

IRISH UNIVERSITIES
QUALITY BOARD



I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For:

**IUQB's response to stakeholder demands for autonomy,
accountability and accessibility through the Institutional
Review of Irish Universities (IRIU) Process**

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IRISH UNIVERSITIES QUALITY BOARD

IUQB KEY FACTS:

- 6 Executive Staff
- 18 Board Members
- Established in 2002
- Incorporated 2006
- Funded: 50% University subscriptions
- 50% Grant from HEA
- ENQA Member
- EQAR Listed Agency
- Universities delegated their statutory obligations as outlined in **Section 35** and **Section 41** of The Universities Act, 1997, in relation to **reviewing and reporting on the effectiveness of the procedures for quality assurance employed by the universities “from time to time and in any case at least every 15 years”**

NATIONAL CONTEXT



INTERNAL REVIEW:

The Universities Act, 1997

Section 35:

The procedures shall include—

*2 (a) the evaluation, at regular intervals and in any case not less than once in every 10 years of **each department and, where appropriate, faculty of the university and any service provided by the university, by employees of the university in the first instance and by persons, other than employees, who are competent to make national and international comparisons on the quality of teaching and research and the provision of other services at university level,***

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Section 35 :

The procedures shall include—

2 (b) *assessment by those, including students, availing of the teaching, research and other services provided by the university, and shall provide for the publication in such form and manner as the governing authority thinks fit of findings arising out of the application of those procedures.*

(3) *A governing authority shall implement any findings arising out of an evaluation carried out in accordance with procedures established under this section unless, having regard to the resources available to the university or for any other reason, it would, in the opinion of the governing authority, be impractical or unreasonable to do so.*

NATIONAL CONTEXT

EXTERNAL REVIEW

The Universities Act, 1997,

Section 35:

(4) A governing authority shall, from time to time, and in any case at least every 15 years... arrange for a review of the effectiveness of the procedures provided for by this section and the implementation of the findings arising out of the application of those procedures.

(5) A governing authority, in a report prepared in accordance with section 41, shall publish the results of a review conducted under subsection (4).

EXTERNAL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW: 2004/05 (First Cycle)



EUA's IEP



SECTORAL REPORT:



“the systematic organisation and promotion of quality assurance at the initiative of the universities themselves” as being “unparalleled in any other country in Europe, or indeed in the United States or Canada”. The reviewers deemed the system “to strike the right tone and combination of public interest, accountability, and university autonomy. It encourages a greater focus on quality and improvement than some systems worldwide, while at the same time being less intrusive than some other systems in Europe”.

“time to move to a new phase” that “should build on the existing system, linking it more closely to strategic management and feeding its outputs into the ongoing development of the universities, individually and collectively”.

THE IRIU PROCESS: 2009/10 – 12/13 (Second Cycle)

By the end of this rolling cycle of reviews, independent reviewers will have confirmed whether Irish universities are operating in line with the requirements of (i) Section 35 of the Universities Act, 1997, and are (ii) consistent with the Part 1 requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2005 (the ESG)



IRIU METHOD

Element 1: Institutional Self-Assessment Report (ISAR)

Element 2: The Review Visit(s) – Planning Visit and a Main Review Visit

Element 3: Review Reports

Element 4: Follow-up

FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

YEAR 1: September 2010

YEAR 2: September 2011

**Mid Cycle
Analysis:** September 2011

Part 1: IRIU Process Against ESG 2

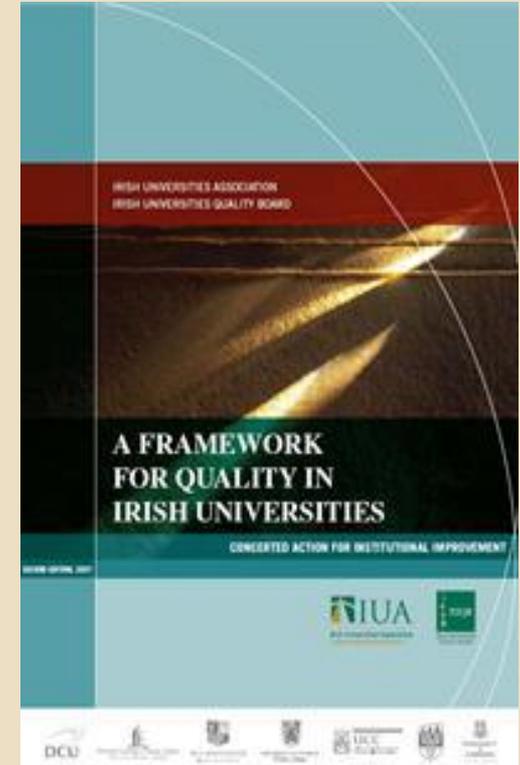
Part 2: Recurrent Themes

http://www.iuqb.ie/info/iuqb_publications.aspx



Framework for Quality, Second Edition, 2007 (IUQB & IUA)

- Engagement with ESG & Bologna
- Internal Evaluation of University Units
- Self-Assessment of a University Unit
- Peer Review of a University Unit
- Follow-up to a Quality Review
- External Review of a University



PART 1: IRIU AGAINST ESG 2

ESG 2.1 Use of Internal QA Procedures

Autonomy:

- Willingness and ability to go beyond national requirements
- ✘ Inconsistency in implementation (feedback structures etc.)

Accountability:

- 100% compliance with Universities Act & ESG Part 1
- ✘ more externality and swifter turnaround in publication

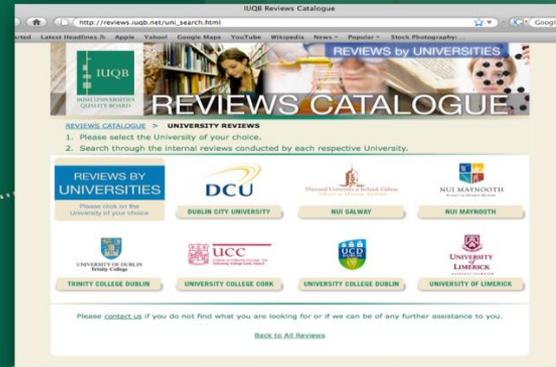
Accessibility:

- Publication of over 400 internal review & follow up reports
- ✘ More consistent and less complex structures

ESG 2.5 Report Publication



The Quality Reviews Catalogue on the IUQB website.



enriching
the student
experience

IRIU Element 3: Reports

Main Report

1. Introduction & Context
2. Institutional Self Assessment
3. Quality Assurance & Accountability
4. Quality Enhancement
5. Compliance
6. Conclusions

Summary Report

- Confirm Universities Act Compliance
- Confirm Consistency with Part 1 ESG
- Confirm engagement with Best Practice
- 5 Commendations
- 5 Recommendations



PART 1: IRIU AGAINST ESG 2

ESG 2.5 Reporting (Summary & Full)

Autonomy:

- 100% agreement (61% strongly) size & structure right
- ✘ 9% of reviewers requested greater format flexibility

Accountability:

- 48% agreed strongly reports internationally comparable
- ✘ Mixed views on summary report structure and content

Accessibility:

- 100% agreement (52% strongly) accessible to externals
- ✘ Survey of students yet to be undertaken

IRIU Element 4: Follow-Up

- Annual Dialogue Meetings (April-May)
- Annual Institutional Reports (January)
- University Action Plan - one year after the Main Review Visit :
 - identify the range of strategic and logistical developments
 - explicitly address/respond to each of the report findings, commendations and recommendations
 - published by the IUQB



PART 1: IRIU AGAINST ESG 2

ESG 2.1 Follow-Up procedures

Autonomy:

- Universities have flexibility in format
- ✘ Uncertain how IUQB would respond to a poor submission

Accountability:

- 100% of universities aware of follow-up requirements and reports have all been submitted on time and shared with review team members
- ✘ No formal structure in place for assessing implementation

Accessibility:

- All follow up reports published on IUQB & Uni websites
- ✘ Need to monitor accessibility

PART 2: RECURRENT THEMES



(Commendations & Recommendations)

ESG 1.1 QA Policy & Procedures

Autonomy:

- Robust quality culture - 54% of team commendations: governance & management
- ✘ Overly complex - 45% of team recommendations: governance & management

Accountability:

- Gone beyond national requirements & outcomes published
- ✘ Greater consistency, accountability and externality needed

Accessibility:

- Outcomes linked to knowledge management systems
- ✘ Improvements indentified for internal & external stakeholders

PART 2: RECURRENT THEMES

ESG 1.7 Public Information

✘ NO COMMENTS FROM REVIEW TEAMS IN THIS AREA

■ IUQB Public Information Project

http://www.iuqb.ie/info/iuqb_publications.aspx?article=fa19c87c-3001-40b3-86f5-6ec1877f463e

Conducted 2010/11

- 264 2nd level students
- 264 careers guidance counsellors

Seeking:

- Greater consistency
- Jargon-free



OUTCOMES OF MID-CYCLE ANALYSIS



Part 1: IRIU Process

- Fit for Purpose and Operating in line with ESG 2
- 100% (60% strongly) IRIU Process comparable to similar processes nationally and internationally
- 100% (78% strongly) working with IUQB compared favourably with similar national & international agencies
- ✘ Reviewer guidance & training to be tightened in terms of the IRIU Code of Conduct and review report scope
- ✘ Frustration in the inflexibility in format of reports
- ✘ Restrictions in IUQB's ability to monitor implementation and accessibility of outcomes

OUTCOMES OF MID-CYCLE ANALYSIS



Part 2: Recurrent Themes from Reports

- Management styles and practices commended across the sector for having embedded a quality culture
 - Volume of publicly available reports arising from internal reviews - review reports & action plans (over 400)
 - Significant amount of evidence available on the impact of financial restrictions upon the quality of the student experience
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- ✘ Over complexity and a lack of consistency institutionally and at a sectoral level
 - ✘ Lack of coverage of progress against ESG 1 in review team reports (1.2, 1.3 & 1.7)

VERDICT?



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