

# Flexible external QA methods to incorporate HEI responses to sustainability agenda



HEIs referenced in national policies

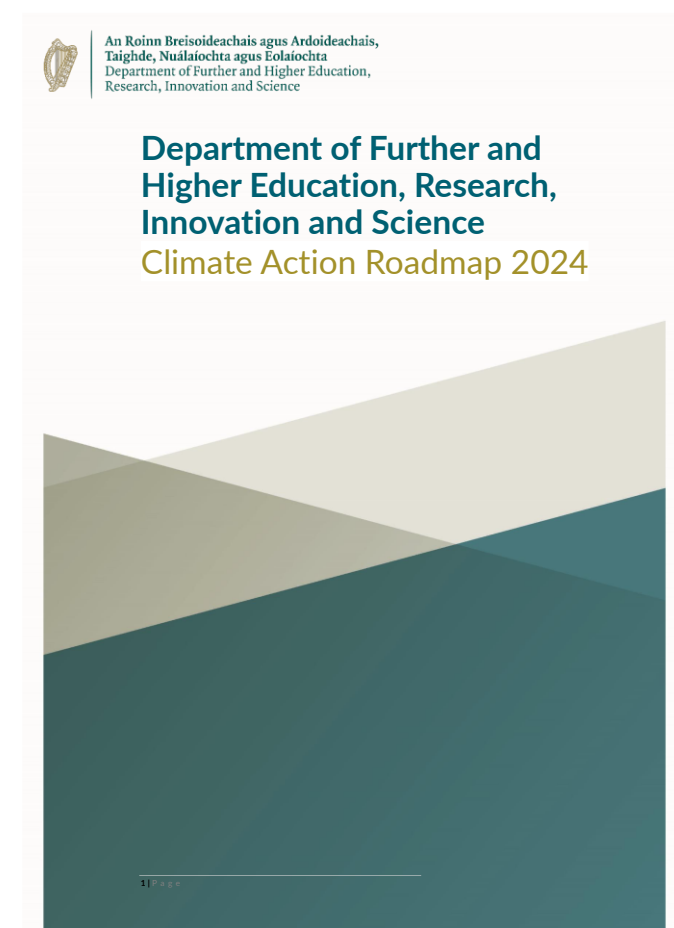
- In their education, research and service missions
- As institutions in their right

No specific references in QQI's current QA guidelines or procedures

- QA applies by law to all education, training, research and related activities

Other accountability mechanisms

- Higher Education Authority performance agreements
- Sustainable Energy Authority returns



**White Paper**  
**QQI Monitoring Policy and Framework**

2025

QQI monitoring of QA includes an annual quality report from each HEI documenting its QA activities, policy changes and quality initiatives. QQI publishes a thematic review based on these 21 reports, supplying a national picture of trends across the sector. We did not specifically ask HEIs to focus on sustainability in their responses.

“The sustainability agenda, climate action and progress toward the SDGs has continued to drive strategic development, new appointments, new curricula and research agendas across the sector. As a cross-cutting theme, sustainability and work to progress the SDGs resonates throughout reporting on external engagement, programmes of education and training, research and investments in the built environment. Cumulatively, the activity in this domain reflects that Ireland’s public HEIs are providing thought leadership on climate action and nurturing innovation in this sphere.” - QQI Insights 2024



## Examples



*10 HEIs have joined the UN-led Sustainable Development Solutions Network (Ireland) and use that framework*

*University of Galway reported on sustainability in the taught curriculum via tracking of the percentage of modules with a focus on sustainability/SDGs on its balanced scorecard, with steady growth observable prior to this reporting period.*

*UCC reported on sustainability research, noting that three of UCC’s research leaders in the Environmental Research Institute were the highest cited academics globally in areas of offshore wind energy, energy modelling and electrofuels respectively.*

*TUS reported on its ongoing leadership of a consortium to deliver the Digital Academy for Sustainable Built Environment (DASBE), with development of new programmes related to circular economy, energy infrastructure, digital tools and community energy systems.*

