



TUS

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre, An tIarthar Láir

Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest

TUS Policy for Programmatic Review 2026 - 2031



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1.0 Introduction

The Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (hereafter referred to as TUS or the University) offers programmes from Level 6 to Level 10 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). TUS operates in a rapidly changing educational, economic and societal context. The University recognises the importance of regularly reviewing its programmes to ensure they continue to meet the needs of learners. Such review also supports the development of a coherent programme portfolio that contributes to regional development and to a knowledge-based society and economy. In addition, it ensures that programme provision is aligned with the *TUS Strategic Plan*,^[1] including its values, purpose, priorities and objectives.

This policy provides a quality assurance framework for the programmatic review and re-validation of programmes at TUS.

The purpose of programmatic review is to provide a structured process for the evaluation and enhancement of the University's programmes, ensuring alignment with institutional strategy and academic standards, and responsiveness to the evolving needs of students, industry and society. The process provides Faculties/Schools and Academic Departments with an opportunity to evaluate the coherence, structure and ongoing development of their programme portfolios. Programmatic review also supports the renewal and re-validation of programmes, enabling curriculum enhancement and innovation while ensuring that programme provision continues to meet the needs of students and external stakeholders, including employers and wider society.

2.0 Scope of the Policy

This *Policy for Programmatic Review* sets out the policy governing the programmatic review and re-validation of all programmes at TUS. This includes both undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes from Level 6 to Level 9 of the NFQ and research programmes at NFQ Level 9 and Level 10. It also encompasses collaborative and joint programmes. Accordingly, this policy applies to:

- 1) all Faculties/Schools and Academic Departments in TUS;
- 2) all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes which undergo re-validation as an integral part of the programmatic review;¹
- 3) the Graduate School and re-validation of research programmes and taught

¹ This encompasses Major and Non-major awards at NFQ Level 6 to Level 9 and TUS Certificates of Completion for Microcredential Programmes of 1 – 9 ECTS credit volume range.

modules in structured research programmes.

Under this Policy, programmatic review at TUS is a faculty/school-level activity with all Departments in a faculty/school undergoing the process as part of a collective endeavor. A schedule of programmatic review for the University has been agreed by the Senior Academic Management Group (SAMG), available at: [Programmatic Review Schedule](#) (subject to change for operational reasons). Upon successful re-validation of programmes under this Policy, programmes will have a six (6) academic year approval period. A revision of this policy will be required for any subsequent cycle of programmatic review.

The Policy also includes provision for the review and re-validation of specific programmes/programme suites outside of programmatic review in specific and defined circumstances.

This policy is supported by an associated *TUS Procedures for Programmatic Review*^[2] which set out the practical steps and operational guidance required to implement the programmatic review process described herein. *The TUS Policy for Taught Programme Validation and Modification*^[3] and *TUS Programme Design Guidelines*^[4] are also important reference points. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the wider *TUS Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook*. Key reference points include:

1. TUS Policy for Taught Programme Validation and Modification^[3]
2. TUS Policy and Procedures for Collaborative Provision (National and Transnational)^[5]
3. TUS Research Policies and Procedures^[6]
4. Putting Learning First: TUS Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy^[7]
5. TUS Graduate Attributes Framework^[8]
6. TUS Student Placement Policy; ^[9]
7. TUS Guide to Writing and Using Learning Outcomes.^[10]

Collectively, these provide the quality framework to ensure that TUS programmes have academic and intellectual currency and standards appropriate to award level and comparable to equivalent awards offered both nationally and internationally.

A set of definitions of relevant terms used in the Policy is available at: [Relevant Definitions](#).

3.0 Statutory and Regulatory Context

As a Designated Awarding Body, subject to the Technological Universities Act (2018)^[11] and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) as amended (2019)^[12], TUS is a self-accrediting university and is responsible for the validation/re-validation of programmes leading to awards in its name, including joint awards. It is also responsible for monitoring the quality, and academic quality assurance, of those awards. A particular function of TUS Academic Council under Chapter 5 (17) (3)(a)(b) of the 2018 Act is designing and developing programmes for the Technological University and supporting the implementation of those programmes. The awards offered by TUS shall be in accordance with the quality assurance obligations of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012^[13] *Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Designated Awarding Bodies (2016)*^[13] and the *Joint-Sectoral Protocol between Designated Awarding Bodies and Quality and Qualifications Ireland for the Inclusion of Qualifications within the National Framework of Qualifications (2022)*^[14].

TUS operates systems for ECTS credit accumulation and credit transfer consistent with the *Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Credit in Irish Higher Education*^[15] and consistent with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation Scheme (ECTS)^[16]. The TUS approach to academic quality assurance for programme validation/revalidation ensures that a learner may attain the knowledge, skill or competence for the purpose of an award which is consistent with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)^[17] and fulfils requirements in relation to Technological University and *QQI Policy on Access, Transfer and Progression*^[18].

4.0 Principles Applicable to the Programmatic Review

The following principles will apply to the programmatic review of programmes.

- 1) The reviewed programme portfolio should align with the academic purpose and strategic priorities of TUS and the relevant Faculty/School.
- 2) The reviewed programme portfolio should take account of regional, national and international skills needs, including industry, societal and economic priorities.
- 3) The reviewed programme portfolio should be considered in the context of the existing programme portfolio, including programmes offered within the regions in which the Faculty/School operate and across all campuses of TUS.
- 4) New programmes may be presented for validation as part of programmatic review where they fall within the broad disciplinary domain of the existing Faculty/School portfolio and align with Departmental academic provision, expertise and resource capacity. Programmes outside the established disciplinary domains, including

multidisciplinary provision, require the standard TUS programme development and validation process. The decision to validate new programmes as part of the programmatic review process shall require the approval of the relevant Head of Department/Dean of Faculty/School in consultation with the VP Academic Affairs and Registrar.

- 5) The reviewed taught programme portfolio shall align with the TUS Awards Framework (Taught Programmes) outlined in Section 5.0 of the [TUS Policy on Programme Validation and Modification](#).^[3] Programme teams should also take account of Section 7.0 '*Overarching Programme Structure Considerations for Major Awards*' and Section 8.0 '*Programme and Module Design Considerations*', which are equally applicable during programme review.
- 6) The reviewed programme portfolio should support clear student pathways, progression opportunities and appropriate access routes across programme award levels. In this context, due consideration should be given to the inclusion of programmes for embedded awards, the development of Add-on programme options and delivery in Full-time, Part-time, Blended and Online Learning modes.
- 7) All programmes will operate on a semesterised structure. Stages 2, 3 and 4 shall be universally semesterised. Stage 1 will normally be semesterised but may operate on a year-long basis, subject to approval by the relevant Dean of Faculty/School and Head of Department, in consultation with the Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar and Chief Academic Officer. Cognate groups of programmes in a department must agree and implement a common stage/semester programme structure.
- 8) The programmatic review shall be resource neutral in respect of class contact hours for a programme and not exceed the current allocation, except in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the relevant Dean of Faculty/School and Head of Department.
- 9) The design of undergraduate programmes should reflect a graduated reduction in directed learning hours as students advance through the stages of a programme. This supports good pedagogical practice by fostering increasing levels of autonomy, critical thinking and self-directed learning as students develop the knowledge, skills and competencies expected at higher stages of study.
- 10) The design of Postgraduate Diploma/Taught Master's programmes should reflect an appropriate balance between directed and independent learning, recognising the advanced level of study and the expectation of greater learner autonomy. In accordance with the TUS Academic Council-approved *Taught Masters Framework*,^[19] contact hours should not exceed 14 hours per week.
- 11) Programme structures should reflect consolidation of core learning to support programme integration, with ECTS credits aggregated into coherent modules of appropriate size as the stages of the programme progress. Programmes should

avoid reliance solely on 5 ECTS credit modules throughout all stages of the programmes. Programmes should include capstone modules to support the integration, synthesis, and application of learning developed throughout the programme.

- 12) In line with the TUS Strategic Plan^[1] and the TUS Student Placement Policy^[x], all Level 8 ab-initio programmes shall incorporate a Work Placement/Work-integrated learning. The inclusion of Work Placement/Work-integrated learning in all Level 7 programmes should also be the norm. Work Placement shall normally be 30 ECTS or greater, except where alternative credit weighting is agreed with the relevant Dean of Faculty/School and Head of Department.
- 13) Programme teaching, learning and assessment strategies should reflect effective pedagogical practice and be informed by the *Putting Learning First: TUS Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy*,^[7] the *TUS Graduate Attributes Framework*^[8] and the principles of embedding inclusive practice in accordance with the TUS adoption of the *ALTITUDE Charter*.^[20]
- 14) Programmes should incorporate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) principles within curriculum design, learning outcomes and teaching practices, where appropriate.
- 15) Programme assessment strategies shall ensure a balanced distribution of continuous assessment across modules and semesters, avoiding undue clustering of assessment deadlines.
- 16) Programme assessment strategies should support authentic and inclusive assessment approaches that align with programme/module learning outcomes and enable students to demonstrate the integration and application of knowledge, skills and competencies. Accordingly, assessment strategies should:
 - a) incorporate a range of assessment approaches appropriate to the learning outcomes, supporting the demonstration of different types of knowledge, skills and competencies;
 - b) ensure a balanced distribution of assessment across stages, semesters and modules, and avoid undue clustering of assessment deadlines;
 - c) avoid over-assessment and give due consideration to the overall number and balance of assessments within programmes;
 - d) where continuous assessment predominates, programme design should ensure that assessment load is structured to support a fair, consistent and equitable student experience;
 - e) at Stage 1, normally include at least 10 ECTS per semester that is assessed through 100% Continuous Assessment;
 - f) promote the embedding of academic integrity in programme and module design, including the development of assessment strategies that foster authentic learning and minimise opportunities for academic misconduct.

- g) the repeat assessment strategy should align with Faculty/School/Department re-assessment approaches.

The *TUS Policy on Programme Validation and Modification*^[3] and *TUS Programme Design Guidelines*^[4] are important resources to support the implementation of these principles.

5.0 Overview of the Programmatic Review Process

Programmatic review will be undertaken at faculty/school level, with all departments within a Faculty/School participating in the process as part of a collective process. Accordingly, the review process comprises of the following:

- a faculty/school critical self-study,
- a department critical self-study and programme self-evaluation.

The Faculty/School critical self-study provides an opportunity to review activities across the Faculty/School and reflect critically on its current position, including its strengths, areas for development and overall performance. It also enables consideration of the strategic direction and future development of the Faculty/School and its programme portfolio within the broader institutional, regional and national context. This leads to the development of a *Faculty Critical Self-study Report*. An External Peer Review Panel conducts a site visit and meet with key stakeholders, including Deans of Faculty/School, Heads of Department, staff, students and external stakeholders. The site visit results in a *Faculty Peer Review Panel Report* which details the main findings and recommendations of the panel. The Faculty/School response to the findings and recommendations of the panel report form the basis for the development of a Faculty Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), centred on the emergent recommendations. Oversight of the faculty response the panel report and associated QIP will be through the Senior Academic Management Group (SAMG), with noting to Academic Council.

The department critical self-study provides an opportunity for departments to reflect critically on the performance and development of their programme suite, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and consider priorities for future programme planning and development. Evaluation of individual programmes and modules, including programme performance, is undertaken through the associated Programme Self-Evaluation Reports (SERs). The programmatic review provides an opportunity for Programme Boards to make modifications, where considered appropriate, as part of the re-validation of programmes.

Each department within a faculty/school undertakes a department critical self-study and develops a *Department Critical Self-study Report*. This is complemented by

individual Programme/Programme Suite Self-evaluation Reports (SERs). The SER's are accompanied by the associated Academic Modular Manager programme specifications for the respective programmes. An internal review panel conducts an independent and objective evaluation of the self-study process and its outputs at Department and Programme/Programme Suite levels, and where appropriate offers recommendations for enhancement prior to submission to external panel.

An external Programmatic Review Panel conducts a site visit for each Department to meet with key stakeholders, including Deans of Faculty/School, Heads of Department, staff, students and external stakeholders. The site visit results in a Department Programmatic External Review Panel Report which details the main findings and recommendations of the panel. Departments and Programme Boards respond to the findings and recommendations arising from the review and implement any required programme changes with responses reviewed through Academic Council. Academic Council then considers and approves the re-validation of programmes.

The key elements of the programmatic review process are depicted in Figure 1.

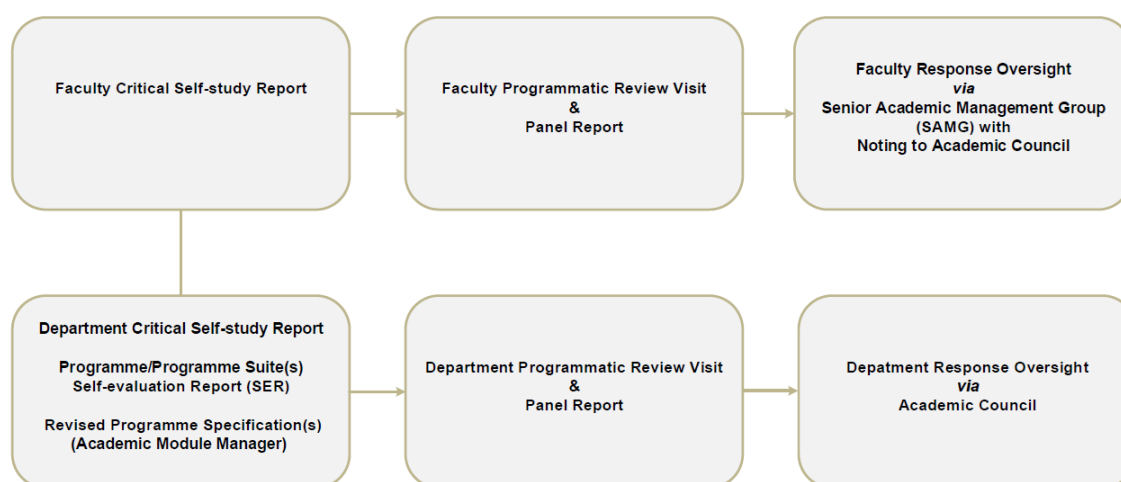


Figure 1. Overview of the Programmatic Review Process

6.0 The Critical Self-study/Self-evaluation

6.1 Faculty/School Critical Self-Study: Objectives and Process

The specific objectives of the faculty/school critical self-study are to:

- 1) define the faculty's strategic direction, including alignment with the TUS Strategic Plan and readiness for the next phase of university development;
- 2) evaluate the organisation, governance and management arrangements of the Faculty to support effective academic development, communication and collaboration with all relevant stakeholders;

- 3) review the disciplinary/interdisciplinary profile of programme portfolio, including both taught and research programme provision, and its future development, taking into account factors such as regional alignment, disciplinary strengths, cross-campus provision, student profile and entry routes, delivery modes, entry routes and progression pathways;
- 4) evaluate teaching, learning and assessment practices to support student success and respond to evolving academic, societal and industry contexts;
- 5) assess the adequacy of physical facilities, infrastructure, staffing and learning resources supporting the faculty's programme portfolio and identify strategic priorities for future development;
- 6) evaluate the faculty's engagement with industry, employers, the region and society, including the impact of its research activity and its contribution to regional development and the University's third mission (engagement/societal impact).

Accordingly, in undertaking the self-study, the Faculty will reflect on and evaluate its activities in relation to these objectives. The self-study should be evidence-informed and draw on relevant documentation, data and stakeholder perspectives, where appropriate. The self-study process will typically include engagement with Heads of Department, academic staff, senior management, relevant TUS professional services and other relevant internal and external stakeholders, as appropriate. Such consultation can help to ensure that a shared and representative understanding of the faculty's strategic priorities and future development opportunities emerges.

An indicative list of guiding questions as a resource for the self-study is provided in [Appendix 1](#) as a reference point. These may be tailored to the specific context of the Faculty/School.

An indicative profile of the content of the associated Faculty Critical Self-study Report is provided in [Appendix 2](#).

6.2 Department Critical Self-Study: Objectives and Process

The specific objectives of the department critical self-study are to:

- 1) evaluate the relevance and quality of the departmental programme suite in the context of the strategic direction of the Faculty and Department, and the Department's disciplinary strengths and scholarly activity, including its overall structure and progression pathways;
- 2) analyse programme performance across the departmental programme suite, including patterns in student recruitment, retention and progression, and graduate outcomes such as progression to employment or further study, to inform programme review, development and future planning;

- 3) evaluate teaching, learning and assessment practices across the departmental programme suite to support the continued enhancement of student learning;
- 4) review student engagement and feedback mechanisms across the programme suite, including the effectiveness of processes for gathering and responding to student feedback to enhance the student experience;
- 5) evaluate engagement with external stakeholders, including industry, employers and professional bodies where applicable, to ensure programmes remain relevant to the needs of the professions, the labour market and contemporary society;
- 6) review the future development of the departmental programme suite in the context of the Department's disciplinary strengths, scholarly activity and research environment, including consideration of resource requirements, facilities and projected demand, to inform programme planning and enhancement.

In undertaking the self-study, the department will reflect on and evaluate its activities in relation to the objectives. The self-study should be evidence-informed and draw on relevant documentation, data and stakeholder perspectives where appropriate. The self-study process will typically include engagement with Programme Boards, academic staff, students, faculty leadership, relevant TUS professional services and other internal and external stakeholders, as appropriate, to ensure a shared and representative understanding of programme provision, development priorities and future opportunities.

An indicative list of guiding questions as a resource for the self-study is provided in [Appendix 3](#), as a reference point. These may be tailored to the specific context of the department.

An indicative profile of the content of the associated Department Critical Self-study Report is provided in [Appendix 4](#).

6.2.1 Self-evaluation of Programmes/Programme Suites

Programme Boards will undertake a self-evaluation of individual programmes or programme suites as an integral element of the Department Critical Self-Study and Programme Self-Evaluation. The self-evaluation provides an opportunity for Programme Boards to review the design, structure, delivery and performance of programmes and to identify opportunities for enhancement and development.

The self-evaluation will be documented through a Programme/ Programme Suite Self-Evaluation Report (SER), which will support the re-validation of programmes as part of the Programmatic Review. The SER should critically evaluate the applicable programme/programme suite with regard to the programme aims and learning outcomes, programme design and curriculum structure, teaching, learning and

assessment practices, student outcomes, and engagement with external stakeholders. Programme Boards are encouraged to use the self-evaluation process to critically review the continued currency, quality and effectiveness of programmes and to identify opportunities for enhancement or redevelopment, where appropriate. The self-evaluation should be evidence-informed and draw on relevant documentation, programme performance data and stakeholder perspectives, where appropriate. The self-evaluation process will typically include engagement with Programme Boards, academic staff, students, relevant TUS professional services and external stakeholders in order to inform their review and re-validation.

In undertaking the self-evaluation, the Programme Board will reflect on and evaluate:

- 1) the continued relevance and effectiveness of the programme purpose, aims and learning outcomes, including alignment with TUS award standards, intended graduate attributes, employability profile and the needs of the target student cohort;
- 2) evidence informing the programme review, including perspectives from students, staff, programme boards and other stakeholders, and the identification of key strengths and areas for improvement;
- 3) the programme's external engagement and positioning, including engagement with industry, employers, accreditation bodies/professional, regulatory and statutory bodies (PRSB's), and benchmarking against comparable programmes nationally or internationally where appropriate;
- 4) student performance and outcomes, including patterns of recruitment, retention, progression and completion across programme stages;
- 5) the effectiveness of the programme's curriculum design and structure, including stage design, coherence of the curriculum, sequencing of modules and progression pathways supporting the development of knowledge, skills and competencies;
- 6) teaching and learning approaches supporting the achievement of programme learning outcomes, including the use of student-centred approaches, innovative pedagogies, research-informed teaching and digitally enhanced learning;
- 7) the design and implementation of assessment strategies, including the validity, reliability, consistency and fairness of assessment practices, management of assessment workload and the promotion of academic integrity. This includes taking cognisance of developments in Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI).

An indicative profile of the content of the associated Programme/Programme Suite Report is provided in [Appendix 5](#). It is emphasised that the focus in the SER should

be on the self-evaluation rather than a description of the factual programme specification employed under the respective headings, which will be available in the revised Programme Specification and any duplication is not necessary in the SER.

The revised programme specification is produced using the Academic Module Manager system. A programme specification is required for all programmes presented for re-validation including:

- 1) Ab-initio Programmes;
- 2) Add-on Programmes;
- 3) Embedded Awards.

All Part-time Programmes require a Part-time Approved Programme Schedule or a Part-time Programme Specification and require validation in their own right.

7.0 Programme Review Outside of Programmatic Review

From time to time, individual programmes or programme suites may require review and re-validation outside the scheduled programmatic review cycle. This may arise in defined circumstances, such as updates required to maintain Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Body (PRSB) accreditation or other significant developments affecting the programme. In such cases, the review will include the preparation of a Programme/Programme Suite Self-Evaluation Report as outlined in Section 6.2.1. Changes to programmes and or modules as a result of annual monitoring follow the normal procedures for programme modification as outlined in the *TUS Policy for Programme Validation and Modification*^[3].

From a procedural perspective, such reviews require consultation by the relevant Dean of Faculty/School, with the VP Academic Affairs and Registrar and the approval of Academic Council. It will involve appraisal by an internal review panel and an external validation panel, with the revised programme(s) subject to final approval by Academic Council. Any programme/programme suite reviewed through this process will remain within the scope of the subsequent scheduled programmatic review and will participate in that programmatic review, notwithstanding the time interval between the two processes.

8.0 University Withdrawal of a Programme

The University may decide not to offer a programme in a particular academic year or to withdraw a programme permanently from the University's programme portfolio.

The decision not to offer a programme in a particular academic year, must be evidence-based, and may be taken at faculty/school level following consultation between the relevant Dean of Faculty/School/Head of Department and Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar. In such cases the programme remains an approved programme of the University and may be offered again in a subsequent academic year.

The permanent withdrawal of a programme from the University's programme portfolio requires approval of the President following consultation with the Chief Academic Officer, Vice President Academic Affairs and Registrar, relevant Dean of Faculty/School and Head of Department and Programme Board. Where a current programme is withdrawn permanently, appropriate arrangements must be made to ensure that any enrolled students are able to complete their studies.

Where an approved programme has not delivered in the preceding two consecutive years, the Faculty/Department may decide not to include the programme in the next cycle of Programmatic Review for re-validation.

9.0 Bibliography

- 1) [TUS Strategic Plan](#)
- 2) TUS Procedures for Programmatic Review
- 3) [TUS Policy for Taught Programme Validation and Modification](#)
- 4) TUS Programme Design Guidelines
- 5) [TUS Policy and Procedures for Collaborative Provision \(National and Transnational\)](#)
- 6) TUS Research Policies and Procedures, Volume 7, [TUS QAE Handbook](#)
- 7) [Putting Learning First: TUS Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy](#)
- 8) [TUS Graduate Attributes Framework](#)
- 9) [TUS Student Placement Policy](#)
- 10) [TUS Guide to Writing and Using Learning Outcomes](#)
- 11) [Technological Universities Act \(2018\)](#)
- 12) [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act \(2012\) as amended \(2019\)](#)
- 13) [Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Designated Awarding Bodies \(2016\)](#)
- 14) [Joint-Sectoral Protocol between Designated Awarding Bodies and Quality and Qualifications Ireland for the Inclusion of Qualifications within the National Framework of Qualifications \(2022\)](#)
- 15) [Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Credit in Irish Higher Education](#)
- 16) [European Credit Transfer and Accumulation Scheme \(ECTS\)](#)
- 17) [National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\)](#)
- 18) [QQI Policy on Access, Transfer and Progression](#)
- 19) TUS Academic Council-approved Taught Masters Framework
- 20) [ALTITUDE Charter](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1.

Faculty Critical Self-study – Guiding Questions

Appendix 2.

Faculty Critical Self-study Report– Indicative Content

Appendix 3.

Department Critical Self-study – Guiding Questions

Appendix 4.

Department Critical Self-study– Indicative Content

Appendix 5.

Programme/ Programme Suite Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

Appendix 6.

Programme Specification Document

Appendix 1. Faculty/School Critical Self-study – Guiding Questions

Note:

These are guiding or prompt questions as a resource to support the critical self-study and not a prescriptive list of questions to be answered.

Faculty Critical Self-study – Guiding Questions
Objective 1: Define the Faculty's/School's strategic direction, including alignment with the TUS Strategic Plan and readiness for the next phase of institutional development.
• How does the Faculty's current direction align with the TUS Strategic Plan, other institutional strategies and relevant national or regional policy priorities? • What are the Faculty's/School's distinctive academic strengths and areas of strategic focus across teaching, research and engagement? • How well positioned is the Faculty/School to contribute to the next phase of institutional development following Faculty consolidation, and what strategic priorities should guide the Faculty over the next planning period.
Objective 2: Evaluate the organisation, governance and leadership arrangements of the Faculty to support effective academic development, communication and collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.
• How effectively do the Faculty's/School's organisational structures, governance processes and leadership arrangements support academic leadership and strategic direction across teaching, research and programme activity? • To what extent do current organisational arrangements enable collaboration across Departments and disciplines within the Faculty and engagement with relevant stakeholders, including students? • What opportunities exist to strengthen organisational structures, governance and leadership arrangements to support academic development and effective communication with stakeholders?
Objective 3: Review the disciplinary/interdisciplinary profile of programme portfolio, including both taught and research programme provision, and its future development, taking into account factors such as regional alignment, disciplinary strengths, cross-campus provision, student profile and entry routes, delivery modes, entry routes and progression pathways.
• How well does the current programme portfolio, including taught and research programme provision, reflect the Faculty's disciplinary strengths and strategic priorities? • How effectively does the portfolio respond to regional needs, national priorities, internationalisation objectives and relevant developments within disciplines and professions? • How coherent is the portfolio in terms of cross-campus provision, delivery modes, flexible learning pathways, student profile, entry routes and progression pathways, and what opportunities exist for portfolio development or new programme initiatives?

Faculty/School Critical Self-study – Guiding Questions

Objective 4: Evaluate teaching, learning and assessment practices to support student success and respond to evolving academic, societal and industry contexts.

- How effectively do current teaching, learning and assessment approaches support high-quality student learning and reflect contemporary pedagogical practice?
- How effectively do teaching, learning and assessment practices support the development of knowledge, skills and competencies required for student success?
- How effectively are the Faculty's academic practices responding to external developments and emerging challenges, and societal, technological and industry change, including the impacts of generative AI and academic integrity?

Objective 5: Assess the adequacy of physical facilities, infrastructure, staffing and learning resources supporting the Faculty's programme portfolio and identify strategic priorities for future development.

- To what extent do the Faculty's physical facilities, laboratories, specialist spaces and digital infrastructure support current teaching, learning and research activities?
- How well does the staffing profile and disciplinary expertise support the delivery and future development of the programme portfolio?
- What resource gaps or strategic investment priorities should be addressed in relation to learning resources, technical support and academic support services to support the Faculty's future development?

Objective 6: Evaluate the Faculty's engagement with industry, employers, the region and society, including its contribution to innovation and the University's third mission.

- How effectively does the Faculty engage with industry, employers, professional bodies and other external stakeholders relevant to its disciplines?
- How do external partnerships and insights inform programme development, research priorities, innovation, enterprise and knowledge exchange, and support the impact of research activity and regional development?
- What opportunities exist to strengthen the Faculty's external engagement and impact at regional, national and international levels?

Appendix 2. Faculty/School Critical Self-study Report – Indicative Content

Notes

- a) *The following is indicative of typical content, not prescriptive, and may be varied to reflect the diversity of activities in Faculties and associated variances in the approach to the Critical Self-study. Level 3 subheadings are typically not provided below but would be included as appropriate (e.g. Section 3.9: Skills Fora; Industry and Employer Engagement; Engagement with PRSBs; Engagement with Academic Institutions, inter alia)*
- b) *An MS Word template for this Report will be available from the Quality Office.*

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Appendices (As deemed relevant)

Appendix 3. Department Critical Self-study – Guiding Questions

Note:

These are guiding or prompt questions as a resource to support the critical self-study and not a prescriptive list of questions to be answered.

Department Critical Self-study – Guiding Questions
Objective 1: Evaluate the relevance and quality of the departmental programme suite in the context of the Department's disciplinary strengths and scholarly activity, including its overall structure and progression pathways.
• How well does the departmental programme suite reflect the Department's disciplinary strengths, scholarly activity and strategic priorities? • How effectively do progression pathways within and between programmes support student progression and development across the programme suite? • What opportunities exist to strengthen or develop the programme suite to support the Department's future academic development?
Objective 2: Analyse programme performance and student outcomes across the departmental programme suite to inform programme review, development and future planning.
• What patterns and trends are evident in programme performance and student outcomes across the departmental programme suite? • What are the key factors influencing student recruitment, progression, completion and graduate outcomes across the programme suite? • How should analysis of programme performance and student outcomes inform programme review, development and future planning within the Department?
Objective 3: Evaluate teaching, learning and assessment practices across the departmental programme suite to support the continued enhancement of student learning;
• How effectively do current teaching, learning and assessment practices support student learning across the programme suite? • To what extent do teaching, learning and assessment approaches reflect contemporary pedagogical practice and support diverse student learning needs? • What opportunities exist to further enhance teaching, learning and assessment practices to improve student learning across the programme suite?
Objective 4: Review student engagement and feedback mechanisms across the programme suite, including the effectiveness of processes for gathering and responding to student feedback to enhance the student experience.
• How effectively are students engaged in providing feedback on their learning experience across the programme suite? • How effective are the mechanisms used to gather, analyse and respond to student feedback? • How has student feedback informed improvements to programmes and the wider student experience, and what further opportunities exist for enhancement?

Objective 5: Evaluate engagement with external stakeholders, including industry, employers and professional bodies where applicable, to ensure programmes remain relevant to the needs of the professions, the labour market and contemporary society.

- How effectively does the Department engage with employers, industry, accreditation bodies, professional, regulatory and statutory bodies (PRSB's), and other external stakeholders relevant to its disciplines?
- How is feedback from external stakeholders used to inform programme review, development and relevance across the programme suite?
- What opportunities exist to strengthen external engagement to support the continued relevance and development of programmes?

Objective 6: Review the future development of the departmental programme suite in the context of the Department's disciplinary strengths, scholarly activity and research environment, including consideration of resource requirements, facilities and projected demand, to inform programme planning and enhancement.

- What future opportunities or challenges may influence the development of the departmental programme suite?
- How do current and anticipated resource requirements, facilities and capacity support the future development of programmes?
- What priorities should guide the future planning and development of the departmental programme suite?

Appendix 4. Department Critical Self-study– Indicative Content

Notes

- a) *The following is indicative of typical content, not prescriptive, and may be varied to reflect the diversity of activities in Departments and associated variances in the approach to the Critical Self-study. Additional Level 3 subheadings may be included as appropriate (e.g. Section 3.3, Life-long Learning; Apprenticeship, Collaborative and Transnational Provision).*
- b) *An MS Word template for this Report will be available from the Quality Office.*

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Purpose of the Department Critical Self-Study
- 1.2 Scope of the Review

2.0 Methodology

- 2.1 Approach to the Self-Study

3.0 Department Critical Self-study

- 3.1 Introduction to the Department & Alignment with Faculty/School Strategy
- 3.2 Quality Assurance Processes in the Department
 - 3.2.1 Quality Assurance Fora, Processes and Student Feedback Mechanisms
 - 3.2.2 Engagement with Internal & External Stakeholders
- 3.3 Department Programme Portfolio and Student Profile
 - 3.3.1 Programme Profile (Major/Non-major Awards /Life-long Learning/Apprenticeships etc)
 - 3.3.2 Student Profile (Recruitment/Entry Routes/Points, Enrolment Trends)
- 3.4 Student Success and Outcomes (*Programme-level Detail*)
 - 3.4.1 Student Outcomes (Retention, Progression, Completion and Grade Profile)
 - 3.4.2 Graduate Outcomes, Including Employment or Further Study Where Relevant
- 3.5 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Practices– Departmental Perspective
- 3.6 Research Profile and Areas of Activity
- 3.7 Learning Resources and Student Supports
- 3.8 Overview of Staffing Profile and Academic Expertise

5.0 Departmental Reflection, Future Development and Recommendations

- 5.1 Departmental Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- 5.2 Department Reflection, Future Development Priorities and Recommendations

Appendices

As deemed relevant

Appendix 5. Programme/ Programme Suite Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

Notes

- a) *The following is indicative of typical content, not prescriptive, and may be varied to reflect the programme/programme suite context.*
- b) *The SER is intended **to remain concise and focus on self-evaluation**.*
- c) *An MS Word template for this Report will be available from the Quality Office.*

Table of Contents

1.0 Programme Context and Positioning

- 1.1 Positioning of the Programme Within the Department, Faculty and Disciplinary Context

2.0 Methodology Employed in the Self-evaluation

- 2.1 Approach to the Self-Study

3.0 Review of Programme Purpose, Learning Outcomes, Relevance & Performance

- 3.1 Programme Purpose, Aims and Learning Outcomes
(evaluation of appropriateness/effectiveness of programme aim; target student cohort; admissions criteria, programme learning outcomes and alignment with TUS award standards; graduate attributes; employability profile);
- 3.2 Stakeholder Perspectives and Evidence Informing Programme Review
(staff/programme board perspectives; evaluation of student feedback, survey findings, stakeholder consultation, external examiner feedback. SWOT analysis);
- 3.3 Review of External Engagement and Benchmarking
(evaluation of engagement with Industry, Employers and Professional Bodies, benchmarking against comparable programmes nationally or internationally as relevant)
- 3.4 Review of Student Performance and Outcomes (Programmes by Stage)
Student Retention, Progression, Completion

4.0 Review of Curriculum Design, Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- 4.1 Programme Structure, Stage Design and Progression Pathways
(curriculum coherence, sequencing of modules; disciplinary foundations; integration across stages; progressive development of knowledge, skills and competencies)
- 4.2 Teaching and Learning Supporting Programme Learning Outcomes
(teaching and learning strategies; innovative pedagogies, research informed teaching and learning, student-centred learning; digitally enhanced learning; implications of generative AI)
- 4.3 Consistency, Fairness and Academic Integrity in Assessment Design
(validity; reliability; consistency across modules/stages; fairness; workload, academic integrity; taking cognisance of developments in Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI))

5.0 Principal Programme Revisions

- 5.1 Summary of Opportunities for Programme Enhancement and/or Redevelopment
- 5.2 Key Changes at Programme Level
- 5.3 Table of Key Changes to Modules
- 5.4 Table of Comparative Programme Structure

Appendices

- A. Sample Programme Board Minutes
- B. Sample External Examiners Reports
- C. Sample Student Survey Questionnaire
- D. Sample Focus Group Questionnaire
- E. Sample Industry/Employer Survey Questionnaire
- F. Relevant Appendices Supporting Section 8.0 (Programme Performance Data)

Appendix 6. Programme Specification Document

Note:

The Programme Specification Document comprises a single document with **concise descriptive information** built on, and extracted from, Module Manager as a pdf, with system heading as follows:

1. Programme Summary Information (Award Class, Type, Title, ECTS, NFQ Level, ISCED Classification)
2. Introduction to the Programme
 - a) Programme Description
 - a) Programme Aim
3. Alignment of Programme with TUS Strategy
4. Alignment of Programme with Faculty/Department Strategy
5. Rationale for the Programme
6. Programme Resources
 - a) Staffing Resources
 - b) Facilities Required
 - c) Learning Resources
7. Industry/Sectoral Demand for the Programme
 - a) Market Research and Consultation
 - b) Employment Opportunities/Career Prospects of Graduates
8. Student Demand for the Programme
 - a) Market Research and Consultation
 - b) Projected Student Numbers
9. Access, Transfer and Progression
 - a) Entry Requirement and Access Routes
 - b) Transfer Routes
 - c) Programme Progression
 - d) Embedded Programmes
10. Teaching and Learning Strategy including Graduate Attributes
11. Assessment Strategy
12. Learning Supports
13. Programme Learning Outcomes
14. Programme Learning Outcomes Mapped to TUS Award Standards
15. Modules Mapped to Programme Learning Outcomes
16. Approved Programme Schedule
17. Programme Delivery Schedule
18. Detailed Assessment Matrix
19. Alignment with Education for Sustainable Development Goals
20. Modules