



Ollscoil na hÉireann
National University of Ireland

NUI STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027: CINNTE REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS ADDENDUM

1. Introduction

The national quality agency, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), included NUI in its most recent cycle of institutional review (CINNTE cycle of reviews). This external institutional review of NUI as a designated awarding body. As part of the review, NUI prepared an institutional self-evaluation report (ISER) with input from staff, service users and stakeholders. The ISER was approved by Senate in September 2022 and the independent review team conducted a desktop review of the report followed by a site visit to NUI in March 2023 during which the review team met with a selection of staff, service users and stakeholders.

At the same time as preparing the ISER, NUI was engaged in strategic plan development. The ISER was a rich source of self-reflection and external data on areas for enhancement and contributed to the development of NUI's Strategic Plan 2023-2027. This plan was launched in May 2023, after the CINNTE review team's visit to NUI but prior to the receipt of the CINNTE review report

2. CINNTE Review Report

The review report was finalised in the summer of 2023, approved by NUI Senate and the QQI Board in Autumn 2023 and published (on the QQI and NUI websites) [thereafter](#). There were 13 recommendations in total.

NUI produced an institutional implementation plan (IIP) which addressed the 13 recommendations with a total of 27 actions. The IIP was approved by NUI Senate in November 2023 and submitted to QQI in December 2023.

One of the recommendations in the review report (Recommendation 8) is as follows:

In the light of other recommendations made in this review, the panel recommends the inclusion of appropriate objectives [in Strategic Plan 2023-27] to give prominence and visibility to recommendations made herein and to allow for the measurement of progress.

As the review report arrived after the publication and official launch of the NUI Strategic Plan, one of the actions identified to respond to this recommendation is the publication of an 'addendum to the Strategic Plan highlighting actions that connect to the CINNTE IIP and noting additional actions'. This is the addendum and the next section identifies the strategic objectives that are relevant to CINNTE IIP actions and the following section outlines further actions that have been integrated into NUI operational plans for 2024.

3. Strategic Objectives and the CINNTE Review Recommendations

3.1 Relevant Strategic Objectives

The NUI Strategic Plan 2023-2027 has four pillars:

1. Education and Research (E&R)
2. People and Culture (P&C)
3. Engagement and Partnership (E&P)
4. Sustainability (Sus)

The following objectives are relevant to recommendations in the CINNTE review report:

Strategic Plan Objective	CINNTE Review Recommendation
E&R2: Enhance student voice within NUI.	<p>Rec 3 – Student Council: The panel recommends that NUI strongly considers the appointment of a student council, using the established pool of student leader resources, i.e., SU sabbatical officers and part time officers from RCSI. The panel also suggests that NUI uses its association with NStEP which already has established partnerships with UCC, University of Galway and MU.</p> <p>(This is one of the Top 5 Recommendations in the CINNTE review report)</p>
E&R4: Ensure that quality assurance policies are appropriate and quality enhancement continues to be a priority. Support our members as new requirements under International Education Mark (IEM), Irish register of Qualifications (IRQ) and other processes are introduced.	
E&P3: Maximise the international reputation of the NUI brand, its research-intensive universities, and Irish higher education through engagement, partnership and collaboration.	
E&R7: Develop our supports for students from underrepresented communities and groups in higher education.	<p>Rec 10 – Matriculation Exemptions: The review panel recommends that NUI explore whether more consistency in its matriculation regulations can be achieved within the basic cross-institutional matriculation requirements at national level. The panel considers that such a harmonisation will be valuable in simplifying and enhancing access opportunities for students.</p>
Sus1: Lower our environmental impact in energy and waste while conserving our historic built environment and improving our space utilisation.	<p>Linked to this, with particular reference to E&R7, is Rec 12 – Matriculation Exemption Information: Until more fundamental enhancements can be delivered, the panel recommends, as a matter of priority, that the NUI website should be developed to include the simplest and clearest explanation possible of the NUI matriculation process, with links to relevant individual matriculation pages on the websites of the different constituent universities.</p>

3.2 IIP Actions related to Recommendations 3, 10 and 12

Actions approved for responding to Recommendation 3 (Student Council) are:

- Registrar to contact senior leaders in member institutions to inform them of the CINNTE recommendation and NUI’s plans, seek assent.
- NUI-UCD Intern to conduct some research and liaise with student reps and NStEP to establish draft Terms of Reference for an NUI Student Council (must also establish what local steps must be taken to ‘feed’ reps to council).
- Launch NUI Student Council.

Actions approved for responding to Recommendation 10 (Matriculation Exemption) are:

- Internal review of NUI Matric Regs (in keeping with agreements of sectoral working group), incorporating feedback from user surveys conducted for ISER.
- Consult with stakeholders, e.g. Dyslexia Ireland, regarding changes.
- Develop and launch online exemption application form, which streamlines application and makes it easier to navigate.

Actions approved for responding to Recommendation 12 (Matriculation Exemption Information) are:

- Review and revise the matric pages on www.nui.ie to simplify language (plain English principles), unify terminology in use on homepage and include clear links to admissions.
- Revise Matriculation Regs (for publication in 2025-26), reflecting stakeholder feedback and the CINNTE recommendation.

4. Recommendations not covered by Strategic Objectives

There are a number of recommendations in the CINNTE review report that are not strategic but operational. These have been incorporated into NUI’s operational plans for 2024. The relevant recommendations and the corresponding actions are:

No	Recommendation	Action(s)
1	The review panel recommends that NUI explores ways in which the permanent participation of the CU Registrars in Senate meetings can be assured.	1. Registrar will make a proposal to Senate reflecting this recommendation during 2023-24 session
2	The panel recommends the establishment by NUI of an official forum for the discussion of standards and quality assurance and enhancement in the federation accompanied by appropriate documentation and monitoring. (This is one of the Top 5 Recommendations)	2.1 Registrar will bring a proposal to Senate in Nov 2023 regarding the establishment of a mechanism for quality assurance and enhancement. 2.2 Academic Affairs (AA) team will set up the approved mechanism and put in place appropriate documentation and monitoring system. (See also actions for Rec 5 below.)
4	The panel recommends that, in its follow-up process with IPA, NUI ensures that the recommendation made by the IPA’s institutional review panel about	4.1 Add student voice as a standing item to Steering Committee meetings.

	inclusion of the student voice is considered and encourages NUI to support the IPA in this regard.	4.2 Follow up on recommendations relating to Student Voice under SC standing item on QIP.
5	The panel recommends that NUI put in place the appropriate means to ensure that it meets its responsibilities as an awarding body by assuring its oversight of those awards for which it is jointly responsible. (Top 5 Rec)	See Actions 2.1 and 2.2 above
6	The review panel recommends that NUI produces further synthesis reports of external examiner reports including analysis of developments over time of all members of the federation and formally shares these with members. (Top 5 Rec)	6.1 Add section to thematic analyses of EE reports on previous reports ('Key issues in previous reports' / 'Similarities and Differences')
		6.2 Send thematic reports to Academic Council (or equivalent) in each member institution.
7	The review panel recommends that NUI conducts more thematic analyses across the members of the federation where a deeper analysis is deemed useful.	7.1 Add a note to all thematic analysis reports that further analysis can be undertaken in specific areas as Senate directs.
		7.2 Monitor trends/changes to identify areas where more specific comparison and analysis would be beneficial.
8	In the light of other recommendations made in this review, the panel recommends the inclusion of appropriate objectives [in Strategic Plan 2023-27] to give prominence and visibility to recommendations made herein and to allow for the measurement of progress.	8.1 Addendum to SP highlighting actions that connect to CINNTE IIP and noting additional actions.
		8.2 Include all CINNTE actions in the Strategic Plan monitoring mechanism (local operational plans, Strategic Plan Review etc).
9	The panel recommends that NUI adopt an advisory and quality oversight role in any IPA review and reassessment of the direction, delivery, and quality of their educational scope, in line with the changing educational demands of learners within the Irish public service, including those learners' access, transfer and progression needs.	9.1 Discuss with IPA (during SC23-3).
		9.2 Add ATP (Access, Transfer & Progression) to new programme approvals section of SC agenda.
11	Given NUI's unique oversight of the NUI matriculation process over its CUs and RCs, the panel recommends that NUI consider collecting longitudinal data on the impact of the NUI matriculation exemptions on the longer-term progression and	11. 1 Discuss project with CAO.
		11.2 Discuss project with member institutions.
		11.3 Check legal implications (GDPR and Data Protection)

	<p>academic success of students. This would contribute new evidence to inform national best practice regarding the impact of pre-requisite subjects on access and progression. (Top 5 Rec)</p>	<p>11.4 Explore feasible mechanisms for data collection.</p>
		<p>11.5 Implement agreed mechanism.</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>The panel recommends that, as with access, transfer and progression, NUI's oversight of and responsibility for any possible future review and revision of the IPA's education offerings should be extended to encompass their work with all learners, including those coming from, or recently arrived from outside Ireland. Such learners should come under the Code of Practice for the Provision of Programmes to International Learners.</p>	<p>[There are aspects and functions of the IPA that do not come properly within the scope of the NUI-IPA relationship. The NUI Registrar is a member of the IPA Board and the triannual NUI-IPA Steering Committee meetings provide ongoing oversight of IPA developments.]</p> <p>13. Add international learners as standing item to Steering Committee agenda.</p>