Review of the performance by the Irish Universities Quality Board of its

functions by the Higher Education Authority

Report of the Expert Group
September 2008

HEA
Higher Education Authority
An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas

IUQB
IRISH UNIVERSITIES
QUALITY BOARD

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1. Executive Summary

1.1.   In October 2006, the Board of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) decided to undergo an external evaluation to include an assessment of substantial compliance of IUQB with the European standards for external quality assurance agencies. The Board requested the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to commission the review.

1.2.   An eight-member expert group was appointed by the HEA in November 2007. The expert group was provided with a broad range of documentation by the IUQB, including a self-evaluation report. The expert group met on two occasions. Following an initial briefing session, the panel held a three-day meeting in Dublin where they met with over 70 stakeholders in individual and group sessions.

1.3.   The purpose of the process was three-fold. It sought to review the performance of the IUQB in carrying out its functions and in its execution of HEA-funded projects. The panel also examined the IUQB's coherence with European standards for external quality assurance agencies.

1.4.   The panel found broad support from stakeholders for the IUQB and its work. While the IUQB is a relatively new organisation, it has developed substantially to date and is now at the point of evolution to the next stage of its development.

1.5.   This is a critical step and given the fundamental role that effective quality assurance plays, the IUQB will require clear strategic objectives and continued support and buy-in from the entire higher education sector.

2. Acknowledgements

2.1.   The panel is grateful for the professional, practical and personal support provided to the panel by the IUQB, HEA and the many other stakeholders who gave freely of their time and expertise to assist the panel in the conduct of this review.

3. Higher education in Ireland

3.1.   Higher education in Ireland is broadly characterised by a binary structure, comprising universities and institutes of technology. There are seven universities which are essentially concerned with undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, together with basic and applied research. There are fourteen institutes of technology (IoTs), including the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), which provide higher certificate, ordinary and honours degree programmes, along with a number of Masters and PhD programmes as part of their growing involvement in basic and applied

research and technology transfer programmes with industry. Institute of Technology programmes tend to be applied in nature, with graduates often trained to meet specific needs of business and industry. The Institutes also tend to have a strategic mission to support business and enterprise and respond to economic changes in a regional, national and international context.

3.2.   Within each sector and between the two sectors, a diversity of institutions offers a wide variety of types and levels of courses. A number of other third level institutions provide specialist education in such fields as teacher education, art and design, medicine, business studies, rural development, theology, music and law. In addition, there are a growing number of private institutions.

3.3.   There are also seven Colleges of Education located throughout the country. Two colleges, Mater Dei Institute and St. Angela's College, offer degree level courses leading to a qualification as teachers of specialised subjects at secondary school. The five remaining Colleges of Education provide approved degree courses which lead to qualification as a primary school teacher: The Church of Ireland College of Education, Froebel College of Education, Mary Immaculate College, St. Patrick's College and Coláiste Mhuire, Marino. While the Colleges of Education are separate institutions to the universities, all have academic and certification linkages to a university.

3.4.   The bulk of third level education is provided in the institutions described above which are supported very substantially by the State; most receive in excess of 80% of their income from the Exchequer. The publicly funded sector comprises circa 135,000 full-time students: universities – 83,000 and IoTs – 52,000. There are also circa 31,000 part time students: universities – 16,000 and IoTs 15,000.

3.5.   The sector has grown significantly since the 1980s. During the period 1980 – 2004 the participation rate in higher education rose from 20% in 1980 to 36% in 1998 and to 55% in 2004.

4. Quality assurance in Ireland

4.1.   The IUQB and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) have important roles to play in the quality assurance process, while the HEA and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) have key oversight responsibilities.

4.2.   The universities and institutes of technology operate under different quality assurance regimes. The Universities Act (1997) obliges the universities to establish and implement procedures for quality assurance and provides that the HEA has high level review functions in respect of these procedures.

4.3.   Section 35 of the Universities Act requires each university to establish (internal) quality assurance procedures aimed at improving the quality of education and related services and requires the university to evaluate the quality of all academic and other activities at least once in every ten years and to publish the outcomes of any such evaluation. Section 35, subsection 4, requires the governing authority of each university to arrange for a review of the effectiveness of the university's internal quality assurance procedures on a periodic basis (and at least every fifteen years) and for the publication of the outcomes of any such review.

4.4.   In 2002, the governing authorities of the seven Irish universities agreed to devolve the arrangement of the conduct of these statutory reviews of the effectiveness of the university's internal quality assurance procedures to the IUQB.

4.5.   Under Section 49 of the Act, the HEA may review the internal quality assurance procedures in a university. The NQAI, established in 2001 under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, must be consulted in any such review.

4.6.   HETAC is the principal quality assurance and accreditation body for the non-university higher education sector. The institutes of technology have developed their procedures in agreement with, and are subject to review by, HETAC. The NQAI has overarching quality assurance responsibilities with respect to HETAC and is also the quality assurance body with respect to the DIT.

4.7.   The various quality assurance systems have been subject to a number of sectoral reviews in recent years, including a review of universities' own quality assurance procedures, a review of the NQAI, a review of HETAC and more recently a review of the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). This review of the IUQB is therefore timely and in keeping with national practice.

5. Brief history of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB)

5.1.   The Universities Act (1997) established, for the first time, a formal statutory quality assurance framework for the Irish universities. Between 1997 and 2002, the Inter Universities Quality Steering Committee (IUQSC) acted to provide a coherent and common approach to the implementation of the quality assurance framework set out in Section 35 of the 1997 Act.

5.2.   In 2002, the governing authorities of the seven Irish universities approved the establishment of the IUQB to monitor the effectiveness of the universities' quality assurance procedures, to advise the universities on

national and international developments in relation to quality assurance and to identify best practice in academic and administrative procedures. Each university governing authority also delegated its obligation to organise the statutory periodic review of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures in its university to the IUQB.

5.3. The IUQB's formal inaugural meeting took place in February 2003 to coincide with its first annual international conference.

5.4. The IUQB conducts external reviews of Irish universities, develops good practice and publishes guidelines for specific areas. It also plays an international role through co-operating with international organisations, and disseminating information to stakeholders. The 17-member Board of Directors, chaired by a member of the judiciary, comprises nominees of the Irish universities, nominees of other stakeholders in Irish higher education and nominees representative of university education in Europe and North America. While a majority of the members of the IUQB Board are drawn from outside the Irish higher education sector, a significant number are former university staff or members of government agencies with responsibilities in the higher education area.

5.5. In 2004 the HEA and the IUQB jointly commissioned the European University Association (EUA) to conduct an independent review of quality assurance in Irish universities. The EUA conducted both an overall review of the quality assurance procedures established by the universities and a review of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures in individual universities. The review process concluded that the universities had gone well beyond the legislative requirements set out in the Universities Act, 1997, by putting in place strong, functioning quality assurance procedures, which were considered to be operating successfully. In addition, the EUA review noted that the quality assurance processes in place in the universities have a positive influence on teaching and learning activities, for example, the quality assurance process helps to keep contents of courses up to date and supports a practical approach to improving teaching and learning methodology. The EUA review also identified areas for improvement, particularly in regard to student involvement in providing feedback on courses. The IUQB is monitoring the implementation of the review recommendations and provides regular updates to the HEA.

5.6. In 2006 the IUQB was formally registered as a company limited by guarantee and the composition of the board was changed to ensure a majority of external stakeholders, including HEA (3) and NQAI (1) nominees. The key governance documents of the IUQB are its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which set out its objects and structures.

5.7. The IUQB has recently completed an update of the Irish Universities Association (IUA)[1]/IUQB publication, *A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities,* and is currently seeking admission to full membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and inclusion on the European Quality Assurance Register in Higher Education (EQAR).

6. Purpose of the review of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB)

6.1. In October 2006, the Board of IUQB agreed to undergo an external evaluation to include an assessment of substantial compliance of IUQB with the European standards for external quality assurance agencies and requested the HEA to commission the review. In December 2006, the HEA agreed to commission a review and requested that the review also include an evaluation of the HEA-funded activities that IUQB has performed since its establishment.

6.2. The terms of reference for the review were agreed by the HEA in May 2007 (Appendix 2). The review sought to:

- evaluate the effectiveness of the IUQB in the performance of its main objectives since its establishment in 2002;
- adopt a developmental approach by assisting the IUQB in achieving its own quality enhancement goals and furthering the development of its own internal quality culture;
- assess the IUQB's performance as a quality assurance agency in Irish higher education against the backdrop of developments in the European Higher Education Area.

6.3. This involved the following:

- evaluation of the performance, organisation and structures of the executive and committees of the IUQB to date;
- evaluation of the effectiveness of IUQB activities undertaken and funded by the HEA under the HEA Quality Assurance Programmes 2002-2004 and the HEA Strategic Initiatives Schemes 2005-2006; and,
- evaluation of the extent to which the IUQB, in the performance of its objects, complies with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.*

6.4. The protocol agreed for the review comprised:

- the production and publication of a self-evaluation report by IUQB;

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[1] The Irish Universities Association (IUA) is the representative body of the heads of the seven Irish universities.

- assessment of the self-evaluation report, including interviews with IUQB board members, staff and stakeholders, by a panel of experts appointed by the HEA;
- consideration of the report of the panel by the Board of IUQB and the development of a plan by the Board of IUQB to implement the recommendations in the report;
- consideration of the report of the panel and the IUQB Board's plans by the HEA and the production of a response by the HEA;
- publication of the outcomes of the review to include the report of the expert panel, the plan developed by IUQB in response to the report, and the response of the HEA (other stakeholders may also prepare responses following publication of the review outcomes).

6.5.   The panel paid particular attention to the self-evaluation report, the external quality reviews of the Irish universities commissioned by the IUQB from the EUA in 2004/2005, the IUA/IUQB publication, *A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities,* and the quality assurance activities funded by the HEA and carried out by the IUQB.

6.6.   The panel also had regard to the binary structure of Irish higher education, the statutory and non-statutory framework for quality assurance and improvement in Irish higher education and research, and the bodies involved including the IUQB, the Higher Education Training and Awards Council (HETAC) and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI).

6.7.   The panel noted the unique character of IUQB, in both the Irish and international context, which has developed within the particular context of the Irish university system. The panel found a maturing organisation evolving towards increased independence. This was illustrated through ongoing changes in both the Governing Board's composition and the organisation's funding structure.

6.8.   The structure of the quality assurance system in Ireland is complex. While comment on this matter is not within the terms of the review, the panel considered that a continued effort should be made by IUQB and other organisations to ensure synergy and cooperation between the activities and programmes of the various bodies and structures. Where opportunity for greater integration or alignment exists these prospects should be investigated.

7. Activities undertaken for the purpose of this review

7.1. In carrying out their review of the IUQB, the panel undertook the following activities:
- considered the IUQB self-evaluation report;
- noted stakeholder submissions;

- met with IUQB – including the conduct of a site visit to their offices;
- met with stakeholder groups and representatives;
- assessed progress on HEA Quality Assurance Programmes 2002-2004 and the HEA Strategic Initiatives Schemes 2005-2006;
- assessed coherence with European standards for external quality assurance agencies.

8. Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) self-evaluation report

8.1. The terms of reference for the review of the IUQB included a requirement that the IUQB provide a self-evaluation of its activities in the performance of its objects, mission and consequently, the contribution the IUQB has made to the area of quality assurance of higher education in Ireland.

8.2. The self-evaluation report considered the IUQB's activities in:

- engaging with internal and external stakeholders;
- setting standards / ensuring accountability;
- the identification of strengths, areas for improvements, opportunities and constraints in relation to the performance by the IUQB of its functions;
- the extent to which the IUQB is in compliance with the European standards for external quality assurance agencies; and,
- the wider national and international context.

8.3. The panel suggest that its report should be read together with the IUQB self-evaluation report (appendix 6). In its report, the review panel has concentrated on findings and recommendations. Readers seeking further background on the IUQB, its development and activities to date, and broader quality assurance structures in Ireland should refer to the IUQB self-evaluation report.

8.4. The review panel found the report both comprehensive in its description of the IUQB and its work and achievements to date. The report, in particular, demonstrated a clear awareness (on the part of the IUQB) of the quality challenge and related issues for Ireland. The report, however, did not provide a sufficiently clear account of how the IUQB would address these challenges. While the need for an IUQB strategic plan was noted in the self-evaluation report, the panel suggests that the development and implementation of such strategy needs greater reflection and should be commensurate with the resources available to the IUQB.

9. Review panel findings

9.1. Among stakeholders, there is a considerable level of interest in and a positive attitude towards the principle of the IUQB model and the manner in which it allows for engagement by the university communities in quality assurance and enhancement activity.

9.2. The enhancement-led model, developed in response to traditional quality assurance practice and the legislative framework, allows Irish universities, as autonomous institutions, to co-ordinate internal quality assurance procedures and processes in an increasingly systemic national and international context.

9.3. The work done to date is impressive and has given strategic impetus to raising the awareness and activity levels in the universities in respect of quality assurance and improvement.

9.4. The IUQB focus on quality enhancement has allowed for positive engagement within and between institutions. This progress in building relationships nationally and internationally (including the membership by the CEO of quality assurance bodies in Switzerland and Scotland) is positive and valuable.

9.5. Considerable regard for the developmental work undertaken by the IUQB and the stimulation of activity across institutions in the preparation of the sectoral guidelines and the associated conferences was expressed. In this regard, communication seemed strong and the IUQB message was getting through to many, though not all, actors in the university sector. Discussions with stakeholders suggest that support from both front line staff and senior management for the quality mission (and the requisite assurance processes) was not always evident. Greater support from university leaderships could help to encourage greater engagement.

9.6. In accordance with its objective of increasing the level of inter-university co-operation in developing quality assurance processes, IUQB has, with the support of the HEA since 2003, commissioned a series of National Guidelines of Good Practice.

9.7. Many of those met by the panel confirmed that the 2005 IUQB national guidelines of good practice booklet, *Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Universities,* funded by the HEA and published by the IUQB in accordance with its objective of increasing the level of inter-university co-operation in developing their quality assurance processes, is a particularly valuable contribution to quality assurance and improvement.

9.8. Overall, the panel found widespread support for the National Guidelines of Good Practice projects and comments further on this initiative later in this report.

9.9. The joint IUA/IUQB publication *A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities: concerted action for institutional improvement,* published in October 2007, is also well regarded by stakeholders. The publication, an update of the 2003 IUA (CHIU) publication *A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities: meeting the challenge of change*, takes account of the ENQA Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and in addition builds on the recommendations arising out of the Review of Quality Assurance in Irish Universities, undertaken by the European University Association Institutional Evaluation Programme (EUA IEP) in 2004-05.

9.10. There is considerable support among stakeholders for the IUQB's participation as an 'honest broker' both within and to the higher education system.

9.11. The IUQB's work has brought a renewed and valuable focus on the role of the student experience. The IUQB was found to be showing an increasing interest in reaching out to the student community through the promotion of mechanisms for enhanced student involvement. The development of a student handbook was also considered a positive step in this regard; however, in discussions with stakeholders, concerns were expressed at the slow pace of progress on this project.

9.12. Co-operation between IUQB and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) is ongoing and positive.

9.13. The statement contained in the IUQB Self Evaluation Report as to IUQB compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area was accepted by the panel – further comment is made below in respect of resources and independence.

9.14. In considering plans for the future development of the IUQB and its activities, the panel found shortcomings in strategic focus and selection of priorities; the first strategic plan was for 2004 — 2006. The subsequent planning cycle has not been completed.

9.15. The panel was disappointed with the stage of development of IUQB and progress since its establishment. However, this should be considered in light of its finding that the IUQB is still at a formative stage.

9.16. In making these remarks, the panel was however mindful of its earlier comments on work done to date. Much of what has been achieved is impressive and has given strategic impetus to raising the awareness and activity levels in the universities in respect of quality assurance and improvement. The IUQB has been successful in nurturing almost universal buy-in for itself and its remit.

9.17. The institutional review process and follow up procedures are a cause for concern. There appears to be a tendency to apply an equal and uniform treatment of all institutions. This approach opened up a risk of moving at the pace of the slowest member institution or units within institutions rather than promoting a model of best practice for sectoral improvement and reform.

9.18. There is a sense, conveyed by some stakeholders, of a lack of full engagement with the IUQB by some university leaderships. Because of competing priorities the quality agenda experienced some slippage. Some institutions engaged better than others, and indeed there were some fine examples of very good practice, but quality, and the IUQB message, is important to all and needs to be driven home.

9.19. In this respect, the panel had concerns that the priorities and activities of IUQB appeared to have a greater focus on developmental and enhancement activities – rather than on quality assurance activities. While the panel expressed an appreciation that such developmental activity was necessary in the early stage growth of the IUQB and sectoral quality more generally, the need to rebalance was considered both important and necessary to the future development of the IUQB.

9.20. The IUQB may not be the appropriate agency to co-ordinate or drive work on "best practice" sectoral projects. While this was not the unanimous view of stakeholders, it was suggested that these activities might be more appropriate to the IUA (in cooperation, where appropriate, with IUQB, IOTI and DIT) or could be progressed better within consortia funded under the HEA-funded Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF)[2].

9.21. In seeking to progress its mandate, the IUQB should develop the capacity to undertake quality assurance reviews rather than contracting these activities to external agencies. The development of the IUQB's ability in this respect would be of considerable benefit to the sector. The panel noted that implementing and commissioning reviews need not be a drain on resources

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2 The Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) is a multi-annual fund managed by the HEA on behalf of the Department of Education and Science. Amounting to €510 million over the period 2006 – 2013, SIF is directed towards support for innovation in higher education institutions. It supports new approaches to enhancing quality and effectiveness within higher education and research, incorporating the use of existing resources (including capital resources) more effectively, as well as new funding.

as the IUQB could seek the support of institutions, the sector and the HEA in the form of secondment of people and exchange of expertise.

9.22. The panel noted sustained, systematic shortcomings in follow up in some instances where universities had suspended QA/QI activities for particular periods. This deficiency, not wholly contributable to the IUQB, suggested the need for systemic arrangements to address such issues at the level of the institution, the IUQB and HEA. Greater engagement by, and support from, the IUQB Board would greatly assist in ensuring appropriate follow-up activity.

9.23. The panel was somewhat uneasy as to the time it has taken for the organisation to "settle down"; the lack of a current strategic plan was a case in point. The panel noted the considerable time taken to establish a medium term budgetary and financial framework and the associated internal financial control structures. The instability of budgets and resource inadequacy is a significant contributing factor in many of the panel's concerns around the functioning of the IUQB. The panel considered reports commissioned from both Hay and Grant Thornton, but retained some concerns. These concerns could however be addressed through implementation recommendations made later in this report.

10. Review Panel Recommendations

10.1. The panel made the following recommendations as a means to address its concerns and as assistance to the IUQB as it seeks to achieve its own quality enhancement goals and further the development of its internal quality culture.

10.2. *Planning and finance*

- the IUQB should immediately complete the preparation of a strategic plan for 2008 -2010 and should prepare business/operational plans on an annual basis;
- in setting out this plan, the IUQB should clearly link specific goals and dates for completion;
- the IUQB should publish annual reports to include a specific section which comments on the sectoral issues and challenges of immediate concern;
- a budgetary and resource framework should be put in place to resource the implementation of the strategic plan;
- the strategic and business plans should reflect the main objective for IUQB delegated to it by the universities and set out in its *Memorandum and Articles of Association* – the external review of quality assurance in the universities;

- priority should be given by the universities, IUA and the HEA to establishing an agreed medium term budgetary framework for the IUQB in the form of an agreed medium term core budget;
- continued engagement with enhancement activities is important but not at the cost of reducing the resources and emphasis given to the review role;
- the IUQB's system of financial controls is not strong and will need to be reinforced. The linking of annual financial reports back to stated budgets was not obvious. The provision of quarterly financial reports to the Board will require a more formal process.

10.3. *Governance*

- The governance of IUQB should be reviewed jointly by the HEA and the IUA. Issues for consideration in this review would include;
  - (i) the desirability of ensuring the continued engagement of university presidents in the governance and work of the Board;
  - (ii) ensuring the effective engagement of members external to the higher education sector;
  - (iii) development of a clear protocol/policy so as to encourage higher attendance levels at IUQB Board meetings;
  - (iv) putting an effective budgetary framework in place for the medium term;
  - (v) inclusion of a representative from HETAC so as to bring a greater cohesion to quality review across the Irish higher education sector;

- The direct appointment of a representative from the HEA executive to the Board, so as to better support the IUQB in the implementation of its review findings should also be considered.

10.4. *Quality assurance and quality improvement*

- the panel recommends that efforts be made to strike an appropriate balance between the review, quality assurance and quality improvement functions of the IUQB;
- the assurance and enhancement functions should be clearly linked and mutually supportive;
- there is a significant role for the IUQB to act as a lever for change in the universities given a willingness to challenge the *status quo;*
- among the enhancement activities, priority emphasis should be given to stimulating the improvement of quality assurance and quality improvement activities in universities. Promotion of good practice in sectoral areas and preparation of sectoral guidelines as discussed

above is desirable but should not displace the IUQB's core activity of quality review;

- IUQB is encouraged to stimulate a greater contribution in this domain through collaboration between IUA, IOTI[3], the DIT, the IHEQN or through consortia of institutions. HEA competitive funding (such as the SIF referred to above) is one means of supporting this activity.

10.5.   *IUQB external quality reviews*

- priority attention should be given to putting clear and effective processes in place to ensure effective and transparent follow up to recommendations emerging from external quality reviews of the universities carried out or commissioned by the IUQB;
- these processes should include annual review meetings between the IUQB and the HEA which would be linked to the budgetary mechanisms used by the HEA for the financing of the universities and the IUQB. The HEA should through these mechanisms be more active in supporting the implementation of the IUQB's recommendations. The review panel recommends the publication of the records of these meetings on the websites of both the HEA and the IUQB;
- the its design of future review cycles IUQB should seek to develop further its own identity as an external agency;
- future review cycles should ensure the engagement and inclusion of the linked and recognised colleges;
- the IUQB should seek to include suitably qualified members of staff from the institute of technology sector on review panels, given the relatively small pool of Irish academia and thereby continuing the sharing of good practice between both sectors;
- the IUQB should continue and conclude as a matter of urgency the consideration which it is giving to putting in place a continued cycle of institutional reviews as well as developing the capacity to undertake reviews itself;
- a cycle of rolling reviews is recommended. A four-year timetable with a sectoral report every fifth year is suggested, however the precise schedule should be the subject of further discussion between the HEA, IUA and IUQB;
- the rolling cycle should also allow for concurrent reviews of different institutions so as to avoid long gaps between institutional reports.

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[3] Institutes of Technology Ireland (IOTI) is a not-for-profit organisation with charitable status which enables the Directors and Presidents of the 13 Institutes of Technology to co-ordinate the work of the Institutes nationally.

10.6.   *Challenges*

- the strategies proposed by the panel for review and follow-up pose substantial challenges for the organisation, the universities and the higher education system generally. In addition to the direct organisational and administrative challenges, other major issues include:

  o the challenge of ensuring a consistent approach to the external review method across all institutions over a multi-annual period;
  o the challenge of ensuring objectivity – both in absolute and perception terms – so as to maintain the integrity of the processes and the confidence of stakeholders;
  o the challenge of achieving a balance between consistency and taking account of developments nationally and internationally in the context of a rolling review cycle.

- with regard to meeting these challenges the panel recommends that:

  o a consistent framework be used for each cycle of external reviews as far as is practicable;
  o the composition of review panels should be such as to maintain confidence and effectiveness.

- criteria in respect of meeting these challenges should include:

  o (i) ensuring a majority of personnel in all review teams are external to the Irish third level sector (universities, institutes of technology and other third-level providers); in the panels' view the 'internal' proportion should not exceed 30%;
  o (ii) at least 30% of the membership should be drawn respectively from each of the following:
  o   a. overseas academic communities and overseas higher education quality assurance agencies; and,
  o   b. Irish internal and external stakeholders including students and employers.

11. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

11.1. While the IUQB is particularly concerned with external quality assurance and review, it also has a role in developing standards for internal quality assurance through the collective responsibility devolved to it by individual universities.

11.2. The common framework agreed by the universities and as articulated in the IUA/IUQB publication, *A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities,* links the IUQB across all three parts of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

11.3. The panel considered the extent to which the IUQB, in the performance of its objects, was in compliance with all three parts of the ESG.

11.4. The panel was persuaded by the statements contained in the IUQB Self-evaluation Report as to IUQB compliance with the ESG.

11.5. The extent to which, and the ways in which, the IUQB complies with each of these standards and guidelines is considered in this chapter. This report should, however, be considered in full and in conjunction with the IUQB Self-Evaluation Report. Performance by the IUQB of its functions and its implementation of HEA funded activities combine, in the review panel's opinion, to meet the requirements and stated criteria of the Standards and Guidelines.

11.6. Each of the standards, procedures and guidelines established under the ESG are set out below. Under each, there is a statement of the practice that IUQB follows to take into account the presence and effectiveness of these processes in its quality assurance work. The panel have also provided their comments on the compliance of the IUQB in each case.

12. Panel summary comments on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

12.1. In order to become Full Members of ENQA (and to be granted admission to the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education), quality assurance agencies are required to successfully undergo an external review and thereby to show that they comply sufficiently with the ESG.

12.2. External reviews of ENQA member or candidate agencies are normally initiated and coordinated nationally by national bodies. National authorities may also commission a body from another country to carry out the review of the QA agency.

12.3. The results of such external reviews should be documented in a report which states the extent to which the agency is in compliance with the European standards for external quality assurance agencies.

12.4. The level of compliance of an agency, on the basis of an external review, is expressed as fully or substantially compliant, partially compliant, or non-compliant.

12.5. In respect of 16 of the standards and guidelines, the IUQB was judged to be fully compliant and to be substantially compliant in respect of the remaining 7.

12.6. The panel found that the IUQB did not contravene any of the ESG in any material way and was satisfied that the IUQB was therefore in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Recognising that IUQB membership of ENQA is a matter for ENQA to decide itself, in the opinion of the Panel, IUQB meets the membership criteria of ENQA (and the requirements for inclusion on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education).

13. *Part 1: European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions*

The standards identified in Part 1 of the ESG are for **internal quality assurance within higher education institutions.**

Part 1 Standard 1: Policy and procedures for quality assurance

Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality and quality assurance in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

IUA/IUQB Framework for Quality statement in relation to Part 1 Standard 1: "This framework and the reports of the EUA teams who carried out reviews of all seven universities in 2004-05 indicate the existence across the whole sector of formal, active and satisfactory institutional policies and participatory procedures that support continuous enhancement of quality."

Panel comments: The panel found both a statutory and non-statutory framework for quality assurance and improvement which combine to provide a clear policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards for programmes and awards in Institutions. The panel noted the significant role played by the IUQB in raising the awareness and activity levels in the universities in respect of continuous quality assurance and improvement. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 1 Standard 2*: Approval, monitoring, periodic review of programmes & awards.*

Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

IUA/IUQB Framework for Quality statement in relation to Part 1 Standard 2: "Procedures targeted specifically at academic programmes and awards depend on the universal use of external examiners, and formal, if largely internal, procedures for initial and on-going programmatic approval. As part of all approval procedures, every new award is also placed on the ten-level National Framework of Qualifications. Although the focus of external reviews in Irish universities is on the academic department or school, periodic external reviews of programmes are also undertaken, apart from externally initiated evaluation exercises linked to the accreditation of professional programmes."

Panel comments: The panel found a systematic framework for the approval, monitoring, periodic review of programmes and awards through a combination of external examiner review, NQF compliance (NQAI) and IUQB review. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 1 Standard 3*: Assessment of students*

Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

*IUA/IUQB Framework for Quality statement in relation to Part 1 Standard 3***:** "The assessment of student learning is controlled by internal examination boards with inputs from formally appointed external examiners. The criteria, regulations and procedures used for these mechanisms are published and are applied consistently. They are reviewed and, where necessary, updated on a regular basis."

Panel comments: Based on oral reports, the panel found a systematic approach to the assessment of students. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 1 Standard 4*: Quality assurance of teaching staff*

Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

IUA/IUQB Framework for Quality statement in relation to Part 1 Standard 4: "All permanent and contract teaching staff are appointed by means of formal public procedures and, in the majority of discipline areas, all appointees have

doctoral qualifications. In certain developing professional areas suitable candidates with master level degrees are also appointed and supported when they register for doctoral programmes. All universities now have permanent teaching support units that provide training programmes for academic staff ranging from regular colloquia to accredited master degrees in higher education teaching. Promotion procedures up to senior lecturer grade commonly include evaluations of teaching, research and community contributions. Student feedback on teaching is universal and increasingly being implemented systematically. Review groups have direct access or can request access, to all relevant records, and teaching quality is a standard topic for comment in review reports. A nationally agreed individual 'Performance Management and Development System', which applies to all members of staff, is currently being implemented in all the universities."

Panel comments: The panel found a systematic approach to the quality assurance of teaching staff. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 1 Standard 5: *Learning resources and student support*

Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

IUA/IUQB Framework for Quality statement in relation to Part 1 Standard 5: "All seven Irish universities provide resources to support student learning that are appropriate for the academic programmes offered. The adequacy of these resources and the need for improvements to enable more diverse and innovative teaching are common themes in internal review reports."

Panel comments: The panel found evidence of the necessary learning resources and student supports. The panel noted the IUQB good practice publication '*National Guidelines of Good Practice in the Organisation of Student Support Services in Irish Universities*' (published in April 2006). The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 1 Standard 6: *Information systems*

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.

IUA/IUQB Framework for Quality statement in relation to Part 1 Standard 6: "While all seven universities collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their study programmes and other activities, they have also recognised the importance and usefulness of 'enterprise data' as an important strategic objective for the university sector. This involves the agreement of definitions regarding key data across the sector, as well as putting in place systems which can collect and analyse this information. Both IUA and IUQB have initiated important and co-ordinated sector-wide projects to support

these objectives. As part of these moves, 'institutional research officers' have been appointed to coordinate data and information management in their own institutions."

Panel comments: The panel found evidence of the collection, analysis and use of relevant information for the effective management of programmes and activities. The panel noted the IUQB's fifth annual conference entitled '*Institutional Research: Benefiting the Student Experience and University Performance'* held in October 2007 and the recent publication of a consultation draft of the IUQB national guidelines on Good Practice for Institutional Research in Irish Higher Education. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 1 Standard 7: Public information

Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

IUA/IUQB Framework for Quality practice in relation to Part 1 Standard 7:
"All Irish universities regularly publish up-to-date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering. In particular, reports of external and internal peer reviews are published on university websites, and are accessible also via the IUQB website."

Panel comments: The panel found evidence of up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, on programmes and awards on offer. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

14. *Part 2: European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education*

Part 2 Standard 1: Use of internal quality assurance procedures

External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

IUQB practice in relation to Part 2 Standard 1: The statutory provision for quality assurance reviews at institutional level is set out in the Universities Act, 1997. The evaluations are required to review and report on the effectiveness of the universities' internal quality assurance procedures. Reviews of the seven Irish universities covered by the Universities Act, 1997 were initiated in 2003. In 2004 the HEA/IUQB jointly engaged the European University Association Institutional Evaluation Programmes (EUA IEP) to undertake the reviews. Under the agreed procedures for the 2004 Review of Quality Assurance in Irish Universities, the EUA IEP was requested "in the case of each university to review and report

(through IUQB to each university) on the effectiveness of its quality assurance procedures and the implementation of findings arising out of the application of those procedures, in the context of its overall institutional decision making and strategic planning."

The EUA IEP teams were asked "to examine the following areas for each of the seven universities:

- Design and planning of existing internal quality processes
- Effectiveness of internal quality procedures
- Relevance of internal quality processes and degree to which their outcomes are used in decision making and strategic planning
- Perceived gaps in the internal mechanisms, process and frameworks and recommendations for enhancing them"

When the Review of Quality Assurance in Irish Universities was undertaken by the EUA IEP in 2004-05, it was important that the review "establish whether each university has respected its legal obligations" and "more importantly whether the quality assurance procedures it had put in place are effective in promoting and improving quality across the institution".

In addition to reports on the individual universities, the EUA IEP provided a report on its sector-wide review of quality procedures established by the universities. This sectoral review concluded that "the Irish universities have established a quality assurance system which is functioning, well organised and now yielding results. In doing so, the universities have gone well beyond the legislative requirements contained in the 1997 Universities Act and have put in place a system which holds much promise for the development of higher education in Ireland."

Panel comments: The panel found the IUQB's external quality assurance procedures, as stated in the IUA/IUQB publication *A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities,* both linked into and took account of the effectiveness of Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines through the statutory and non-statutory framework for quality assurance and improvement. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 2 Standard 2: *Development of external quality assurance processes*

The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

IUQB practice in relation to Part 2 Standard 2: IUQB is strongly committed to ensuring that the processes, criteria and procedures used for its reviews are

publicly available. Paragraph 2 (a) (v) of the Memorandum of Association states as a subsidiary object of the company (IUQB) that where reviews have been agreed, IUQB will "… ensure that the processes, criteria and procedures used for any such reviews are predefined and are publicly available". In the external quality assurance review undertaken by IUQB in 2004 – the review of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures of the seven Irish universities – the aims and objectives were pre-determined, following discussion with the universities at the level of the university representative association (CHIU, now IUA) and the HEA. The terms of reference and protocols for the review, which also set out the procedures to be followed, were published prior to the commencement of the review.

Panel comments: The panel considered the IUQB's development of external quality assurance processes. The panel noted that IUQB's outline of their periodic review process was retrospective rather than forward looking and that the model for future periodic review was under development. The panel was satisfied that the implementation of their recommendations in this regard and the continuing development of the IUQB's model for future periodic external review would address this concern. The panel therefore considered the IUQB to be substantially compliant with the European Standards and Guidelines at this time.

Part 2 Standard 3: *Criteria for decisions*

Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

IUQB practice in relation to Part 2 Standard 3: The process of external review of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures in an Irish university has the legislative requirement that the outcomes of any such review must be published. The terms of reference for the 2004 EUA IEP review made provision for commending good practice and to make recommendations for quality improvement. The terms of reference made provision for each university to receive the draft report and to make any evidence-based factual corrections. On receipt of the final report from IUQB, the terms of reference made provision for the university to make a response to the review report, prior to the publication of the review report.

The external audit is a review of the effectiveness of internal evaluations conducted by the university and its general quality assurance procedures. Section 35 of the Universities Act provides for the establishment by each university of quality assurance procedures "aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by the university" and for periodic reviews of the effectiveness of these internal procedures. The legislative basis is therefore one of quality improvement. As it is not an accreditation process, there are no formal decisions made to accredit or not to accredit. The review reports contain commendations of good practice and recommendations for quality improvement

which must be addressed in the institutional response to the report and in subsequent follow-up reports which are made publicly available.

The focus of any subsequent review of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures in a university will take into account progress made in the implementation of the recommendations arising from the previous review.

Panel comments: The panel found both formal (legislative) and informal structures for decision making processes based on explicit published criteria which were consistently applied. The panel's recommendations on the development of a model for future periodic review are reiterated here. The IUQB's work to date suggests the organisation has the capability to develop and implement its own framework for external review. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 2 Standard 4: *Processes fit for purpose*

All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

IUQB practice in relation to Part 2 Standard 4: The 2004 EUA IEP review of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures in the seven Irish universities commissioned by IUQB (and the HEA) was designed to achieve the specific aims and objectives set for it.

The terms of reference of the review stated that, in the case of each university, the EUA IEP would review and report on the effectiveness of its quality assurance procedures and the implementation of findings arising out of the application of those procedures, in the context of its overall decision making and strategic planning. To this end, and following discussions with the universities (under the auspices of CHIU (now the IUA)), IUQB and HEA decided that an appropriate approach to the review would be to utilise the institutional evaluation programme of the European University Association. The EUA IEP was commissioned therefore to undertake the review on behalf of IUQB (and the HEA), though a number of elements of the EUA's standard review process were customised to satisfy particular statutory requirements. This included the commitment to publication of the review reports and the agreed process for the review.

Panel comments: The panel found external quality assurance processes designed specifically to achieve the aims and objectives set for them. The IUQB's use of the EUA's standard review process was noted in this regard. The panel's recommendations on the development of a model for future periodic review are again reiterated here. The IUQB's work to date suggests the organisation has the capability to develop and implement its own framework for external review. The panel considered the IUQB to be substantially compliant.

Part 2 Standard 5*: Reporting*

Reports should be published and should be written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.

IUQB practice in relation to Part 2 Standard 5: IUQB is committed to publishing informative reports and has signed up to the following principle of good practice, with fellow practitioners and policy makers, under the auspices of the Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN)[4]: "Bodies responsible for the activation and administration of reviews publish the outcomes of all reviews. Reports are written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to the intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports are easy for a reader to find."

The terms of reference for the 2004 EUA IEP review provided explicitly for the publication of the review reports. All of the review reports culminated with a section on recommendations for quality improvement.

IUQB is also continuing to work with stakeholders in the IHEQN, to further develop good practice with regard to the publication of reviews.

Panel comments: The panel found unequivocal commitment by the IUQB to openness and transparency in its processes including the publication and communication of the outcomes of its review processes. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 2 Standard 6*: Follow-up procedures*

Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.

IUQB practice in relation to Part 2 Standard 6: IUQB is strongly committed to having robust follow-up procedures built into its quality assurance processes. Paragraph 2 (a) (iii) of the Memorandum of Association has as a subsidiary object of the company (IUQB) that where reviews have been undertaken and: "… where such reviews contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan (IUQB will) collaborate with the Irish universities to ensure that such reviews have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently".

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[4] The IHEQN was established in 2003 and provides a forum for the discussion of quality assurance / quality improvement issues amongst the principal national stakeholders involved in the quality assurance of higher education and training in Ireland.

The terms of reference for the 2004 EUA IEP review of quality assurance in Irish Universities[5] were published in advance of the review. The terms of reference provided for each university to provide a response to each of the reports (university report, sectoral report and the 'reflections' document produced by the high-level reference panel) within six weeks of receipt of the report. The terms of reference also included the requirement for IUQB to respond to the reports and for this response to be published.

Prior to the publication of the reports and responses in April 2005 (in advance of the adoption of the European Standards and Guidelines in May 2005), IUQB had agreed to establish a task force to coordinate the implementation of the recommendations in the review reports. In November 2005 and June 2006, each university provided an update to IUQB on progress with the implementation of the recommendations in the individual university and sectoral reports. IUQB also provided an overview report on both occasions to the HEA. All of these reports were published on the IUQB website. A third report was sent to the IUQB Board in November 2007 and the HEA in December 2007. Following the consideration of the report by the HEA it was published on the IUQB website.

On a sectoral basis for higher education, IUQB has also signed up to the following principle of good practice, with fellow practitioners and policy makers, under the auspices of the IHEQN: "Predetermined follow-up procedures exist for acting upon reports, implementing recommendations for action, or developing an action plan. These follow-up procedures are implemented consistently and are publicly available."

IUQB is also continuing to work with stakeholders in the IHEQN, to further develop good practice in this area. A working group within the network is finalising the development of a new set of principles of good practice on 'follow-up' in quality reviews.

Panel comments: The panel found evidence of commitment by the IUQB to encouraging the consideration of review outcomes and implementation of recommendations. However, the panel noted the IUQB was somewhat restricted in its ability to implement certain recommendations and may, as a result, have lost some focus on its implementation and change agenda favouring instead quality enhancement activities. The panel were satisfied that the implementation of their recommendations in respect of the need for an appropriate balance between the review, quality assurance and quality improvement functions of the IUQB would address this concern. The panel therefore considered the IUQB to be substantially compliant with the European Standards and Guidelines at this time.

Part 2 Standard 7: Periodic reviews

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[5] See *http://www.iuqb.ie/info/Review_of_universities.aspx* for further information on the 2004/5 review.

External quality assurance processes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.

*IUQB practice in relation to Part 2 Standard 7***: The first cycle of reviews of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures in the seven Irish universities was undertaken in 2004, with the process being completed with the publication of the reports in 2005. All seven universities were reviewed in 2004 in this cycle. The review procedures were clearly defined in consultation with the seven universities and were published in advance.

Although the statutory provision for such institutional audits is fifteen years (in accordance with Section 35(4) of the Universities Act, 1997), the Board of IUQB, following consultation with the universities and the HEA, agreed to conduct a second evaluation of all seven universities (and associated or linked colleges where a university makes awards) in 2009, with reports completed and published in 2010.

In line with current international practice, it is anticipated that further reviews will take place on a cyclical basis at least once every five years.

Panel comments: The panel found external quality assurance processes were undertaken on a cyclical basis and the length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used were both clearly defined and published in advance as evidenced through the 2004 review process. The panel also considered the IUQB's outline for its forthcoming 2009/10 review process and has made specific recommendations elsewhere in its report. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 2 Standard 8*: System-wide analyses*

Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments etc.

IUQB practice in relation to Part 2 Standard 8: Paragraph 2 (a) (iv) of the Memorandum of Association has as a subsidiary object of the company (IUQB) that where external quality assurance reviews have been undertaken IUQB will "… produce and publish from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of such reviews or evaluations".

As part of the Review of Quality Assurance in Irish Universities in 2004, the EUA IEP produced a sectoral report for the Higher Education Authority (HEA) that was also sent to IUQB and including recommendations for improvement in the quality assurance processes in the Irish university sector. In March 2005, the

HEA requested that IUQB provide reports in relation to the follow-up of the recommendations in the report at university and sectoral level. IUQB sent an overview report on progress in the implementation of recommendations in the sectoral report to the HEA in November 2005 and a second report in June 2006. A third report was sent in November 2007. All three of these reports have been published on the IUQB website. In addition, the implementation of the recommendations of the sectoral report at system and individual university level have been incorporated into the 2nd edition of A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities which was published jointly by IUQB and the IUA in October 2007.

Panel comments: The panel found unequivocal commitment by the IUQB to openness and transparency in its processes including the publication and communication of the outcomes of its review processes. The panel noted the publication of the EUA IEP and subsequent follow-up reports to the HEA via the IUQB's website. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

15. *Part 3: European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance agencies*

Part 3 Standard 1: Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education

Standard: The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

Guidelines: The standards for external quality assurance contained in Part 2 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. The standards reflect best practices and experiences gained through the development of external quality assurance in Europe since the early 1990s. It is therefore important that these standards are integrated into the processes applied by external quality assurance agencies towards the higher education institutions.

The standards for external quality assurance should together with the standards for external quality assurance agencies constitute the basis for professional and credible external quality assurance of higher education institutions.

IUQB practice in relation to Part 3 Standard 1: IUQB practice in relation to the use of external quality assurance procedures has been described in the preceding section (Part 2: European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education).

Panel comments: The panel found that the IUQB had, since its inception, looked to European practice as a model and indeed set of standards to be exceeded. The panel noted the IUQB's external quality assurance processes to date had aligned

well with European Standards and Guidelines. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 3 Standard 2: *Official status*

Standard: Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.

IUQB statement in relation to Part 3 Standard 2: IUQB was established by the Irish universities in 2002. From 2003—2004, IUQB was funded by the universities (through the Irish Universities Association) and also received funding from the Higher Education Authority (HEA, the statutory funding body for universities) as part of the Quality Assurance Programme 2003 — 2004.

In 2005 and 2006, IUQB received direct funding contributions from the universities and was also funded by the HEA under the Strategic Initiatives Schemes 2005 — 2006.

In 2006, IUQB was given an established legal basis, as a company limited by guarantee (registered number: 415814), governed by a memorandum and articles of association, as required by Irish company law. Following this legal incorporation in 2006, IUQB received its 2007 funding from university subscriptions and an annual grant from the HEA. The balance of funding from 2003-2007 has moved from a proportionately higher figure from the universities than HEA to a more balanced figure in 2008 (IUA 60: HEA 40 in 2006, 55:45 in 2007 and an outline agreement for 50:50 funding in 2008).

The HEA has a statutory right to review the quality assurance procedures in the universities. It discharged this right jointly with IUQB in 2004 when all seven universities were reviewed. A sectoral report was provided to the HEA and the individual university reports were sent to IUQB. In March 2005, HEA requested that IUQB follow-up and report on progress by the universities in relation to the recommendations in the sectoral report.

IUQB conducts its reviews in accordance with Section 35(4-5) of the Universities Act (1997) and consistent with the European Standards and Guidelines (2005). As a company limited by guarantee, IUQB is subject to the provision of the Irish Companies Acts, 1963 — 2006 and must submit audited accounts annually.

IUQB can only change its directors and memorandum and articles of association by formal declaration to the statutory Companies Registration Office (CRO) and must provide an annual return to the CRO. All submissions to the CRO are

accessible to any member of the public on payment of the appropriate nominal fee.

Panel comments: In carrying out its review, and in its discussions with stakeholders, the panel found broad recognition of the IUQB both nationally and internationally as an agency with responsibilities for external quality assurance. The panel noted the IUQB's established legal basis as a company limited by guarantee and the fact that the universities have delegated their statutory quality assurance and improvement responsibilities to the IUQB in a legally appropriate way. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 3 Standard 3: *Activities*

Standard: Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.

Guidelines: These may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the agency.

IUQB statement in relation to Part 3 Standard 3: IUQB is strongly committed to ensuring that it undertakes external quality assurance activities at institutional level on a regular basis. Paragraph 2 (a) (ii) of the Memorandum of Association states that a subsidiary object of the company (IUQB) provides that IUQB will: "… arrange regular quality assurance reviews or evaluations of the Irish universities including reviews or evaluations of the effectiveness of quality assurance and quality improvement procedures as may be required by law."

The statutory provision for reviewing the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures in an Irish university (at least once every fifteen years) rests with the governing authority of the university under Section 35(4-5) of the Universities Act (1997). Upon establishing IUQB in 2002, the governing authorities of the seven Irish universities assigned to IUQB the responsibility to organise these reviews of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures. This was further confirmed in 2006 when IUQB was established as a company limited by guarantee with the university review function enshrined in the memorandum of association of the company. The process of externally reviewing the effectiveness of internal procedures in a university would normally be characterised as an institutional audit.

The IUQB Corporate Brochure (2006) indicates that consistent with the mission statement, the main and subsidiary objects of the company are translated into four main activities, the foremost of which is to conduct regular external reviews of Irish universities in accordance with national legislation and consistent with the European Standards and Guidelines.

IUQB reviewed all seven universities in 2004, consistent with the practice of publishing and agreeing the following: the terms of reference for the review, the self-evaluation guidelines, the review reports by external experts, the university responses, the follow-up process and associated reports. In consultation with the universities (and the HEA), a second series of evaluations of the seven universities has already been agreed by the IUQB Board in October 2006 and will take place in 2009-10.

Panel comments: The panel found external quality assurance processes were undertaken at institutional and programme level on a cyclical basis. The panel also considered the IUQB's outline for its forthcoming 2009/10 review process and has made specific recommendations elsewhere in its report. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 3 Standard 4: Resources

Standard: Agencies should have adequate and proportionate resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.

IUQB statement on Part 3 Standard 4: IUQB is funded by subscriptions from the seven universities (on a pro rata basis, on the same basis as the Irish universities fund the university representative association, IUA) and by an annual grant from the Higher Education Authority. IUQB currently has an agreed staff complement of seven (with five staff currently employed and a recruitment process in place for the remaining two positions). The staff complement of seven was agreed following the recommendations of an external review by the Hay Group (See the statement of practice under Standard 8 below). In accordance with Irish company law, IUQB accounts are audited and presented to the annual general meeting of members in advance of being included in the annual return to the Irish Companies Registration Office (CRO). The accounts and all details and changes in membership of the board of directors and any changes in the memorandum and articles of association of the company are available on application from the CRO upon payment of the appropriate nominal fee.

Panel comments: The panel found evidence of adequate and proportionate resources, both human and financial, to enable the IUQB to organise and run its external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner.

However, aspects of the IUQB self-evaluation report and indeed the stakeholder meetings suggested that the IUQB had faced resource issues in the past. The resource shortage experienced was often coupled with a lack of support in some quarters of the university system. These resource shortages were likely exacerbated by a necessity for the IUQB to appropriate scarce resources to sectoral non-review related projects as a means of garnering support and ensuring

buy-in from the sector. The net result was a tendency towards a project focused organisation with somewhat less focus on the broader quality agenda and a lack of the strategic vision required to spur growth.

The panel found that these concerns have, to some extent, been addressed more recently. The panel noted that the IUQB was likely still constrained by its establishment order (the memorandum of association of the company limit IUQB activity and what they can achieve) and suggested the need for a greater impetus from the HEA to assist the IUQB in achieving its quality objectives. From its discussions with the HEA the panel was satisfied that this support would be forthcoming and that the resource issue could be addressed. The panel also considered the IUQB's outline for its forthcoming 2009/10 review process and has made specific recommendations elsewhere in its report. The panel considered the IUQB to be substantially compliant with the European Standards and Guidelines.

Part 3 Standard 5: *Mission statement*

Standard: Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

Guidelines: These statements should describe the goals and objectives of agencies' quality assurance processes, the division of labour with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions, and the cultural and historical context of their work. The statements should make clear that the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the agency and that there exists a systematic approach to achieving its goals and objectives. There should also be documentation to demonstrate how the statements are translated into a clear policy and management plan.

IUQB statement on Part 3 Standard 5: IUQB adopted its current mission statement initially in 2004, following the preparation of its first strategic plan. The mission is published on the IUQB website and in the IUQB Corporate Brochure and reads: "IUQB will play a leading role in developing and fostering a coherent culture of quality in all the activities of the universities in line with the highest international standards. Building on its central role in the statutory reviews of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures in the universities, IUQB will develop and drive collaborative initiatives across the sector, taking the lead in co-operating with higher education partners in Ireland and abroad and earning the trust of stakeholders through open and transparent communication."

Furthermore, the IUQB Corporate Brochure and *A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities (2nd edition)* indicate that consistent with its mission and the main and subsidiary objects of the company, IUQB performs four core activities

in relation to quality assurance, the first of which is defined as conducting regular external reviews of Irish universities.

The four core activities are given below:

- Conducting regular external reviews of Irish universities in accordance with national legislation and agreed European standards
- Establishing good practice and publishing and promoting national guidelines of good practice
- Disseminating information to stakeholders
- Co-operating with national and international organisations

IUQB reviewed all seven universities in 2004, consistent with the practice of publishing and agreeing the following: the terms of reference for the review, the self-evaluation guidelines, the review report by external experts, the university responses, the follow-up process and associated reports. In consultation with the universities (and the HEA), a second series of evaluations of the seven universities will take place in 2009-10. This review will also include any linked or associated higher education college where a university makes awards.

Panel comments: The panel found clear and explicit goals and objectives for the work of the IUQB, contained in a publicly available statement. While the panel were concerned at the lack of a current strategic plan for the IUQB they have made specific recommendations elsewhere in this document in this regard and expect this concern will be addressed in the immediate future. The panel also noted the IUQB's *framework* document and memorandum and articles of association as contributing towards the communication of the IUQB's aims and objectives. The panel considered the IUQB to be substantially compliant with the European Standards and Guidelines at this time.

Part 3 Standard 6: *Independence*

Standard: Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.

Guidelines: An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as:
- Its operational independence from higher education institutions and governments is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts).
- The definition and operation of its procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its quality assurance processes are undertaken autonomously and

independently from governments, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence.

- While relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

IUQB statement on Part 3 Standard 6: Under its memorandum and articles of association, IUQB enjoys independence and autonomy. The provisions for membership of the Board (of Directors of the company) are set out in the articles of association of the company and reflect nominations by stakeholder, including learner, interests. The representative body for the Irish universities (the Irish Universities Association, IUA) nominates seven of the seventeen members of the Board on an ad personam basis. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) nominates three members. The Chair of the Board is appointed as a joint nominee of the HEA and the IUA. The other members of the Board are nominated by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), and by representative bodies for the trade unions, business and students in higher education. In addition, the Board has international membership nominated by representative bodies of European and North American universities. Upon retirement or resignation, casual vacancies in the Board are filled by nominations from organisations which must be considered by the Nominations Committee of the Board, in advance of their formal appointment by the Board.

Although the universities are consulted when developing the terms of reference for IUQB reviews and the universities are afforded the opportunity to point out factual errors in the draft review reports and to make formal responses to the reports in advance of their publication, the final review reports remain the responsibility of IUQB.

Decisions relating to quality assurance matters – including the nomination and appointment of external experts involved in its quality assurance processes – are made by IUQB in an independent manner, which is independent of influence from government, institutional or other sources.

IUQB initiated the review of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures in the seven Irish universities in 2003, following consultation with the universities. The members of the evaluation teams for the 2004 Review of Quality Assurance in Irish Universities were appointed by the EUA IEP. They consisted of current and former president and vice-presidents of universities complemented by other higher educational professionals. The members of the EUA IEP quality pool undergo an annual 3 day training programme in quality assurance. All members of the 2004 teams were from outside Ireland. Neither the universities nor the HEA were involved in the selection of the members of the evaluation teams.

In October 2006, the Board of IUQB decided to conduct the second review of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures in the Irish universities in 2009, following consultation with the universities and the HEA. This second series of review will take place 5 years after the first review, well within the statutory requirement to hold reviews every 15 years.

Panel comments: The panel considered the issue of independence carefully as it was introduced as a subject of discussion by a number of stakeholder groups. The panel was satisfied that the existing *modus operandi*, funding and governance model had served the IUQB well through its developmental stage from 2002 to date. The panel also noted that such funding relationships were not unusual in the European context. The panel again made specific recommendations on the future development, funding and governance of the IUQB and was satisfied that implementation would allay any lingering concerns about independence, including the substantial financial contributions made by the universities. The panel considered the IUQB to be substantially compliant with the European Standards and Guidelines.

Part 3 Standard 7*: External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies*

Standard: The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
- an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
- publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

Guidelines: Agencies may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes. Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people. Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions or conclusions which have formal consequences should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.

IUQB statement on Part 3 Standard 7: IUQB is strongly committed to ensuring that the processes, criteria and procedures used for its reviews are publicly available. Paragraph 2 (a) (v) of the Memorandum of Association has as a subsidiary object of the company (IUQB) that where reviews have been agreed, IUQB will "… ensure that the processes, criteria and procedures used for any such reviews are pre-defined and are publicly available." The processes, criteria and procedures used by IUQB in relation to the 2004 review of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures in the Irish universities were pre-defined and made publicly available prior to the commencement of the review. The review was jointly commissioned by IUQB and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to accord with the organisations' separate but compatible roles in relation to quality assurance in the Irish universities.

IUQB engaged the European University Association (EUA) Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) to undertake the review of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures on its behalf. The review process was based on the EUA's established institutional evaluation programme, which makes provision for the training of internal and external evaluators, self-assessment by the institution, an external assessment by a group of experts, publication of a report with recommendations, and a follow-up procedure. IUQB's decision to engage the EUA IEP was contingent upon the existence of such elements within the association's institutional evaluation programme. Following discussions with IUQB and the universities, the EUA IEP adapted its standard procedures to include panel members from North America in addition to its normal European panel members. This was the first occasion on which such an adaptation was made.

Prior to the publication of the review reports, IUQB had agreed to establish a task force to progress the follow-up on the review recommendations and their implementation by the universities. The following elements of the review process – the original terms of reference and review methodology, the assessment report of the external experts, the university responses, the IUQB response and the follow-up reports from the universities and IUQB – were published.

The reviews of all seven universities were undertaken in the same year (2004) by a group of fourteen evaluators operating as four teams, three of the teams evaluating two universities each and one team evaluating the remaining university. All evaluators attended an initial briefing with the universities and IUQB (and the HEA).

When the draft reports were received from the EUA IEP, the universities were afforded the opportunity to address factual errors. As the reports do not contain formal decisions or make conclusions which have formal consequences, there is no requirement for an appeal process against such decisions. However, as part of the published terms of reference and agreement between the EUA IEP and IUQB (and the HEA) the universities were requested to provide a response to the review

reports (within 6 weeks of receipt of the reports) and the review reports were not published until the response was received.

The review reports were written in a manner that was consistent with the philosophy of the EUA institutional evaluation programme and the legislative requirements of the Universities Act, in that the process is one of evaluation in the spirit of quality improvement. The reports contained a series of recommendations for quality improvement. The implementation of the recommendations was followed-up by regular reporting to IUQB, including the publication of these follow-up reports.

The focus of any subsequent review of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures in a university will take into account progress made in the implementation of the recommendations arising from the previous review.

Panel comments: The panel found the review processes, criteria and procedures used by the IUQB were both clearly defined and published in advance as evidenced through the 2004 review process. The panel also considered the IUQB's outline for its forthcoming 2009/10 review process and has made specific recommendations elsewhere in its report. The panel considered the IUQB to be fully compliant.

Part 3 Standard 8*: Accountability procedures*

Standard: Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

Guidelines: These procedures are expected to include the following:

- A published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website;
- Documentation which demonstrates that:
  - o the agency's processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;
  - o the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts;
  - o the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and materials produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedures are subcontracted to other parties;
  - o the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from its own staff and council/board); an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and

evaluated institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.

- A mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years.

IUQB statement on Part 3 Standard 8: IUQB is strongly committed to having a cyclical review of its activities at least once every five years. Paragraph 2 (b) (viii) of the Memorandum of Association has as a subsidiary object of the company (IUQB) that IUQB will: "… organise an evaluation by experts of its own processes in reviewing the effectiveness of the quality procedures"

IUQB is currently undergoing a quality review process, with three different strands. One strand will consider the extent to which IUQB complies with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

A second strand seeks to evaluate how effectively IUQB has achieved its objects as set out in the Memorandum of Association of the company and will consider an assessment of the performance, organisation and structures of the executive and committees of IUQB to date.

A third strand will consider the effectiveness of the activities organised by IUQB that have been funded by the HEA since 2003.

In 2007, IUQB has undergone two other external organisational review exercises. The first of these in January-March 2007 involved the use of the Hay Group to perform a review of the proposed organisational structure of the Executive and also included a series of job evaluations of the existing and proposed new posts. The review concluded that the proposed structure of seven persons was fit for purpose to undertake the main activities of IUQB. A business analysis process review undertaken by Grant Thornton commenced in July 2007 and is ongoing. In the case of both reviews, all IUQB staff were interviewed by the external evaluators as part of the process.

The outcome of the Grant Thornton review will include the production of a procedures manual suitable for IUQB, a draft of which was produced in April 2008. Current financial and administrative procedures were documented in advance of the report of the review. A series of recommendation has been made on financial and other business processes including the streamlining of financial and other business management processes.

These process reviews are designed to improve organisational outputs and internal processes, and will form the basis for IUQB's overall internal quality strategy and policy. IUQB subcontracted the evaluation of the *Review of Quality Assurance in Irish Universities* to the EUA IEP in 2004 under conditions that

were negotiated in advance and whereby the terms of reference and the review process were published in advance, having consulted with the institutions to be evaluated and following a briefing seminar with IUQB, HEA and the universities. The terms of reference were developed so as to be consistent with the legislative provisions of the Universities Act.

The members of the evaluation teams for the 2004 *Review of Quality Assurance in Irish Universities* were appointed by the EUA IEP. They consisted of current and former president and vice-presidents of universities complemented by other higher educational professionals. The members of the EUA IEP quality pool undergo an annual 3 day training programme in quality assurance. All members of the 2004 teams were from outside Ireland and had no previous formal association with the Irish universities. The curriculum vitae of the reviewers were published on the university websites in advance of the reviews.

The process of self-evaluation for the current review has permitted the further development of internal quality assurance procedures. In particular, the process has permitted the formal documenting of:

- An internal feedback mechanism where the self-evaluation process and report clearly demonstrates the mechanism for formally collecting feedback about all its activities from (a) its own staff through an internal SWOT exercise at the commencement of the review and two staff meetings specifically dedicated to internal quality assurance processes and (b) the Board, who participated in a focus group session and an evaluation using a survey instrument
- An internal reflection mechanism where the self-evaluation process and report clearly outlines the mechanism of reacting to internal and external recommendations for improvement from staff and external stakeholders
- An external feedback mechanism where the self-evaluation process and report clearly outlines the mechanism used for collecting feedback from experts and evaluated institutions for future development

This process of review has greatly assisted in informing and underpinning IUQB's own development and improvement.

Panel comments: The panel found the IUQB had in place, or in development, a range of measures, documents and procedures both outlining and assuring their own internal and external accountability procedures. The panel noted the IUQB had commissioned this external review and had in the recent past commissioned a review of the proposed organisational structure by the Hay Group as well as an ongoing business analysis process review undertaken by Grant Thornton. The panel considered the IUQB to be substantially compliant with the European Standards and Guidelines.

16. Higher Education Authority (HEA) funded projects

16.1. In accordance with the IUQB's objective of increasing the level of inter-university co-operation in developing quality assurance processes, the HEA has since 2003 supported the IUQB in the performance of a number of sectoral projects to develop national guidelines of good practice.

16.2. To date, two booklets have been published:

> *National Guidelines of Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Universities* (published in February 2005 and reprinted by demand in October 2006);

> *National Guidelines of Good Practice in the Organisation of Student Support Services in Irish Universities* (published in April 2006).

16.3. Ongoing projects include the preparation of national guidelines of good practice in the areas of:

- Institutional research
- Quality improvement of teaching and learning
- Academic workloads
- Strategic planning in academic departments
- Mathematics teaching and learning
- Student evaluation and feedback mechanisms

16.4. The IUQB has recently invited feedback on consultation drafts of IUQB national guidelines on *Good Practice for Institutional Research in Irish Higher Education* (April 2008) and *Good Practice in Strategic Planning for Academic Units in Irish Universities* (May 2008). Both consultations have now been completed.

16.5. Reflecting earlier comments, the panel had concerns as to the pace of development of these sectoral projects. While a small number had progressed quickly and had been well received, at the point of the commencement of this review others were close to five years in development. The lack of progress seemed to suggest the urgent need for a strategic approach by the IUQB and greater prioritisation of its activities given the limited resources available.

16.6. The panel did however note that towards the end of the review process this situation had been markedly improved. In June 2008, a further two of the sectoral good practice guidelines (*Institutional Research* and *Strategic Planning in Academic Departments*) were published.

16.7. There was however a sense that a number of those projects which had been successfully brought to completion were significantly reliant on individual

actors and in particular their capacity to build engagement across the system. The panel recognised the need for consultation between the HEA and the IUQB and noted ongoing engagement and discussion.

16.8. As stated earlier, the panel found that the sectoral project on the organisation of PhD programmes was very well received. Numerous stakeholders expressed their support for this initiative. The more recent student support publication was less well recognised but had support among those who had received it. A number of key target audiences for the publication were less familiar and this lacuna will need to be addressed.

16.9. The panel also expressed some concern that the promotion of good practice in sectoral areas and preparation of sectoral guidelines might draw the IUQB's attention away from its quality review activity.

16.10. Some concern also centred on the appropriateness of the IUQB as an actor in the production of these reports. While there may be a significant or central role for the IUQB in some of these productions other might be better resourced or developed under the auspices of the IUA, IOTI and DIT or through other consortia supported by the Strategic Innovation Fund.

16.11. Conversely, it was the case that if these sectoral projects were driven by the IUQB there could be a genuine opportunity for the IUQB to effect real change given the support and buy-in of senior university management.

16.12. The panel again reiterated a prerequisite for strategic planning on the part of the IUQB and the need for a balance between its core mission of quality assurance and a subsidiary mission of quality improvement. While these activities are not mutually exclusive an appropriate balance and mutual-support structure, where quality assurance influences and assists the prioritisation of improvement activities, is required.

17. Conclusion

17.1. Quality assurance is essential to underwriting the activities of higher education institutions. Higher education is widely recognised as having made a significant contribution to social and economic growth in Ireland.

17.2. As Ireland faces a less certain economic outlook, the contribution from higher education will be more important than ever. The quality of graduates, research activity, teaching and learning will be inextricably linked with success in pursuing economic and social development objectives in the coming years.

17.3. The IUQB, a relatively young organisation, faces challenges too as it seeks to move from its developmental stage to a more formal and active footing.

17.4. In any review findings there are both positives and negatives.

17.5. The IUQB's performance as a quality assurance agency in Irish higher education against, the backdrop of developments in the European Higher Education Area, has been significant.

17.6. The review panel has noted the considerable strengths of the IUQB and in particular its achievement of broad support for its activities across the higher education sector both in Ireland and abroad.

17.7. In seeking to assist the IUQB in achieving its own quality enhancement goals and furthering the development of its own internal quality culture, where the panel have found gaps they have made recommendations. The panel are satisfied that the IUQB, with the continued support of the university sector and the HEA, will rise to this challenge.

17.8. The panel therefore commend the IUQB on its effectiveness in the performance of its main objectives since its establishment in 2002.

Appendix 1 - Glossary of Terms/Acronyms

CEO   Chief Executive Officer

CHIU   Conference of Heads of Irish Universities (now IUA)

CRO   Companies' Registration Office

DIT   Dublin Institute of Technology

ENQA   European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

EQAR   European Quality Assurance Register in Higher Education

ESU   European Students' Union

ESG   European Standards and Guidelines

EUA   European University Association

EUA IEP European University Association Institutional Evaluation Programme

FETAC   Further Education and Training Awards Council

HEA   Higher Education Authority

HETAC   Higher Education and Training Awards Council

IEP   Institutional Evaluation Programme

IHEQN   Irish Higher Education Quality Network

IMI   Irish Management Institute

IOTI   Institutes of Technology Ireland

IUA   Irish Universities' Association

IUQB   Irish Universities' Quality Board

IUQSC   Inter Universities Quality Steering Committee

NDP   National Development Plan

NESC   National Economic and Social Council

NQAI   National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

NQF   National Qualifications' Framework

OECD   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

QA   Quality Assurance

QAA   Quality Assurance Agency

QI   Quality Improvement

SFI   Science Foundation Ireland

SIF   Strategic Innovation Fund

SIPTU   Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union

TCD   Trinity College Dublin

UCC   University College Cork

USI   Union of Students in Ireland

Appendix 2 – Terms of reference and protocol for the review

Quality Review of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) -
commissioned by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) at the request of IUQB
– Terms of Reference and Protocol for the Review

CONTEXT

The Irish Universities Quality Board was established in 2002 to increase the level of inter-university co-operation in developing quality assurance procedures and processes, in line with best international systems. The IUQB was incorporated in February 2006 as a non-profit making company.

IUQB performs the following core activities in relation to quality assurance in the Irish university sector:

o Conducting regular external reviews of Irish universities in accordance with national legislation and agreed European standards.
o Establishing good practice and publishing and promoting national guidelines
o Disseminating information to stakeholders.
o Co-operating with national and international organisations.

In accordance with paragraph 2 (viii) of its memorandum of association, in line with good international practice and so as to fulfil European standards for external quality assurance agencies, the IUQB Board, in 2006, agreed to undergo an external review and requested the HEA to commission the review.

The review will:

o Evaluate the effectiveness of the IUQB in the performance of its main objects of its memorandum of association since its establishment in 2002
o Adopt a developmental approach by assisting the IUQB in achieving its own quality enhancement goals and furthering the development of its own internal quality culture.
o Assess the IUQB's performance as a quality assurance agency in Irish higher education against the backdrop of developments in the European Higher Education Area.

This will involve the following:

o Evaluating the performance, organisation and structures of the executive and committees of the IUQB to date.
o Evaluating the effectiveness of IUQB activities undertaken and funded by the HEA under the HEA Quality Assurance Programmes 2002-2004 and the HEA Strategic Initiatives Schemes 2005-2006.
o Evaluating the extent to which the IUQB, in the performance of its objects, complies with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.*

The review will comprise:

- o The production and publication of a self-evaluation report by IUQB
- o Evaluation of the self-evaluation report, including interviews with IUQB board members, staff and stakeholders, by a panel of experts appointed by the HEA.
- o Consideration of the report of the panel by the Board of IUQB and the development of a plan by the Board of IUQB to implement the recommendations in the report.
- o Consideration of the report of the panel and the IUQB Board's plans by the HEA and the production of a response by the HEA.
- o Publication of the outcomes of the review to include the report of the expert panel, the plan developed by the IUQB in response to the report, and the response of the HEA (other stakeholders may also prepare responses following publication of the review outcomes).

Context

The Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) was established by the governing authorities of the seven Irish universities in 2002 to increase the level of inter-university co-operation in developing quality assurance procedures and processes, in line with best international systems. The IUQB was incorporated in February 2006 as a non-profit-making company.

Under Section 35(4) of the Universities Act (1997), a university governing authority is required to arrange for a review of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures in that university. In 2002, the governing authorities of the seven Irish universities agreed to devolve the power to arrange the conduct of these statutory reviews to IUQB.

Under Section 49(a) of the Universities Act, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) may exercise the right to arrange for a review of the quality assurance procedures in the universities.

In 2003, the HEA and IUQB jointly commissioned the European University Association (EUA) to undertake a review of quality assurance in Irish universities. The review was structured to accord with the respective responsibilities of the universities and the HEA concerning quality assurance under the Universities Act.

The review was designed to ensure that the university system and its stakeholders gained maximum benefit from comprehensive reviews by teams of experienced international quality assurance experts and that the procedures and processes in place in Irish universities were reviewed against best practice internationally.

Policy Approach

In October 2006, the IUQB Board committed to undertaking a quality review. To a large extent, the process was modelled on the processes that are currently in use in higher education institutions, and it is assumed in this proposal that a quality review of the IUQB will be undertaken in a similar manner.

Within the quality review space occupied by the IUQB there is a key external dimension – the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.* The standards and guidelines were adopted by the ministers responsible for higher education in the 45 Bologna signatory states in Bergen in May 2005. They apply not only to higher education institutions, but also to external quality assurance agencies and require the latter to submit themselves to a five-yearly cycle of external reviews in order to demonstrate their compliance with the *European Standards and Guidelines*. It is also the case that compliance with these standards is now a membership requirement for the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

IUQB is one of a number of external quality assurance agencies operating in Irish higher education. IUQB has the devolved statutory power for the periodic external reviews of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures of the Irish universities. The other external quality assurance bodies operating in Ireland in respect of public higher educations institutions are the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) which has statutory quality assurance functions in relation to the Dublin Institute of Technology

(DIT) and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), which has responsibility for the other Institutes of Technology. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) may also exercise the right to arrange for a review of the quality assurance procedures in the universities.

It is of note that the NQAI commissioned and completed a statutory quality assurance review of HETAC in summer 2006. The HETAC review, in particular, was concerned with evaluating the extent to which the Council in the performance of its statutory functions complies with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.* The Department of Education and Science commissioned a review of the NQAI. This review is currently underway and is also evaluating the extent to which the NQAI in the performance of its statutory functions complies with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.*

Given its key role as a quality assurance agency, the continued active participation of the IUQB in policy and practice debates on quality assurance, both at European and national level, is essential. To maintain its credibility in this arena, the IUQB will need to submit itself to an external review in order to demonstrate its compliance with the *European Standards and Guidelines* and in order to obtain membership of ENQA. IUQB intends to apply for membership of ENQA and to acquire full membership will need to submit itself, under ENQA regulations, to an external review.

Purpose and scope of the quality review of IUQB

To meet the strategic needs of the IUQB at this stage of its development, the quality review will have three distinct, but related purposes.

First, the quality review will evaluate the effectiveness of IUQB in the performance of its objects since its establishment in 2002, having particular regard to the policies and procedures that the IUQB has developed for each function and how they are being implemented and operated. In particular, it is essential to evaluate how IUQB is serving its stakeholders, primarily the university staff and students, in addition to external stakeholders such as employers and the general public.

The main object for which IUQB has been established, as listed in the memorandum of association of the company, is the development and promotion of quality assurance and quality improvement procedures for application in the Irish universities in order to ensure that the quality of education, research, administration and other activities of the Irish universities is in accordance with the highest international standards.

The following objects are subsidiary and ancillary to that main object:

(i)   To maintain and promote co-operation between the Irish universities in quality assurance procedures and processes, supporting the universities in their goal of achieving a culture of quality through continuous improvement in all their activities;

(ii)   To arrange regular quality assurance reviews or evaluations of the Irish universities, including reviews or evaluations of the effectiveness of quality assurance and quality improvement procedures as may be required by law;

(iii) To appoint the reviewers and where necessary the agencies who undertake such reviews and to provide reports on such reviews and where such reviews contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan to collaborate with the Irish universities to ensure that such reviews have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently;

(iv)   To produce and publish from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of such reviews or evaluations;

(v)   To ensure that the processes, criteria and procedures used for any such reviews are predefined and are publicly available;

(vi)   To receive, review and comment on annual reports from each of the Irish universities on their quality assurance and quality improvement activities, including recommendations for improvement, in respect of any evaluations or reviews initiated by the Irish universities in accordance with law;

(vii) With the co-operation of the Irish universities and other higher education partners, to organise and direct cross-university projects in quality improvement with the goal of establishing and publishing best practice in specific key areas;

(viii) To organise an evaluation by experts of its own processes in reviewing the effectiveness of the quality procedures;

(ix)   To collaborate with the universities in organising regular major conferences on themes related to quality improvement;

(x)   To provide a source of information to stakeholders on important Irish, European and other international quality developments;

(xi)   To promote and provide facilities for discussion and consultation between representatives of Irish Universities and other higher education bodies in Ireland on any matters affecting or relevant to quality in the higher education sector; to represent through its Board, committees, sub-committees, working parties and working groups to policy makers, civil servants, business people, trade unions, students, teachers, parents and the general public collective views on quality matters of common interest;

(xii) To advise the Government, the Higher Education Authority, the institutions of the European Union and any other relevant agencies or bodies regarding its views and policies on quality issues;

(xiii) To provide information, advice and assistance to the Irish Universities and other educational bodies within Ireland on any aspect of quality in educational affairs;

(xiv) To identify international best practice in maintaining and improving quality, and to promote its adoption by the Irish universities;

(xv) To co-operate and interact with the EU and other international organisations in relation to quality assurance in university education including accreditation; to establish formal links with international quality agencies in furthering European developments in higher education.

Second, the quality review will also be developmental in intent and will aim to assist the IUQB in achieving its own quality enhancement goals and to further develop its own internal quality culture. In this connection, it will consider in some detail the organisational structures and processes of the executive of the IUQB as it currently operates and evaluate its suitability in the context of the IUQB's developing role. Thus, it will focus on the mission of the IUQB and the norms and goals that the organisation has set for itself. It is envisaged that the process will assist the IUQB in discovering any constraints or opportunities that arise for the organisation in meeting its aims and goals. This will require an analysis of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses to identify any discrepancies between what might be and what actually is.

The quality review will do this by facilitating reflection on

- the mission, aims and objectives of the IUQB and the systems and procedures in place and their suitability to fulfilling the mission
- the quality measures in use including feedback from stakeholders, both internal and external
- strategic planning procedures and the capacity to change and meet new challenges.

Third, the quality review will also have a particular focus on the IUQB's role as a quality assurance agency in Irish higher education against the backdrop of developments in the European Higher Education Area.

In order to address the various purposes of the review in a thorough manner, the review will be organised around three distinct strands:

- ***Strand 1: Evaluation of performance, organisation and structures of the executive and committees of the IUQB to date***

As IUQB has developed, the need arises for a review of the systems and structures that are in place. It is generally recognised that as an organisation develops and changes, the way in which staff and functions relate to one another can also change. The main activities of IUQB to date have been in the area of the development of *National Guidelines of Good Practice*, arising from the series of sectoral projects initiated with the HEA since 2003. Another significant activity has been the HEA/IUQB jointly commissioned external review of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures in the seven universities in 2004. In October 2006, the Board agreed to conduct a thematic review of PhD programmes in the seven universities, focusing on the adoption of the *National Guidelines of Good Practice* in the *Organisation of PhD Programmes* and also to conduct a second round of institutional quality assurance reviews, commencing in 2009. The quality review will examine and evaluate the suitability of the organisational structures in place for the conduct of this ongoing series of reviews.

The Board has recently appointed a management committee, which first met in January 2007 and which will meet once between Board meetings. The review will examine the suitability of the current committee structures to the work of the Board.

- ***Strand 2: Evaluation of IUQB activities funded under the HEA Quality Assurance Programmes 2002-2004 and the HEA Strategic Initiatives Schemes 2005 and 2006***

This strand of the review will evaluate the quality improvement and dissemination activities funded by the Higher Education Authority under the above-mentioned programmes.

Since 2000, the HEA has funded a Quality Assurance Programme from within the Quality Assurance sub-measure of the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2000-2006. The NDP outlined how the aim of the Quality Assurance measure in the third level sector was to promote a quality culture across the whole range of activities in third-level institutions, and at the same time addressing society's concern for greater transparency and accountability and to improve pedagogical training, teaching evaluation and appraisal and the development of management skills.

Over the period of the NDP 2000-2006, an annual allocation was made by the HEA to eligible institutions, following consideration of submissions by a special committee. The overall strategy of the quality assurance programme was that universities move towards a systematic approach, with key common elements, to quality assurance and one that was consistent with the national legislative provisions and the European Council Recommendations of 24 September 1998 and 15 February 2006 on European Co-operation in Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Priority for funding under this programme was given to cross-institutional developmental activities including, from 2002, the activities of IUQB.

In the period 2002-2006, the universities received specific funding from the HEA *Quality Assurance Programme* and its successor programme, the *Strategic Initiatives Scheme* to develop a series of sectoral projects, leading to the publication of *National Guidelines of Good Practice* aspects of quality assurance in the Irish universities.

IUQB was established in 2002 and from 2002-2004, in agreement with the Irish universities, made submissions to the HEA Quality Assurance Scheme in relation to IUQB sectoral activities and received funding of €105,000, €140,000 and €142,000 in those years.

In 2005 and 2006, IUQB was invited by the HEA to make directs submissions to the Strategic Initiatives Scheme, the successor programme to the Targeted Initiatives Scheme and the Quality Assurance Programme. IUQB received funding of €142,000 in 2005 and €258,000 in 2006 for the quality improvement sectoral projects leading to the publication of National Guidelines of Good Practice and dissemination activities such as the IUQB annual conference, publication of the newsletter, *IUQB News,* and the upgrade of the IUQB website.

- *Strand 3: Evaluation of the Compliance of IUQB with European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*

This strand of the review will evaluate the extent to which IUQB complies with the standards for external quality assurance agencies as set out in the recently adopted *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*.

There are eight such standards (see Appendix) which relate to:

- *the agency's use of the external quality assurance procedures for higher education as set out in the European Standards and Guidelines*

- *the agency's possession of official status*

- *the regularity of the agency's engagement in external quality assurance activities*

- *the adequacy of the agency's human and financial resources*

- *the clarity of the agency's goals as set out in a publicly available mission statement*

- *the independence of the agency with regard to its decision making processes and especially in relation to government and higher education institutions*

- *the use of external quality assurance criteria and processes involving self-assessment by the review subject, external expert review, publication of review outcomes and follow-up process*

- *the putting in place by the agency of its own accountability procedures*

Although this strand of the review will be the most discrete, it is anticipated that the findings from the other two strands will make a contribution towards demonstrating the Authority's compliance with the *European Standards and Guidelines*.

Review process overview

The quality review process for the IUQB will consist of the following main elements:

- Commissioning of the review, including the appointment of the external panel of experts, by the Higher Education Authority (HEA)
- Preparation and publication of a self-evaluation report by the IUQB
- Evaluation by the panel of experts
- Consideration of the report of the panel by the IUQB and the development of a quality improvement plan by the IUQB to implement the recommendations in the report
- Consideration of the review report and the IUQB quality improvement plan by the HEA and the preparation of a response by the HEA
- Publication of Review Outcomes: Report of the expert panel, IUQB quality improvement plan and the HEA response

Review Process: Details and Indicative timetable

- Decision by IUQB to undertake review and to request HEA to commission review
  Oct-Nov 2006

- Decision by HEA to commission the review including an evaluation of IUQB activities funded by the HEA since its establishment in 2002
  December 2006

- Preparation by IUQB Executive of draft terms of reference and protocol for the review for submission to the HEA
  Jan-Feb 2007

- Proposed draft terms of reference and protocol for review to be considered by IUQB Board
  26 February 2007

- Draft terms of reference and protocol for the review communicated to HEA
  April 2007

- HEA consultation with stakeholders on draft terms of reference and protocol for the review
  May 2007

The stakeholders to be consulted will include the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, the Irish Universities Association (IUA), the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), the Department of Education and Science (DES), organisations representative of business and the trade unions and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The consultation on the terms of reference is distinct from the engagement that will take place with stakeholders during the review. The aim here will be to test the robustness of the quality review process that is envisaged and to

take advice and soundings on the technical aspects of the review process. A broader list of stakeholders will need to be consulted during the review process proper.

- Preparation of self-evaluation by IUQB Executive (following approval in principle by IUQB Board of proposed draft terms of reference and protocol for review). The self-evaluation process will include consultation with stakeholders.
  May 2007- November 2007

  A quality coordination committee, representative of all staff, will be appointed to oversee the self-assessment process. This committee:
    - will determine the nature of the self-assessment process (i.e. the kind of internal and external consultative exercises to be undertaken)
    - will co-ordinate the self –assessment process and appoint a secretary from amongst its number to draft the self-evaluation report (SER)
    - will provide feedback on a regular basis to the IUQB Board and the IUQB Management Committee on the progress of the review.

- Consideration of final draft Terms of Reference and Protocol for Review by IUQB Board
  21 May 2007

- Determination by Higher Education Authority of Terms of Reference for review and appointment of an external panel of experts
  23 May 2007

The panel's profile will be along the following lines:

  - 2 senior national public figures (one with a broad interest in education and one stakeholder member) – one of whom will chair the panel
  - 2 international experts in quality assurance (to include at least 1 European with knowledge of European standards and guidelines)
  - 1 person representative of Irish Higher Education Institutions
  - 1 expert with a learner perspective

There will also be a secretary appointed who will be independent of the IUQB.

- Approval of the self-evaluation report by the IUQB Board and subsequent publication.
  19 November 2007

- Briefing session for Expert Panel
  3 March 2008

- Visit by Expert Panel , including meetings with IUQB stakeholders
  21-24 April 2008

- Provision of report with recommendations by External Panel
  End of May 2008

- Preparation of a quality improvement plan by the IUQB Executive based on the self-evaluation report and the recommendations in the expert panel's report

  June 2008

- The IUQB Board will consider the expert panel's report and agree the draft quality improvement plan at its June meeting ahead of their publication

  30 June 2008

- Consideration of the expert panel's report and the IUQB Quality Improvement Plan by the Higher Education Authority and approval of the HEA response to the review

  22 July 2008

- Publication of Review Outcomes (Expert Panel Report, IUQB Quality Improvement Plan and HEA Response)

  August 2008

- The Quality Improvement Plan will be implemented and reviewed on a timescale consistent with the activities identified. IUQB will undertake to publish one or more follow-up reports subsequently at specified dates. In addition, its implementation will be incorporated into the IUQB Strategic Plan for 2007-2011.

Quality Co-ordination Committee

As mentioned above, an internal staff committee would oversee the self-evaluation process and produce the self-assessment report. Due to the small size of the Executive, all staff will be members of the committee. It may be necessary to recruit someone from outside the organisation to supplement and co-ordinate the work and to involve a nominated member of the IUQB Management committee in the self-evaluation process.

The committee will organise a number of self-evaluation exercises. It is likely that these will include staff and stakeholder surveys, focus groups and SWOT analyses.

Appendix 3 - Expert Panel for the Review of the IUQB

PANEL MEMBERS

- Don Thornhill, Chair, National Competitiveness Council
- John Dunne, Chief Executive, Chambers Ireland
- Fiona Crozier, Assistant Director, Development & Enhancement, QAA, UK
- Jean Morse, President, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, US
- Gerry Wrixon, President Emeritus, University College Cork
- Marion Coy, President, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
- Daithí MacSíthigh, Student Representative, (Former Education Officer, USI)
- Des Geraghty, Chair, Affordable Homes Partnership and Former SIPTU President

Secretariat

- Tim Conlon , HEA Executive

Chairman: Dr. Don Thornhill is the current Chair of the National Competiveness Council. Prior to that, he was Chairman of the Higher Education Authority from 1998-2005 and Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science from 1993 to 1998. His board memberships include the Irish Management Institute (IMI), the Digital Hub Development Agency, Forfás, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Fulbright Commission. He is also a member of the Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (ICSTI), the Council of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, and is a member of the Executive Committee of the European Cultural Foundation.

He was an Assistant Secretary in the Office of the Revenue Commissioners in Dublin with responsibility for VAT and Capital Taxes from 1985 to 1998. He was a key participant at EU level and in Ireland in the development of the EU Internal Market and the abolition within the EU of customs controls. He has also worked in the Departments of Finance and Foreign Affairs and in the Unilever organisation.

Ms. Marion Coy is the new Chairperson of Institutes of Technology Ireland (IOTI) for 2008, and has also been the President of Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) since October 2002. She is on the board of the Regional Higher Education Network (Lionra), and has contributed to the deliberations of the Points Commission, the development of the Bologna Process, the establishment of Lionra and the development of a national quality framework for the Institutes of Technology.

Ms. Fiona Crozier is Assistant Director of *Enhancement and Development in the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education* in the United Kingdom (UK). She has been involved in circulating programme specification and codes of practice guidelines to higher education institutes in the UK, and has made several presentations on the subject of quality assurance and periodic reviews.

Mr. John Dunne is the Chief Executive of Chambers Ireland - the largest business network on the island of Ireland. He is currently a member of the National Economic and Social Council and of the Steering Committee on Sustaining Progress. He is also a Director of Eurochambres, the European network of Chambers of Commerce based in Brussels, and Chairman of the Irish National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce based in Paris.

Mr. Des Geraghty is the Chair of Affordable Homes Partnership, a state agency established in August 2005, aimed at developing affordable housing in the greater Dublin area. He is a former President of SIPTU and former member of the ICTU Executive Committee. He was also a member of the Government's Enterprise Strategy Group, the NESC and the National Competitiveness Council. Finally, he was a former member of the European Parliament, serving on the Economic & Monetary Affairs Committee.

Mr. Daithi Mac Sithigh has been nominated by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), and is currently undertaking a PhD in Trinity College Dublin. He has previously acted as an Education Officer in the USI (2005) and in TCD Students' Union (2004 - 5). He

remains involved in higher education policy through his position in the European Students' Union (ESU, formerly ESIB), with a focus on the Bologna Process in European higher education.

Ms. Jean Avnet Morse is President of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in the US. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education is a voluntary, non-governmental, membership association that defines, maintains, and promotes quality assurance and improvement across institutions. Prior to joining the commission, Morse was deputy to the President of the University of Pennsylvania, where she also served as acting Assistant Provost and as Deputy Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. She was Associate Dean for Administration at the New York University School of Law.

Professor Gerard Wrixon is the President Emeritus of University College Cork, having served from 1999-2007. He is a former Chairman of EOLAS (1987-1993), the state agency for science and technology, and was responsible for launching the Programmes in Advanced Technology, developing a unique bridge between university research and industry needs. He also founded the Tyndall Institute in UCC, (formerly the National Microelectronics Research Centre) which is a vibrant research centre covering microelectronic research, chemistry and physics.

Mr. Tim Conlon is a senior policy analyst at the Higher Education Authority with special responsibility for the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF). He has a background in research assessment, administration and policy having worked at both HEA Research Programmes (PRTLI Cycle 4) and the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (Programme Manager). Tim holds an MBA from the Smurfit School of Business, University College Dublin.

Appendix 4 – Site Visit Participants

Stakeholders who met the Expert Panel during IUQB Review Process April 21st -23rd			
Emma	Barry	Quality Officer	Mary Immaculate College
Martin	Butler	Head of Student Affairs	University College Dublin
Barry	Colfer	Student Union President	University College Dublin
Peadar	Cremin	President	Mary Immaculate College
Tim	Cullinane	HEO Higher Education Research and Finance	Department of Education and Science
Liz	Donnellan	Director of Quality	Quality Unit
Jennifer	Edmond	Executive Director of the Long Room Hub	Trinity College Dublin
Roy	Ferguson	Director of Quality	University College Dublin
Anne	Forde	Principal Officer Higher Education Policy & Skills	Department of Education and Science
Fintan	Foy	Associate Director for Academic Affairs	Royal College of Surgeons Ireland
Jim	Gosling	Director of Quality	National University of Ireland Galway
Attracta	Halpin	Registrar	National University of Ireland
Peter	Healy	Assistant Principal Higher Education Policy & Skills	Department of Education and Science
Nuala	Hunt	Head of Centre for Continuing Education	National College of Art and Design
Áine	Hyland	Vice President	University College Cork
Margaret	Kelly	Principal Officer QCAP division	Department of Education and Science
Alan	Kelly	Dean of Graduate Studies	University College Cork
Eugene	Kennedy	VP Research	Dublin City University
Hamid	Khodabakhshi	President	Union of Students in Ireland
Pat	Layde	Operations Director	General Paints
Heinz	Lechleiter	Director of Quality	Dublin City University
Deirdre	Lillis	Head of Institutional Reviews	HETAC

Geraldine	MacCarrick	Vice Dean for Medical Education	Royal College of Surgeons Ireland
Saranne	Magennis	Head of Quality	National University of Ireland Maynooth
Bryan	Maguire	Director of Academic Affairs	HETAC
Peter	Mannion	Education Officer	Union of Students in Ireland
Barbara	McConalogue	Business Systems Manager	Dublin City University
Joanne	Moles	Physical Education & Sport Sciences Department	University of Limerick
Jim	Murray	Director of Framework Implementation and Qualifications Recognition	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
Muireann	Ní Dhuigneáin	Head of Careers	Dublin City University
Conor	O' Carroll	Director of Research	Irish Universities Association
Noel	O'Connor	Chair of Grangegorman Project	Campus Planning
Seán	O' Foghlú	Chief Executive	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
Jacqueline	Potter	Academic Development Officer	Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning
Séamus	Purséil	Chief Executive	HETAC
Bartley	Rock	Education Officer	Trinity College Dublin
Norma	Ryan	Director of Quality	University College Cork
Michael	Ryan	Dean of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Training	University College Dublin
Nicky	Saunders	QA/QI Officer	National College of Art and Design
Ciara	Staunton	Education Officer	National University of Ireland, Galway
Mary	Sweeney	Head of Careers	University of Limerick
Adrian	Thomas	Director of Quality	University of Limerick
Bernadette	Walsh	Head of Student Affairs	University of Limerick
Gerard	Whyte	Dean of Students	Trinity College Dublin

Telephone Participants			
Andrée	Sursock	Deputy Secretary General	European University Association
Lee	Fritschler	HEA External Review Panel Representative	School of Public Policy, George Mason University

Appendix 4 - Site Visit Programme

REVIEW PANEL PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS

SUNDAY, 20TH APRIL 2008	
18.30	Panel welcome dinner hosted by HEA.

MONDAY, 21ST APRIL 2008	
09.00 – 09.30	Private meeting of panel members.
09.30 – 11.00	HEA - Mr. Tom Boland (Chief Executive), Ms. Mary Kerr (Deputy Chief Executive).
11.00-11.15	*Coffee*
11.15-11.45	IUA - Mr. Ned Costello (Chief Executive), Mr. Lewis Purser (Assistant Director – Academic).
11.45-12.30	University Registrars - Dr. Philip Nolan, UCD; Prof. Maria Slowey, DCU.
12.30-13.00	Institutes of Technology Ireland (IOTI) - Mr. Gerry Murray, Dr. Dermot Douglas. Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) - Dr. Frank McMahon, Dr. Thomas Duff.
13.00	*Lunch*
14.00 – 16.00	Site visit to IUQB Offices in Lower Mount Street, D.2. Meetings with Dr. Padraig Walsh, Chief Executive, IUQB and IUQB staff.
16.00	*Coffee*
16.15-17.00	NQAI - Mr. Seán O Foghlú (Chief Executive), Dr. Jim Murray (Director of Framework Implementation).
17.00 – 17.30	HETAC - Mr. Séamus Puirséil (Chief Executive), Dr. Bryan Maguire (Director of Academic Affairs), Dr. Deirdre Lillis (Head of Institutional Reviews).
17.30	Private meeting of panel members.

TUESDAY, 22ND APRIL 2008	
09.00 – 09.30	Private meeting of panel members.
09.30 – 10.15	Department of Education & Science – Anne Forde (PO), Margaret Kelly (PO), Peter Healy (AP), Tim Cullinane (HEO)
10.15 – 11.00	Conference call with Deputy Secretary General of the European University Association (EUA), Dr. Andrée Sursock.
11.00	*Coffee*
11.15-11.45	Representatives of IUQB Editorial Groups (Institutional Research, Strategic Planning & Teaching and Learning) – Dr. Jacqueline Potter, TCD; Professor Áine Hyland, UCC; Dr. Noel O'Connor, DIT.
11.45-12.15	Representatives of departments which have participated in IUQB cross-sectoral reviews - Dr. Joanne Moles, UL.
12.15 – 13.15	QA Officers - Dr. Norma Ryan, UCC; Mr. Roy Ferguson, UCD; Ms. Liz Donnellan, TCD; Professor Jim Gosling, NUIG; Mr. Adrian Thomas, UL; Ms. Saranne Magennis, NUIM; Dr. Heinz Lechleiter, DCU.
13.15	*Lunch*
14.00 – 14.30	Union of Students in Ireland - President of USI, Mr. Hamidreza Khodabakhshi; USI Education Officer, Mr. Peter Mannion; Student representatives from university sector - Mr. Barry Colfer (Student Union President UCD); Mr. Bartley Rock (Education Officer TCD - USI Education Officer Elect); Ms. Ciara Staunton, Education Officer, NUI Galway.
14.30 – 15.00	CHoICE [Colleges of Education] - Professor Peadar Cremin and Ms. Emma Barry. NCAD [Art & Design] - Ms. Nicky Saunders and Ms. Nuala Hunt; RCSI [Medicine] - Professor Geraldine MacCarrick and Mr. Fintan Foy; NUI [National University of Ireland] – Dr. Attracta Halpin.
15.00 – 15.30	Private meeting of panel members.
15.30	*Coffee*
15.45 – 16.15 (10.45 EST)	Conference call with representative of HEA External Review Panels - Dr. Lee Fritschler, George Mason University (PRTLI 4, 2007).
16.15-18.00	Private meeting of panel members.
19.00	***Dinner with IUQB Board Members***

WEDNESDAY, 23RD APRIL 2008	
09.00 – 10.00	Private meeting of panel members.
10.00-10.30	Deans of Graduate Students/Vice-President for Research: Professor Eugene Kennedy, VP Research, DCU; Dr. Alan Kelly, Dean of Graduate Studies, UCC; Professor Michael Ryan, Dean of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Training, UCD; Dr. Conor O'Carroll, Assistant Director, Research, IUA.
10.30-11.00	Representatives from Admin/Registry/Finance departments which have participated in IUQB cross-sectoral reviews - Dr. Jennifer Edmond, Executive Director of the Long Room Hub, TCD; Ms. Barbara McConalogue, Business Systems Manager, DCU; Ms. Muireann Ní Dhuigneáin, Head of Careers, DCU; Ms. Mary Sweeney, Head of Careers, UL.
11.00-11.30	Heads of Student Affairs - Dr. Bernadette Walsh, UL; Dr. Martin Butler, UCD; Professor Gerard Whyte, TCD.
11.30	*Coffee*
11.45-12.30	Business / Industry representative - Mr. Pat Layde, General Paints.
12.30-13.00	Private meeting of panel members.
13.00	*Lunch*
14.00 – 15.30	Private meeting of panel members.
15.30 – 16.15	Review Panel Feedback Session with IUQB CEO.
16.15/16.30	Private meeting of panel members to finalise report.
18.00	Review panel departs.

Appendix 5 – List of documents provided to the panel

A. Key Documents

1. Quality Review of the IUBQ: Self-evaluation Report
2. Appendices to Quality Review of the IUBQ: Self-evaluation Report
3. Terms of Reference for IUQB review
4. Standards and Guidelines for Quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2005)
5. EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme – Internal Quality Policy
6. EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme – Guidelines for Self-evaluation and Site Visits
7. Responses to HEA Call for Submissions (April 2008)

B. Irish Quality Assurance Documents and Relevant Legislation

1. Review of Quality Assurance in Irish Universities: HEA/IUQB Agreed Process (2004) (p.29 of B2)
2. HEA/IUQB: Review of Quality Assurance in Irish Universities: Sectoral Report (2005)
3. HEA/IUQB: Review of Quality Assurance in Irish Universities: University Reports (2005)
4. Universities' Act 1997

C. IUQB Publications

C1. IUQB: Strategic Plan 2004 – 2006
C2. IUQB: National Guidelines of Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Universities (2005)
C3. IUQB: National Guidelines of Good Practice in the Organisation of Student Support Services in Irish Universities (2006)
C4. IUQB: Corporate Brochure (2006)
C5. IUA/IUQB: A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities: Concerted Action for Institutional Improvement (2007)
C6. IUQB News (Issue 1
C7. IUQB News (Issue 2)
C8. Hay Group: Review of Proposed IUQB Structure (2007)
C9. Grant Thornton: IUQB Finance and Administration Process Review (2007)

D. Higher Education in Ireland

D1. OECD Examiners' report: Review of Higher Education in Ireland (2004)
D2. Higher Education in Ireland – Country Background Report for OECD Review (2004)

E. Other Documents

E1. Agendas of IUQB Quality Committee Meetings (for this review)
E2. Minutes of IUQB Quality Committee Meetings (for this review)
E3. Notes of Semi-structured Interviews and Focus Groups (for this review)