

Institute response to the report of the panel of experts relating to institute review at the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown

Date: 12 September 2011.



General comments

The Institute welcomes the report of the expert panel appointed by HETAC to undertake the institutional review of the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB) on 21-23 February 2011. The expert panel included international experts, under the chairmanship of Professor Graham Chesters. The Institute particularly welcomes the key findings that:

- *The effectiveness of the Quality Assurance arrangements operated by the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown has been assessed and the arrangements have been found to be generally effective in accordance with the seven elements of Part One of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance 2009, Helsinki, 3rd edition, and the HETAC Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance Procedures in Higher Education, 2002.*
- *The Institute of Technology Blanchardstown has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression, as determined by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.*
- *The Institute of Technology Blanchardstown meets the criteria for the delegation of authority to make awards that relate to Operations and Management; Education and Training Programmes; Council Conditions related to Delegation of Authority and the Objects of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999.*

The panel in their report made a total of 15 commendations and 41 recommendations. The Institute notes these commendations and recommendations, including those that the panel highlighted from our own self-evaluation report (SER). The Institute is committed to implementing these recommendations in a coherent manner.

The ITB community embraced the opportunity to engage in a holistic Institutional review and was heartened and motivated in this endeavour by the terms of reference which included a commitment to partnership, flexibility, openness and transparency. The decision to adopt an appreciative inquiry approach was in keeping with this ethos and provided a forum for all staff to engage in dialogue and discussion in a positive and appreciative environment, to excavate beneath the practices and procedures and give prominence to the heart of ITB – the values, beliefs and motivation of its staff, the student body and broader stakeholders. This approach was in recognition that the essence of staff engagements with our learners cannot be truly captured by statistical or procedural approaches. This was a challenging undertaking for ITB but the experiences, artefacts and insights that emerged will continue to sustain and inspire staff in their continued ambitions to provide a personal, flexible and innovative response to the needs of all our learners.

Given the fundamental approach we took to the Institute review process, we have some concern regarding the nature and granularity of some of the recommendations. From our own internal reflections, we feel that some parts of the institutional review process adopted a predominately deficit-based approach. In being confronted with this, we acknowledge the tensions and feelings of constraint that this engendered in the institute where the normal approach, is one that instinctively gravitates towards searching for the best of what exists and from there exploring possibilities for improvements, solutions, and innovations. This

divergence in approach is evident in the way the report has been drafted. The Institute has concerns that the report, as a consequence, may be perceived more as a report of a compliance audit, as distinct from our understanding of an institute review (based on our understanding of the agreed terms of reference for the evaluation). On reflection, we feel the review visit component of the overall process, while robust in its processes and approach, may have benefited from a more flexible approach with broader engagement with staff, students and other stakeholders of the institute to better capture the culture of the Institute. Notwithstanding this concern, we are committed to implementing the spirit of the recommendations in an ordered manner within appropriate timeframes and in the context of the real situation of limited resources.

This response is considered an initial response to the institute review report. We will engage with our stakeholders to determine a precise implementation plan. We consider this step as part of an on-going process of reflection, which will evolve over time. The Institute notes the requirement to submit a follow-up report to HETAC within 12 months of publication of the Institute review report. Responsibility of this submission rests with the Registrar of the Institute.

The Institute staff would like to thank the panel members and HETAC support staff that were involved in this review exercise. Their commitment to the process and facilitating the development of the Institute is noted and appreciated. We would welcome an opportunity to contribute to a review of the Institute review process at a sectoral level, by providing feedback of our experiences of the process, if such an opportunity was possible.

Specific comments relating to recommendations around specific objectives are listed below. Details relating to implementation of individual recommendations are listed in an appendix to this response.

Objective 1: Public Confidence

Commendations — Page 18

- C1 The accessibility of documentation on-site during the Institutional Review, particularly the presentation and completeness of the documentation room (1.4).*
- C2 The strong recognition and endorsement of the Institute's distinctive mission, values and brand by learners and stakeholders in the local community (1.7).*
- C3 The open and active engagement of the Institute with a wide range of external stakeholders, including secondary schools, further education colleges and employers (1.7).*

Recommendations —Page 18 & 19

- R1 Use the SER as a source of public confidence and added value, by following up in a transparent manner the key issues it identified as needing attention, linked to the recommendations from the Institutional Review (1.5).*
- R2 Continue to enhance the quality of its information available electronically to the general public and external stakeholders, including the use of focus groups representing its different target audiences (1.6).*

R3 Act on the SER conclusion that engagements with stakeholders should be further extended by:

- o developing their recognition of the Institute as a prestige brand and centre of excellence for learning and innovation throughout its catchment area and beyond (1.8).*
- o reinforcing relations with companies to enhance strategic involvement at an institutional level for example, by establishing industrial liaison platforms in all departments and by taking specific initiatives to target the skills and innovation needs of key employers and expand work-based learning (1.9).*

Institute response

The Institute welcomes the commendations relating to public confidence, including accessibility of documentation during the panel visit, endorsement of the mission, vision and brand of the Institute and the open engagement with stakeholders.

The Institute welcomes the recommendation to use our SER as a basis for further actions. The Institute found the process of generation the SER particularly valuable and the consultation process employed as part of that process, suggests to us that there is significant stakeholder buy-in to the recommendations contained within our SER. The Institute also welcomes the recommendations around further enhancement of information available electronically and further engagement with external stakeholders. This will further complement on-going developments in this area.

In the past three years, a Marketing and Development unit was created to support the academic department's efforts to achieve enrolment targets. A core feature of this strategy was to unify course development and promote activities for all students with a view to presenting ITB as an Institute which served the needs of all student categories and was strengthened by that diversity. An analysis of our enrolment data shows that the marketing strategy has been largely effective. Overall student numbers have increased by almost half since 2006. Our school leaver intake is drawn mainly from the hinterland of the college with ITB now being the college of choice for schools in the Dublin 15 area. ITB has recruited more school leavers from Dublin 15, our immediate hinterland than any other third level institution since 2008.

ITB welcomes that stakeholders desire locally to promote the Institute, to make it better known and to have its strengths acknowledged and recognized by a wider audience. There is a strong will for ITB to thrive and excel and attracting new, different and greater numbers of people is seen to be a way of achieving this. The brand strengths have been identified through focus groups as friendliness modernity, its practical, hands-on reputation, the quality of tuition and atmosphere of care and its accessibility.

In developing its brand as a prestige one, ITB will continue to engage with stakeholders. Since March 2011, ITB has implemented a new range of publications and a new theme for all advertising and communication campaigns. The key message was based on the stakeholder focus groups held in late 2010.

The Learning and Innovation Centre (LINC) remains ITB's tangible link between the academic community and the business community. Through the LINC, ITB has engaged with industry stakeholders through participation on boards, engaging with industry agencies and working directly with companies through course development, research projects, and development opportunities. Industry liaison takes place through the LINC and through each Department in the Schools. We will continue to engage in Government initiatives aimed at up-skilling and will also continue to offer a flexible cost-effective continuing education programme which includes work based learning. ITB, through the LINC, will continue to review our industry engagement practises to enhance the experience of the Institute and of all our stakeholders including industry. The Institute through the LINC will continue to work with multinationals and local businesses through the local Chamber organisations, the local agencies and the trade organisations hosting networking events and seminars enabling the Institute to continue to be seen as a learning hub for the region.

We note the comment of the panel regarding perceived introspective nature of the SER (page 16) and would concur with it. This introspection marked the conclusion of a process that was externally focused initially with environmental scanning activities and in-depth consultation with stakeholders, and then moved internally as the Institute collectively considered the feedback gathered. This introspective phase,

which is captured in the SER, was important in terms of extracting meaning and learning from those externally focused activities and was a key step in the overall review process.

Objective 2: Strategic Planning and Governance

Commendations —Page 26

- C4 *The strength of the institutional commitment to its existing mission of access and relevance which has served it well in its developmental phase and in meeting the needs of learners and the community (2.4).*
- C5 *Its strong sense of collective ownership and highly participative culture with both management and staff supporting the Institute's organisational values and principles (2.9).*

Recommendations Page 26/27

- R4 *Develop during 2011-2012 an integrated management planning and reporting system that will*
- *ensure all departments and sections are aligned with the implementation of the next Strategic Plan by monitoring and evaluating the performance of their own action plans, specific objectives and deliverables (2.1).*
 - *include a more balanced set of key indicators, benchmarks and targets, such as on learner achievement, diversity management and graduate employability, to enhance measurement of performance against strategic and operational objectives (2.2).*
- R5 *Evaluate the new demands and different scenarios it faces in its post-development phase and update its mission accordingly, including by considering how to become the hub of a "learning region" and a prestige centre of excellence for innovative and hi-tech business (2.4, 2.5).*
- R6 *Ensure that tangible accountability is embedded more systematically throughout the organisational structure and enhance the governance role of the Academic Council and its sub-committees (2.9, 2.10).*
- R7 *Take specific measures to help learners to become full and active partners in governance throughout ITB, such as by providing training opportunities and more effective feedback mechanisms (2.11).*
- R8 *Specify ITB's strategies on internationalisation and research as part of its next Strategic Plan (2.12, 2.13).*

Institute response

The Institute notes the commendations relating to strategic planning and governance. We welcome the commendation regarding commitment to our mission, particularly in regard to access initiatives. We note the comments of the panel regarding evidence of a culture of collective ownership of the Institute activities. We welcome the spirit of the recommendations relating to strategic planning and governance, and will incorporate these into our internal reflective processes as we go forward. The need for further work on integrated management planning is noted, as is the need for a more balanced set of performance indicators.

We note the recommendations around providing clarity on internationalisation and research strategy, Encouraging learners to more actively engage in governance is consistent with ITB's participative culture and we will continue to help this to evolve. The spirit of the recommendations regarding review of mission and embedding accountability is noted. We have some concerns about the appropriateness of some of the recommendations as suggested, given the size of the Institute. However, they will be included in the implementation plan.

Objective 3: Quality Assurance

Element 1: Policy and Procedures for Quality Assurance

Recommendations —Page 32

- R9 *Review the terms of reference and operation of the Academic Council and its Quality Assurance sub-committee to ensure that they assume fully their crucial role within the Institute in monitoring the effectiveness and enhancement of quality assurance processes (3.6).*
- R10 *Implement the effectiveness review suggestions that quality assurance policy and procedural documents, including a revised policy manual, should be made more user-friendly for staff (3.3).*
- R11 *Strengthen its procedures for the consistent implementation and continuous enhancement of quality assurance, including by specifying more clearly the roles, responsibilities and means for monitoring and revising policies and procedures and by implementing the recommendations of its own review of effectiveness (3.5).*

Element 2: Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes and Awards

Commendation — Page 37

- C6 *The thoroughness of the procedures for the approval of new programmes (3.10).*

Recommendations —Page 37/38

- R12 *Establish an interim reflection process between five year programme reviews to monitor the progress of programmes, including in terms of graduate employability, and to make adjustments to ensure programme relevance (3.10, 3.12).*
- R13 *Include in the final reporting on the programmatic reviews a clear response to each of the external panel's recommendations and ensure that representatives of key industry/business/employers are represented on all future external panels, in particular for periodic reviews where all programmes are under review at the same time. (3.11, 3.12).*
- R14 *Review critically the policy and terms of reference of Course Boards to formalise their role and responsibility for the continuous and effective monitoring of programmes, including their route to the Academic Council (3.17, 3.18, and 3.22).*
- R15 *Improve the management and procedures for Course Board meetings to ensure that they consistently:*
Address in a structured way strategic and academic review issues, such as retention, and identify clear action points and issues for the attention of the Academic Council, such as feedback from external examiners (3.16).
Assess external examiners' reports for action required so that the Registrar can inform the examiners of action taken or planned (3.15).
- R16 *Ensure that learners are treated as full partners in the implementation of quality assurance, programme development and monitoring, particularly by facilitating their full and active contribution to Course Board meetings and by revising the relevant agenda template (3.21).*
- R17 *Resolve any outstanding issues blocking the use of Annual Course Board Reports and re-activate the process in accordance with approved policy (3.19).*

Element 3: Assessment of Learners

Recommendations —Page 41/42

- R18 Accelerate the mainstreaming of “Coursebuilder” to all programmes and modules (3.27) and develop a template for programme handbooks including a matrix clearly linking assessment to learning outcomes (3.26).*
- R19 Provide training to all academic staff on the assessment of learning outcomes based on best practice (3.28).*
- R20 Develop a new ITB assessment and standards policy and procedure, including a specific central function to verify that all assessment information made available to learners and staff is exclusively based on clear learning outcomes criteria (3.25, 3.28, and 3.29).*
- R21 Strengthen the policy and procedures on external examiners in relation to:*
Their recommended attendance at examination board meetings and sign-off of assessment results and award standards (3.31);
Their selection in terms of experience, range of competences and origin/diversity (3.33);
The institutional monitoring of their contribution (3.33);
The report format and content of feedback, particularly on the achievement of learning outcomes (3.32).
- R22 Review thoroughly the effectiveness of the existing external examiners and update the current register of externs as appropriate (3.33).*

Element 4: Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff

Commendation — Page 45

- C7 The range and quality of innovative initiatives in teaching and learning (3.37).*
- C8 The commitment among management and staff to re-launch the effective use across ITB of the Performance Management and Development System and Personal Development Plans (3.40).*

Recommendations —Page 45

- R23 Reinforce the evaluation of potential employees both at the interview stage and during probationary periods (3.36).*
- R24 Develop a mechanism to disseminate and mainstream good practice in teaching and learning throughout the schools, departments and programmes (3.37).*
- R25 Develop a more effective system of learner feedback including a learner-friendly online system (3.38).*
- R26 Establish a coordinated strategy to ensure the training and development of all its staff over a multi-annual period, integrating teaching and learning objectives, assessment and planning of both institutional and individual requirements and the transparent allocation of appropriate resources (3.39, 3.41, and 3.42).*

Element 5: Learning Resources and Support

Commendations — Page 48

- C9 *The positive impact of the new student information desk providing a “one-stop-shop” for student queries (3.48).*
- C10 *The effective and widespread use of “Moodle” as a support for student learning (3.51).*
- C11 *The successful development and implementation of the learning difficulties screening initiative with the support of the National Learning Network (3.53).*

Recommendations —Page 49

- R27 *Reinforce the ways in which learning resources and support issues can be raised by the support services, including a formal link to one of the sub-committees of the Academic Council (3.46).*
- R28 *Review and update the policy and current planning for the evaluation of academic and support services to ensure that adequate reviews are taking place in accordance with the five year timetable and that all reviews and audits result in a final follow-up report to the Top Management Group and Academic Council (3.47, 3.49).*
- R29 *Develop a strategic approach to diversity management based on actions, responsibilities and deliverables, including an expansion of its professional development opportunities to allow all academic and relevant support staff to benefit from training in this field (3.52, 3.53).*

Element 6: Information systems

Commendation — Page 51

- C12 *The completeness of its information collection and the potential of its database tracking recommendations for follow-up action (3.56).*

Recommendations — Page 51

- R30 *Review and update its Document Management System, as part of the new IT strategy, to ensure that key management data, policies and procedures are more readily accessible and user-friendly for staff (3.57).*
- R31 *Develop further the use of the tracking database through systematic management monitoring of its content and of the follow-up of recommendations (3.56).*

Element 7: Public Information

Recommendations —Page 52

- R32 *Renew its previous practice of publishing annual reports, starting with 2010 (3.63).*

Institute response

The Institute welcomes the commendations relating to quality assurance. We note the commendations relating to the approach to new programme development, innovation in teaching and

learning initiatives, commitment to re-invigorating the staff performance management and development system, new developments including the student information one-stop-shop, wide-scale use of Moodle and the integration of the National Learning Network services. We note the commendation relating to quality assurance review recommendation tracking. We consider this range of commendations is a reflection of the quality and energy of our staff, and our fundamental commitment to the spirit of quality assurance. We consider the observations of the panel supports our assertion that our quality assurance procedures broadly comply with the requirements of the seven elements of the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area.

We welcome the specific recommendations relating to quality assurance. While we consider we are broadly in compliance with European norms, we acknowledge that there are specific issues that need to be addressed. We consider that the recommendations of the panel broadly support our own findings in the review of effectiveness of our quality assurance procedures conducted as part of this Institute review, and in addition, a number of additional significant issues were identified by the panel. In particular, we note the significance of the recommendations relating to:

- The extern examiner process and reporting of examiners.
- Assessment and standards and linking of learning outcomes and assessments.
- Course board operations.
- On-line feedback from students.

As these issues affect learners directly, we have prioritised action in regard to these recommendations. The recommendations of the panel are welcomed as they will assist in focussing energy to address these issues.

We note the recommendations relating to operations of Academic Council and user access to policies and relevant information. We welcome the recommendation of the panel regarding production of annual report. Both of these recommendations have been prioritised as medium in terms of immediate action.

We note a range of other specific recommendations. Proposed resolutions are contained in the attached implementation plan. Many of these matters identified will continue to be addressed as part of the established and on-going activities of the Institute over time within the constraints of time and physical resources available.

Objective 4: Qualifications Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression

Commendations — Page 57

- C13 All ITB's programmes are validated and its policies support access, transfer and the progression ladder (4.1, 4.2).*
- C14 Its achievement in attracting and meeting the needs of under-represented and disadvantaged groups, up-skilling and re-skilling through flexible lifelong learning provision and innovative initiatives throughout the community (4.4, 4.5).*

Recommendations — Page 57/58

- R33 Complete its implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications by ensuring that the learning outcomes approach is fully embedded in programmes and modules, particularly in all criteria and procedures for learner assessment (4.3).*
- R34 Develop a clear and comprehensive lifelong learning and access strategy linked to its overall strategic priorities, particularly to the development of ITB as the hub of a learning region, building on its existing external networks with other educational and community-based bodies (4.6, 4.7).*

- R35 Implement its existing policy on the recognition of prior learning by building on established good practice in other institutes and by disseminating clear information to all potential applicants on the RPL possibilities in its programmes (4.8).*
- R36 Develop a pro-active policy on retention based on a central management information system, including data collection, analysis and reporting across the Institute, with follow-up action and practical initiatives involving the student support services, to improve performance in this crucial area (4.9, 4.10).*

Institute response

The Institute welcomes the commendations relating to qualifications framework, access, transfer and progression. We believe we have consistently supported the ladder system of access, transfer and progression, and welcome recognition of this. We also appreciate recognition of our efforts to meet the needs of under-represented learners.

We welcome the recommendation with regard to completing the implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and the recognition of our progress in its implementation across the Institute thus far. Since the revalidation process in 2003, ITB has operated within the spirit and framework of the NFQ and will continue to review and analyse the systemic implementation of the framework from programme evaluation and design, through programme delivery and assessment, both at programme and individual module level.

We note the recommendations of the panel relating to lifelong learning and access strategy. Our continuing commitment to lifelong learning and access is evident in the diverse spread of programme offerings in flexible and traditional modes and is reflected in the diversity of our staff and student body. We will continue to initiate, develop, and support lifelong learning and access, transfer and progression schemes through proactive engagement, research, and support of initiatives.

Our access activity will build on our well established links with schools, further education colleges, mature students' associations, and community based programmes. Our close ties with our local schools (primary and secondary) will be strengthened and enhanced. We will build on our excellent record and reputation with regard to initiatives for the unemployed through reskilling and up-skilling programmes developed both in-house and in association with government sponsored initiatives.

The recommendation on recognition of prior and experiential learning (RPEL) reflects Institute practice with regard to the facilitation of learners with prior learning and/or experience. The policy referred to, outlines the criteria for such recognition. Recognition of prior learning is embedded in the existing processes and every year sees a significant intake of students who have had their prior learning and/or experience recognised through the award of exemptions and/or advanced entry to programmes. Our progress in this area has achieved international recognition which we resolve to further develop.

The criteria to be employed when assessing prior experiential learning are of paramount importance in ensuring that adequacy and consistency of standards are maintained. Equally access to education and learning is of crucial importance and this policy will be developed to reflect best practice and progress in this area. Comprehensive application of the principles of RPEL will be constrained by temporal and resource constraints. However, our commitment to the principles and application of RPEL will continue.

We note the recommendation on retention and resolve to intensify our commitment to improving retention and creating a positive learning environment for all learners. Initiatives will focus on introduction, induction and orientation, curriculum development, and the promotion of a dynamic and supportive learning and teaching context.

Objective 5: Operation and Management of Delegated Authority

Commendation — Page 60

- C15 Its thorough and self-reflective review of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures (3.4).*

Recommendations — Page 60/61

- R37 The recommendations on quality assurance in this report and in ITB's own effectiveness review should be implemented.*
- R38 An external audit should be commissioned by the Institute to confirm within the next 12 months that these recommendations have been implemented.*
- R39 Delegated Authority granted to the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown be continued as provided for in the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999.*

Institute response

The Institute welcomes the commendations relating to operations and management of delegated authority. In addition, we particularly welcome the recommendation regarding the renewal of delegated authority. We acknowledge the efforts of all staff in developing the Institute over the past 5 years to provide the panel the comfort to make this recommendation.

We note the recommendation regarding implementation of the recommendations contained within the quality assurance review. This was a particularly detailed review and contained a large number of recommendations. Thus, we recognise it will take time to consider and implement the range of recommendations. Given the difference in impact of some of the recommendations on key stakeholders, we realise that recommendations will have to be prioritised for implementation. As a consequence, we feel the recommendation to conduct an external audit within 12 months would be of greater benefit if done at a later date.

Objective 6: Recommendations for Enhancement

Recommendations — Page 62

- R40 The panel recommends that the Institute should now prepare for the major challenges of the new period by seeking out and sharing best practice across higher education institutions, both nationally and internationally.*
- R41 The panel acknowledges the areas for further development and critical challenges identified by the Institute in the SER and recommends that these should be further evaluated and refined in the context of its future strategic planning and the recommendations of the panel in this report.*

Institute response

The Institute notes the recommendations for enhancement. We agree that the Institute is entering a period of significant change and is likely of a scale that will fundamentally affect the functions of the Institute in the medium-term. We found the preparation and consultation involved in the development of our self-evaluation report to be particularly informative and fully support the recommendations therein. Thus, we welcome the recommendations of the panel regarding those recommendations.

Appendix:

Implementation plan for recommendations in report of the panel of experts

Priority of recommendations has been assigned based on the following guidelines:

Priority	What recommendations would get this priority	Timing of addressing recommendation	Conditions for addressing
High	Immediate direct and significant impact on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student,• Staff• Institute reputation	Within academic year 2011-2012	Must be addressed and resources must be re-directed.
Medium	Strategic or operational importance or minor impact on students	Between 2011 and 2013	Address provided it does not draw resources directly from student engagement or priority 1 activities.
Low	Supporting activity "Nice to have"	Before next Institute review (June 2016)	Provided resources are available and it does not compromise activity relating to priority 1 or 2.

Number	Recommendation	Priority	Action (including dates)	Action plan leader (with team members)	Current status (September 2011)
R1 (page 18) R37 (page 60)	Use the SER as a source of public confidence and added value, by following up in a transparent manner the key issues it identified as needing attention, linked to the recommendations from the Institutional Review (1.5). The recommendations on quality assurance in this report and in ITB's own effectiveness review should be implemented.	Medium	Recommendations listed in the SER, QA effectiveness review and the Institute review report will be included in the current Institute recommendation progress tracking database (September 2011). Schedule of engagement with staff to update progress will be established (Autumn 2011). Progress will be monitored at each meeting of the Quality Assurance subcommittee of Academic Council (on-going from Autumn 2011).	Registrar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA officer • TMG • Croi • QA subcommittee of AC 	Database is in operation and new recommendations have been populated.
R2 (page 19)	Continue to enhance the quality of its information available electronically to the general public and external stakeholders, including the use of focus groups representing its different target audiences (1.6).	Medium	Changes from 2010 programmatic review will be reflected on www.itb.ie (November 2011). Promotion of presence via social media to ensure a comprehensive list of 'fans' or 'followers'. Implement a new content management system (CMS) and refresh the design of the ITB web site (2012). Conduct focus groups with key audiences as part of this process. Coursebuilder will be launched publicly as a facility for guidance counsellors and potential students (2012).	Marketing Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Manager • Marketing staff 	QR code competition to encourage students to link ITB facebook page.
R3 (page 19)	Act on the SER conclusion that engagements with stakeholders should be further extended by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) developing their recognition of the Institute as a prestige brand and centre of excellence for learning and innovation throughout its catchment area and beyond (1.8). • (b) reinforcing relations with companies to enhance strategic involvement at an institutional level for example, by establishing industrial 	Medium	Implemented a new range of publications and a new theme for all advertising and communication campaigns (March 2011). Focus on using more digital marketing and communications as well as engaging in more public relations activities around events, students successes, and campus news and the LINC (2011-2012). Continue to ensure all marketing materials and channels reflect a prestige brand (2012).	Marketing Manager (3a) LINC Manager (3b)	Key message in all advertising/promotions has been implemented.

	liaison platforms in all departments and by taking specific initiatives to target the skills and innovation needs of key employers and expand work-based learning (1.9).				
R4 (page 26)	<p>Develop during 2011-2012 an integrated management planning and reporting system that will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure all departments and sections are aligned with the implementation of the next Strategic Plan by monitoring and evaluating the performance of their own action plans, specific objectives and deliverables (2.1). include a more balanced set of key indicators, benchmarks and targets, such as on learner achievement, diversity management and graduate employability, to enhance measurement of performance against strategic and operational objectives (2.2). 	Medium	<p>Augment the use of PMDS, currently deployed as an integrated planning tool, to further refine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance monitoring at departmental level against a set of agreed objectives and deliverables Performance monitoring at Institute level against strategic objectives and deliverables. (2012) <p>In consultation with key stakeholders, develop additional performance measures to capture the breadth and depth of key Institute activities of significance to these stakeholders. (2012-13)</p>	<p>Secretary Financial Controller</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TMG Heads of Departments 	<p>Two KPI measures published. Planning in process</p>
R5 (page 26)	Evaluate the new demands and different scenarios it faces in its post-development phase and update its mission accordingly, including by considering how to become the hub of a “learning region” and a prestige centre of excellence for innovative and hi-tech business (2.4, 2.5).	High	The Institute mission will be reviewed as a core component of our next strategic plan, using the outcome of a process of appreciative inquiry conducted at ITB among management, staff and students (Spring 2012).	<p>President</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TMG Governing Body 	<p>AI consultation completed Planning in process</p>

<p>R6 (page 27)</p> <p>R9 (page 32)</p> <p>R27 (page 49)</p>	<p>Ensure that tangible accountability is embedded more systematically throughout the organisational structure and enhance the governance role of the Academic Council and its sub-committees (2.9, 2.10).</p> <p>Review the terms of reference and operation of the Academic Council and its Quality Assurance sub-committee to ensure that they assume fully their crucial role within the Institute in monitoring the effectiveness and enhancement of quality assurance processes (3.6).</p> <p>Reinforce the ways in which learning resources and support issues can be raised by the support services, including a formal link to one of the sub-committees of the Academic Council (3.46).</p>	Medium	<p>The organisational structure, including the roles and responsibilities of Academic Council and its sub-committees, will be reviewed. This review will examine how to increase the visibility of the high levels of accountability taken by individuals and teams throughout the organisation. The terms of reference will include the enhancement of ways in which learning resources and support issues can be raised by the support services. (Autumn 2012).</p>	<p>President</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Council TMG 	Planning in process
R7 (page 27)	<p>Take specific measures to help learners to become full and active partners in governance throughout ITB, such as by providing training opportunities and more effective feedback mechanisms (2.11).</p>	High	<p>Effective election of class representatives to ensure the most suitable candidates are put forward by the students (Autumn 2011). Closer links with USI to ensure that class representatives are properly trained and aware of the importance of their role (Autumn 2011). Establishment of student forum where all class representatives are invited to meet with the Registrar, Librarian, IT Manager and Student Affairs Manager to voice any issues in relation to academic support (Spring 2011). Strive to have student representation on all committees (on-going).</p>	<p>Academic administration and student affairs manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' Union President 	<p>Student forum established and operational.</p> <p>Planning in process</p>
R8 (page 27)	<p>Specify ITB's strategies on internationalisation and research as part of its next Strategic Plan (2.12, 2.13).</p>	Medium	<p>ITB plans to develop this strategy to target specific non EU countries and to establish links with international other third level HEIs. This internationalisation strategy will be developed as part of the next strategic plan (2012).</p> <p>Through the research forum the LINC will facilitate the</p>	<p>Marketing Manager</p> <p>Head of School of Informatics and Engineering</p>	<p>Linkages for international recruitment established</p> <p>Research forum is in place and</p>

			Schools to review their current research activity and competence while also analysing the international trends thus enabling the School to plan a research strategy (2012).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of Departments • LINC manager • Research forum 	research activities are being reviewed
R10 (page 32) R11 (page 32) R30 (page 51)	<p>Implement the effectiveness review suggestions that quality assurance policy and procedural documents, including a revised policy manual, should be made more user-friendly for staff (3.3).</p> <p>Strengthen its procedures for the consistent implementation and continuous enhancement of quality assurance, including by specifying more clearly the roles, responsibilities and means for monitoring and revising policies and procedures and by implementing the recommendations of its own review of effectiveness (3.5).</p> <p>Review and update its Document Management System, as part of the new IT strategy, to ensure that key management data, policies and procedures are more readily accessible and user-friendly for staff (3.57).</p>	Medium	Develop search facility and layout on DMS (Summer 2011). Review layout of DMS (Autumn 2011). Review the current arrangements for authority and accountability for monitoring effectiveness of QA procedures (Spring 2012). Review and update QA manual and linkage to other policies and procedures, including clarity on agreed roles and responsibilities of different officers relating to effectiveness monitoring of QA procedures (Summer 2012).	Registrar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Manager • QA Officer • TMG • Academic Council • QA subcommittee of AC 	Revised Intranet and DMS platform launched, including embedded search facility.
R12 (page 37)	Establish an interim reflection process between five year programme reviews to monitor the progress of programmes, including in terms of graduate employability, and to make adjustments to ensure programme relevance (3.10, 3.12).	Medium	<p>The Institute will consolidate the development of the Marketing and Development unit, the LINC and the Careers Guidance office. Each entity will leverage and consolidate the information gleaned from their external environmental scanning activities. This will include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertaking market research on new and existing programmes • establishing an advisory group to support and develop LINC activities with local and regional industry 	Head of School of Informatics and Engineering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing manager • LINC manager • Heads of departments 	On-going

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deploying social media resources to harness and capture the feedback from ITB alumni. <p>These activities will operate in parallel with on-going course board and departmental reviews of existing and proposed programmes (2011-2012)</p>		
R13 (page 37)	Include in the final reporting on the programmatic reviews a clear response to each of the external panel's recommendations and ensure that representatives of key industry/business/employers are represented on all future external panels, in particular for periodic reviews where all programmes are under review at the same time. (3.11, 3.12).	High	This will follow on-going current practice. Representatives of key industry/business/employers are included on all external panels in practice, including periodic reviews and programmatic review	Heads of School of Business and Humanities	On-going
R14 (page 37) R15 (page 38)	<p>Review critically the policy and terms of reference of Course Boards to formalise their role and responsibility for the continuous and effective monitoring of programmes, including their route to the Academic Council (3.17, 3.18, and 3.22).</p> <p>Improve the management and procedures for Course Board meetings to ensure that they consistently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address in a structured way strategic and academic review issues, such as retention, and identify clear action points and issues for the attention of the Academic Council, such as feedback from external examiners (3.16). • Assess external examiners' reports for action required so that the Registrar can inform 	High	<p>Academic Council will undertake to establish a sub-committee to review the policy and terms of reference of Course Boards (3CD05). This will include addressing academic review issues, student representation, extern examiner feedback and the completion of course board annual reports (Spring 2012).</p> <p>Ensure appointment of learner representatives before end of September for course boards. Giving adequate notice to learner representatives in advance of course board meetings. Facilitating learner attendance at course board meetings. Liaison with Student Union body to train and develop learners for full and active contribution to course boards (Autumn 2011)</p>	<p>Head of School of Informatics and Engineering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of departments • Course co-ordinators • Students' Union officers • Academic Council 	On-going

R16 (page 38)	the examiners of action taken or planned (3.15). Ensure that learners are treated as full partners in the implementation of quality assurance, programme development and monitoring, particularly by facilitating their full and active contribution to Course Board meetings and by revising the relevant agenda template (3.21).				
R17 (page 38)	Resolve any outstanding issues blocking the use of Annual Course Board Reports and re-activate the process in accordance with approved policy (3.19).	High	Within the framework of the Croke Park Agreement, explore the possibility of finding a resolution to the IR issue blocking production of reports (June 2012).	Secretary Financial Controller <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR manager • Heads of Departments • QA officer 	
R18 (page 41) R19 (page 41) R20 (page 42)	Accelerate the mainstreaming of "Coursebuilder" to all programmes and modules (3.27) and develop a template for programme handbooks including a matrix clearly linking assessment to learning outcomes (3.26). Provide training to all academic staff on the assessment of learning outcomes based on best practice (3.28). Develop a new ITB assessment and standards policy and procedure, including a specific central function to verify that all assessment information made available to learners and staff is exclusively based on clear learning outcomes criteria (3.25, 3.28, and 3.29). Complete its implementation of the	High	Develop Coursebuilder platform to allow linking of assessment and learning outcomes (Summer 2011). Review Institute marks and standards (3AS06), including policy on linking assessments to learning outcomes and reference to HETAC 2009 assessment and standards policy (Autumn 2011). Review course board procedure to include consideration of learning outcome and assessment matrix (Autumn 2011). Provide training opportunities for academic staff to refresh on writing learning outcomes and linking assessments to learning outcomes (Spring 2012). Provide training on Coursebuilder (Spring 2012). Develop model template for academic staff as guidance for consistence of approach at modular level (Spring 2012). Encourage refreshing learning outcome text and linking of assessments to learning outcomes in Coursebuilder at modular level (Autumn 2012)	Registrar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA officer • IT Manager • HR Manager • Academic Council • Heads of Departments 	Coursebuilder in place (June 2011). Project planning initiated. Programmes from two departments populated post programme review (September 2011)

R33 (page 57)	National Framework of Qualifications by ensuring that the learning outcomes approach is fully embedded in programmes and modules, particularly in all criteria and procedures for learner assessment (4.3).				
R21 (page 42)	Strengthen the policy and procedures on external examiners in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their recommended attendance at examination board meetings and sign-off of assessment results and award standards (3.31); • Their selection in terms of experience, range of competences and origin/diversity (3.33); • The institutional monitoring of their contribution (3.33); • The report format and content of feedback, particularly on the achievement of learning outcomes (3.32). 	High	Review current appointment procedure (3AS09) and associated documentation relating to extern examiners, including best practice as identified in HETAC assessment and standards 2009 (Autumn 2011). Implement recommended changes (Spring 2012) for academic year 2012 onwards.	Registrar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Council • QA officer • Heads of School 	Project planning initiated
R22 (page 42)	Review thoroughly the effectiveness of the existing external examiners and update the current register of externs as appropriate (3.33).				
R23 (page 45)	Reinforce the evaluation of potential employees both at the interview stage and during probationary periods (3.36).	Low	The current interview process employed is in line with best practice and Department of Education and Skills guidelines. Extend the existing probationary monitoring system to all new academic staff. (September 2011).	Secretary Financial Controller <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR manager • Heads of Departments 	Planning in process

R24 (page 45)	Develop a mechanism to disseminate and mainstream good practice in teaching and learning throughout the schools, departments and programmes (3.37).	High	Enhance the current mechanisms for disseminating good practice in teaching and learning. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual publication of the Teaching and Learning Journal; • On-going training opportunities for all staff in teaching and learning innovations; • Support all staff showcase and communication events; • Continue to expand the deployment of Moodle and other e-learning resources and tools (ongoing) 	Head of School of Informatics and Engineering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of departments • Academic staff 	On-going
R25 (page 45)	Develop a more effective system of learner feedback including a learner-friendly online system (3.38).	High	Consider options for development of on-line feedback system (Autumn 2011). Develop on-line feedback system (Spring 2012). Pilot on-line feedback system (Summer 2012). Include policy in teaching policy Rollout to all programmes (Autumn 2012)	Registrar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Manager • AASAM • Heads of Department • TMG 	Quote obtained for out-of-pocket on-line feedback system
R26 (page 45)	Establish a coordinated strategy to ensure the training and development of all its staff over a multi-annual period, integrating teaching and learning objectives, assessment and planning of both institutional and individual requirements and the transparent allocation of appropriate resources (3.39, 3.41, and 3.42).	Medium	All training is currently aligned to the strategic needs of the Institute. Re-activate PMDS, or a similar system, as a mechanism to systematically identify and address training and development needs of all staff, whilst continuing to locate primary responsibility for personal development with the individual. Integral to this will be a system for capturing the resources expended on training and development across multiple funding sources. (2011-2013)	Secretary Financial Controller <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR manager 	

R28 (page 49)	Review and update the policy and current planning for the evaluation of academic and support services to ensure that adequate reviews are taking place in accordance with the five year timetable and that all reviews and audits result in a final follow-up report to the Top Management Group and Academic Council (3.47, 3.49).	Medium	Review policy 2MP09 (Spring 2012). Implement findings of review (Autumn 2012)	President • Academic Council	Project planning initiated.
R29 (page 49)	Develop a strategic approach to diversity management based on actions, responsibilities and deliverables, including an expansion of its professional development opportunities to allow all academic and relevant support staff to benefit from training in this field (3.52, 3.53).	High	Continue existing diversity management initiatives through extending existing workshops and training in diversity. Training and development in this area at ITB recognises the needs of the whole institute and training and development in this area includes staff, learners and partner individuals and groups	Head of School of Business and Humanities • All staff • All students	On-going
R31 (page 51)	Develop further the use of the tracking database through systematic management monitoring of its content and of the follow-up of recommendations (3.56).	Medium	The introduction of the tracking database by ITB added significantly to the QA processes by providing valuable management information with regard to loop closure on quality improvement recommendations from a range of sources. To further enhance the system a procedure will be developed to formalise the existing management reporting and follow-up arrangements. (Summer 2012)	President • QA officer	On-going
R32 (page 52)	Renew its previous practice of publishing annual reports, starting with 2010 (3.63).	High	Staff member identified (September 2011). Plan for annual data collection (September 2011). Data collection (October-November 2011). Report drafted (January 2012). Report signed off by Governing Body (March 2012). Practice embedded in annual calendar of events (March 2012).	President • Project officer	Project planning initiated.

R34 (page 57)	Develop a clear and comprehensive lifelong learning and access strategy linked to its overall strategic priorities, particularly to the development of ITB as the hub of a learning region, building on its existing external networks with other educational and community-based bodies (4.6, 4.7).	Medium	As part of ITB's upcoming strategic plan ITB access and lifelong learning strategy will map our plans to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainstream our dormant account projects, • continue to analyse and work with local schools (both at primary and secondary level), • maintain and improve our school visits programme, • continue to develop our links with PLC colleges, mature students associations and community based organisations, • Develop our initiatives for the unemployed for reskilling and up-skilling through our part-time programme and government initiatives. (2012) 	Marketing Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of department • Access officer • School liaison officer 	On-going Project planning initiated
R35 (page 58)	Implement its existing policy on the recognition of prior learning by building on established good practice in other institutes and by disseminating clear information to all potential applicants on the RPL possibilities in its programmes (4.8).	Low	Policy will be reviewed (Autumn 2012). Needs of students, not currently being met will be identified (Spring 2013), and resources identified to implement strategy (Summer 2013). Decisions relating to changes in current operational practice will be made given existing financial constraints at the time (Summer 2014).	Registrar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AASAM • TMG • Marketing manager • Admissions officer 	Draft policy in place (3AD07). Significant level of advanced entry currently operating
R36 (page 58)	Develop a pro-active policy on retention based on a central management information system, including data collection, analysis and reporting across the Institute, with follow-up action and practical initiatives involving the student support services, to improve performance in this crucial area (4.9, 4.10).	High	Establish central management information to include data and information from across the institute, identifying critical actions and initiatives to support students, follow up on non-completion of academic programmes and develop supports and initiatives to increase retention (2011-2012)	Head of School of Business and Humanities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of departments • QA officer 	One KPI currently published Course board reports contain retention information Planning ongoing
R38 (page 60)	An external audit should be commissioned by the Institute to confirm within the next 12 months that these recommendations have been implemented.	Low	External audit will be conducted in due course. Due to practical time and resource constraints, it is unlikely this will occur within the next 12 months to accrue maximum benefit.(2013-2014)	Secretary Financial Controller	Action Planned, timing to be confirmed

R39 (page 61)	Delegated Authority granted to the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown be continued as provided for in the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999.	n/a	This recommendation is noted. No specific action is required.	President	In place
R40 (page 62)	The panel recommends that the Institute should now prepare for the major challenges of the new period by seeking out and sharing best practice across higher education institutions, both nationally and internationally.	High	Since its inception ITB has prepared for and overcome a wide range of challenges and looks forward to addressing future challenges in a creative and innovative manner. As part of its preparation for a new period of higher education in Ireland ITB will form strategic alliances with appropriate partners nationally and internationally. (On-going)	President	On-going
R41 (page 62)	The panel acknowledges the areas for further development and critical challenges identified by the Institute in the SER and recommends that these should be further evaluated and refined in the context of its future strategic planning and the recommendations of the panel in this report.	Medium	In the first phase of development of the next Strategic Plan, areas for further development, as identified in the SER, in tandem with the critical challenges identified and the recommendation of the panel, will be fully and comprehensively explored. (September 2011-Summer 2012)	Secretary Financial Controller <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governing Body TMG 	On-going