



Ollscoil na hÉireann
National University of Ireland

Recognised Colleges of the NUI:

Information for prospective applicants

2018

Introduction

This document provides background information and guidance for institutions that are considering an application to become a Recognised College of the National University of Ireland.

Background

Becoming a Recognised College of the National University of Ireland (NUI) means joining the largest academic community in the Irish higher education system and benefitting from the national and international educational identity and collective strength that this community offers. NUI warmly welcomes interest and applications for Recognised College status from existing or newly established institutions of higher education in the Republic of Ireland.

The National University of Ireland (NUI) was established in 1908, and is a federal university currently comprising four Constituent Universities (CUs), two Recognised Colleges (RCs) and four colleges linked with the constituent universities. NUI's constituent universities (and constituent colleges thereof, in brackets) are:

- University College Cork (UCC)
- University College Dublin (UCD) (National College of Art and Design, NCAD)
- Maynooth University (MU)
- National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) (Shannon College of Hotel Management; Burren College of Art; St Angela's College, Sligo).

NUI's current Recognised Colleges are:

- The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)
- Uversity (until November 2018)
- Institute of Public Administration (IPA: from 1st September 2018)

In the 2016/17 academic year, over 83,000 students were registered to study across these institutions, making the NUI federal system the largest entity in the Irish higher education system. Degrees and other qualifications of the University are awarded in the Recognised Colleges. All NUI qualifications and degrees are aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The NUI also awards the DLitt, the University's highest academic degree award. More information on the origins and evolution of the NUI can be found in appendix A of this document.

The relationship between Recognised Colleges and (QQI) “Linked Providers”

NUI is empowered under legislation and its 1908 Charter to grant to Institutions of Higher Education the status of ‘Recognised College’ of the University. NUI is also a Designated Awarding Body (DAB) under the more recent 2012 Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act. DAB status reaffirms NUI’s authority, in Irish law, to make awards of degrees and other qualifications.

Since the 2012 Act, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) uses the term “Linked Provider” to describe organisations that provide programmes that lead to awards of a DAB. A linked provider has itself no authority in law to make awards. While NUI has always overseen the quality and high academic standards of its degrees and qualifications awarded in the Recognised Colleges, the 2012 Act and the term “linked provider” brings a strengthening of legal requirements, particularly in the context of Quality Assurance.

As a DAB, NUI is subject to all relevant requirements arising from the 2012 Act, embodied in policies and guidelines for quality assurance of academic programmes, leading to awards, and the review and quality assurance of wider supporting academic infrastructures and support services that enable programme and award provision. In awarding Recognised College status, the NUI is concurrently designating the higher education institution as a linked provider to the NUI, under the 2012 Act, and all relevant requirements and guidelines apply.

The role of the NUI in relation to its Recognised Colleges

NUI’s commitment has always been to seek to ensure that the quality of the learning experience offered in the Recognised Colleges is comparable to that offered in the four Constituent Universities. In this way, Recognised Colleges can offer qualifications that are nationally and internationally recognised as of high academic quality. NUI’s status as a Designated Awarding Body further strengthens this commitment.

In line with its Charter, and with more recent responsibilities as a DAB, NUI’s role in relation to its Recognised Colleges, has three key dimensions: oversight, service provision and support.

Oversight

As the accreditation and awarding body, and in seeking to ensure comparable standards with constituent universities, NUI Senate oversees all academic programmes offered and delivered by the Recognised Colleges. NUI provides policies and guidelines to support Senate’s responsibilities, including the approval of new academic programmes, or major/minor changes to programmes, and policies and guidelines for programme review.

NUI Senate is responsible for ensuring that the RC has appropriate QA policies and procedures in place, for reviewing and approving these policies and procedures and for ensuring their effectiveness. This latter oversight responsibility forms part of NUI’s institutional quality review of the Recognised College (Linked Provider), a responsibility arising from the 2012 Act.

Service provision

In connection with the awarding of its degrees and other qualifications, NUI supplies all degree parchments and certificates for conferring ceremonies. NUI also provides a replacement document service to graduates and a degree-verification service to agencies. The NUI Chancellor and Registrar confer degrees and other qualifications of the NUI at conferring ceremonies at home and abroad.

In relation to students and academic programmes, NUI provides policy and procedural guidance in relation to matriculation, QA requirements, the academic standing of degrees

and other qualifications, and related academic matters. NUI Recognised Colleges benefit from any shared policies and guidelines that are developed with the input of national and international experts and the constituent universities. NUI also appoints the Extern Examiners to all degree programmes within the Recognised College. This is a fundamental and long-standing element of quality assurance.

As an NUI Recognised College, the institution is required to adopt the basic matriculation (entry requirements) for admission set by NUI Senate. NUI also provides an annual matriculation exemption service for qualifying prospective students. More details are available on the NUI website: <http://www.nui.ie/college/entry-requirements.asp>

Students and academic staff within NUI Recognised Colleges also enjoy the privilege of access to NUI's wide-ranging and highly prestigious awards and grants for academic achievement and scholarship. Many of these awards are the result of historic bequests from private donors over the years since NUI's inception in 1908, and are also generously supported by NUI's constituent universities. Full details are available at: <http://www.nui.ie/awards/>

Support

Becoming a Recognised College of NUI means gaining access to dedicated, professional personnel based in 49, Merrion Square. NUI's staff are dedicated to the provision of quality support services to all member institutions.

Recognised Colleges enjoy the visible support of NUI's Chancellor, Dr Maurice Manning, and of the Registrar, Dr Attracta Halpin. Both lend active support to NUI's Recognised Colleges in their activities and regularly participate in their events and ceremonies.

Recognised Colleges form part of a large academic community of staff and students, stretching across the Irish higher education sector. Given its history and enduring high academic standing, the NUI brand is recognised and respected outside of Ireland.

Applying to become a Recognised College

NUI's staff are pleased to provide assistance to higher education institutions that may be considering membership of NUI's federation. Any new application should begin with any enquiry to NUI's Registrar, subsequent to which an introductory meeting will be arranged.

NUI's founding charter specifies that a Recognised College of the NUI must have essential good character and financial standing, high quality teaching staff and teaching standards, and provide the "laboratories" and "appliances" (i.e. facilities and services) needed to support students who "*are to be given the benefit of any privileges of matriculated students of the University*". The essential focus on quality has therefore been a hallmark of the NUI Recognised College since inception of the NUI in 1908.

Arising from the 2012 Act's particular focus on Quality Assurance, NUI (and all DABs) must ensure that Recognised Colleges (Linked Providers) have appropriate QA policies and procedures in place. NUI reviews applicants' QA policies and procedures as part of the application process to become a Recognised College.

Statutory requirement to ensure consent from NUI's constituent universities

Applying for Recognised College status means that an institution is applying to become part of the only federal university in Ireland with four large and autonomous constituent universities. NUI is one of only a few federal universities in the EU.

The support of NUI's constituent universities is paramount to the functioning of NUI as a federation. From the outset, their support is essential to the admission of a new Recognised College, which on recognition gains access to the award of NUI degrees and other

qualifications, also awarded by the constituent universities. As such, the NUI 1908 Charter and statutes require that the active consent of the Governing Bodies of the constituent universities in order to progress Recognised College status for an applicant institution. In this regard, NUI Senate will receive a recommendation from the Governing Body of University College Dublin, University College Cork or NUI Galway. The NUI Registrar will advise on the relevant process during the application phase.

Given that an application for RC status requires referral to, and review and recommendation by one of the constituent university Governing Bodies, it is advisable that a formal application for RC status is made no later than eighteen months prior to the planned start date. Appendices B and C provide more details on the essential elements of an application, and a sample timeline.

Appendix A : Origins and history of the National University of Ireland

The Irish Universities Act, 1908, established two new Universities - the National University of Ireland and the Queen's University of Belfast. The Act dissolved the Royal University on 31 October 1909. Under this Act, the National University became a federal University with its seat in Dublin and with three Constituent Colleges established by Charter: University College, Dublin; University College, Cork; and University College, Galway. The Queen's Colleges in Cork and Galway were given an entirely new status and title. The Jesuit University College, Dublin, was given a new constitution and was merged with the Catholic University Medical School.

The Act empowered the University Senate to recognise courses of study in other institutions for the purpose of degrees, and the following institutions were granted the status of Recognised College:

1910 to 1997:	St Patrick's College, Maynooth
1975 to 1995:	St Patrick's College of Education, Drumcondra, Dublin
1975 to 1988:	Our Lady of Mercy College, (Carysfort) Dublin
1975 to 1994:	Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
1976 to 1977:	The National Institute for Higher Education, Limerick
1976 to 1977:	Thomond College of Education, Limerick
1977:	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)
1978 to 2005:	St Angela's College of Education, Sligo (From 2006, a constituent College of NUI Galway)
1996 to 2010:	National College of Art and Design, Dublin (NCAD) (From 2010, a constituent College of UCD).
2002 to 2016:	Shannon College of Hotel Management (From 2016, a School in College of Business, Public Policy and Law, NUI Galway).
2002 to 2011:	Institute of Public Administration (IPA) (From 2011-2018, a constituent College of UCD).
2005 to 2015:	Milltown Institute of Theology.
2013 to 2018:	University.
2018:	Institute of Public Administration (IPA).

Under the Universities Act 1997, the Faculties comprising St Patrick's College at Maynooth were designated as the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, a Constituent University of the National University of Ireland.

The Universities Act, 1997, which came into effect on 16 June, 1997, redefined the nature and role of the National University of Ireland. It reconstituted the Senate, which is the Governing Body of the University, with a membership of thirty-eight, and laid down Senate's functions and responsibilities in relation to the following:

- determining basic matriculation requirements;
- reviewing the content and teaching of courses;
- appointing external examiners;
- awarding degrees and other qualifications.

For more information, please refer to NUI's website: www.nui.ie/about.history.asp

Appendix B: Applying for Recognised College status: detailed guidelines

Following an initial discussion with the NUI Registrar, institutions who wish to proceed with an application are requested to submit documentation setting out their background and the case they wish to make to become an NUI Recognised College.

This initial documentation should include summary details of:

- The nature of business of the institution
- Governance and management structures
- Academic leadership
- Financial and other resources
- Staffing arrangements
- Quality assurance

The NUI Registrar will recommend the initial application to NUI Senate for consideration. The NUI Senate annual (academic year) schedule of meetings is as follows:

Meeting 1: November

Meeting 2: January

Meeting 3: April

Meetings dates and administrative deadlines will be supplied separately.

Subject the views of Senate, the applicant institution will be asked to submit a full written proposal to become an NUI Recognised College. There is no specific template for this proposal, but the following are regarded as essential elements:

1. An ambitious and sustainable Strategic Plan.
2. Clear, effective and sustainable governance and management structures.
3. Demonstrably sound reputation.
4. Demonstrable financial viability.
5. Transparent recruitment policies and clear support structures in place for academic and non-academic professional and technical staff.
6. Policies and procedures in regard to the academic welfare of enrolled students (including Protection of Enrolled Learners).
7. Comprehensive Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policies and procedures, in line with NUI's Policy for Quality Assurance and Enhancement, and cognisant of NUI's Policy/Procedures for the Approval of Quality Assurance Procedures in the Recognised Colleges.

The full application will be made to the NUI Registrar, who will refer the application to the relevant constituent university Governing Body, for consent and a recommendation to NUI Senate. As the Governing Body of NUI, Senate will make a final decision on granting of Recognised College status.

NUI staff will provide institutions with guidance on the completion of the full application and once granted, NUI will engage with its new Recognised College on transitional arrangements relating to the necessary services, supports and oversight requirements.

Appendix C: sample application process and approval timeline.

Given NUI's statutory requirement for the consent and recommendation of the relevant constituent university, an applicant for Recognised College status should begin discussion with NUI Registrar no later than 18 months in advance of a planned start date.

The following is an indicative timeline only and it is often the case that the stages overlap in practice.

Stage 1, Year 1: September to December
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Interested Institutions contact the NUI Registrar directly. This begins a process of informal communication in order to understand whether Recognised College status is a likely option for the Institution.

□

Stage 2, Year 1: January to April
<ul style="list-style-type: none">At the discretion of the NUI Registrar, the Institution will be invited to submit an introductory proposal to Senate. This process will be facilitated by NUI staff, and will take into account NUI's suite of Policies and Regulations¹.

□

Stage 3, Year 1: April – November (or January of the following year, Year 2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Upon approval of the introductory proposal, the Institution will be invited to begin the full application processThe application is referred to the Governing Body of the relevant Constituent University, upon which a report will be submitted to the Senate with a recommendation concerning the granting of Recognised College status.The Senate will consider the report and the Registrar's assessment thereof, and if it is of their opinion that the college ought to be recognised, the Senate shall, by resolution, declare it to be a Recognised College of the University.

¹ Please find all necessary documentation under at <http://www.nui.ie/about/gvrnce.asp>