provided for this planning phase to build on the tremendous progress that has been noted above. There is great anticipation in the IoE for the launch of the DCU strategic plan, which will help frame the IoE's next strategy and ensure it aligns with the University strategy. In working on the development of its strategy, the IoE will need to reflect on the concerns of staff and stakeholders. The PRG have been assured that the light-touch approach to strategy development described in the SAR for the five years from 2017 will be replaced by a more rigorous approach in this next phase. The structures that were put in place in 2017 also played a significant role in ensuring that the original strategy was implemented and that resources were identified and deployed appropriately.

Four key areas for specific attention during the next phase of strategic development were identified by the PRG. Specific recommendations under each of these areas are dealt with in different sections of the report as outlined below. Two components of these recommendations are essential. First, changing the balance and emphasis of current practice is an essential first step in the process, and requires immediate action as a key pathway to facilitate the enactment of the next strategic plan. Without a clear and SMART set of actions to address this fundamental paradigm shift in focus, many of the achievements of other elements of the new strategic plan will not be possible. Second, resolving IoE connectivity is essential for the effective operation of IoE and implementation of many recommendations identified in this report. The four areas identified by the PRG are:

- Changing balance and emphasis of current focus (addressed to varying degrees in Section 5)
- Organisational /Governance structures (addressed below)
- Research culture enhancement (addressed in Sections 5.3 , 5.5 and 5.6)
- Strategic external engagement (addressed in Sections 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6)

5.1.1 Strategic review of Organisational /Governance structures

The matrix structure that was developed at the outset of IoE consisted of four main operational areas: the office of the Head of School, the Programme Chair structure, the Placement component across all programmes and the Research Centre structure. Although a number of committees are in place to facilitate connections between these different areas, the PRG finds that the processes for decision-making are not sufficiently inter-connected, with the result that decisions made by one group can have significant consequences for other areas of activity, without consultation or consideration of the impact of these decisions across the board. This lack of cohesion is most notable between Heads of Schools

and Programme Chairs involved in the IoE's cross-school programmes. In order to deal with the gaps that are now evident, structural adjustments are required by the IoE. The PRG determined that Heads of Schools should play a much more proactive role in decision-making and advocating for School needs moving forward, as well as their natural role in providing discipline-specific leadership and local line management. In particular, Heads of Schools are responsible for the management of all human and physical resources within their remit as determined by the Faculty. Refining the matrix structure into an efficient and sustainable organisational model will require ongoing, faculty-wide communication regarding what is and what is not working. Structures need to be reviewed so that all staff and students have a clear understanding of decision-making processes and where line management and resource management pathways are. An organisation design project may be required to rationalise the interactions and lines of accountability, and to aid understanding of how the matrix structure operates between schools, programmes and Faculty management. The PRG identifies the need to examine how the current design — built to respond to the incorporation challenge — now needs to be redrawn to respond to the future.

The PRG recommends that the current matrix structure - the four operational areas – need to be reviewed and refined in order to ensure that resource management pathways and decision-making processes function efficiently and transparently for all staff and students. Currently the systems that are in place are not working. There is a clear need to establish and maintain cohesion and organisational clarity among the various groups comprising the IoE matrix structure. This will require the development of decision-making practices to include clarifying reporting lines in relation to key decisions around workload and related staff resourcing, teaching-related matters, research-related matters, placement-related matters and other non-staff-related resourcing queries. This Review requires immediate action in order to facilitate the enactment of the next strategic plan.

5.1.2 Effective Management of Resources

The issue of making provision for additional resources is mentioned in different sections in the SAR. However, with some notable exceptions (the need for a specific school placement lead being an example) the issue of additional resources did not emerge in the discussions with IoE colleagues. It is likely, however, that in the development of the next strategic plan, key resource implications will be identified. Overall, the PRG finds that resources did not emerge as an urgent priority in the review. There are, however, some key recommendations in relation to the management of human resources that will be necessary in order to move to the next stage of development for the IoE. The workloads of current staff are very high and the imbalance towards teaching and placement for many is unsustainable in the context of the stated ambitions of the IoE. Rebalancing the workloads of many staff is an essential prerequisite for the successful implementation of any future strategic plan. There are recommendations in this report that will have implications for the future management of staff across the IoE. One key issue, from a strategic perspective, relates to a review of current teaching and placement hours of many faculty. These need to be assessed against the DCU Strategic priorities of focus, people and impact.

The PRG recommends that the Faculty reviews the balance and emphasis of current work practices as an essential and immediate action in order to facilitate the enactment of the next strategic plan and most if not all of the recommendations in this review report. This may be achieved by

1. reducing the amount of some activity (particularly placement, teaching and assessment);
2. moving away from an expectation that all staff should be contributing across all areas in a broadly similar way
3. exploring the potential of more innovative approaches to each of the areas of: placement, teaching and assessment.

5.2 Teaching and Learning

The PRG acknowledges the complexities of teacher education that are evident in the SAR and evident from PRG meetings with faculty and administrative staff. While educating third-level students and addressing students' learning outcomes and well-being, teacher education programmes must dually educate future teachers who can develop their own future students' learning outcomes and well-being. This dual role requires consideration of more diverse forms of organising and teaching than what is common in many other disciplines. Like all education for the professions, teacher education entails combining theory, research and practice in ways that enhance knowledge, competence, and skills for future work, in this case in the target settings of Early Childhood Education (ECE), primary and second-level schools and Further Education (FE) colleges.

The PRG commends the Faculty for establishing structures to support teaching and learning. The Faculty Teaching & Learning Committee (FTLC) is one such support structure and is central to pedagogical innovation, learning, programme development, and programme evaluation in IoE. Since 2019, the FTLC has organised annual one-day seminars in June to bring together academic and professional staff in "celebration of teaching and learning", as identified in the SAR. Relevant and important topics are addressed on these days, although there is no mention in the SAR of how this work is followed up during the year.

The SAR illustrates how IoE students are satisfied with the diversity of teaching and learning methods that they encounter during their years at IoE. They appreciate the workshops and possibilities to discuss and be interactively engaged. But, "[w]hile the vast majority of students (85%) either agreed or strongly agreed that in small classrooms lecturers use effective strategies to help them learn, only 36% of students agreed that this was the case in large lecture theatres and a further 26% were undecided." The PRG identifies a need for further support in how to create engaging and interactive learning situations in large groups, as the current volume of small classroom teaching is unsustainable and not always necessary.

5.2.1 Teaching Hours and Assessment Volume

The PRG, and to some extent the SAR, identified that the number of hours that faculty teach and for which students attend sessions in some of the programmes (not all) is neither sustainable, necessary or beneficial for faculty or students. Numbers as high as 24 teaching hours per week were mentioned, which leaves very little space for student intellectual, social and personal development. It equally leaves little opportunity for faculty to engage with other aspects of their role. There are also cases where the same lesson is repeated five or more times by teaching faculty in order to work with smaller groups of students (e.g. 35 students) to model more "school classroom-like" learning experiences. The PRG questions the sustainability and necessity of this resource use.

Additionally, the PRG meetings confirmed the SAR observation that students are over-assessed. Specifically, the SAR identifies that 59% of students agreed that there were too many assessments in their course, and only a third (34%) agreed that assessments were well-spaced out across the semester. The SWOC-analysis of teaching & learning also highlights that there is a "lack of coherent/ programmatic approaches to assessment and feedback, manifested through high volumes of assessment particularly within consolidated modules, poor assessment scheduling, duplication of assessment, and student confusion about the use of assessment material on placement." The PRG validates this assessment from its meetings and observations of evidence obtained.

During PRG meetings with students, it was apparent that the lack of coherent/ programmatic approaches to assessment and feedback resulted in a draining of their mental resources and available time. Furthermore, the number of teaching hours and the quantity of assessment led to students not being able to 'put their best foot forward' — focusing instead on completing the work without putting in the quality of effort of which they feel they are capable. Teaching faculty are also over-burdened with assessments, especially those with large classes. This is exacerbated by the expectation to provide feedback to students from which they can learn. Provision of feedback in these circumstances becomes

of less quality or impossible. Students can receive a single grade with no comments. Both teaching faculty and students are unable to achieve their best potential in this context.

Reasons for high teaching hours, high levels of assessment and large teaching workloads were identified during PRG meetings to include faculty members' own passion and dedication to teacher education. Indeed, it was stated that faculty would often take on new teaching or new programmes due to their own personal interests. Also faculty or programme boards would increase the number of teaching hours to try to model the classrooms their student teachers would experience in the future, again aiming to, and believing that this would, deliver the best quality student learning experience. "*We are our own worst enemy*", was one description of this. A passion for students and for teacher education is commendable, and the PRG acknowledge the outstanding efforts that faculty put into their work. However, this is neither sustainable nor sustaining for teachers, students or the IoE.

A significant problem that arises in situations with academic work overload is the lack of time for scholarly dialogue, collaboration, and transformative reflection. Among others, UNESCO highlights the future roles for teaching as a collaborative endeavour — that teachers are recognized as knowledge producers and key figures in public debate and dialogue on the futures of education^[1]. Initial teacher education is an important part of the continuum of teacher education, and it is important to raise and discuss questions such as: how does our programme enable the development of the "*student voice*" that can grow into a "teacher voice"?; in what ways are we supporting students' inquiry, awareness, and deep knowledge so that these can feed into their future professional work, and how are we doing this?; how do we promote the scholarship of teaching and learning for the students?

The PRG's review identified that teaching on some programmes may be more *encyclopaedic* in nature, meaning that there are very many topics and very many assessments that are packed in to give complete 'coverage'. This leaves little room for other vital aspects of teacher education and very little room for student teachers to develop as self-directed learners — a competency required for their sustainable continuous development as teachers beyond DCU and beyond their programme of study.

The PRG recommends a review and redevelopment of the full suite of programmes across IoE to identify module synergies, opportunities to reduce both the number of modules and multiple (parallel/duplicate) presentation of modules or module content. This includes investigating how students can learn the pedagogy of classroom teaching in other ways besides small group teaching repeated over several curriculum subjects. The IoE needs to innovate teaching delivery formats away from an 'encyclopaedic' model and towards the provision of a sustainable teacher education experience that develops teacher meta-competencies for self-directed and life-long learning.

The PRG recommends that the academic faculty collectively review which assessments are necessary, what kinds of assessments are necessary, how to reduce the number of assessments and how to increase the extent of programmatic assessment. This will facilitate faculty in having more time to give effective and constructive feedback on fewer assessments and allow students to engage in deeper and more self-reliant learning and development over time.

5.2.2 Professional Placement

The importance of Professional Placements on IoE programmes is identified in the SAR, so too are a number of significant issues associated with the operationalisation of placement at the scale required. The PRG acknowledges the vital work and collaborative effort that goes into operationalising placements within IoE. All faculty and administrative staff reflected serious ambitions, professional interest, and deep concern for professional placement. This dedication is to be commended.

However, as the SWOC points out and PRG meetings confirmed, there are delays "*in the provision of information regarding placement and inconsistencies in placement requirements, regulations and scheduling leading to for example divergent expectations regarding notice of placement dates, time for planning and preparation before placement, and the amount and nature of planning required in similar programmes*". The placement process is enormously complicated, demanding and fragile. Even minor internal or external human factors or changes in circumstances can create major disruption. As currently

organised, there are too often too many “*flashing blue lights*” with respect to placement. This depletes both staff and students and creates unnecessary uncertainties and frustrations.

The issues identified with placement are predominantly centred around the amount of time required to operationalise placement processes, and inconsistencies across different placement practices. Issues identified include, for example: significant hours and days travelling to placement settings; variance in the information provided to schools and students regarding placement; timing of provision of this information; inconsistencies in the processes, information and requirements of various placements across programmes; and variance with regard to preparation for placement or engagement during placement across programmes.

A complete reform and reimagining of how placement is designed, operated and assessed in line with scientific evidence and international best practice is now required, and timely in terms of putting IoE further to the fore as a global leader in teacher education. As the largest provider of teacher education in the country, the IOE should be at the forefront of innovation in this essential domain of practice. While CEIM provides a broad set of standards to guide School Placement, it is important to recognise that there is flexibility built into these standards as to how each HEI ensures that the standards regarding placement are met. This flexibility provides a context where development and innovation of the school placement experience can be achieved.

A reform can include evaluating how schools are recruited and maintained in the placement programme, including for example agreements with placement settings that go beyond a year-to-year or term-to-term basis. It could also entail trialling and evaluating new ways of organising student placements such as in pairs or groups of three in one year. This may serve to reduce the number of schools needed for placement, but also serve to emphasise professional collaboration through peer planning, teaching, observation and feedback. The PRG also recommends that this reform includes re-evaluating how assessments are carried out, when they are carried out, and how many are carried out, in order to very significantly reduce the amount of time that academic faculty spend travelling. The personal, financial and environmental impacts of the vast amounts of full-time and part-time staff travel currently undertaken to support placement assessment are unsustainable.

There is a need as part of the reform to identify the requirements of external stakeholders; identify the commonalities and differences across placement policy, procedures and practices in IoE programmes and the associated schools and identify possible technological solutions that would streamline the organisation, monitoring, assessment and reporting of placement. There is a need to devise and implement a unified approach to placement right across the IoE, including clear, defined, communicated and understood policies, procedures and practices made available to staff, students and placement settings, from initial Student Induction to Programme Completion. This reform will also provide more time on faculty workloads for module innovation, planning, preparing, collaborating, providing feedback to students, researching, or writing scholarly scientific papers.

The PRG recommends that a Director of Placement is put in place who will be given the resources and support to conduct a complete reform and innovation on how placement is designed, operated and assessed.

[1] See: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379381> p.9

5.3 Research and Scholarship

The development of research capacity and reputation has been a priority of the IoE since Incorporation, and significant and commendable progress has been made. The ambition is that all staff are research active and the criteria to achieve this status are clear. Since incorporation the proportion of staff who have met these criteria has increased from 35% to 60%. The University has prioritised journal citation indices as a key indicator of academic impact and the IoE has a rising curve on this criterion. The level of external research income has also been rising at an aggregate level. The PRG finds that the foundations for developing research capacity, culture and reputation are now robust enough in IoE for it to progress to enhancing the strength of the culture and the capacity of faculty to engage in research activity by recognising the connections between areas of core activity within the IoE.

5.3.1 Research Focus & Research Quality Indicators

The aspiration of the IoE is that all staff contribute to research. However, this will remain challenging for two reasons. First, the primary focus of the IoE lies in initial teacher education and as the recruitment of staff required to have a teaching qualification is becoming more of a factor in teacher education with the implementation of CEIM. Second, the indicator of research quality in the IoE is based on journal citations. This essentially represents the products of two not easily reconcilable career pathways.

The PRG meetings with staff identified, more strongly than was evidenced in the SAR, that research in IoE is having an impact on policy and on practice in schools. This is appropriate for educational research where an applied focus is often the *raison d'être*. It is also appropriate to recognize that impact on practice and policy in local or national contexts can be as important (and is almost certainly more likely) as compared with impact in international contexts. If this is to be recognized formally by the IoE and DCU, and included in the criteria for career development, promotions and reward systems, then the criteria for research quality should be expanded to include not just measures of academic impact, but wider impact on practice, society and policy. There is a view in the IoE that DCU has prioritised journal citation indices as a key indicator of academic impact and there is likely a clear strategic imperative behind the adoption of a narrow set of criteria for research quality. However, it may now be appropriate to broaden the criteria to reflect the wider range of research impact evident at least in the work of the IoE. This includes work related to promoting improved practice in schools and classrooms, and work focused on education policy at a national or international level.

It should be noted that the PRG meetings revealed that much about the impact of IoE research on policy appeared to be reactive. Engaged research is characterised not just by actively responding to policy agendas, but also by helping to shape and frame those agendas in the first place. This requires greater engagement with policymakers at all stages of the policy cycle, and a commitment to promoting co-design in research priorities and projects. As the IoE is the national leader in teacher education, it is well positioned to drive and lead these agendas rather than solely reacting.

The SAR and supporting documents illustrate the use of aggregate data on citation indices and research income. This approach does not provide insight into the degree of variance in contribution across faculty, but all the indications are that the pattern is skewed, with a relatively small number of academics making the most significant contribution to research activity. Currently there are strong support systems in place to develop early career researchers. This reflects the primary role of initial teacher education for the IoE and the priority in recruiting qualified teachers to the staff. However, if the research and internationalisation ambitions of the IoE are to be realised, the PRG identifies that attention also needs to be given to high impact researchers in order to continue to support the development of new, and the enhancement of existing, national and international research networks and partnerships.

The PRG recommends that the workload model allow for greater variance in the balance of contribution by staff across the range of activities around teaching, research and placement. For example, a high impact researcher may be able to offset this against a lower teaching and placement load. Commensurate with this would be enhanced expectations for delivery on research outputs and impact.

Also, attention in the workload model would need to be given to those on or just after completing a PhD time to establish a stage-appropriate research profile.

The PRG recommends that the IoE adopt a more expansive definition of research to include applied research, such as that focused on classroom practice or policy, and a commitment to improve practice, or policy-oriented research. This would also require a wider set of criteria for measuring research quality and include measures of impact beyond purely academic impact.

Additionally, at university level, the PRG recommends that the University explores the potential of developing different career pathways, one of which might be primarily focused on education and scholarship while the other is focused on education and research. In this context scholarship would be evidenced by contributions to professional publications and practice on pedagogy, curriculum and teaching materials, including textbooks. This option is only feasible if a full career pathway through promotion is available for the teaching and scholarship route.

5.3.2 Postgraduate Research Students

A strength of the IoE lies in the growth of its postgraduate programmes, in particular doctoral programmes. This includes the Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD) focused on the needs of experienced professionals from education and related fields. The goal for this programme is to support existing and emerging educational leadership in Ireland to an international standard. In addition, options are available to take a Masters by Research and/or a PhD. A range of supportive procedures operate at key moments in the doctoral student lifecycle to ensure progress, and this has undoubtedly contributed to an appropriate completion period for these students. There is a menu of support systems in place for postgraduate research students. While this includes bursaries and travel grants, it also includes a range of activities aimed at promoting engagement between the students, which is particularly important for part-time students.

The expansion of the IoE postgraduate programmes has not been without its challenges. Many academic staff act as supervisors for doctoral students but may not always have specialist knowledge of the research topic or sufficient research methods training: at this point about a third of the staff in the IoE do not have a doctoral level qualification, though procedures are in place to address this. Aligned to the previous PRG recommendation on the workload model, active researcher academics might be expected to take on more postgraduate student supervisions thus ensuring that all first supervisors are research active, ensuring that they have the requisite research methods skills to support their students, and allowing for greater coherence between supervisor expertise and postgraduate research topics. As most of the doctoral students are part-time, it's important that the supportive procedures mentioned above are such as to allow them to fully engage with their peers and to fully avail of the opportunities provided by the IoE and DCU.

The PRG recommends that postgraduate research students be recognised as a part of the research orbit of the IoE so that they have a clear role and expectation to contribute to the research culture of the institute by being more explicitly involved in publications, seminars, etc. In pursuit of this outcome the IoE needs to explicitly address the provision of activities and supports specific to the part-time doctoral cohort of researchers.

5.3.3 Research Centres

There are a large number of Research Centres in the IoE, some of which have University status and some have Faculty status. University-recognised Research Centres are line managed by the centre directors who answer to Exec Deans but are reviewed by URC. It is recognized that Research Centres are not represented on the Faculty Research Committee, even though they appear to be key drivers of high-quality research within the Faculty. This has implications when decisions taken within the Faculty can impact staff workload. Yet there are limited mechanisms to ensure that the interdependence of workload responsibilities are appropriately taken into account when such decisions are being made. The Research Centres should be more formally linked to the key decision-making processes of the IoE.

The University is undertaking a review of Research Centres and it seems likely this will lead to greater clarity on the criteria for holding research centre status, and some rationalisation of the total number of centres. The PRG suggests that this review should help identify the core role of Research Centres in meeting the research ambitions of the IoE. Additionally, rather than having a surplus of Research Centres, including ones which do not meet significant thresholds for research activity, it is appropriate to allow for research interest groups to develop and grow research activities in areas that may provide the basis for centres of excellence in future. They may also have a role in ensuring that all academics in the IoE, regardless of their personal level of research activity, are active consumers of research and promote research-informed teaching in their areas of responsibility.

The PRG recommends that the University-recognised Research Centres be linked more formally into the key decision-making processes of the IoE.

5.4 University Service and Engagement Relationship with the rest of the University

The Institute of Education is one of the five constituent executive faculties of the University. It supports all the normal roles and functions of such a faculty (Executive Dean, Associate Deans, Faculty Board, Faculty Committees, etc.) The Faculty contributes fully to all of the University governance and management functions and structures, such as Governing Authority, University Executive, Senior Management Group and Academic Council, and to all of the relevant cross-cutting formal and informal committees and groups integral to the delivery of the University mandate to its internal and external stakeholders. The Institute's Faculty Office delivers business operations, support and local management of systems and processes to the Faculty staff, but is also strongly linked into all of the central units and functions necessary for the effective delivery of University operations and processes. The Faculty's Research Centres and Groups contribute to the research vision and strategy of the University as a whole.

The Peer Review Panel finds that, just over six years after its founding, the IoE is fully integrated into the operation of the University and is integral to the effective leadership and strategic direction of the University.

In its examination of the relationship with the rest of the University, the PRG notes many areas of excellent and effective operations, and some areas where there are opportunities for improvement.

5.4.1 IoE-specific issues

Not surprisingly after such a short period in existence, with a very significant number of new academic and professional staff recruited recently, and with Incorporation bringing together cohorts from very different backgrounds and work practices, staff in the IoE are still learning about University structures, policies and practices. This is even as these same structures, policies and practices are developing and changing within the University as a whole because of its growth. Without local role models and informal access to 'fonts of knowledge', IoE faculty and staff have reported that this context can lead to inefficiencies in their work. Informal 'collegiate' groupings across Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning and Associate Deans for Research already exist within DCU and provide valuable assistance to the functioning of the University.

The PRG recommends informal cross-faculty and cross-campus pairings of mentors/buddies in similar (targeted) roles to reduce to the greatest extent possible inefficiencies in the system. Examples would be at Head of School level or Research Centre Director level. This should be led by the University Human Resources Department, perhaps as a complement to or extension of the existing mentoring system.

5.4.2 Cross-campus and University growth issues

IoE faculty and staff identified in the SAR that the pivot during the Covid pandemic to Zoom as a forum for university-level and cross-campus meetings removed a significant impediment to faculty and staff participation at university level. It is identified in the SAR that IoE students are satisfied being situated on the more intimate St Patrick's Campus with its better selection of local (non-DCU) facilities and easier

access to transport links, due to its location in Drumcondra ‘village’ and on a main arterial transportation route.

The dedicated team for IoE within Human Resources led by a service delivery manager, along with the physical presence at least one day per week of HR representative(s) on the St Patrick’s Campus is lauded in the SAR and by the PRG, and seems to be covering most IoE needs. PRG meetings with DCU Registry identified that in general there is insufficient footfall on the St Patrick’s Campus to justify a year-round physical presence. DCU Registry acknowledged that temporary on-campus support could be provided during busier registration and student induction periods to manage a peak in student needs. Student Support & Development (SS&D) have an office on the St Patrick’s campus, but noted that with the ‘footfall’ at 5-10 people per week for much of the year, they may have to review that. The SAR identifies a need for increased student support at certain times of the year – e.g. with placement periods. A gap in the guidance available for final year students to prepare them to locate and secure a teaching position was also raised and could be directed to DCU Career Service if there is no capacity to provide it within the IoE.

The PRG meetings supported the observation in the SAR of on-campus support in the ICT/AV area as being a matter of general concern. A reported reduction from four to two staff over the pandemic period was explained by the ISS representative as arising solely from the very difficult technical staff recruitment environment. This includes competition from industry and the private sector on pay and conditions, including significantly better hybrid working arrangements on offer in industry. They indicated that the current level of support on the St Patrick’s Campus is three ISS staff. The PRG acknowledges commendations provided by IoE faculty and staff for the assistance provided by the (small number of) technical staff within the IoE itself.

The SAR reports a perception in IoE that the default assumption is for University business meetings requiring physical presence to be on the Glasnevin campus (an example given was of recent fire-warden training). Meanwhile some staff based on the Glasnevin campus lamented that artistic events seemed to be primarily on the St Patrick’s Campus.

Senior roles in the IoE reported having good contact with and support from central units. However, the PRG meetings with IoE staff supported the observation in the SAR that for contact and support from central units of the University, less senior faculty and staff find challenges with identifying correct points of contact and in-person contact. Inefficiencies in the current ticketing systems were also identified. Representatives of the central units noted the importance of the audit ‘trail’ provided by ticketing systems in the context of the growth of the University with the attendant more complex needs and processes. The proposed development of a new single centralised ticketing system allowing a ‘one-stop-shop’ with central triaging for all issues — irrespective of the central unit involved — was noted. The Core timesheet system project in the Finance Office was identified as having greatly streamlined processes for managing temporary contracts, which is particularly important for the IoE, and thus a significant boon.

The PRG recommends that the University review arrangements with regard to its multi-campus operation to identify opportunities for greater multi-campus integration. For example, ‘hot desk’ arrangements on both campuses, improvements in transport channels between the campuses, and reduce any residual ‘friction’ in car and bike parking arrangements for University staff who need to visit a campus other than the one on which they are primarily based. It also recommends that the new staff induction process would enable all new staff to easily ‘navigate’ all three academic campuses, irrespective of which one they will be primarily based on.

5.5 Communications and Provision of Information

In addition to the challenges outlined in the SAR, IoE staff identified a number of communication issues in meetings with the PRG. These issues may be largely attributable to ambiguities in the IoE’s organisational structure. The PRG finds that, while the potential strengths of the IoE’s matrix structure suit its signature interdisciplinarity and longer-term aspirations, its successful implementation has yet to be realised. As a consequence the structure has resulted in a lack of clarity regarding which roles hold decision-making power, and related communication issues. IoE will need to dedicate more time to identifying how to best operationalise the matrix structure, including exploring successful external

examples of operating matrix structures. Only then can IoE truly realise the benefits this structure can deliver. Ongoing, faculty-wide communication regarding what is and is not working will also be required to ensure its continued success.

Regarding the IoE's placement programmes, PRG meetings with select placement schools praised the IoE's prompt and consistent communication. However, it must be noted that these individuals represented schools with which the IoE already had well-established relationships; the SAR and subsequent PRG meetings revealed significant inconsistencies in relationships between placement schools and the IoE. Undoubtedly, some of these inconsistencies stem from the voluntary and perhaps improvised nature of the school placement programme – an externally imposed limitation which the IoE assured the PRG that it is already planning to raise with the relevant arm of government.

The SAR alluded to the need for better student engagement, and PRG meetings revealed that were students more engaged with programme boards some other issues related to teaching and learning may have been identified sooner e.g volume of assessment, over-teaching, placement issues. In general there was a low awareness of the functions and availability of student representatives - both in staff and student cohorts. Additionally, in the event that a student in a cross-school programme has to report an issue, it should be clear to whom the student is to report the issue, and who has the responsibility as well as the authority to address the issue. Improved student-staff relations should factor strongly into the IoE's strategy moving forward. In general, better student engagement is needed to shift the IoE's overall approach further toward a model of co-design. Recommendations on this matter are detailed in Section 5.6.

The PRG meetings revealed a number of inherent communication difficulties with respect to the IoE's goal of increasing research activity amongst postgraduate/doctoral students, and better integrating them into the IoE and various Research Centres. Given that the majority of postgraduate/doctoral students are part-time and working in education, they are often not present on campus to avail of the informal mentoring that greatly benefits full-time research students. The exorbitant cost of living in and around Dublin was also noted as a reason why students may not be able to afford accommodation near campus or commute on a regular basis. Relatedly, it was also emphasised that the funding available to postgraduate/doctoral students is far too inadequate to enable or incentivise career breaks, thus making it difficult to recruit full-time postgraduate/doctoral researchers. These challenges all hinder the ability of postgraduate/doctoral students to research and publish beyond their degree requirements. Nevertheless, staff identified opportunities to encourage and enhance high-quality research activity from the IoE's postgraduate/doctoral community, such as summer writing and research workshops. The IoE will need to devise proactive, creative communication solutions promoting such opportunities in order to overcome the lack of informal mentoring.

The current communications structures provides little recourse for staff to resolve issues related to workload. Heads of Schools in the IoE report attending monthly meetings with the Executive Dean, though these meetings are considered informal. It was determined that communication breakdowns among staff may also be attributable to excessive workload or time spent travelling for placements, which similarly prevent them from sharing space with colleagues. A need for more dedicated and genuine implementation of the DCU Performance Management and Development Scheme (PMDS) with a stronger focus on career progress was also identified. The PRG noted that junior staff are typically reluctant to communicate issues about excessive workloads or consequences for their workloads when communication and decision-making breaks down across the matrix structure. This tendency should be taken into account in adjustments made to the IoE's development of the matrix structure's operation.

IoE faculty and staff emphasised in both the SAR and in PRG meetings that some communication issues may have arisen due to the rapidly growing size of the IoE – a factor that the PRG acknowledges as a significant challenge. This challenge is another reason why the IoE requires greater organisational structure clarity. While the geographically disparate nature of DCU does exacerbate some communication issues, these may be overcome with the proper systems in place. In particular, it will be crucial for the IoE to develop strategies to ensure stronger connections between central support services and staff at all levels. Although senior staff are generally well-connected to central services, lower-level staff expressed the opposite sentiment in PRG meetings, emphasising that many issues are much better suited to in-person consultations. In line with the previously mentioned seasonal nature of the necessity

of central support services' on-campus presence, IoE needs to liaise with these services to establish a set timetable or communication channel that reliably conveys each service's onsite availability. Recommendations on this matter are detailed in Section 7.

5.6 External Perspectives

5.6.1 Undergraduate Students

It is identified in the SAR that the quality of the student experience is central to the Faculty mission to transform lives and societies, not least because the IoE is, through its own teaching, modelling for students the role of the educator. The SAR and PRG meetings were generally consistent in illuminating undergraduate perspectives on IoE.

The IoE has a process through which students can engage in quality improvement of programmes. This involves the election of student representatives who are intended to liaise between students and the programme board, attend programme board meetings and provide student feedback and input to the programme board. This process can also be a mechanism through which the programme chair/programme board can provide clarity to students on features of their programme, respond to student feedback and state how any issues raised are resolved. However, the SAR and PRG meetings with undergraduate students illustrated significant variation across programmes in the extent to which this process was successful. Challenges are indicated in the SAR in terms of recruiting and electing student representatives and/or actively engaging them in such roles. Equally, the PRG identified examples of where student representatives were successfully recruited for programmes, liaised between students and programme chairs, presented class feedback at programme boards and subsequently got replies from the programme chairs as to how matters raised were resolved. It was suggested in one instance that programme chairs were advised that it was not their role to encourage students to become student representatives. The process of student representative engagement needs to be clarified and enabled via some clearly-defined function such as programme chairs. Reasons cited in the SAR as to why students did not volunteer for student representative roles included a lack of time due to the intensity of some programmes. However, the PRG equally found that student representatives on some part-time programmes were engaged despite needing to balance both study and work.

The Faculty Teaching & Learning Committee (FTLC) and academic teaching staff participate in institutionally organised staff-student forums, conducted twice each semester, as an alternative mechanism to communicate with students. The Annual and Periodic Programme Review processes also incorporate feedback from students and the processes in IoE are thorough in ensuring that the feedback loop is closed. Notable and commendable in the APR and PPR processes are: a good selection of stakeholder evidence in the APR (this is aside from findings about lack of stakeholder perspectives in other IoE processes), including alumni; the PPR process includes meetings between programme chair and ADTL, and a feedback loop from FTLC Committee to the programme chair, Head of School and programme team.

Other mechanisms used to solicit student feedback for the purposes of the Quality Review Process and presented in the SAR were a survey to all IoE students and focus groups with students. The undergraduate survey response rate of 49% amounted to 1,532 responses and 2,519 separate items of qualitative feedback. It provides useful information on the student perspective on IoE. Highlights that the PRG commends with respect to teaching and learning cited in the SAR and reinforced in meetings held by the PRG included: curriculum choice, lecturer quality, mix of learning methods, encouragement to learn, interest, challenge, the development of core skills and preparation for future careers. Areas for development included: communication between students and lecturers with students explicitly welcoming the student survey distributed as part of the quality review process; relevance of module content and assessments to work context; limited range of assessment types; too much assessment; effectiveness of large class teaching; and insufficient feedback on coursework to facilitate development. A consistent theme related to programme content and assessments was a need to better coordinate across programme modules so as to integrate content and avoid duplication and excessive volume of assessments.

The survey and focus groups with undergraduate students also identified highlights and opportunities for development relating to Placement — a core component of IoE programmes. Highlights that the PRG commends include: strong links between Professional Placement and their programme as a whole; high quality learning experience; and feedback on placement that helps improvement. However, opportunities for development included: better organisation; better preparation pre-placement; inconsistencies in Professional Placement requirements and regulations; and some students feeling isolated and unsupported during placement.

The students met by members of the PRG were passionate, articulate, knowledgeable and engaging, and PRG meetings with them helped to crystalize the issues surrounding over-teaching and over-assessment on some programmes, and the need for significant development in the management and assessment of professional placement. Examples of some additional issues raised by students that are not addressed elsewhere in this report include: the need for information on writing a scheme; educational gap between March of Year 2 and January of Year 3 as there are no lectures in this period for some students; differences in approaches used by part-time tutors, retired principals and academic faculty when operating as placement tutors; coordination of feedback between assessment periods; clarity on the role of host teachers; host teacher support needs when placement is actual substitute teaching; the possibility to learn from virtual placement visits; and the need for consistency in the size of assessments in terms of associated credits.

This Quality Review process was the first occasion that such a survey of, and set of focus groups with, students was conducted by the IoE. The PRG also identified incidences of where module coordinators distributed their own module evaluation surveys periodically as a mechanism to solicit module-level student feedback. However, this was sporadic and based on individual initiative only. The data gathered from this IoE Quality Review survey and the focus groups illuminates the value and opportunity for more regularly soliciting programmatic student feedback, and input on programme design and improvement. While it was suggested that surveying students would overburden them further, soliciting student input is necessary in the continuous development of programmes.

In response to the undergraduate student perspective data collated, the recommendations presented in Section 5.2 are of relevance again here. Additionally, the PRG recommends that the process for electing and engaging student representatives on all programmes is clarified and actioned via an appropriate function such as Programme Chairs. It's also important to develop a formalised, regular and communicated process for greater student engagement in programme design, programme boards and feedback, led by the ADTL and Teaching Committee. The concepts of student voice and student co-design should be central to the educational activities of the Institute.

5.6.2 Postgraduate Taught Students

The PRG met with student representatives from two taught postgraduate programmes. The graduate teacher education students (PME) were not represented, so consequently the focus was on the post-qualification cohort who are primarily part-time students. The students were fundamentally positive about their engagement with IoE. Commendable elements identified included: the unique and specialist content of their programmes and how it enabled them to offer something valuable and innovative to their own educational settings; their engagement with the programme chairs and programme board to voice concerns, issues or feedback, and how this was resolved or explained; and the flexible part-time or blended nature of programme design which worked well with their work and lives.

However, as the IoE has twenty taught postgraduate students, a number of student voices were missing from the SAR and PRG meetings. The IoE conducted a survey with postgraduate students which obtained a response rate of 28%. It is unclear from the SAR if this survey includes aggregated results from taught and research postgraduate students, including the EdD.

5.6.3 Postgraduate Research Students

In the SAR and one of the SWOC's the IoE is identified as having fostered a strong research community. Indeed, the SAR and PRG review group meetings illustrated some unique and **commendable** activities in IoE to support postgraduate researchers and early career scholars, which would be of interest to DCU more broadly. Strengths identified in the SAR and during PRG meetings included the Graduate Training Element's, the Research in Progress Sessions (RIPs) and supervision quality. Developing the extent of engagement in the activities on offer presents an opportunity for IoE. For example, survey data from the postgraduate research community shows variability in the extent of participation in some of these activities. The PRG identified that research students valued the variety of activities available, but participation was dependent on individuals' disposition and initiative, with one stating 'you get out of it what you put into it'. The SWOC identifies some opportunities to develop more activities/supports pertaining to preparing postgraduate researchers for their future careers either through, for example, career planning or opportunities to teach as part of their studies.

The IoE has, at present, a cohort of 67 PhD researchers and 103 part-time Doctorate of Education (EdD) researchers. PRG meetings identified some challenges and opportunities unique to the EdD cohort of researchers. Most notable is the need to identify how to adapt the available supports and activities to better engage these researchers in the research community, taking into account their part-time status. Equally, PRG meetings identified that the part-time cohort of researchers are less likely to publish for a variety of reasons pertaining to, for example, their part-time status, their Education background and their methodological training. Unique supports suggested therefore include recognising that this cohort have "less time to be critical consumers of research and thus critical producers of research", providing a preparatory programme before starting the EdD, additional content and support around research methods, and connecting students with supervisors from the outset of the programme based on research interests and expertise. Concerns were expressed around how to reconcile increasing numbers of part-time EdD researchers and the associated supervision demands with the need to also deliver on DCU research metrics around publications. In devising the next IoE Research Strategy, the faculty should introduce activities and supports specific to this part-time cohort of researchers and better define which research metrics may be more suitable for them. This may include focusing more on DCU Research Impact metrics such as how EdD research impacts policy, government and educational practice. Subsequently, this could inform module content, activities and supports to put in place specifically for this cohort.

There is a cohort of staff for whom PhD or EdD pathways may not be the most appropriate vehicles for achieving a Level 10 award. There is a 'PhD by publication' option available within DCU, but in its present form this doesn't seem to present a viable pathway for DCU staff in the IoE.

The PRG recommends that the University review the existing policy on 'PhD by publication' in light of international best practice to allow greater flexibility for full-time faculty to work towards obtaining a Level 10 qualification.

In response to the postgraduate researcher perspective, the recommendations presented in Section 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 are of relevance again here.

5.6.4 External Stakeholders

The SAR provides a lot of examples of interesting national and international external engagement activity by IoE, which is to be commended. However, the SAR did not include evidence from external stakeholders with respect to these activities such as from schools and other educational settings, Department of Education, Oide, Inspectorate, Teaching Council, National Council for Curriculum and

Assessment, National Council for Special Education, Tusla Education Support Services, Education and Training Boards, Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN), National Association for Principals & Deputy Principals (NAPD), National Parents Councils (Primary and Post Primary), Industry, International Ministries, Research Centre partners, clients, benefactors, etc. Such perspectives are invaluable in better evidencing if, how and why IoE is a global leader in Education and how IoE delivers value to these external stakeholders. In PRG meetings with external stakeholders representing schools and a partner university, these stakeholders were fundamentally positive about their engagement with IoE, which is to be commended. School partners identified how their relationship with IoE for school placements was positive, very successful compared to other universities, relationships and communications were excellent, and if there were any difficulties it was 'easy to lift the phone to talk to someone', how tutors gave feedback in a forthcoming manner and schools were happy to have students return. School partners really valued: the continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities provided to placement schools; that the mentoring offered to students is '2nd to none'; the integrative programmes offered by IoE that meet needs of the sector; the presence of placement students to help them fill their substitution gaps; and in-person placement as they can clearly see what was lost during COVID when everything moved online. Some operational suggestions for improving professional placement were mentioned such as: it is perceived as useful when supervisors drop in to check on their students whom are on placement; schools having a dedicated contact point; offer mentoring to teachers in schools who manage students; and have meetings at the beginning of the year with schools about placement. One school representative identified IoE as having a strong reputation nationally and internationally evidenced by its research, presence at conferences, reading work from Europe that includes IoE faculty and IoE's work in leading the fields of bullying, equality and access. A university partner described working with IoE on a proposal that was inherently complicated and risky as: operationalised by IoE as though easy; approached with a solutions-based mindset; proactive; and addressed a large market need. IoE was described as 'world-class' in this interaction.

Related to the need to identify the value of external activity to external stakeholders, it was not clear from the SAR or PRG meetings if or how these external activities delivered value to IoE and DCU. The volume of incoming requests to IoE by national and international parties was recognised by IoE faculty and there is now stronger consideration given to which requests to decline and which requests to complete. There are a number of future opportunities also identified by IoE, for example, CPD, consulting and new programmes in international jurisdictions. The PRG meetings identified some commendable examples of external engagement activity that delivered on external and internal impact and research metrics. For example:

- a calculated grades report influenced national practice and led to three published papers;
- the Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspection (EQI) worked with ETBI to produce *Statements of Effective Practice to underpin the ETBI Patron's Framework* which had a national impact;
- the most recent seminal publication *Towards a New Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy: A Review of the Literature* will be central to the next phase in the development of literacy and numeracy policy nationally.

The IoE identifies itself as a leader with a global reputation in education. Three items are identified by the PRG pertaining to the external perspective on this statement. First, the voice of external stakeholders was missing from the SAR, and the PRG met a limited selection of external stakeholders during the review process. Second, though some examples were provided to the PRG during meetings, the discussion ultimately revealed a need to explicate the contribution and value of IoE external activity, for the external stakeholders, IoE and DCU. Finally, IoE international and national activity largely reads as reactive to what stakeholders want from IoE. It is unclear how IoE prioritises what activities to engage in,

and how these activities align with its strategic priorities and positions IoE as the leader driving the agenda.

The IoE has five University-designated research centres, seven faculty research centres and one affiliated centre. The SAR and quality review process did not include perspectives from external stakeholders of these centres. A number of examples of successes emerging from these centres are evidenced in the SAR, for example the Anti-Bullying Centre, and during PRG meetings, for example CASTeL, EQI and CARPE, but these were from internal stakeholders. A review of these IoE and all centres across the University is due to be undertaken by the University. This review should systematically determine who are the centres' external stakeholders, and what are their perspectives on the centres and what is the strategic relevance of each centre to IoE's future vision.

There are two possible reasons identified for these issues. First, the IoE Internationalisation Strategy is still in development in line with the new DCU Strategy. Second, an identified area for improvement in the SAR is to "Establish structures that facilitate the mapping, monitoring, evaluation and regular communication of activities that contribute to the External Engagements Agenda", which is currently ad-hoc as opposed to systematic. With such a volume of activity, more detailed identification and recording of activity will provide a basis to both report on and better align activity with strategic priorities and resources and therefore with metrics around value and impact.

The PRG recommends that the IoE proactively complete the development of its Internationalisation and External Engagement Strategy. This should align with the University's Strategy but also recognise the uniqueness of IoE and its ambition to be a global leader in teacher education.

The PRG recommends the development of a system for tracking, mapping, monitoring and evaluating IoE external engagement activity.

The PRG recommends a more strategically aligned, systematic and criteria-guided process for determining which external activity opportunities to pursue, which to decline and to what value can be derived.

The PRG recommends that the IoE establish an external advisory board as one mechanism to better represent external stakeholders voice on IoE activity and to inform its strategy and activity.

6 SWOC Analysis and Plans for Improvement

6.1 SWOC Analysis for Institute of Education

The self-assessment report for the Area included a proposed summary SWOC analysis of the Area. The PRG's analysis of the self-assessment report and findings from the peer review visit are reflected in the following SWOC.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful incorporation process with great level of buy-in and cooperation amongst IoE staff • Positive mindset of staff and students • The enthusiasm and commitment of IoE staff for the quality of teacher formation • The quality and strength of Faculty Leadership • The experience, expertise and critical mass of staff in key areas of research and teaching in the combined Faculty. • The large postgraduate research population and the breadth and scale of the doctorate programme(s) • Recent Céim programme accreditation validates the quality and strength of the Faculty for the management and development of these programmes to meet the future needs of teachers and the targeted educational sectors as a whole • The cross-school nature of some programmes, while posing challenges, is also a strength — the value of which is not fully realised • The Faculty support and activities for early stage researchers • The calibre of students attracted • Significant number of external stakeholders interested in IoE • Operationalisation of APR and PPR processes • Student identified strengths of some programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear boundaries within programme governance between the different roles and resources allocation practices e.g. programme chairs and heads of schools • The current design and operation of Professional Placements • Lack of student and other stakeholder input to the design and management of some programmes • Need to respond to items of dissatisfaction indicated in some areas by student surveys • Lack of adherence in some cases to the standards and guidelines of modularization and ECTS credits, particularly in terms of the link between student effort and ECTS credits • Encyclopaedic nature of teaching and assessment • Insufficient provision of formative feedback to students • Over assessment across many modules and some programmes • Coordination and integration of content and assessments on modules across programmes • A lot of external activity not clearly mapped to strategic priorities or with identified value to external or internal stakeholders • Part-time doctoral researchers less likely to be part of the research orbit of the IoE • Challenges in providing supervision to postgraduate research students • Narrow range of metrics used to assess research quality • Research Centres with variable levels of connection to IoE strategic priorities and variable activity • Academic work overload
Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a more rigorous strategy development approach • Building stronger links between the IoE and other faculties in the University • The impact on student diversity of move towards a more diverse portfolio of activities • Reform and reconceptualization of Professional Placement across the IoE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Education control of some programme intake levels • Securing a more sustainable model of student placement opportunities. • Making the external engagement agenda proactively rather than reactively • The robustness of assessment in conjunction with very high levels of continuous

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a model for Programmatic Assessment • Providing a sustainable teacher education by developing teacher competencies in learning how to learn and self-directed learning • More regular and formalised opportunity to solicit student feedback • A review and reform of curriculum • Develop decision-making protocol for determining which external activities to action • Advance on the tangible engagement in the activities available for doctoral researchers and early career scholars • Develop niche, activities and supports for part-time postgraduate researchers • Devise mechanisms to translate part-time doctoral research into research for impact • Use the University review of Research Centres to rationalise current provision and enhance the contribution of the Centres to the ambitions of the IoE • Develop a more expansive definition of research to include work which impacts of practice and policy • Widen the range of measures used to assess research quality, both for academic impact, and for impact on society, policy and practice • Establish greater differentiation in workload profiles to support high-impact researchers • Extract the value that can be derived from the matrix structure around creativity and innovation. • Capturing and documenting the impact of practitioner-based and applied research strengths as well as educational policy initiatives • Develop Internationalisation & External Engagement Strategy 	<p>assessment in the context of very sophisticated new AI technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a new workload model that is fit for purpose for the next stage of IoE • Having a mostly single-discipline campus that becomes isolated from the other faculties • Managing necessary operational change within the inevitable reality of resource constraints arising from a view that some content areas will lose their identity if not explicitly taught and assessed. • Capturing and documenting the impact of practitioner-based and applied research strengths as well as educational policy initiatives • Reforming cross-school structures • Strategically responding to incoming external activity requests • Over-expanding of postgraduate research students beyond the capacity of the IoE to provide high-quality supervision • Strengthening the connections between different areas of activity within the IoE to maximise overall impact and efficient coordination within the matrix structure
--	--

6.2 Plans for Improvement Identified by the Institute of Education

In the SAR, the IoE identifies areas of improvement as outlined below. Generally, the PRG identified similar areas for improvement based on the PRG meetings but with nuances or with a more systematic or strategic lens. Some areas identified by the IoE are at a more operational level and did not feature in PRG findings. The PRG identified other areas for improvement which are not mentioned in the IoE plans for improvement and these are summarised in Section 7 and identifiable in previous sections of the report.

The IoE Plans for Improvement which generally align with the findings of the PRG are:

Planning and Overall Strategic Direction

1. Develop a formal strategy development, operationalisation and review process which retains the strengths of the current approach, addresses weaknesses and which speaks to a fluid and congested operational context

2. Extend strategic planning engagements to schools and units, with Heads setting school/unit strategic direction and staff asked to draw on these when setting personal performance objectives

Structures and Management

3. Identify an appropriate leadership and management structure for professional placements; this will deliver alignment, coordination and consistency of activities across primary and post-primary programmes with a view to optimising the student experience
4. Redesign management structures for cross-school programmes to address (a) challenges with aligning programme direction and decision-making with faculty strategy, and (b) issues with resource allocation

Organisation and Resourcing

6. Review the workload model to ensure it is fit for purpose, enables transparent allocation of workload and captures activity at the appropriate level.
 - The PRG recommendations around re-balancing the focus of work in IoE and recommendations about teaching, assessment, placement, research metrics and priority engagements systematically inform the development of this new workload model.
7. Address issues with poor quality data on key strategic metrics
8. Address issues experienced with the central unit service delivery model and with capacity issues across key services (ISS and TEU)

Teaching and Learning

9. Develop and embed programmatic approaches to assessment and feedback to enable more comprehensive in-depth assessment and engagement and more effective feedback, track student development over time, reduce assessment scheduling issues and duplication, and facilitate a reduction in the amount of assessment and grading
10. Build processes to ensure the feedback loop is closed following engagement with students

Research and Scholarship

11. Review and build on the Faculty Citation Action Plan.
 - The PRG recommendations around extending the definition of research impact and associated metrics, the supports for high impact research staff, the integration of Research Centres with IoE and including postgraduate researchers in the research orbit of the IoE should inform the development of this action plan.

External Engagements

12. Establish structures that facilitate the mapping, monitoring, evaluation and regular communication of activities that contribute to the External Engagements Agenda
13. Finalise the IoE External engagements constituent strategic plan, ensuring its alignment with priorities articulated within the IoE and DCU strategic plans currently under development

The IoE Plans for Improvement which do not feature in the findings of the PRG are:

- Develop an internal faculty communications plan which includes staff induction, enhanced reporting from committees, a programme of social engagements/networking events, town-halls, a newsletter and which builds opportunities for staff engagement and recognition across the faculty through, for example, staff recognition awards.
- Implement Faculty Office Staffing Plan to address critical issues with management capacity, placement administration support and supports to internationalisation and PDP
- Develop an office space allocation policy which addresses post-Covid work patterns and supports community building and faculty strategy
- Review our operation of the revised academic calendar framework following next two cycles
- Recognise, support, disseminate and celebrate good practices and excellence in teaching and learning by, for example, providing faculty support for mentoring and continuing professional development and establishing faculty teaching and learning awards
- Develop a sustainable approach to providing research assistance across small scale projects
- Provide dedicated support for writing large research grants
- Establish a sustainable and scalable framework for delivery of the current professional development programme and further development of an expanded portfolio
- Develop a fully functioning and integrated system of support services and resources at both faculty and university levels to support the IoE External engagements Strategy and agreed priorities

7 Summary of Commendations and Recommendations

Here the PRG presents the 7 main commendations and 15 main recommendations arising from the review of the Institute of Education.

No	Commendation/ Recommendation	P	Level	
Planning and Effective Management of Resources				
1	Commendation		A	The PRG would like to join the Incorporation Review Panel in acknowledging the success of the leadership team in delivering a successful completion of the transformation project. The success of Incorporation in creating and building a new Faculty and the IoE – strategically, structurally, operationally and culturally – from the previously existing and incorporating units, cannot be underestimated and is to be highly commended. The structures and systems that were put in place during the early and more recent stages of the formation of the IoE have played a significant role in drawing together and subsequently consolidating the different parts of the Institute.
2	Recommendation	P1	A	Review and refine the current matrix structure - the four operational areas – in order to ensure that resource management pathways and decision-making processes function efficiently and transparently for all staff and students. Currently the systems that are in place are not working. There is a clear need to establish and maintain cohesion and organisational clarity among the various groups comprising the IoE matrix structure. This will require the development of decision-making practices to include clarifying reporting lines in relation to key decisions around workload and related staff resourcing and teaching, research and placement related matters. This review requires immediate action in order to facilitate the enactment of the next strategic plan.
3	Recommendation	P1	A	Review the balance and emphasis of the current work focus in order to facilitate the enactment of the next strategic plan and most if not all of the recommendations in this PRG report. This may be achieved by (1) reducing the amount of some activity (particularly placement, teaching and assessment); (2) moving away from an expectation that all staff should be contributing across all areas in a broadly similar way; (3) exploring the potential of more innovative approaches to each of the areas of: placement, teaching and assessment.
Teaching and Learning				
4	Commendation		A	The PRG commends the Faculty for establishing structures to support teaching and learning. The Faculty Teaching & Learning Committee (FTLC) is one such support structure and is central to pedagogical innovation, learning, programme development, and programme evaluation.

5	Commendation		A	The PRG commends the staff of the IoE for their passion for and outstanding effort put into teacher education and for the development of their students as teachers.
6	Recommendation	P1	A	Review and redevelop the full suite of programmes across IoE to identify module synergies, opportunities to reduce both the number of modules and multiple (parallel/duplicate) presentation of modules or module content. The IoE needs to innovate teaching delivery formats away from an 'encyclopaedic' model and towards the provision of a sustainable teacher education experience that develops teacher meta-competencies for self-directed and life-long learning.
7	Recommendation	P1	A	Complete a thorough programmatic review of assessments. This should include reviewing which and what kind of assessments are necessary, how to reduce the number of assessments and how to increase the extent of programmatic assessment. This will facilitate faculty in having more time to give effective and constructive feedback on fewer assessments and allow students to engage in deeper and more self-directed learning.
8	Recommendation	P1	A	<p>Recruit a Director of Placement with responsibility for a complete and systematic reform of Placement across the IoE. They should <i>inter alia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) identify the criteria on which a placement is deemed successful and effective based on: research; approaches used in other universities delivering teacher education; existing IoE practice; and based on the experiences of internal and external stakeholders; (ii) identify the requirements of external stakeholders; identify the commonalities and differences across placement policy, procedures and practices in IoE programmes and the associated schools, and identify possible technology solutions that would streamline the organisation, monitoring, assessment and reporting of placement; (iii) devise and cause to be implemented a unified approach to placement right across the IoE, including clear, defined, communicated and understood policies, procedures and practices made available to staff, students and placement settings, from initial Student Induction to Programme Completion; (iv) establish targets and timescales for reducing the operational workload of placement and its associated evaluation on all staff (full-time and part-time) and on students, while maintaining the quality of in-class teaching achieved by the students.
Research and Scholarship				
9	Commendation		A	Significant and commendable progress has been made in the development of research capacity and reputation since Incorporation. The IoE is commended for having fostered a strong research community, and particularly some unique activities and structures in the IoE to support postgraduate researchers and early career scholars, which would be of interest to DCU more broadly. The PRG commends the fact

				that research in IoE is having a direct and substantive impact on policy and on practice in schools in local or national contexts.
10	Recommendation	P1	A	Adopt a more expansive definition of research to include applied research, such as that focused on classroom practice or policy. This would also require a wider set of criteria for measuring research quality and include measures of impact beyond purely academic impact.
11	Recommendation	P1	A/U	Link the University recognised Research Centres more formally into the key decision-making processes of the IoE.
12	Recommendation	P2	A/U	Provide more enhanced support for high-impact research staff to allow them more time to focus on research activity, including establishing and developing national and international networks and partnerships, and strategic management of greater variance in the balance of contribution by staff across the range of activities.
13	Recommendation	P2	A	Explicitly recognise postgraduate research students as a part of the research orbit of the IoE so that they have a clear role and expectation to contribute to the research culture of the IoE. In pursuit of this outcome it would be important to explicitly address the provision of activities and supports specific to the part-time doctoral cohort of researchers.
14	Recommendation	P2	U	Review the existing policy on 'PhD by publication' at University level in light of international best practice to allow greater flexibility for full-time faculty to work towards obtaining a Level 10 qualification.
University Service and Engagement				
15	Commendation			The PRG commends all of the achievements to date in integrating the IoE into the broader university. While there are many areas where this can develop, the overall positive outcomes of the incorporation process was very tangible in all discussions. It is very clear that the level of engagement between the IoE and the broader University is developing very well and at pace.
16	Recommendation	P2	A/U	Improve and enhance initiatives that will support communication and collaboration across the four campuses. These could include an enhancement of current 'hot desk' arrangements on both campuses, the inclusion during new staff induction of processes that would enable all new staff to easily 'navigate' all three academic campuses, and the encouragement of informal cross-faculty and cross-campus pairings of mentors/buddies in similar (targeted) roles to reduce to the greatest extent possible inefficiencies in the system. Examples would be at Head of School level or Research Centre Director level.
Communications and Provision of Information				
17	Commendation		A	The very strong and collegiate culture that is evident among colleagues in the IoE and the manner in which culture is identifiable among this community of scholars who clearly and tangibly support each other in a variety of ways

				During discussions between IoE colleagues and the PRG, a strong sense of identity among staff as a member of the IoE became very evident. This sense of shared identity among staff and students is not always easy to achieve and the whole team are to be commended for their efforts in securing this outcome
18	Commendation		A	The team are to be commended on the very deliberate focus on the future and on the possibilities that it holds for the development of the IOE. It is clear that these future oriented ambitions are shared and clearly and actively owned by members of the IoE
19	Recommendation	P1	A/U	Improve communications and the provision of information in the IoE. This should focus on (i) achieving cohesion and organisational clarity among the various groups comprising the IoE matrix structure and, subsequently (ii) formalising and making explicit all communication channels including decision-making and feedback processes, as well as communication channels to central units and functions within the University.
Stakeholder Relationships				
20	Recommendation	P1	A	Complete the development of the IoE Internationalisation and External Engagement Strategy. This should align with the University's Strategy but also recognise the uniqueness of IoE and its ambition to be a global leader in teacher education.
21	Recommendation	P1	A	Develop a system for tracking, mapping, monitoring and evaluating IoE external engagement activity.
22	Recommendation	P2	A/U	Develop a more strategically aligned, systematic and criteria-guided process for determining which external activity opportunities to pursue, which to decline and what value can be derived. The IoE needs to be clearer internally and externally as to where to invest its time and resources.

Appendices

Peer Review Group Visit Schedule DCU Institute of Education

Time	Peer Review Group (PRG) Activity/Meeting	Venue	Meeting No
Day 1: Tuesday 18th April 2023			
1630-1715	Briefing by the Director of Quality Promotion <i>guidelines provided to assist the PRG during the visit and in developing its report</i>	F327 with zoom	
1715-1845	PRG Private Meeting Time <i>Select of Chairperson</i> <i>Review of initial impressions document</i> <i>Identification of key areas of interest</i> <i>Assignment of tasks and responsibilities</i>	F327 with zoom	
1845-1900	Transfer to restaurant	Walk	
1900-2100	Peer Review Group Dinner with Quality Director	Restaurant 104	

Day 2 : Wednesday 19th April 2023			
0845-0915	PRG Private Meeting Time	Belvedere Boardroom C206	
0915-1015	Consideration of the SAR with the Executive Dean and members of the Quality Review committee, commencing with a short presentation by the Dean, followed by discussion (Director, QPO to attend) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof Anne Looney, Executive Dean • Prof Charlotte Holland, Deputy Dean • Ms Maeve Fitzpatrick, Faculty Manager • Dr Anna Logan, Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning • Dr Maura Coulter, Associate Dean, Research • Dr Shivaun O'Brien, Associate Dean, Professional Developments and Partnerships • Ms Aisling McKenna, Director of Quality Promotion and Institutional Research 	Belvedere Boardroom C206	1
1015-1030	PRG Private Meeting Time	Belvedere Boardroom C206	
1030-1130	Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Anna Logan, Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning • Dr Eleanor Healion, Assistant Faculty Manager, Academic Affairs • Dr Patrick Burke, Convenor in the School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education • Mr. Conor Sullivan, Senior Technical Officer 	Belvedere Dining Room C204	2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Ashling Bourke, Subject representative for Human Development • Dr Irene White, Convenor School of Human Development • Dr Maura Coulter, Associate Dean, Research • Dr Michael Flannery, Convenor School of Arts Education & Movement • Dr Shivaun O'Brien, Associate Dean, Professional Developments and Partnerships • Dr Suzanne Stone, Academic Developer, TEU • Prof Catherine Furlong, Chair, Bed • Dr Natalie O'Neill, Programme Chair BSc Science Education • Dr Francesca Lorenz, Convenor School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood 			
1130-1230	Parallel Session 1 <i>Placement Coordinators</i> Dr. John White, Director, Primary Placement Dr Damien Burke, Coordinator, Primary Placement Dr Leanne Coll, Coordinator, Post-Primary Placement Dr Aideen Cassidy , Coordinator, Post-Primary Placement Dr Natalie O'Neill, Coordinator, Post-Primary Placement Dr Sarah O'Grady, Coordinator, Post-Primary Placement	Parallel Session 2 <i>Cross-School Programme Chairs</i> Prof Catherine Furlong, Chair, Bachelor of Education Dr PJ Sexton, Chair, Bachelor of Religious Education Dr Irene White, Co-Chair, Professional Master of Education (Post-Primary) Dr Aisling Twohill, Chair, Professional Master of Education (Primary) Dr Orna Farrell, Deputy Chair, Bachelor of Education in Gaeilge with French or German or Spanish Dr Jane O'Kelly, Chair, BSc in Education and Training	Session 1 Belvedere Boardroom C206 Session 2 Belvedere Dining Room C204	3a/3b
1230-1300	PRG reconvene post parallel sessions		Belvedere Boardroom C206	
1300-1400	Lunch/ PRG Private Meeting Time		Belvedere Boardroom C206	
1400-1445	Faculty Administration Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Eleanor Healion, Assistant Faculty Manager, Academic Affairs • Mr Conor Sullivan, Senior Technical Officer • Ms Caitriona Ni Mhurchu, Assistant Faculty Manager, Placements and Engagements • Ms Karen Brady, School Placement Administration • Ms Rachel McCullagh, School Placement Administration • Ms Mary Behan, Programme Administrator • Ms Bronagh Farrell, Programme Administrator • Ms Maeve Power, School Assistant, School of Policy and Practice 		Belvedere Boardroom C206	4

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ms Orla Dawson, School Assistant, School of Language, Literacy & Early Childhood Education			
1445-1515	PRG Private Meeting Time/Coffee		Belvedere Boardroom C206	
1515-1600	External Engagements <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prof Charlotte Holland, Deputy DeanDr Shivaun O'Brien, Associate Dean, Professional		External Engagements Belvedere Boardroom C206 External Stakeholders Belvedere Dining Room C204	5a/5b
	Meeting with external stakeholders via Zoom <ul style="list-style-type: none">Dr Niall Seery, Technological University of the ShannonMs Dearbhail Lawless, AONTAS National Adult Learning AssociationMs Siobhan Duffy, Lios Na nÓgMr Conor Dilleen, Belgrove Senior Girls School			
1600-1700	Parallel Session 1 <i>Meeting with UG Students</i> Ms Meibh McDonnell BRM Student (UG) Mr Matthew Smith BECE Student (UG) Ms Chloe McNamara BECE Student (UG) Ms Kayleigh Murphy, BEd Mr Diarmuid O'Neill, BEd Ms Niamh McCarthy BEd Ms. Karina Curley - EdD student	Parallel Session 2 <i>Meeting with PGT and PGR Students</i> Ms Helen Rothwell GDILS student (PG) Ms Jennifer Kelly DISE Student (PG) Ms Rachel Rafferty PGR student	Session 1 UG Students Belvedere Boardroom C206 Session 2 PG Students Belvedere Dining Room C204	6
1700-1730	PRG Private Meeting Time		Belvedere Boardroom C206	
1900-2100	PRG Private Dinner and discussion		Skylon Hotel	QPO

Day 3: Thursday 20th April 2023			
0845-0915	PRG Private Meeting Time	Belvedere Boardroom C206	
0915-1000	Meeting with Heads of School and Directors of Denominational Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr Margaret Leahy, Head of School of STEM Education, Innovation & Global Studies Dr Martin Brown, Head of School of Policy and Practice 	Belvedere Boardroom C206	7

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Geraldine French, Head of School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education • Dr Aoife Brennan, Head of School of Inclusive and Special Education • Dr Sandra Cullen, Head of School of Human Development • Dr Una McCabe, Head of School of Arts Education & Movement • Prof Anne Lodge, Director of the Church of Ireland Centre • Dr Cora O'Farrell, Director of the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education 			
1000-1100	Faculty Academic Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Alan Gorman, School of Policy and Practice • Ms Marlene McCormack, School of Language, Literacy and Early Childhood Education • Dr Elizabeth Matthews, School of Inclusive and Special Education • Ronan Gubbins, Teacher Fellow - School of Arts, Education and Movement • Dr. Siún Nic Mhuiri, School of STEM Education, Innovation & Global Studies 		Belvedere Boardroom C206	8
1100-1130	PRG Private Meeting Time		Belvedere Boardroom C206	
1130-1230	Faculty Research Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Maura Coulter, Associate Dean, Research • Dr Eleanor Healion, Assistant Faculty Manager, Academic Affairs • Dr Aisling Ni Dhiorbhain, Chair, Research Ethics • Dr Anna Logan Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning • Dr Audrey Doyle, School of Policy & Practice • Dr Fiona King, School of Inclusive and Special Education • Dr Shivaun O'Brien, Associate Dean, Professional Developments and Partnerships • Dr Therese Farrell, Convenor, School of Language, Literacy & Early Childhood Education • Ms Ellen Breen, Associate Director, Research & Teaching, DCU Library 		Belvedere Boardroom C206	9
1230-1330	Parallel Session 1 Academic Staff: Engagement, Impact, Cross Faculty Collaboration Dr Eithne Kennedy, Director Write to Read Research Initiative Prof Hamsa Venkatakrishnan Naughton, Family Chair in STEM Education	Parallel Session 2 Academic Staff: PGR Supervision Dr Annie Ó Breacháin, School of Arts Education and Movement Dr Audrey Bryan, School of Human Development Dr Joe Travers, School of Inclusive and Special Education	Session 1 Belvedere Boardroom C206 Session 2 Belvedere Dining Room C204	10a/10b

	<p>Prof James O'Higgins Norman, Director of DCU Anti-Bullying Centre</p> <p>Dr Enda Donlon, School of STEM Education, Innovation and Global Studies</p> <p>Prof Pádraig Ó Duibhir, Director of Sealbhú</p> <p>Ms Rowan Oberman, Co-Director of the Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education</p> <p>Dr Martin Brown, Co-Director EQI The Centre for Evaluation Quality and Inspection</p>	<p>Dr Sinead McNally, School of Language, Literacy & Early Childhood Education</p> <p>Dr Zita Lysaght, School of Policy and Practice</p>		
1330-1430	Lunch/ PRG Private Meeting Time		Belvedere Boardroom C206	
1430-1515	Relevant Central Support Units <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Aisling Brady, Communications Officer • Mr Ian Spillane, ISS Manager • Ms Isabel Hidalgo, Research Information and Analytics Officer • Ms Jennifer O'Halloran, Controller Group Financial Operations • Dr Monica Ward, Dean of Teaching at Learning • Ms Orla Nic Aodha, Associate Director, Public Services & Outreach Library • Ms Paula Murray, Director of Placement • Ms Niamh McMahon, Student Awards Manager • Ms Caroline Bowe, Student Support Adviser • Ms Mary Jennings, HR Service Delivery Manager • Mr Darragh Power, Operations Manager Estates Office 		Belvedere Dining Room C204	11
1515-1545	Staff Open Forum for any member of staff		Belvedere Boardroom C206	12
1545-1615	PRG Private Meeting Time/ Coffee		Belvedere Boardroom C206	
1615-1700	<p>Meeting with Executive Dean, Deputy Dean, Associate Deans and Faculty Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof Anne Looney, Executive Dean • Prof Charlotte Holland, Deputy Dean • Ms Maeve Fitzpatrick, Faculty Manager • Dr Anna Logan, Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning • Dr Maura Coulter, Associate Dean, Research • Dr Shivaun O'Brien, Associate Dean, Professional Developments and Partnerships 		Belvedere Boardroom C206	13

1700-1745	Meeting with Faculty Executive Dean	Belvedere Boardroom C206	14
1900-2100	PRG Private Dinner and Meeting	Skylon Hotel	

Day 4: Friday 21st April 2023

0900-0955	PRG Meeting with Senior Management Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President – Prof. Daire Keogh • Deputy President – Prof. Anne Sinnott • Director HR – Mr. Gareth Yore • Finance Director – Mr. John Kilcoyne • Vice-President Academic Affairs (Registrar) Prof. Lisa Looney • Chief Operations Officer – Dr. Declan Raftery • Exec Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences - Prof Derek Hand • Exec Dean, Faculty of Science and Health - Prof Michelle Butler • Exec Dean, Faculty of Engineering and Computing - Ms Jennifer Bruton • Vice President for Research - Prof John Doyle • Executive Director of Engagement – Ms. Laura Mahoney 	Belvedere Dining Room C204	15
1000-1025	Meeting with Area Reporting Head , Prof. Anne Sinnott – Deputy President	Belvedere Boardroom C206	16
1030-1300	PRG Private Meeting Time- final discussion on recommendations	Belvedere Boardroom C206	
1300-1345	PRG working lunch and finalisation of exit presentation	Belvedere Boardroom C206	
1345-1400	Briefing with Executive Dean and Director of QPO on key recommendations	Belvedere Boardroom C206	
1400-1430	PRG Exit Presentation - All Staff	G114	