



GALWAY BUSINESS SCHOOL

QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK

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1: Introduction

Policy Title	Introduction
Date Approved	April 2016
Effective From	September 2016
Summary	This Chapter provides an introduction to the Quality Assurance Handbook, its background, rationale and structure, together with the current programmes offered by Galway Business School.
Amendment History	- Amendment to Chapter 1: - Structure and Layout - Insertion of: - Table 1 & 2

1.1 Introduction

Galway Business School has committed itself to embracing an inclusive Quality Assurance culture in order to improve and maintain the quality of education offered to learners. This Quality Assurance Handbook demonstrates the commitment and is the definitive information source for Galway Business School's:

- Academic and Quality policies
- Academic and Quality procedures
- Related forms, templates and documentation

The Quality policies, systems and procedures described herein are in place in Galway Business School and underpin all academic and support activities within the school. This Quality Assurance Handbook formalises those procedures and is a definitive reference for all Galway Business School staff. The Handbook also provides information for other stakeholders, both internal and external, including students and employers and finally

provides evidence that Galway Business School satisfies the national and European standards required of a higher education provider.

1.2 Background

As an independent, third-level educational institution, providing full and part-time programmes, Galway Business School aims to deliver its Quality Assurance policies and procedures in compliance with those required by external validating bodies.

Galway Business School was established in 1999 to provide business and related, full and part-time programmes to both local and international markets. Galway Cultural Institute (GCI), our sister school, was founded in 1989 by David Niland and Celestine Rowland. GCI was established to provide English Language training to non-native speakers. While both schools operate from the same premises and share operations, administrative, financial and marketing functions, the academic management is differentiated along clear lines. Each school is staffed by separate academic management and teaching staff.

1.3 Quality Assurance

The necessary QQI publications on Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance Procedures and Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA, 2015) have acted as a framework for the establishment and development of Galway Business School's Quality Assurance policies and procedures.

The Quality Assurance Handbook and related documents are reviewed regularly by Quality Assurance committee meetings which take place once per semester. Any changes are recorded and updates are circulated to management and faculty.

The Quality Assurance Handbook is reviewed in its entirety once per year. This ensures quality management processes at Galway Business School are up to date and fit for purpose. In addition, its monitoring and governance is strictly observed to ensure it follows the GSB Strategic Plan (2015-2020) and School policy at all times.

This updated Handbook details systematic quality assurance procedures for a range of data collection and analysis, identifies the appropriate forum for monitoring the data and requires both a recording of actions to be taken and a review of the effectiveness of these actions. Galway Business School is currently in receipt of accreditation from the following bodies:

- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- University of Wales
- Institute of Commercial Management (ICM)

1.4 Mission

Building on its previous Strategic Plan (2015 – 2020) GBS' strategy has developed and continues to develop in response to the changing needs of society and the economy. This document provides a renewed roadmap for realising this.

Galway Business School's mission is to:

Create a learning organisation where students can succeed both as students and as citizens

Provide a range of flexible programmes where students can study at their own pace and satisfy their career and educational objectives

Develop a portfolio of programmes to suit the employment and business requirements of local and international enterprise

Galway Business School's Governing Body guides the development and implementation of this vision of excellence in education. The mission of Galway Business School is to pursue this vision whilst inculcating an ethic of courtesy, integrity, perseverance and respect amongst its staff and student body. Its motto is 'Life-Changing Learning'.

Galway Business School offers opportunities to students who are seeking employment-focused qualifications at third-level through offering high quality programmes that are flexible and geared to meet the demands of modern work environments. Students will be

exposed to the best in current management thought through the use of innovative and engaging pedagogic approaches designed to secure learning objectives and enhance employment opportunities.

1.5 Structure

Galway Business School operates from an integrated campus with its sister institution, Galway Cultural Institute, a nationally and internationally accredited English language school.

Galway Business School and Galway Cultural Institute are two separate legal entities and are separate companies limited by guarantee. Both companies share the same Directors, Mr David Niland and Ms Celestine Rowland. The two schools have separate governance structures and the structures of Galway Business School are detailed in this Quality Assurance Handbook. Galway Cultural Institute has its own academic governance and quality assurance structures. Both schools are separately staffed and the Registrar is the academic principal (and monitors all academic processes) of Galway Business School. The Director of Studies is the academic principal (and monitors all academic processes) of Galway Cultural Institute.

The General Manager is charged with the implementation of strategic and organisational goals for Galway Business School. The General Manager holds overall responsibility for commercial, operational, management and academic support functions for both Galway Business School and Galway Cultural Institute.

The minimum requirements in terms of staff qualifications are different. Galway Business School's academic staffs are required to have a minimum of masters' degree level in order to teach on the degree programme. They must also, where possible, have teaching and industry experience. Galway Cultural Institute's teaching team is required to have a minimum of a level 7 degree plus an ACELS recognised TEFL qualification or equivalent. They must also, where possible, have EFL teaching experience.

Both schools maintain separate accreditations and memberships of professional organisations. Galway Business School is accredited by QQI, the University of Wales and the Institute of Commercial Management. Galway Cultural Institute has no responsibility or input into these programmes. Galway Cultural Institute is recognised by QQI and ACELS, and is accredited by IALC (International Association of Language Centres), EAQUALS (Evaluation & Accreditation of Quality in Language Services) and is a member of Marketing English in Ireland and the Association of Language Travel Organisations (ALTO). Galway Cultural Institute can use the Education in Ireland brand.

Both schools share facilities and key service functions including administration, information technology, facilities management, finance, and marketing, under the direction of the General Manager. All of these functions report to the General Manager and full details of functional responsibilities are detailed in Section 2 of the QA Handbook. There are no shared intellectual property rights and the legal and academic responsibilities of the parties in relation to those rights are clearly separate.

1.6 Current Programmes: Higher and Further Education

Galway Business School currently provides programmes between Levels 5 and 9 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and offers a range of courses in contemporary business subjects reflecting learner demand, academic research and international best practice. Its prospectus has developed over time to reflect the school's commitment to offering leading-edge courses. Galway Business School currently offers the following programmes:

Table 1: Higher Education Programmes currently offered by Galway Business School

Higher Education Programmes

Programme Title	NFQ Level	Awarding Body	Mode of Delivery
Bachelor of Business	7	Quality and Qualifications Ireland	Full-time Part-time
Bachelor of Business in International Business	8	Pending QQI validation	Full-time Part-time
Bachelor of Arts in Business Management	8	University of Wales	Full-time Part-time
Postgraduate Diploma in Management	9	Institute of Commercial Management	Part-time

Table 2: Further Education (FE) Programmes currently offered by Galway Business School

Further Education programmes

Diploma in Marketing, Advertising & PR			6	Institute of Commercial Management	Business	Full-time Part-time
University Programme	Foundation		n/a	Galway School	Business	Full-time
University Programme	Pre-Masters		n/a	Galway School	Business	Full-time
Practical Skills (Special Award)	Marketing Purpose		5	QQI		Full-time Part-time
Advanced (Special Award)	Sales Skills Purpose		6	QQI		Full-time Part-time
Digital (Module)	Marketing		5	QQI		Full-time Part-time
Marketing (Module)	Practice		5	QQI		Full-time Part-time
Behavioural (Module)	Studies		5	QQI		Full-time Part-time
Sales and Marketing Management (Module)			6	QQI		Full-time Part-time
Sales (Module)	Negotiation		6	QQI		Full-time Part-time
Consultative Selling			6	QQI		Full-time Part-time

2. Governance & Committee Structure

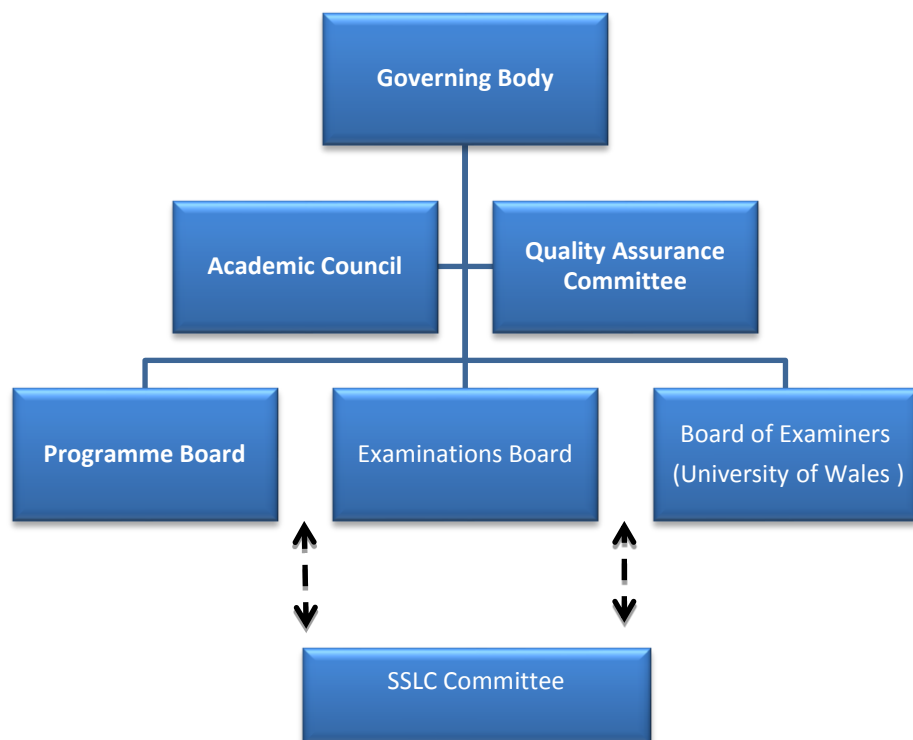
Policy Title	Policy for Governance & Committee Structure
Date Approved	April 2016
Effective From	September 2016
Review Procedure & Responsibility	Governing Body Academic Council QA Committee Programme Boards Examinations Board Board of Examiners (University of Wales)
Overview	This section refers to the governance and committee structure of Galway Business School. Details are also provided of individual roles and responsibilities and functional responsibilities.
Supporting Documentation	• Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines (QQI, 2016) • Galway Business School Strategic Plan (2015-2020) • Policy and Criteria for Provider Access to Initial Validation of Programmes Leading to QQI Awards (2013) • Provider Monitoring Policy (QQI 2014) • QQI Assessment and Standards - Revised (2013) • Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012 • University of Wales' Validation Unit Quality Handbook: Policies and procedures 2015/16 • Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA 2015)

Amendment History	- Amendment to Chapter 2: - Structure and Layout & Supporting Documentation - Insertion of: - Section 2.1
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2.1 Boards and Committees

Galway Business School is supported by a number of Boards and Committees to ensure the academic integrity, independence and processes and to facilitate and augment the optimum student experience through formal engagement and feedback from the student body, as outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Boards and Committees Structure



2.1.1 Governing Body

Role	The Governing Body guides the development and implementation of our vision of excellence in education. It is tasked with creating a learning organisation where students can succeed academically and as citizens. It oversees and fosters a culture of independence whereby individual potential is realised and achieved.
Terms of Reference	• To provide academic and corporate guardianship and ensure best practice • To develop and oversee the implementation of the strategic direction of the school • To identify current and future trends in the education sector, and highlight current and future developments within industry which may impact on learners • To highlight potential growth areas and areas of future opportunity for stakeholders • To protect the efficiency and integrity of the school through ensuring optimal student educational offering • To monitor action plans and ensure resources are available for delivery of quality programmes to stakeholders
Duties and Responsibilities:	• Decide the overall strategic direction of GBS • Review national /international trends in the Higher Education sector and advise the Academic Council and Programme Development Board accordingly • Monitor ongoing developments in industry, society and employment both locally, nationally and internationally and advise the Directors on emerging trends • Receive annual reports from Academic Council and approve recommendations that are in line with current and future strategy • Approve new programmes and programme changes

	• Review and approve changes to quality policies and procedures
Membership	• CEO, Managing Director, One External Adviser (Industry) One External Adviser (Education), Registrar <i>*The Governing Body comprises the Directors of GBS and representatives from the Academic, Business, and Arts & Social sectors. GBS Governing Body has been selected to reflect the diversity and needs of the stakeholders.</i>
Procedure	• The quorum is formed if there is 50% of the membership of the Governing Body present and this quorum must contain either the Managing Director or CEO of GBS and one other external member. • Additional members may be seconded onto the Governing Body to complete its business and this will be determined by majority vote.
Meeting Frequency	Twice per year December & July (Minimum)

2.1.2 Academic Council

Role	The Academic Council is the ultimate authority for academic standards and rigour within the school. It oversees the protection, maintenance and development of the academic standards within the school, working closely with the Governing Body to ensure that the programmes and offerings are in line with the strategic direction of the school.
Terms of Reference	• To protect the academic rigour and standards of the school. • To make recommendations on the selection, admission and retention of students. • To investigate and approve new programme proposals. • To approve any fundamental changes to existing programmes. • To monitor and review matrices of the deliverables, including awards, results, progress, attrition, recruitment and student body profile, and report to the Governing Body. • To appoint External Examiners. • To approve the Broadsheet of Examinations received from the Examination Board/Board of Examiners at its statutory meeting. • To ensure the congruence of the academic policies with the strategic plan as outlined by the Governing Body. • To manage its sub-groups, namely the Quality Assurance Committee, the Programme Board, the Examinations Board and the Staff/Student Liaison Committee. • To ensure that programme deliverables are benchmarked against national and international standards and that these are recorded and reported to the Governing Body.
Duties and Responsibilities:	• Monitor the performance, reviews and reports of its constituent committees: the Quality Assurance Committee, the Programme Board, the Examinations Board, and the Staff / Student Liaison Committee • Ensure the systems for delivery and the academic standards are robust

	• Confirm that the academic programmes are in keeping with the overall strategic direction of the school as outlined by the Governing Body • Recommend policies and procedures regarding the selection, admission and retention of students • Ensure that the policies and procedures for selection and admission of students are in compliance with Galway Business School's Policy on Equality & Diversity • Ensure that interim student and lecturer feedback has been conducted and reviewed at programme level • Approve the Broadsheet of Examinations as received from the Examinations Board • Review the progress of programmes as outlined by the Programme Board • Review academic progress at an overall programme level and if necessary at modular level as communicated by the Programme Board • Decide on recommendations for changes to existing programmes as suggested by the Programme Board • Review, amend and approve all new programmes as suggested by the Programme Development Team • Ensure that Quality Assurance is a continuous and ongoing process undertaken by all personnel within the school. • Approve improvements and changes to the quality system as recommended by the Quality Assurance Committee. • Benchmark the academic output against national and international standards, results, awards, attrition and progression rates. • Ensure that the required resources are in place to protect academic standards and the delivery of programmes. • Review the recommendations for the appointment of External Examiners as suggested by QQI and/or other validating bodies.
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Membership	• Programme Leaders, Registrar, Head of Teaching and Learning Academic Coordinator, Senior Academic Staff, one Student representative, General Manager.
Procedure	• The quorum is made up of 50% of the senior academics of the school which will include both the Registrar and the General Manager • A chair and secretary will be appointed annually from the academic cohort to ensure consistency • Agenda items that will be considered will include: Reports from Individual Committees, External Accreditations, Quality Assurance Staff Training & Development, Approval of Examination Results, Student Progress, Student & Lecturer Feedback, Marketing & Student Recruitment, Implications on the Quality Assurance Procedures in GBS • At the end of the meeting, minutes are circulated to attendees and to the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director
Meeting Frequency	Twice per year December & July (Minimum)

2.1.3 Quality Assurance Committee

Role	The Quality Assurance Committee (QA) ensures that an ethos of excellence permeates all academic and academic support functions. This committee evaluates reviews and revises Quality Assurance procedures within Galway Business School. It has specific responsibilities for maintaining academic and integrated administrative standards. Ultimately, the QA Committee has two main functions; oversight of the institutional philosophy of quality delivery, and systematic implementation of quality assurance procedures. The QA Committee reports to the Academic Council who in turn report to Governing Body.
Terms of Reference	• To ensure Galway Business School's programmes are delivered in accordance with robust Quality Assurance procedures • To provide that systems are in place to facilitate a comprehensive, rewarding and engaging education for learners • To ensure all departments engage in on-going self-evaluation, and comply with external validation processes • To monitor and review all processes designed to improve academic standards • To engage all personnel, particularly academic staff, in the delivery of the agreed quality standards • To ensure that QA standards reflect best practice in relation to other national and international institutions
Duties and Responsibilities:	• Develop and review the Quality Assurance Handbook • Communicate roles and responsibilities of all staff concerning the implementation of quality processes • Engineer a system of open communication in all academic and academic support activities • Ensure ongoing quality processes are incorporated into the academic programmes • Ensure that standards are reviewed and benchmarked against national

	and international education providers • Monitor academic staff training and development • Ensure that all committees are aware of the Quality Assurance standards and adhere to Quality Assurance procedures in the design and delivery of academic assessment • Establish feedback systems for all stakeholders concerning Quality Assurance implementation • Notify management of non-compliance with Quality Assurance policies to initiate corrective and preventative actions
Membership	• Registrar, General Manager, Head of Teaching and Learning, Academic Coordinator, Programme Leader
Procedure	• The Quality Assurance Committee reviews reports from Academic Council, Programme Boards, Exams Boards, Staff Student Liaison, Annual Resources Report, Internal quality self-evaluations, suggestions from staff and students which contribute to the quality management system • The level of student services is reviewed through examination of feedback in the Modular Feedback Forms and in the Annual Programme Monitoring reports. Attention is paid to any suggestions or complaints from students that have been documented through formal lecturer/student meetings or informally through the Registrar, Academic Coordinator or the General Manager • The Quality Assurance Committee will review and quality assures the training and professional development activities in the previous year and suggests areas for improvement. It also assures the systems that are in place and monitors access to that training. This is done through committee meetings and reports on training and professional development activities from the Registrar and the General Manager • The committee reviews suitable improvements to processes and documents and proposes these to the Academic Council. Changes that

	are approved at Academic Council level form part of the report sent to the Academic Council • The Quality Assurance Committee reviews the quality management systems and the Quality Assurance Handbook annually to ensure that policy and procedures are adequate and fit for purpose particularly with regard to on-going activities and new developments within Galway Business School • The chair of the Quality Assurance committee is the Quality Assurance Officer and the chair maintains minutes and presents the Quality Assurance committee reports to the Academic Council which includes recommendations for improvements • Recommendations for quality improvement or change in quality assurance policies or processes then form part of the QA Committee Reports.
Meeting Frequency	Twice per year November & June (Minimum)

2.1.4 Programme Board

Role	The Academic Council appoints a Programme Board for each programme. The Programme Board is responsible for the on-going management and operational delivery of programmes within the school. The Programme Board ensures that programmes run successfully within the parameters set for each programme.
Terms of Reference	• To ensure effective delivery of programmes • To amend programmes as necessary in response to the strategic direction of the Governing Body and/or Academic Council • To ensure all programmes are coordinated and in compliance with internally and externally set standards and guidelines as directed by the Quality Assurance Committee and the Academic Council • To ensure the implementation of QA Committee recommendations • To ensure academic delivery and resources are appropriate to the programme being taught • To submit an annual report to the Academic Council.
Duties and Responsibilities:	• Each Programme Board compiles an Annual Programme Monitoring Report • Annual Programme Monitoring Report includes an analysis of qualitative and quantitative data generated per programme • Facilitate feedback across programmes at faculty meetings. • Ensure the efficient and timely delivery of a coordinated schedule of tutorials, assessments, course work and examinations within each programme • Track weekly learner attendance records at module and programme level and report any absences to Registrar • Identify opportunities for programme development through stakeholder engagement reflecting the strategic direction of the Governing Body • Communicate any potential learner issues to programme management

	• Ascertain that continuous learner feedback is monitored, coordinated and communicated by each lecturer • Communicate any potential operational or other issues to programme management • Suggest and recommend on-going academic staff development opportunities in accordance with Quality Assurance Committee guidelines • The University of Wales degree programme has a Joint Board of Studies which occurs after the Board of Examiners meeting. It provides an opportunity for the programme team, moderator and external examiners to consider and discuss proposed changes to the programme. These are detailed in the Annual College and Course Review and the Annual Programme Monitoring Report
Membership	• Programme Leader (Chair), Registrar, Head of Teaching and Learning, Members of the Academic Team & Academic Coordinator
Procedure	• The Programme Board is chaired by the Programme Leader (PL). Typically the Programme Board is convened at the start and end of each semester to enable addressing of issues at the outset of programmes and modules and review at the end of the programmes • The quorum required for the Programme Board is 50% to include the Programme Leader, the Registrar and the General Manager • A Modular Report is written once the module has been delivered by each lecturer for each module delivered on a programme. This is distilled from the following records: Module Student Feedback, module evaluation and comment by the lecturer and the learner • Peer reviews conducted during modules and programme are reviewed at board level • From the Module Reports, peer reviews, and input at the Programme Board meetings, the Annual Programme Monitoring Report is produced at Programme board level by the Programme Leader

	• Decisions are taken on foot of module and programme reports concerning schedule of assessments, tutorials, course work and examinations on the programmes. Actions agreed are assigned to members of the board and minutes recorded • Any pertinent issues raised in the Annual Programme Monitoring Report are raised at Exam Board Level, Board of Examiners and with the external examining bodies and external examiners as appropriate • The Programme Board minutes and circulated to members of the academic team and to the Academic Council and Quality Assurance Committee * The Programme Board Agenda includes as standard the following items: Agenda: - <i>Assessments including conduct of examinations,</i> - <i>Student Progress,</i> - <i>Attendance & Classroom Management,</i> - <i>Quality Assurance,</i> - <i>Review of Module Reports,</i> - <i>Review of Student Complaints or suggestions,</i> - <i>Implications on the Quality Assurance Procedures in GBS,</i> - <i>AOB</i>
Meeting Frequency	Three per year February, June & September (Minimum)

2.1.5 Examinations Board & Board of Examiners

Role	The Examinations Board is an internal committee which reports directly to the Academic Council. The Examinations Board is concerned with all aspects of examination and assessment regulation within the school. The Examinations Officer chairs the Examinations Board. The Examinations Officer has overall responsibility for overseeing the internal coordination, registration, compliance, setting and grading of all examinations and assessments within the school. The Board of Examiners (UOW) is formed from the Examinations Board and the External Examiner. The Board of Examiners has ultimate authority for the awarding of all awards for the BA in Business Management. The Board of Examiners meets once per year in July, or additionally as required.
Terms of Reference	• To be responsible for all matters concerning the assessment and awarding of all degrees, certificates and diplomas • To ensure that systems and mechanisms for the development and implementation of all examinations, assessments and awards within the institution comply with the Quality Assurance Handbook • To maintain a strict code of fairness and equity in examination and assessment process, with due regard to the school's philosophy of openness and transparency • To communicate the Broadsheet of Results to the Academic Council for approval • To communicate awards being attained by learners to the Academic Council • To ensure the rigour and comprehensiveness of all methods of assessment
Duties and Responsibilities:	• Ensure the proper systems of internal and external assessments are being adhered to across the school • Ensure that Programme Board lecturers are cognisant of the systems for

	testing learning outcomes • Promote and develop fair and innovative assessment procedures within the school • Ensure that all proposed assessment materials are developed in compliance with the guidelines as outlined in the Quality Assurance Handbook • Remain informed of the appointment of internal and external examiners as directed by the Programme Board and the Academic Council • Ensure that examinations are conducted in accordance with quality standards as set out in the programme assessment strategy • Ensure that post-assessment feedback is communicated to learners within an appropriate timeframe • Oversee grades, awards and other assessment materials have been completed to the standards as outlined in the Quality Assurance Handbook • Approve recommendations for student referrals, deferrals etc. • Monitor incidents of mitigating circumstances in tandem with the Registrar and/or Examinations Officer • Issue results to the Registrar for dissemination to students and to external awarding bodies • To ensure an independent and fair system of Examination Recheck, Review and Appeal as outlined in Procedures and Guidelines for the Assessment of Learners • To appoint any committees necessary for certain academic investigations in compliance with the Procedure for the Assessment of Learners (e.g. Committees of Enquiry/ Disciplinary Committees, Appeals Board, etc.)
Examinations Board	• Examinations Officer (Chair), Registrar, Programme Leaders, Head of Teaching and Learning, Internal Examiners & Academic Coordination

Membership	
Board of Examiners Membership	Registrar (Chair), Examinations Officer, Programme Leaders, Internal Examiners, External Examiners, and in the case of the University of Wales, a Moderator. (See section 5 Quality Assurance Handbook).
Procedure	- The Examinations Board is chaired by the Examinations Officer - The quorum required for a meeting is Examinations Officer, the Registrar, the External Examiners, a Programme Leader and a minimum of two Internal Examiners. The Moderator from the University of Wales must be in attendance for that programme. <i>*Agenda items: Review Exam Board minutes, Decision on mitigating circumstances, unfair practise, reports of committees of enquiry, requests for rechecks, reviews or appeals and complaints, Assessment and exam results, Results are agreed through a process of deliberation, reflection discussion and consensus, Forthcoming examinations, Minutes of the Examinations Board are circulated to the Academic Council, Minutes and actions are summarised by the Chair and circulated, Implications on the Quality Assurance Procedures in GBS.</i>
Meeting Frequency	Three per year February, June & September (Minimum)

2.1.6 Staff Student Liaison Committee

Role	The Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) acts as a forum for two-way discussion between learners and academics. The Staff Student Liaison Committee is a valuable resource within Galway Business School as it formally connects learners with processes and decisions taken by the school, and provides unique insight at both a formal and informal level into students' perspectives and ensures their voices are heard.
Terms of Reference	• To act as a mechanism for the on-going communication of issues and feedback between students and the various other committees within the institution • To provide a forum for ideas from the student body that may be reflected within stakeholder analysis for the strategic direction of the institution at Governing Body.
Duties and Responsibilities:	• Provide an open, two-way flow and exchange of ideas between staff and students • To discuss issues and recommendations designed to promote learner engagement and involvement within the school • Provide ongoing feedback and raise any concerns regarding the operational delivery of programmes • Ensure that all issues and recommendations are addressed to the relevant committee, feeding into the Academic Council • Ensure that the learner representatives are selected by the learners from the student body
Membership	• Programme Leaders (Chair), Registrar, Academic Coordinator, Head of Teaching and Learning & Student Class Representatives
Procedure	• The Programme Leader for each programme arranges for the election of a student representative from each class group (both day and evening). • The quorum required for a meeting is the Programme Leader/ or the Registrar, Academic Coordinator and two student representatives

	• The Registrar convenes the SSLC and notifies the Programme Leaders and the student representatives according to academic schedule of meetings * Agenda: - <i>Review of last meeting action and minutes,</i> - <i>Each member is invited to present contributions on quality,</i> - <i>Delivery,</i> - <i>Resources,</i> - <i>Assessment,</i> - <i>Levels of service and any other issues of concern.</i> <i>Discussion will ensue and summary actions are assigned to the appropriate staff member, committee or department as appropriate, Actions are assigned to members, Minutes of SSLC meetings are circulated to the Academic Council, Implications on the Quality Assurance Procedures in GBS</i>
Meeting Frequency	Twice per year December & July (Minimum)

2.2 Procedures for Academic Governance

Galway Business School is committed to the protection and upholding of the most rigorous systems of academic process, governance and standards. Galway Business School has implemented initiatives for the protection of the academic integrity of the school and to ensure the separation of academic and commercial governance within the institution. The governance and committee structure have been designed to underpin academic integrity, independence and processes and to facilitate and augment the optimum student experience through formal engagement with and feedback from the student body.

The academic focus and direction of the school is strictly preserved and guided by and through the Academic Council. The Academic Council has full responsibility for:

- All aspects of the academic development
- Learner assessment and quality assurance within the school.

As a small organisation, there is still clear demarcation between the operations of both academic and commercial activities within the institution. The Chair of the Academic Council is completely independent of all commercial activities and his/her role is to protect the academic integrity and processes within the school. The Academic Council is chaired by a member of the academic staff, normally a Programme Leader.

The Registrar sits on the Academic Council and reports on the performance of the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures ensuring that the stated academic goals are being delivered. The Academic Council is run independently by the academic staff with input from the Registrar. A student representative sits on the Academic Council. The General Manager sits on the Academic Council and performs a facilitative and reporting role to ensure that the resources, operational needs and strategic objectives of the school are met and to communicate the recommendations of the Academic Council to the Directors.

Please see Appendix 1 - the GBS / GCI Group Organisational Chart for clarification.

2.3 Individual Roles and Responsibilities

2.3.1 Chief Executive Officer

Role	The Chief Executive Officer provides direction and leadership towards the vision, mission, and strategy of Galway Business School. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for setting the strategic goals of Galway Business School and its sister organisation, Galway Cultural Institute.
Duties and Responsibilities:	• The Chief Executive Officer, in his capacity as a Director, oversees, with the Managing Director, the compliance with all legal and statutory obligations of corporate governance • The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring adequate capitalisation and security for the business • The CEO is actively involved in the external engagement of the school and sits on a number of industry, local and national boards in the areas of Business, the Arts and the Educational Sector • The Chief Executive Officer with the Managing Director and General Manager develops the Strategic Plan for the school and sits on the Governing Body for the purposes of formulating strategy.

2.3.2 Managing Director

Role	The Managing Director with the Chief Executive Officer provides direction and leadership towards the vision, mission, and strategy of Galway Business School. The Managing Director is responsible for setting the strategic goals of Galway Business School and its sister organisation, Galway Cultural Institute.
Duties and Responsibilities:	• The Managing Director, in her capacity as a Director, oversees, with the Chief Executive Officer, the compliance with all legal and statutory obligations of corporate governance • The Managing Director drives the culture and ethos of the organisation. She develops the strategic plan for the long term future of the organisation with the Chief Executive Officer and with input from the management team • The Managing Director in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that Galway Business School is sufficiently resourced to ensure financial stability and to provide a strict structure for corporate governance • The Managing Director works closely on maximising the efficient operations of the institution in order to ensure its viability and sustainability • The Managing Director is engaged with the external stakeholders of the institution in the development of both strategic, tactical and operational plans and their implementation. The Managing Director also sits on all the boards

2.3.3 General Manager

Role	The General Manager reports to the Managing Director and has a dotted line reporting duty to the Chief Executive Officer. She/he has responsibility for the implementation of the strategic goals of the company and has overall responsibility for the commercial and academic operational activities within Galway Business School and Galway Cultural Institute.
Duties and Responsibilities:	• To assist the Directors in the strategic planning and development of the school and coordinate the implementation of that strategy • To set individual departmental goals and objectives to ensure that departmental strategic goals are in line with the strategy of the school • To support the effective and focused development and delivery of a range of educational programmes • The development and achievement of agreed growth levels for educational programmes and overall asset usage through dedicated teams • Overseeing financial planning in conjunction with the Managing Director and the Finance Department • Overseeing the Sales and Marketing function to ensure that annual sales and marketing plans meet budgetary targets • Overseeing operational management and ensuring sufficient human and physical resources are in place • Responsible for the recruitment and selection of all staff. Also managing performance appraisals of academic and non-academic staff. • Ensuring that staff is sufficiently trained. Develop and review the CPD plan • Overseeing the development and improvement of physical facilities and learner support services • Responsible for the implementation of corrective and preventative action in conjunction with and as stipulated by the Quality Assurance committee

	• Ensuring that the student experience meets students' goals, capabilities and expectations • Sits on various committees and reports on and implements changes once they are approved at Academic Council or Governing Body level • Awareness of academic developments within the school and ensuring that these match the School's Strategic Plan • Promoting the school at all levels locally, nationally and internationally
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2.3.4 Registrar

Role	The Registrar has principal responsibility for the maintenance and enhancement of academic quality assurance and standards at Galway Business School. He/She has an overarching responsibility for existing quality processes, quality improvement, academic development and liaison with external academic bodies. In relation to quality assurance of QQI programmes the Registrar is responsible for ensuring that the conditions of recognition and validation of GBS programmes required by QQI are fulfilled and meet or exceed the standard.
Duties and Responsibilities:	• Overall responsibility for the planning, coordination, implementation, supervision and monitoring of the Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures through measurement and review of relevant statistical data, feedback surveys, reports from learners, college staff and external stakeholders and the Quality Assurance Committee • Report to the Academic Council, the General Manager and Managing Director on the performance of the Quality Assurance policies and procedures • Ensure that the Quality Assurance procedures are up to date, adequate and fit for purpose, and reflect best practice, as recommended by the Academic Council, QQI and/or other relevant awarding bodies, including the University of Wales and the Institute of Commercial Management. • Ensure procedures are in accordance with the provisions of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012 and any amendments that may be made to that act • Send the Quality Assurance Committee Reports to the Academic Council and any recommendations arising during the academic period. • Responsible for the quality policies and procedures within the school including revisions and updates to the Quality Assurance Handbook. • Conduct training on quality procedures and policies among all staff

	members and carry out internal quality self-evaluations annually • Ensuring that programme modification where required by validation panels are carried out • Overseeing student admission criteria and processes including CAO admissions, international admissions and RPL processes • Maintaining registration and examination records and liaising with QQI and HEA in relation to proper requests for data • Liaise with academic staff regarding the setting of assessments and examinations and ensuring the assessment material is of a high academic standard • The organisation of the Academic Council, ensuring that it has appropriate oversight of the programmes in GBS and that it can perform its functions as agreed with QQI • In conjunction with programme leaders, ensuring that Programme Boards operate and that the functions assigned to them are carried out • The organisation of examinations and graduation ceremonies • The recruitment of external examiners and ensuring that the recommendations by External Examiners are implemented • Organising induction programmes for new staff, giving them skills in delivery of programmes and assessment of students, including the use of Moodle and other learning resources • Providing training on GBS examination processes and QQI standards to academic staff • Review the development of new modules and programmes in line with the strategic plan of GBS • Provide training to academic staff on QQI requirements and processes and on the proper development of programmes leading to QQI awards • Liaise with QQI on validation submissions and ensure that the conditions and suggestions of the validation panels are implemented • Liaise with QQI and ensure that up to date on relevant academic policy
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	developments • Monitor developments in higher education in Ireland, in particular in the private sector • Liaise with other private sector colleges to provide delivery, assessment and quality development training to staff. In addition, liaise with other privates and public colleges to provide progression pathways for graduates • Liaise with other appropriate national and international education agencies
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2.3.5 Programme Leader

Role	Each Programme Leader reports directly to the Registrar and has direct responsibility for the day to day operation of their respective programmes within Galway Business School. Programme Leaders sit on the Programme Board, Examinations Board and on the Academic Council.
Duties and Responsibilities:	• Chairing the Programme Board meetings and ensuring it meets its responsibilities • Updating programme documentation, such as module descriptors, to be lodged with the Registrar and external awarding bodies arising from the Programme Board's annual review process • Ensuring the effective day to day management of the programme • Implementing short term changes in response to feedback from stakeholders and making recommendations to the Registrar with regard to long term changes to the programme as agreed at Programme Board level • Ensuring adherence to the Programme Documents • Monitoring on-going operation of the programme and learner progression, identifying and supporting borderline learners • Monitoring the quality of the learners' learning experience including learner satisfaction and progress • Ensures that the Examinations Board discharges its duties • Liaising with the Examinations Officer regarding all aspects of exam administration • Ensuring the alignment of the assessments with the learning outcomes • Ensuring the modular learning outcomes facilitate progression • Ensuring alignment of modular outcomes with programme objectives • Engage in the annual programme monitoring report process and in the five year programme review with the Programme Board • Implementing recommendations from other boards and bodies

2.3.6 Examinations Officer

Role	The Registrar holds overall responsibility for the integrity and security of the Examinations function. The Examinations Officer, a senior member of the academic lecturing team, is responsible for ensuring registering, setting, administering, correcting and double marking of examinations and assessments in line with the Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy. The Examinations Officer operates under QQI Assessments and Standards (2013). The Examinations Officer convenes and chairs the Examinations Board meetings, and attends the Board of Examiners (UOW) where all assessments, results and awards are discussed.
Duties and Responsibilities:	• Overall responsibility for ensuring registration, setting, administering, correcting, double marking and verifying of all examinations and assessments within the school • Manages the internal verification processes of internally set assessments in line with Quality Assurance Procedures • Ensures that the Examinations Board discharges its duties • Ensure the operational management of the examinations process, through room booking, supervision and timetabling, with the Registrar, General Manager and Academic Coordinator • Ensure that assessment material is corrected within the agreed timeframes and appropriate feedback is given to students in line with best practice • Organises double marking of assessment material in line with Quality Assurance procedures • In cooperation with the Registrar, ensures that representative samples of corrected scripts are externally verified and compiles the list of performance grades, awards, results and grade distribution • Liaise with students and the Registrar in the case of mitigating circumstances and extension deadlines and keeping the Exam Board informed of all such issues

	• Liaise with the Registrar and students in the case of externally set and graded exams e.g. Institute of Commercial Management
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2.3.7 Academic Coordinator

Role	The Academic Coordinator is a full time position within the school. The Coordinator assists in the academic administration and is in daily contact with learners on all programmes providing the first point of contact for queries and enquiries.
Duties and Responsibilities:	• Providing academic administrative support to the Registrar and the General Manager for the smooth running of programmes and optimum student progress as part of the Quality Assurance committee • Answering queries from existing students and enquiries from potential students about Galway Business Schools programmes and processing any queries or CAO admissions • Ensuring that students' records are up to date and that fees and other registrations are received and documented. Liaising with the General Manager for any areas of non-compliance • Ensure that library resources are adequately stocked with up to date editions for the commencement of each academic year and ordering any books or journals required from the reading lists provided by lecturers • Coordinate the Student Induction programme and the provision of student handbooks with the Registrar • Coordinate attendance records and ensure that they are kept up to date. Report any non-attendance issues to the Registrar so that support can be provided and ensuring that visa requiring students are compliant • Maintaining the Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) and ensuring that information is uploaded in a timely fashion • Provide training to other academic staff on the Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle), the Virtual Library (EBSCO) and additional library resources as well as the Interactive TV's and other resources for lecture room delivery

	• Programme Leaders and other academic staff with administrative support • Engage with potential entrants to the school through interviews and open evenings
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2.3.8 Head of Teaching and Learning

Role	Supporting the role of the Registrar, the Head of Teaching and Learning provides leadership on all matters related to learning, teaching and research activity within the school. This involves working collaboratively with faculty and students to promote, support and enhance innovation and best practice in teaching and learning. It includes ascertaining, maintaining, improving and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning within the school. He/She ascertains the quality of teaching and learning within the school through a systematic system of formal and informal feedback from faculty and students.
Duties and Responsibilities:	• Lecturing on assigned programmes • Ascertaining the quality of the teaching and learning methodologies through regular formal and informal feedback • Maintaining the quality of teaching and learning through peer reviews and observations by the Registrar and Head of Teaching and Learning • Improving the quality of the Teaching and Learning through planned programmes of Induction, CPD, attendance at conferences and Academic Think Tank sessions with the objective of continuous improvement in the overall delivery and the quality of the teaching methodologies in GBS • Ensuring best use of teaching methods and learner resources, such as the Interactive Display Screens, the Academic Server, the delivery in the classroom, e-tivities, use of the VLE and a fully resourced library • Ensuring that programmes are organised in a manner that exemplifies excellence in Teaching and Learning and reporting feedback to the Registrar, QA Committee and Academic Council on improvements and feedback • Helping to drive the schools research agenda, in line with GBS Strategy Plan 2015-2020

	• Providing support to the marketing function including engaging with potential students via interviews, open days and school visits
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2.3.9 Lecturing Staff

Role	The Lecturing Staff are the primary resource within Galway Business School for the provision of a robust, academically sound, quality educational offering for learners. All lecturers perform the following similar teaching and assessment duties within their respective specialist areas.
Duties and Responsibilities:	• Lecture on the respective programme within the weekly schedule and fixed period agreed with the appropriate school personnel / committees • Prepare Module Packs containing lecture schedule, assessment schedule, assessment criteria and marking scheme, updated reading list • Devise and follow programme syllabi in a timely and accurate manner • Upload lecture notes and related materials onto Moodle • Prepare and correct homework and other assessments. Double mark assessment materials were required • Set and mark all assignments prepared by the students and return within a reasonable time or deadline laid down by School administration • Provide academic guidance to students, in particular regular and substantial individual feedback • Be attentive to the exam syllabus and examination procedures for any exam classes taught as outlined in the Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy • Act as Internal Examiner • Prepare lessons efficiently and employ a range of appropriate resources, materials and methodologies • Report any student academic problems to the Programme Leader and/or Registrar • Report any student welfare problems to the General Manager and/or Registrar • Supervise degree Business Research Projects where relevant

	• Attend Faculty, Programme Board, Examination Board, Board of Examiners and Joint Board of Studies (UOW) meetings (where relevant) • Attend Academic Council meetings on request • Liaise with other lecturers teaching on the same programme • Prepare internal assignments and assessment criteria for the respective programme and provide substantial written feedback within school guideline • Prepare internal examinations and marking schemes / model answers for the respective programme and provide substantial written feedback • Provide the Examinations Officer with a spread sheet of continuous assessment and final assessment marks • Keep accurate records of all lectures on file in the school and upload notes and readings or other material onto Moodle • Keep accurate records of student attendance • Regularly provide feedback and contribute significantly to the continuous development of the school • Advise students on programmes of further study and provide academic references for students when required • Prepare Module Evaluation Report(s) to contribute to the production of Annual Programme Monitoring reports • Contribute to the continuous improvement and effectiveness of Galway Business School by actively adopting and practising the School's Quality Assurance system
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2.4 Departmental Responsibilities

2.4.1 Finance Department

- Involvement in all aspects of the company to ensure its continued growth and profitability
- Preparation of the annual accounts and advise on resource maintenance and investment
- Input into strategic planning and particularly reconciling projects with financial projections of the company
- Drawing up budgets in conjunction with the senior management for various departments in line with the strategic plan
- Costing the courses and products of the company and defining targets in financial terms for the coming year
- Production of and analysis of monthly Management Accounts for review by senior management and benchmarking them in line with similar businesses
- Suggesting cost reductions when required without impacting negatively on operations or student experiences
- Promoting the school at all levels to prospective students, agents etc. and acting as an ambassador for it in a general way

2.4.2 Sales & Marketing Department

- Responsibility for all sales and marketing functions for Galway Business School and Galway Cultural Institute
- Developing marketing & sales strategies, plans and functions which will be linked to an advertising & PR schedule and implementation of those plans in a timely manner
- Involved in gathering feedback from students informally and formally, through the use of monitoring questionnaires, and reporting the analysis to the academic team as well as management
- Preparing and costing a sales and marketing plan annually with defined targets and a full activity plan to drive sales in line with the strategic plan
- Monthly reporting with statistical comparisons with previous years and projections and

benchmarking future plans in line with targets to Management

- Developing, designing and updating marketing information & materials and ensuring their accuracy
- Developing an online presence and social media strategy to drive sales
- Analysing, researching and developing new markets/products and maintaining existing markets
- Preparing & taking part in sales trips and workshops in line with the marketing plan
- Training of other staff members in products & sales
- Promoting the school at all levels to prospective students, agents etc. and acting as an ambassador for it in a general way

2.4.3 Operations & Administration Department

- Ensuring that the school is at all times ready for business and student focused
- The Front Office has a key role in as the face of the organisation and the first point of contact for students, prospective students and the public
- Dealing with students, agents and colleagues on a daily basis in a professional & welcoming manner
- Implementation of systems & procedures to ensure smooth flow of work through the front office through optimal use of resources and time
- Ensuring that all tasks and service delivery adhere to best practice and are carried out in a timely manner, including queries, bookings, quotations, budgets & services
- Working closely with the management/marketing department to ensure the sale of products in season and to update on status of enquiries and bookings
- Financial & commercial understanding in order to meet the financial targets of the school with regard to budgets and cash flow
- General administrative duties including answering telephone, filing, tidying, photocopying, postage, stock control & preparing material for student orientation
- Promoting the school at all levels to prospective students, educational agents etc. and acting as an ambassador, by gathering feedback from students and reporting the analysis to the academic team as well as management

2.4.4 Facilities Department

- Maintaining and ensuring that all classrooms, public areas and exterior of the building are up to the required standard, meet with statutory regulations and are fit for purpose and sufficiently resourced to allow optimum learning and teaching
- Allocation of resources across all departments and schools to ensure that the facilities are adequately resourced
- Comply with company policy on health and safety and security while at work and ensure compliance with all statutory and best practice safety, security and fire requirements
- Promoting the school at all levels to prospective students, educational tour operators etc. and acting as an ambassador for it in a general way

2.4.5 Information Technology Function

It is the function of the General Manager to liaise with the external IT Company for the provision of IT resources with the school and to ensure that:

- The maintenance, upgrade and review of the IT provision (including Interactive Professional Display Units (IPDUs) within the school meets the operational requirements in relation to the provision of all hardware and software
- WIFI access, firewall and anti-virus software provision and licensing agreements are up to standard and fit for purpose
- Daily and monthly back-up of all information off site in a virtual environment including all email and ensuring the school websites are hosted correctly
- The database CLASS is, fit for the purpose as needed and is upgraded regularly to ensure school is kept abreast of new developments
- Ensure that WIFI connectivity allows optimum use of the Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) and to liaise with Academic staff / Academic Support Coordinator and Registrar to achieve same
- Training is conducted as and when required and induction is carried out with all student cohorts at the beginning of each academic year.

3. Internal Procedures and Guidelines for the design, institutional approval and external validation of new programmes

Policy Title	Policy for Internal Procedures and Guidelines for the design, institutional approval and external validation of new programmes
Date Approved	April 2016
Effective From	September 2016
Review Procedure & Responsibility	Registrar All academic staff Programme Development Team
Overview	New programmes will be developed which provide targeted, relevant, effective programmes to an existing target audience. Programmes will be viable and will be researched to ensure they fill a skills-gap for which there is demand from industry.
Supporting Documentation	• Assessment and Standards -Revised (QQI 2013) • Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines (2016) • General Programme Validation Manual (QQI 2013) • QQI Consultative Programme Oct 2014 • QQI HET General Programme Validation Manual Revised 2013 • University of Wales' Validation Unit Quality Handbook: Policies and Procedures 2015/16 • Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA 2015)
Amendment History	- Amendment to Chapter 3: Order, Structure and Layout & Supporting Documentation

3.1 Rationale

The procedures and guidelines for the design and approval of new programmes must be rigorous and effective. In particular, the process of developing new programmes must be assessed under several criteria:

- Consistency with the school's Strategic Plan and fulfilment of the plan's aims and objectives
- Impacts on the existing programmes offered by the school
- Whether it offers a sufficiently differentiated and valuable learning experience to students
- Compatibility with the school's operational and financial resources
- Viability of proposed programme in terms of potential students
- How it takes cognisance of the knowledge, skills and competence framework of National Framework of Qualifications and implements the NQAI in terms of access, transfer and progression
- Compliance with the *Higher Education and Training Awards Council Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance in Higher Education 2015*, *Core Validation Policy and Criteria 2013*, *QQI General Programme Validation Manual 2013*
- *Monitoring Policy and Procedures 2014*; *Assessment and Standards 2013*; *General Programme Validation Handbook 2013* and *Award Standards*; the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA 2015)* and for programmes validated by UK institutions; the *Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education General Business and Management 2007*; and *Guidelines for Preparing Programme Specifications 2006*, on programme submission and quality assurance
- How the new programme fits into the School's quality assurance process

3.2 Initial Proposals for New Programmes

The School welcomes initiatives for new programmes from many sources. The most frequent source and channel for individual proposals and programme development is likely to be by individual academic staff at Faculty Meetings and through Programme Boards. New proposals may also be introduced directly through the Academic Council.

In addition, the Governing Body and other key stakeholders may wish to propose new programmes. In particular these may be initiated by a demand for the programme from industry, government agencies and associated professional bodies. Proposals are considered both on their own merit and within the framework of the School's Strategic Plan. Galway Business School requires that proposers of new programmes make an initial approach to the Registrar.

If the proposal has some academic merit, the Registrar will contact the:

- **Marketing Manager:** to conduct some preliminary evidence-based market research. This will typically explore *inter alia* the availability of similar programmes in other institutions; an initial assessment of demand from learners; and some feedback from employers and industry;
- **General Manager:** to determine preliminary likely resource implications and investigate basic operational feasibility of the new proposed programme offering.

In cooperation with the Registrar, and with the above inputs from the Marketing and General Manager, the original proposer drafts an initial programme proposal report. This brief (one or two page) document is then submitted for preliminary consideration at the subsequent Academic Council meeting.

This initial proposal report must conform to the requirements of the validating body on new course evaluation. The preliminary report should address the following issues:

- Academic feasibility and compatibility with current programmes at Galway Business School

- Programme Aims and Outline Programme Learning Outcomes
- Outline Programme Curriculum – module titles, programme length, level of award
Resource implications for staffing, accommodation and facilities
- Programme differentiation compared to similar programmes at other institutions
- Evidence of demand from industry for the programme
- Evidence of demand from prospective students

The Academic Council decide on any one of three outcomes in relation to the initial programme proposal:

- Approved: the proposal moves on to the Interim stage described below
- Revise and re-submit: conditional on modifications or further details to be provided, the proposal may be re-submitted to a later Council meeting
- Rejected: the Council decides that the proposal does not meet the criteria to progress any further

3.3 Interim Report on New Programmes

Provided the Academic Council has approved the interim programme proposal, the Registrar is delegated the responsibility to appoint a Programme Development Team. The Programme Development Team is then responsible for bringing the new programme idea to the Interim report stage.

The Registrar invites a member of academic staff to chair the Programme Development Team. In consultation with the Registrar, the Chair will put together a representative team of relevant academic staff and, if deemed necessary, external consultants or industry specialists.

The Programme Development Team is responsible for the development of the new programme proposal in accordance with '*QQI's General Programme Validation Handbook 2010* or the *QAA Guidelines for Preparing Programme Specifications 2013*'. Each new

interim programme proposal contains the following information:

- Programme rationale and background, including the results of a benchmarking exercise against similar programmes in other institutions
- Detailed programme learning outcomes and relevant award standards
- Programme structure, i.e. a list of all modules and relevant ECTS [European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System] credits required to achieve the overall programme learning outcomes
- Clear explanation of the target learner market to which the new programme will appeal
- Access, transfer and progression criteria
- Overall teaching, learning and assessment strategy
- Programme management arrangements
- A detailed outlined of additional resource requirements
- Module descriptors including learning, teaching and assessment information
- Typical graduate opportunities

The Programme Development Team will also prepare a Self-assessment Programme Report. This will provide a critical assessment of the proposal including its strengths, weaknesses and underlying assumptions.

During this process, the Registrar will create a timeline for structured meetings with the Programme Development Team to create the necessary documents to complete the final programme proposal. Moreover, an additional critical requirement during this Interim process is for the Programme Development Team to provide regular status updates to the Registrar and to the relevant Faculty and Academic Council meetings. Feedback on the new programme from lecturing staff and management may cause revisions of the programme proposal at this stage.

3.4 Final Programme Proposal

Based on the feedback received and the findings of the Self-assessment Programme Report, the Programme Development Team submits a final programme proposal document to the Academic Council for formal approval. The final programme proposal is written so as to satisfy all of the relevant validating body's requirements, particularly the provision of a proposed programme schedule, self-assessment report and a detailed new programme validation template. Such requirements will include:

- Compatibility with the School's Strategic Plan and Mission Statement
- Impact on the programmes currently offered by the School and the economic viability and market demand for the proposed programme
- Pedagogical philosophy and programme aims and objectives
- Suitability of the programme with the School's quality assurance process
- Award title and level consistent with the intended learning outcomes
- Mode of delivery of the programme (full-time, part-time, distance, blended learning) and the time to completion
- In-depth analysis of demand for graduates from the programme
- Detailed curriculum for the programme, incorporating a definitive list of programme learning outcomes
- Clear information on the relevant provision of resources and feasibility of programme provision – this will address issues such as accommodation, academic
- Staffing requirements, library and information technology resources, and staff development
- Specific intended module learning outcomes and module learning environment
- Breakdown of total contact hours per module into lectures, practicals, tutorials and other modes of fostering learning
- Balancing learner development with the intended programmatic academic outcomes
- Complete rubric of standard-compliant assessment of learners
- Reading lists and recommended texts for each module

- Detailed programme progressions rules and standards
- Provision for learner access, transfer and progression in the context of the National Qualifications Framework

The Academic Council has the authority to assess the new programme's academic content and compatibility with the current programmes offered by Galway Business School. If the Academic Council is satisfied on these criteria, the programme proposal is forwarded to an Assessment Panel for final consideration. The Assessment Panel will be comprised of Senior Management within the School and, if deemed necessary, at least one external advisor with particular expertise. The panel's role is to assess the programme within the remit of the School's Strategic Plan. Any revisions will be communicated back to the Programme Development Team.

Once any issues have been satisfactorily resolved, the programme proposal is re-submitted to the Academic Council who then has the authority to approve the new programme and forward the completed application to QQI for approval. "QQI's General Programme and Validation Manual 2013' will be employed as the template for all programmes being developed, and the Academic Council will be ultimately responsible for ensuring that all documents submitted to QQI adhere to the requirements contained in this document.

Programme Submission for External Assessment

Once the programme has been submitted to QQI an Expert Panel will be constituted by QQI. The Proposed Programme will be assessed and a site visit will take place. Pending a positive decision, the Expert Panel Report will be published on the QQI website www.qqi.ie.

4. Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes

Policy Title	Policy for Ongoing Monitoring of Programmes & Quality Assurance
Date Approved	April 2016
Effective From	September 2016
Review Procedure & Responsibility	All Programme Leaders All Academic Staff Registrar
Overview	This section refers to all of Galway Business School's full-time and part-time programmes. A programme is a series of modules leading to a major award. On-going monitoring of programmes is necessary in order to: a) ensure that the programme remains valid and current with regards to best practice within the discipline b) evaluate whether the intended learning outcomes are being achieved by learners c) evaluate the suitability and appropriateness of the curriculum and assessment.
Supporting Documentation	• Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines (QQI, 2016) • Galway Business School Strategic Plan (2015-2020) • Policy and Criteria for Provider Access to Initial Validation of Programmes Leading to QQI Awards,(2013) • Provider Monitoring Policy (QQI 2014) • QQI HET General Programme Validation Manual Revised 2013 • QQI Strategy Statement (2016-2018) • Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA 2015) • University of Wales' Validation Unit Quality Handbook: Policies and Procedures 2015/16

Amendment History	Amendment to Chapter 4: - Order, Structure and Layout & Supporting Documentation - Insertion of: - Section 4.2 & 4.3
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4.1 Rationale

GBS has primary responsibility for the quality of its programmes provision; ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programmes ensures that academic quality assurance is undertaken and that continuous improvement can be implemented. Corrective and preventative actions are identified to enhance programmes. This ensures that each student receives the best education and experience that Galway Business School can offer and in line with the Quality Assurance and overall objectives of the school.

All programmes offered by Galway Business School are monitored on an annual basis. Galway Business School is further aware that effective monitoring will ensure greater consistency across and between programmes in related fields of learning, including but not limited to, teaching and learning methodologies, and assessment.

Galway Business School monitors in this context to include:

- Ensure that the stated aims of each programme are met and delivered
- Monitor the learner experience
- Monitor assessments to ensure the stated learning programme outcomes are being achieved
- Receive ongoing programme evaluation from learners and lecturers
- Identify best practice between lecturers and programmes
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the curriculum and assessment in relation to outcomes
- Monitor student achievement and progression
- Review entry standards and attrition rates. This is undertaken in the knowledge

that high non-completion rates normally indicate a problem with the programme concerned, its access criteria or its attractiveness to learners

- Identify issues for further learning enhancement or corrective action or preventative action
- Benchmark the programme against other similar programmes

4.2 Internal Monitoring of Programmes and Quality Assurance

4.2.1 Responsibility

The Programme Board is responsible for the annual monitoring of that programme, and for producing an Annual Programme Monitoring Report. The Programme Board comprises the Programme Leader, all academic staff lecturing on the programme, a learner representative and the Registrar. The Programme Board meet five times per year and liaise with other relevant personnel in the school, as appropriate, to complete the relevant sections of the report. Each lecturer produces a module report which contributes to the Annual Programme Monitoring Report. The report is submitted by the Programme Board to the Academic Council.

Where responsibility for curriculum development and changes to syllabi is external to Galway Business School (for example, ICM programmes), the Programme Board collates and focuses on information relating to access, attainment, teaching strategies and attrition.

4.2.2 Monitoring Practice

Each programme is monitored by ongoing examination of its delivery and outcomes. Both learner and lecturer are given opportunities to evaluate the programme through expressing opinions and making suggestions regarding programme and learning experiences throughout the lifetime of a programme. Each programme is also evaluated in terms of its module content, assessments (internal external), demands on the learner, lecturer, school and overall quality and relevance.

The Annual Programme Monitoring Report is produced based on the following information

derived from the following sources:

- Previous Annual Programme Monitoring Reports
- External Examiner Reports
- Programme Board minutes
- Module reports
- Student intake, access, transfer and progression data
- Student attainment
- SSLC Committee Reports
- Lecturer Feedback
- Learner Feedback
- Ongoing Student Monitoring Reports
- Interim Feedback Reports
- Muddy Point Reports (End-of-Class Feedback on unclear point)
- End of Module Student Evaluation
- Graduate Survey (undertaken online through for example social media)
- Survey of Employers / Industry Bodies / Wider Community

The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that lecturing staff provide feedback on their modules. Individual lecturing staff are responsible for ensuring that learners complete feedback sheets at the appropriate intervals. All feedback sheets are available on Moodle. End of Module Student Evaluation Forms are completed anonymously. Issues raised as a result of Muddy Point Reports and Interim Feedback Reports are brought to the next Programme Board meeting. Data on access, transfer and progression and on attrition rates is produced by the Registrar for discussion at the end of year Programme Board meeting. The Registrar undertakes the Graduate Survey and presents results to the Programme Board.

4.2.3 Annual Programme Monitoring Report

The report is presented by the Programme Board to the Academic Council for full consideration and approval. The Report includes an action plan and timeline for the programme(s) under scrutiny which is monitored by the Quality Assurance Committee. The Annual Programme Monitoring Report will form an input into the periodic evaluation (5th

year) of the programme.

4.2.4 Procedure for ongoing monitoring of University of Wales programmes

As a validated provider of the University of Wales BA in Business Management, Galway Business School prepares an Annual College and Course Review (ACCR). This Report is considered by the Academic Council and recommendations and resulting actions are approved for submission to the University of Wales in conjunction with reports by the programme Moderator and External Examiner. Further details of this process are described in the University of Wales' *'Validation Uni Quality Handbook: Policies and Procedures 2015/16'*.

Please see Appendix 2- ACCR Template

4.3 Procedures for Programme Modification

4.3.1 QQI Programme Modification Procedures – Major and Minor

Recommendations arising from an Annual Programme Monitoring Report often point to proposed programme modification. This will only apply to internally controlled programmes. (This does not apply to ICM programmes.) Galway Business School is cognisant of QQI's *Core Validation Policy and Criteria* which details the requirements for significant major change and minor change.

Table 3: Requirements for Significant Major and Minor Change

Minor Change	Major change
Occur annually	Incorporated into Periodic review
May be made internally	Require Revalidation
<i>Examples:</i>	<i>Examples:</i>
Revised Reading lists	Change to the programme title
Provision of additional learner supports	Module change
Assessment strategies (not affecting credit weightings)	Change to programme learning outcomes
	Changes to entry requirements

All minor modifications and proposals to any particular programme will be agreed at Academic Council level and the Programme Document will be updated with the agreed minor modifications. Minor modifications do not impact on the overall programme, module learning outcomes, the course schedule and the overall assessment strategy.

The procedure for approving minor changes to QQI programmes is as follows:

- the amended Programme Submission document is forwarded to the Academic Council
- once the Academic Council has approved the Programme Document, the Registrar presents the modified document and recommendations to the Awarding Body
- the Registrar corresponds as necessary with the Awarding Body, and the Programme Document is updated in accordance with feedback from the Awarding Body
- the final approved modified programme document becomes the current programme offering
- any modifications required to the School prospectus are implemented on the next reprint
- the website is updated

4.3.2 University of Wales – BA in Business Management Programme Modification Procedures

Changes to this programme may be proposed by the Programme Board and must be discussed with the University of Wales appointed Moderator before changes can be considered or discussed at a higher level. With Moderator approval, the Programme Board can include suggestions for change in the Annual Course and College Review Report and the proposed changes may be discussed at the Joint Board of Studies meetings.

The Joint Board of Studies is comprised of the Moderator, the External Examiner, a representative of the University of Wales Validation Unit, the Registrar and Programme Board of Galway Business School. A decision is then taken by the Joint Board of Studies and if approved is recommended to the University of Wales Taught Degrees Board for final approval. A representative of the Validation Unit confirms the change and Galway Business School updates the programme documentation and all marketing materials accordingly.

5. Procedures for Periodic Evaluation of Programmes

Policy Title	Policy for Procedures for Periodic Evaluation of Programmes
Date Approved	April 2016
Effective From	September 2016
Review Procedure & Responsibility	Registrar Programme Board Programme Leader Lecturing staff Academic Council
Overview	Galway Business School places great importance on the quality of its programmes, especially with regard to keeping programmes updated and relevant. Programmes are evaluated at five yearly intervals to ensure they remain relevant and viable.
Supporting Documentation	• Assessment and Standards (QQI 2013) • Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines (2016) • Provider Monitoring Policy & Procedures (QQI 2014) • QQI Consultative Programme Oct 2014 • QQI HET General Programme Validation Manual Revised 2013 • QQI Provider Monitoring Policy (2014)Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA 2015) • University of Wales' Validation Unit Quality Handbook: Policies and Procedures 2015/16
Amendment History	- Amendment to Chapter 5: - Order, Structure and Layout & Supporting Documentation - Insertion of: - Section 5.1, 5.3

5.1 Objectives of Periodic Evaluation of Programmes

The objectives of the procedures set out by Galway Business School are to ensure regular evaluation of programmes and that programmes are performing in accordance with 'QCI's *Provider Monitoring Policy 2014*' defined as:

- To analyse the effectiveness and efficiency of each validated programme, including details of learner numbers, access, progress, retention rates and success rates
- To review the development of the programmes in the context of the requirements of employers, industry, professional bodies, the Irish economy and international developments
- To evaluate the response of Galway Business School to market requirements and educational developments
- To evaluate the feedback mechanisms for learners and the processes for acting on this feedback
- To evaluate the physical facilities and resources provided for the provision of the programmes
- To evaluate the formal links which have been established with industry, business and the wider community in order to maintain the relevance of its programmes
- To evaluate feedback from employers of the programmes' graduates and from those graduates
- To review any research activities in the field of learning under review and their impact on teaching and learning
- To evaluate projections for the following five years in the programme field of learning under review
- To consider proposals and decisions in relation to updating programmes and modules, discontinuing programmes or parts of programmes, together with proposals to develop new programmes

5.2 Overview of Periodic Evaluation of Programmes

The periodic programme evaluation can either be conducted on an individual programme or a group of related programmes. There may be a combined periodic programme evaluation for all programmes in the school. A periodic programme(s) evaluation is carried out at least once every five years, or as the approved validating body directs.

Galway Business School carries out a Quinquennial Review for University of Wales validated programmes. The Quinquennial Review is the process whereby the progress of a validated course is critically appraised at five yearly intervals. Any proposals for change are considered by a review panel representing the University of Wales in order to confirm that the course remains academically valid and continues to meet the conditions for an award of the University of Wales.

5.2.1 *General Principles*

The periodic programme evaluation is a dual process involving both internal self-evaluation and external expert evaluation following the agreement of terms of reference with the validating body.

1. The internal element of a periodic programme evaluation involves Self-Evaluation of the programme, a plan for the subsequent five years, and a modifying programme document.
2. The external element of a periodic programme evaluation involves a group of external professionals taking into consideration the evidence of the self-evaluation and creating an evaluation of the modified programme document and plan.

When examining a programme the focus is on the effectiveness of the programme in meeting its stated aims and also on the success of the learners in reaching their intended learning outcomes. The self-evaluation will culminate in a Self-Evaluation Report, including an evaluation of the programme's strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats and possible actions.

To produce the Self Evaluation Report, the Programme Board consults widely with internal and external stakeholders and evidence is compiled from the following sources:

- Annual Programme Monitoring Reports
- Programme Board Meetings
- External Examiner Reports
- Moderator Reports where relevant
- Statistics on student intake, access, transfer and progression
- SSLC Committee Reports
- Lecturer Feedback
- Learner Feedback
- Ongoing Student Monitoring Reports
- Interim Feedback Reports
- Muddy Point Reports
- End of Module Student Evaluation
- School Alumni
- Survey of Employers / Industry Bodies / Wider Community

5.3 Periodic Monitoring

5.3.1 Internal Phase of Periodic Monitoring: Procedures for the Development of a Self-Evaluation Report

The self-evaluation process commences at the beginning of year three of the five year cycle (2017). The Programme Board, with the Registrar, agree a schedule of tasks to be completed within a set time frame, and identify the internal and external stakeholders who need to be consulted on the merits and appropriateness of the content and delivery of the programme. The Registrar presents the schedule for Programmatic Review to the Academic Council for approval. This schedule will summarise the process to be followed in conducting this review and also specify when specific elements of the work will be completed and by whom they will be undertaken.

The members of the Programme Board will synthesise all relevant information and take a

holistic view of each programme to evaluate their pedagogical appropriateness and to ensure that the programme(s) remain relevant to learner needs and academic and labour market needs. Physical facilities and all other resources are also evaluated.

The Programme Board meets regularly during these periods of consultation to monitor progress and process the data generated in order to assess its relevance to the evaluation. The Registrar will present progress reports at each Quality Assurance Committee and Academic Council meeting until the internal self-evaluation is completed.

A draft Self Evaluation Report is prepared in accordance with best international practice and adheres to both the School's standards and the appropriate validating body's standards and complies with *QQI's Provider Monitoring Policy 2014*'.

The draft Self Evaluation Report is presented by the Programme Board to the Academic Council for review. Once approved by the Academic Council, the Self Evaluation Report is sent to the Governing Body. The Governing Board examines the draft Self Evaluation Report in terms of the School's Strategic Plan.

When all appropriate committees are satisfied with the Self Evaluation Report, the Quality Assurance committee meets to consider the composition of the External Evaluation Review Group and makes recommendations to the Governing Body who are ultimately responsible for inviting panel members to participate. (In the case of University of Wales programmes, the Quinquennial Review Panel is formed by the University of Wales.)

For FE programmes, QQI undertakes a Periodic Review of Providers. The QQI Monitor produces a desk review compiled based on the evidence provided by the school. A site visit then takes place which reviews the effectiveness of the QA procedures. The site visit is a collaborative process which involves meetings with school management, staff and learners. Recommendations for improvements are identified in the report and the school produces a plan to ensure the implementation of any recommendations.

5.3.2 External Phase of Periodic Monitoring: Peer Review of Programme Evaluation

Following the production of the Self Evaluation Report (SER), the school arranges an external evaluation conducted by a group of experts from outside the School. This Peer Review Group comprises a suitably qualified chairperson, a secretary, a minimum of two external academics experts in the field of learning, a student representative, representatives of industry / or the relevant profession, and a representative of QQI, if required.

In the composition of the Peer Review Group, other factors may include; gender balance, international input and academics from outside the jurisdiction. If approved by the Chair the Registrar of Galway Business School's QA Committee can serve as secretary.

The peer review process is held in a collaborative environment of cooperation, consultation and advice, facilitated by Galway Business School. The functions of the Peer Review Group, as outlined in '*QQI's Provider Monitor Guidelines 2014*' are:

- Study the Self Evaluation Report
- Visit Galway Business School and meet with faculty, learners past and present, (if possible), support staff, management, employers and any other category of internal and external stakeholders
- Clarify and verify details in the Self Evaluation Report and allow for private discussions of the panel and or review of further documentation and evidence not included in the Self Evaluation Report
- The panel will also consider how well the identified aims and objectives of Galway Business School are being met
- The Chair will provide verbal feedback to Galway Business School at the end of the visit, indicating overall conclusions, recommendations for change, and further evaluation and any associated conditions

The Chair of the Peer Review Group will provide a written report combining the evaluation of the Self Evaluation Report and the panel visit. The report should make a recommendation as to the continuing validation of the programme(s), improvements, changes, and the schedule for implementation of same.

5.4 Procedures for Implementation of Final Evaluation Report Recommendations

The Peer Review Group Report is reviewed by the Academic Council who decides to request revalidation from QQI. A formal response to the Report is produced. An implementation plan which addresses the findings and recommendations of both the Self Evaluation Report and the Peer Review Group, to effect change and improvements, is prepared by the Programme Board and the Quality Assurance Committee ensures that the necessary achievable actions and measurable outcomes and timelines are met.

The Academic Council submits the implementation plan to QQI with a request for revalidation of the programme.

5.4.1 University of Wales Quinquennial Review Process (QR)

The University of Wales Quinquennial review process is as robust as and mirrors the QQI Programmatic Review process in all aspects with the exception of:

- An assessment and review of Galway Business School's relationship with the University of Wales and its representatives.
- How the Quinquennial Review Panel (Peer Review Panel) is formed

The Self Evaluation Report assesses the relationship between Galway Business School and the Moderator appointed by University of Wales, the Extern(s), and representatives of the Validation Unit.

The University of Wales appoints the Quinquennial Review Panel when Galway Business School submit the Self Evaluation Report and its composition is determined by the University of Wales. The panel comprises a Chairperson who is a senior academic, and two external academics. The Extern and the Moderator are consulted by the Quinquennial Review Panel to consider evidence presented by Galway Business School.

In all other aspects Programmatic Review of University of Wales validated programmes is as

per QQI Provider Monitoring Policy (2014).

The entire UW Validation Unit Quality Handbook is available on request or can be found at:

<http://wales.ac.uk/Resources/Documents/Partners/Validated/QualityHandbook/ValidationUnitQualityHandbook.pdf>

6. Teaching and Learning Resources

Policy Title	Teaching and Learning Resources
Date Approved	April 2016
Effective From	September 2016
Review Procedure & Responsibility	General Manager Registrar Head of Teaching & Learning Academic Coordinator Programme Leader
Overview	This policy establishes the Teaching and Learning Strategy within Galway Business School and details the services and resources available to students and staff.
Supporting Documentation	• Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners (QQI 2015) • Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines (QQI, 2016) • GBS Strategic Plan (2015-2020) • QQI HET General Programme Validation Manual Revised (2013) • QQI Strategy Statement (2014-2016) • Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA 2015)
Amendment History	- Amendment to Chapter 6: - Order, Structure and Layout & Supporting Documentation - Insertion of: - Section 6.2, 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.3, 6.3.1, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6

6.1 Rationale

Galway Business School recognises that the development of an academic ethos to foster student-centred learning is at the core of its mission. The School's teaching and learning strategy has two primary dimensions, namely (i) students and (ii) lecturers, underpinned by rigorous evaluation and reporting systems.

The Teaching and Learning Strategy at GBS is informed by the QQI Award Standards, European Standards and Guidelines, the National Framework of Qualifications, and 'National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030' (Hunt Report) and stakeholder engagement with lecturers, students and employers on both how students learn and what lifelong skills they need to acquire for the world of work.

The Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Higher Education – Governance and Quality Education 2013 states that the four main purposes of Higher Education are:

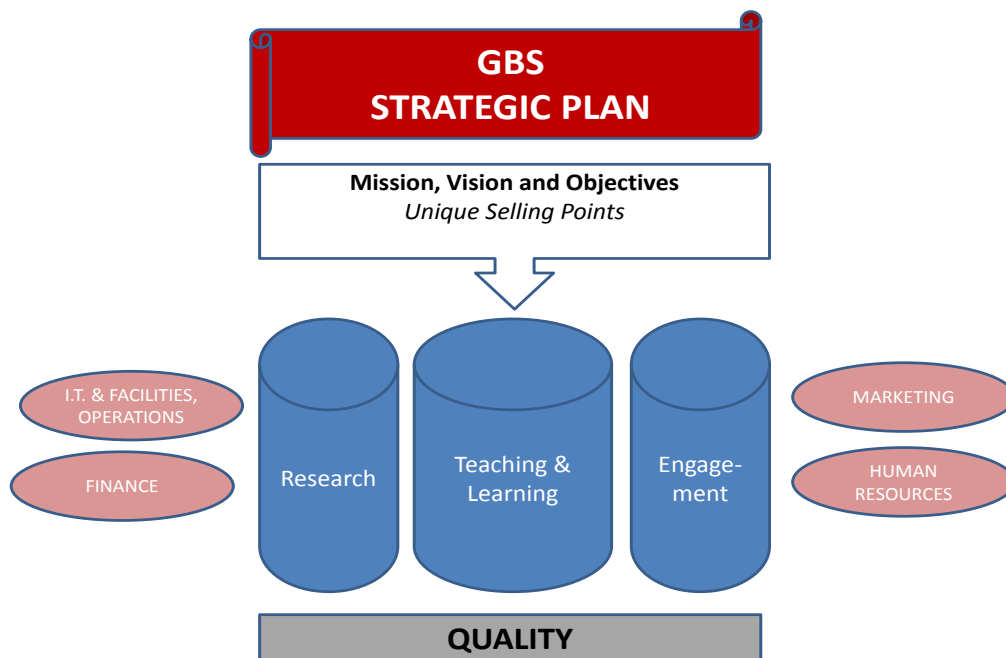
- Preparation for sustainable employment
- Preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies
- Personal Development
- The development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research of a broad advanced knowledge base

The Teaching and Learning Strategy at Galway Business School takes account of continuing developments in Irish and international development in Higher Education. Our mission is to transform our students for individual excellence and global citizenship. 'Transformation requires curiosity, courage and commitment – qualities that we seek to develop in our students. Armed with these qualities, our students will not only understand the world of business, they will also be capable of making it better'.

6.2 Teaching and Learning Strategy

Galway Business School's Strategic Plan (2015 - 2020) closely mirrors the mission for higher education in Ireland, as documented in the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Hunt Report). Like the Hunt Report, our strategy looks at how we can pursue ambitious yet realistic objectives in terms of three interconnected core strands - **teaching and learning**, **research**, and **engagement**. We consider these strands as underpinning the strategy of Galway Business School.

Figure 2: GBS Strategic Plan



In addition to this, and corroborated by assertions in the Hunt Report, *internationalisation* is another core theme at GBS. These core themes are supported by a solid quality assurance function, which is fundamental to all GBS' core and supporting functions. Specifically in relation to the Teaching & Learning, it explores how GBS ensures that its students can have an excellent teaching and learning experience facilitated by a high-quality learning environment, with state-of-the-art learning resources.

Flexibility & Diversity: The introduction to the HEA's Position Paper, "Open and Flexible Learning" November 2009, stated that flexibility of provision was a key indicator of the

responsiveness of Irish higher education to Irish society and that it was the intention to establish flexible learning as a mainstream concern of Irish higher education rather than as a supplementary reporting obligation.

The commitment to flexible learning modes provides the opportunity for wider participation and fairness of access. Galway Business School is well placed to provide this capacity as the private sector can and will adapt more quickly to market demands and has the funding and ability to grow compared to the state education sector which is under increasing pressure due to the current economic situation of the country.

6.2.1 Teaching and Learning Strategy Goals and Objectives

Our Teaching and Learning Strategy is based on a set of key goals with specific objectives for learning, teaching and assessment. These take account of external reference points of knowledge, skills and competencies as stated in QQI Awards Standards. These include but are not limited to:

- Learning as a skill
- Student success and progression
- Competence-based learning
- Flexible approaches to learning
- Internationally relevant inclusive curriculum
- Research informed curriculum
- Assessment to support learning
- Readiness for Employability
- Academic and pastoral learner support
- Staff development in teaching and learning
- Research

Teaching and assessment methods at GBS enable students from a range of backgrounds to discover, exploit and build on their strengths. Our teaching approaches are both student centered and reflect different learning styles and different disciplinary areas. This is complemented by e-learning (through a list of e-tivities), self-directed learning, problem-based learning, and collaborative projects. Teachers 'need to stimulate active, not passive,

learning and to encourage students to be critical, creative thinkers, with the capacity to go on learning after their college days are over' (Hunt, p. 54).

The focus of the teaching methods employed support learning and the learner, though helping the learner understand how to use resources, specifically the experience of lecturers. There are dedicated modules around learning skills and it is included at every stage and module, thus enabling students to achieve the learning outcomes of their programmes and modules. The main format of teaching in Galway Business School is classroom based teaching as outlined in the contact hours on approved programme schedules supported by the Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle).

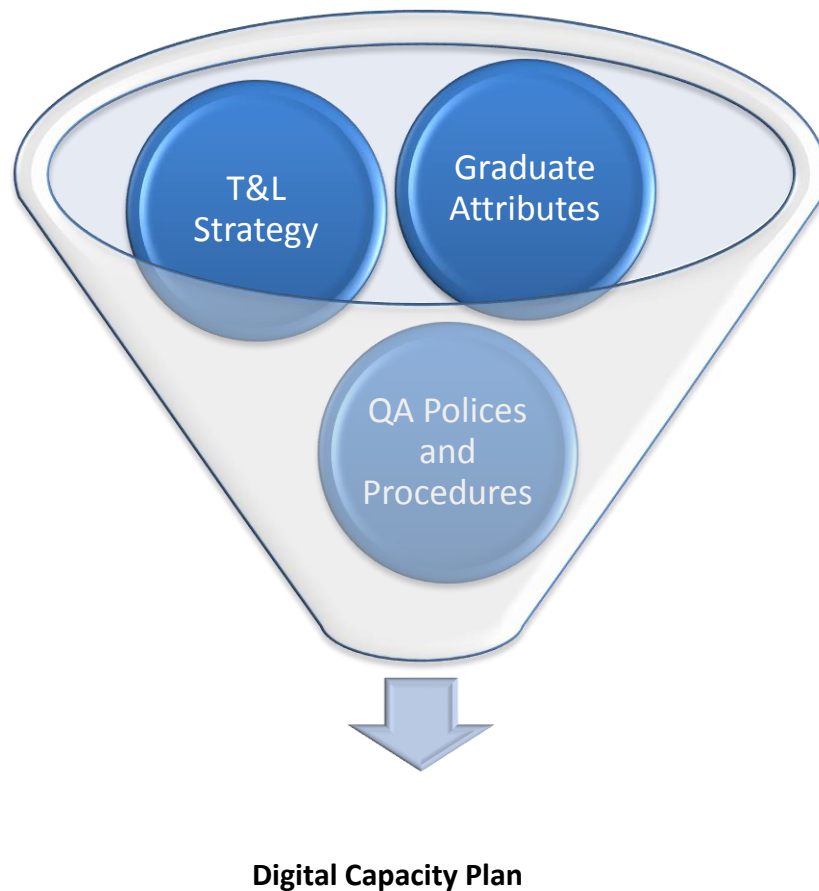
6.2.2 Digital Capacity

Given the increasing transformation of 'digital' Galway Business School aims to meet the expectations of digitally empowered students to help them better engage and enhance their learning experience. The numerous delivery approaches referred to in Section 6.3 highlights some of the methods employed by Galway Business School to collaboratively engage with students and local companies to help empower and equip students for the future of digital capacity. Educating students on digital capacity highlights:

- Flexibility and Accessibility
- How to keep pace with a global world
- Awareness of their digital footprint
- New ways of working
- How to reach out to students

Galway Business School enhances the student experience by embedding digital technologies, resources and skills in all elements of their planning techniques together with using a collaborative approach to student and lecturer learning as can be seen from Figure 3. Figure 3 highlights the three attributes to Galway Business School's Digital Capacity Plan: Teaching and Learning Strategy, Graduate Attributes and QA Policies and Procedures.

Figure 3: GBS Digital Capacity Plan



6.3 Approaches and Methods

The Teaching methods and approaches we employ help students take ownership of, and responsibility for their own learning in partnership with the lecturers. Various methods are provided and include using the Interactive Display Units:

- Classroom based delivery
- Formative assessment
- Problem solving
- Skills development
- Seminars & Workshops
- Skills Development including personal skills development

- Case Study Analysis
- Research supervision and Projects
- Group work
- Presentation skills
- Simulation games
- E-learning including E-tivities
- Company visits
- Guest lecturers

6.3.1 Creating Blended Learning through Technology

Additional teaching methods supported by Moodle in the form of E-tivities include:

- Forums, Blogs
- Videos
- Podcast
- Discussion Boards
- Wikis
- Online Journals
- Online Tests/ Surveys/ Questionnaires
- Web based Knowledge Construction in Business
- Virtual Reality Business Games
- Video Role Play and Feedback

This student centered approach is one where lecturers and students are on a learning journey with the lecturer acting as guide and facilitator. As a student progresses through the various stages, the subject matter becomes more challenging. Students move from the acquisition of knowledge to critical analysis and application of concepts to practical situations.

6.4 Personal and Skills Development for Employability

The underlying acquisition of skills and competence by learners will adhere to the principles on transferable skills outlined in key policy proposals such as the Hunt report (2011) and the recent QQI publication, 'Education and Employers: A Strategic Approach to Employer

Engagement’ (2014). Research among employers and the school’s Industry Expert Group have identified the need for these personal skills and abilities in successful future employees.

A key insight from all documents related to Higher Education learning outcomes is the critical emphasis placed on key transferable skills that all learners need to acquire as part of their undergraduate education, and that that ‘the simple acquisition of knowledge is not enough to count as an education. These skills include analytic reasoning, critical thinking, work readiness, research, and the practical application of theory. In addition, all learners need to demonstrate competence in written and oral communication skills, leadership ability, and the ability to work in a team environment.

Galway Business School is committed to enabling learners to have these key skills that can be transferred to other areas of their lives, both professional and personal including:

- the ability for critical thinking
- the ability to carry out and analyse research
- to manipulate, sort and present data
- problem solving
- learning to learn
- to manage time and resources effectively
- innovation and entrepreneurship
- written and oral communication skills
- IT skills for business
- team-working
- leadership
- work readiness
- employability skills

These skills are evidenced right throughout our programme, both in specific credit modules (Learn to Learn) and integrated and tested throughout. Our programme development strategy also encompasses these elements both in the module content and also through

assessment strategies such as cross modular assessment which interlinks modules, learning outcomes and student skillsets.

6.5 Academic Support and Resources

6.5.1 Resources to Support Learning

Galway Business School acknowledges that physical resources contribute positively to the students' learning, performance and satisfaction. Galway Business School aims to provide and maintain a safe, well-resourced building, available and accessible to all staff and students of the school including:

- attractive clean classroom spaces
- interactive Display Screens which give access to all resources on line
- academic server allowing lecturers to develop resources that can be backed up and shared
- fast WIFI
- well-stocked library
- virtual Learning Environment (Moodle)
- IT supports for students and staff that promote learning including access to laptops, printing and photocopying
- study space for students in the evenings and at weekends

Other Support Services include:

- Counselling Services
- Careers Support Service
- General Student Services
- Administration services

Galway Business School recognises that the continuous management, evaluation and improvement of physical resources and other support services supports the quality of learning and teaching that it espouses. This document details the physical resources, student support services, and administrative functions of Galway Business School and the delineation

with Galway Cultural Institute and how these procedures are quality assured.

The Quality Assurance committee and the General Manager are involved in this process as a key part of their respective roles and responsibilities. In particular, the General Manager has duties and responsibilities regarding Teaching and Learning resources. These include:

- ensuring that the physical and resource requirements are in line with the strategic plans of the Directors and that all legal and statutory requirements are met
- managing the institutional administrative support for both institutions including allocation of resources, classroom scheduling and maintaining and upgrading of all facilities and resources as necessary
- ensuring that students have access to counselling, career guidance, accommodation or other support and administrative services provided by GBS
- Feedback from lecturers, students, administration and from the various committees on resources informs the Annual Resources Report which the GM produces for the Quality Assurance Committee based on the previous year's findings.

6.5.2 Academic Environment

Academic standards are established by the Academic Council. Annual reports from Programme Boards, as well as regular communication with Programme Leaders, are the principal bases for decisions taken at Academic Council. Secondly, as indicated in Section 9, there are a number of staff development initiatives undertaken each year.

6.5.3 Learner Induction

During the first days of week one in the first semester, all new learners attend Induction sessions where the Registrar, Head of Teaching and Learning, the Programme Leader and Academic Coordinator. Lecturing staff on the programme give learners a thorough briefing about the programme, as well as covering key concerns such as time management, study skills, plagiarism, use of the on-line library, referencing and attribution, and critical thinking. In addition, it is school practice for each lecturer to integrate such skills as part of their modules early in the academic year to reinforce learning of these key attributes.

The aim of this session is to welcome new learners to the programme, provide them with

essential information and to let them know what to expect over the duration of the programme. During this session learners will complete a campus tour and note the location of key contact personnel. Learners also get the opportunity to meet their lecturers and student peers through engaging in team building and ice-breaker exercises. Learners will also be provided with vital information such as the student handbook, the academic calendar, and information technology and support services. In the final schedule of induction, learners are provided with training on GBS e-learning platform – Moodle, online library – EBSCO, Referencing styles and techniques and general printing facilities.

Throughout each semester, both academic staff and the Registrar provide dedicated office hours and scheduled appointments to meet Learners on a one-to-one basis.

6.5.4 Attendance

The importance of regular attendance has a direct impact on student achievement, but does not impact on marks awarded. While attendance at class is not obligatory its importance is stressed and monitored. This serves to emphasise the importance of regular class attendance and this is highlighted to students should their attendance fall below par. Attendance is maintained on a daily basis and recorded on CLASS (School Database Management System).

Class attendance is discussed at Programme Boards and Faculty Meetings, with all lecturers reporting poor attendance to the Registrar and Programme Leader. If poor attendance is due to a personal problem, the student will meet with the assigned Programme Leader or the Registrar. If necessary, the student will be referred to a Counselling Professional.

If there is no valid reason for poor attendance, the student is informed that his/her attendance record will be made available to the Programme Board. The attendance report contributes to the Annual Programme Monitoring Report.

6.5.5 Physical Infrastructural Resources

The General Manager and Registrar ensure that all classrooms are of a size capable of taking the number of students required, well ventilated and / or heated and have suitable furniture to allow optimum teaching and learning. Each classroom is equipped with sufficient sockets, IT provision, whiteboards, flip charts, projectors and PCs as required. The room must have access for those with disabilities and must also allow students and teachers to access bathroom and recreational facilities.

The building at Galway Business School is wheelchair accessible but not adapted. Galway Business School's Policy on Disability aims to deal with students with a disability who wish to undertake a qualification. The policy covers four main areas of in relation to wheelchair access, dyslexia, hearing difficulties and visual impairment.

The document outlines the support services that Galway Business School will provide for these students to complete their academic qualification from admission to graduation. It also gives students the necessary support to process applications for government support in such instances.

Please see Appendix 3 – Galway Business School's Policy on Disability.

There are dedicated student facilities including student common room and café and the availability of these facilities additionally serves the function of providing students with an informal, social space to meet.

Evening and weekend study is also available for all student cohorts.

6.5.6 Library Resources

The provision of library facilities is a fundamental resource for both students and staff and an essential part of the teaching and learning environment. The library consists of both a dedicated physical library and a virtual library. Full and Part-time students have ample access to borrowing resources with a renewals and ordering facility. Galway Business School

has invested in both a dedicated physical library in addition to a virtual library (EBSCO). These facilities are seen as being a resource for both Learners and staff and an essential part of the teaching and learning environment. Learners have ample access to borrowing resources with a renewals and ordering facility. It is a priority for Galway Business School to increase Learners' familiarity and engagement with the online database. All Learners receive intensive library induction at the commencement of their course in addition to on-going training sessions at modular level.

The library has an on-going stock replenishment system in place, with emphasis placed on current titles. Lecturers on all modules are encouraged to recommend core text books as well as indicative supplementary reading to Learners; these resources are provided for in the library. Booklists are updated at the start of each academic year. Lecturers are kept abreast of current titles and updated texts through regular engagement with publishers and are involved in editorial review of new titles.

Galway Business School library facilities have been and will be expanded commensurate with the ambitions of the School. Our recent upgrade of our EBSCO online library database licence has significantly developed and expanded our online facilities, allowing students to access the industry's most popular business research database, Business Source Premier.

Our physical library content will be enlarged proportionate to the learner numbers in the School. Up-stocking the library continues to be done before the start of each academic year, following consultation with both academic staff and publishing companies, and based on experience of what material and what quantity is needed. Galway Business School keeps a modest stock of books and journals in hard copy in the library.

There is regular monitoring of the library facilities and its distinction will lie in its relevance and agility to adapt quickly and in response to demand. The following information regarding library resources expenditure has previously been provided to the QQI panel that validated the Level 7 Bachelor of Business. Our database has been since upgraded to include resources for the proposed Level 8 programme.

There are copying and printing facilities in the library and dedicated computer desks. There are 48 study spaces/seats and desks in the library. Additional rooms are available for group study and these can be booked through the Academic Coordinator or Director of Studies.

6.5.7 Information Technology Resources

Galway Business School has installed the open source Virtual learning Environment (VLE), Moodle, as the platform to support student learning and self-study. All lecturers use Moodle in the delivery of their programmes. Moodle enables interactive learning through access to programme notes, past exam papers, journal articles and other key readings, sample assessments and various online exams and assignments. Students use Moodle for class preparation and revision. Staff training and student induction sessions regarding optimal use of this resource, including the setting up of interactive forums and Wikis, are scheduled at the start of the academic year.

All learners are enrolled on the Virtual learning Environment – Moodle. All lecturers use Moodle in the delivery of their programmes. Moodle enables learning by providing information in the form of links to appropriate journals, videos and websites whilst also acting as an assessment tool through quizzes, Multiple Choice Questions, Case Study Analyses, Applied Virtual Business Games / Simulations, Discussion Forums, and Quantitative Solutions. Lecture notes and presentations are uploaded weekly by the respective lecturer to enable Learners to have material for class preparation and revision. This resource gives support to the learner off site and within the school and is particularly important for part time learners.

The recently upgraded version of Moodle 2.7 brings a more robust online platform for students with such improvements as new interactive features, and advancements in learning activities and resources for students.

The new Moodle provides a clear view of all learning activities and resources for each program, including assessment information. In addition, the new Moodle platform includes subscription tools to receive information about your study, such as RSS feeds of forum

discussions, calendar feeds and forum discussions or marked assignments. Our VLE link is <http://elearning.galwaybusinessschool.ie/>

There have been significant training and Learner induction sessions regarding optimal use of this resource including the setting up of interactive forums. There have been investments in IT hardware and software for Learner use with the increased use of virtual resources during class and as on-going study resource for Learners. Galway Business School has identified a Moodle champion within the staff (Academic Coordinator). This person assists both learners and staff in their use of this VLE resource contributing to increased learning.

6.5.8 Counselling Service

Lecturers are encouraged to alert the Programme Leader or the Registrar if they feel a student may require some outside assistance. Students can be referred to a subsidised off-site counselling service provided by a fully accredited and experienced counselling professional. The Programme Leader or Registrar will maintain contact with the student throughout the counselling process. Such contact is recorded and maintained in hard-copy form in the student file.

Confidentiality of the individual student's counselling process will be of highest priority in these cases, and any personal identifying information related to the counselling process remains undisclosed.

6.5.9 Careers Support Service

With its history of close integration with industry, Galway Business School is committed to preparing its students with the skills necessary to excel in the workplace or to progress to further education. Within the school, there are a number of careers support mechanisms:

- One of the roles of the Registrar is to act as the Careers Officer as the first point of contact for students.
- The school hires a professional Career Guidance professional throughout the year to provide focused skills-based workshops on CV preparation, communications and interpersonal skills, and interview techniques.
- The General Manager liaises with a number of recruitment agencies in terms of

disseminating resumes and student profiles to prospective employers.

- Academic staff with expertise in given industries or in particular academic areas are available to meet students individually to discuss their future plans and to advise them on possible avenues to further education.

The Careers Support Service is monitored through student and graduate feedback. In particular, the Registrar surveys graduates and, where possible, employers of graduates to monitor and review how graduates perceive the school and how employers perceive graduates of the School. Results of these surveys will help evaluate this service and form part of the ongoing monitoring process.

6.5.10 General Student Services

Other student services provided by the school include:

Support for Social and Sports programmes: The School provides information on all types of sporting activities around the city, including information with regard to student discounts. A number of social programmes and events are organised throughout each semester normally involving sporting and cultural events. There are also opportunities for students to volunteer for community and arts projects in the city.

Medical Insurance provision: Galway Business School arranges yearly student medical insurance with an accredited insurance company for a reduced fee. This insurance is particularly targeted towards international students who may not have insurance arrangements in place before programme commencement. This insurance covers GP visits, and any hospital visit up to the value of €2,000,000.

Health Service: If the need arises, Galway Business School can refer any of its students to a Medical Clinic in Galway city, with which the school has an agreement in place.

International student registration support: New international non-EU students require help

and guidance with regard to opening a bank account, obtaining a PPS number and to ensure that all necessary paperwork and identification is obtained in order to register with the Garda National Immigration Bureau. The Reception will provide students with the necessary information and supporting documentation.

Student safety and security: Galway Business School ensures that its premises and facilities are fully compliant with relevant health and safety legislation. Any other information which increases safety awareness is communicated to all students at induction and as necessary during the academic year.

Accommodation service: The school manages a network of Irish host families and school accommodation and arranges brief stays, particularly for cultural orientation purposes, for the first few weeks after the student arrives. The school also offers advice on finding and sharing independent accommodation in Galway.

Data Administration Services: The “*Class*” software program handles all enquiries, bookings for students and their educational agents, invoicing of students for courses and records collection of fees. It also records allocation of physical and personnel resources on a daily / semester basis. Galway Business School seeks to maintain almost all student and school records on *Class*. Records that require additional security are recorded elsewhere. These include staff contracts and performance reviews and student examination and assignment results. Access to student examination results is limited to the Registrar and management of Galway Business School.

Administration Services

On an institutional level, a centralised administration function provides support in such areas as accounting, fees administration, marketing and admissions, student services, and academic records administration to the Governing Body, Academic Council and its sub-committees. The institutional administrative support is managed by the General Manager and is monitored by the Governing Body.

The Admissions Office is responsible for student recruitment, enrolment, interviews, and offers, in accordance with admissions policy as determined by the Academic Council. The Admissions Office liaises with the Marketing Department on marketing and promotion of the school, and on planned recruitment strategies.

A number of staff members provide administrative support for all departments. The Academic Coordinator has specific responsibility for Galway Business School students within the school. This includes acting as a daily liaison with students and academic staff and providing administrative support for the Registrar. It also includes registering students for courses, for examinations and posting timetables, notices and information on Moodle or/and on notice boards. Part of the role includes the management of the Virtual Learning Environment within the organisation.

Feedback

Feedback on Administration services is received from student, lecturers and graduate surveys. Daily feedback in all its forms is recorded and discussed at the relevant committee and faculty meetings. As part of the Annual Resources Report, the General Manager reports issues relating to all feedback to the Quality Assurance Committee.

Complaints

Student feedback and complaints are initially dealt with informally. Complaints about the following, can usually be dealt with at Reception:

- Library opening hours
- Students wishing to borrow books outside of library opening hours
- Printing Card issues
- Photocopier jamming, breaking etc.

Students, who wish to make a formal complaint, including an academic complaint, must complete the Student Complaints Form and submit it at Reception for the attention of the General Manager or the Registrar. The General Manager or Registrar will then contact the student to arrange a meeting. Students are encouraged to have somebody accompany them to

such meetings. Issues related to assessment including requests for Rechecks, Reviews and Appeals are dealt with in Section 5. Complaints are valuable for the continuous improvement process and complaints information is summarised to the QA committee by the General Manager.

6.6 Quality Assurance in Teaching and Learning

The General Manager reports to the Quality Assurance Committee to ensure that the views of students, staff and graduates are fully integrated into the review of resources. The Quality Assurance Committee makes recommendations where appropriate to the Academic Council. Particular emphasis is given to any factors that would materially affect programme delivery and any deviations from the school's goals and objectives.

Although the Quality Assurance Committee will typically make recommendations for remedial action and resource improvements, the Academic Council decides whether to make requests for additional, remedial or new resources. If the Academic Council recommends expenditure or commits to any decision with resource implications, an implementation plan is agreed with the General Manager along with a proposed schedule for completion. The implementation is monitored by the Quality Assurance Committee.

If recommendations are not approved by Academic Council, the reasons for refusal are outlined to the Quality Assurance Committee. Together with the General Manager, the Quality Assurance Committee may decide to re-submit the recommendations with additional information to give extra clarity to the proposals. Where disagreements arise among any of the Boards regarding the school's facilities and resources, a specific report is submitted by the Academic Council to the Governing Body summarising recommendations and disagreements to ensure that recommendations on any changes to the school's facilities and resources and / or implementation plans are in line with overall strategic planning, quality control, development and improving institutional quality.

6.6.1 Evaluating Academic and Student Support Services

The school understands the importance of regularly reviewing the effectiveness of all academic and support services related to its programmes of higher education and training. The first priority in providing these services is to focus on the student experience within the school. The main support services are reviewed annually with regard to adequacy, functionality and capacity.

7. Assessment Policy

Policy Title	Assessment Policy
Date Approved	April 2016
Effective From	September 2016
Review Procedure & Responsibility	As requested by the Academic Board All Staff All Students, External Moderators where applicable
Overview	This section informs learners, academic and support staff, and external examiners of their responsibilities associated with assessment including: assessment standards, submission of assignments, examinations, marking and moderation, external examiners, examination boards, academic appeals and complaints.
Supporting Documentation	• Assessment and Standards Revised (QQI 2013) • Core Validation Policy and Criteria Revised (QQI 2013) • Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examining Revised (QQI 2015) • National Framework of Qualifications documents • QQI HET General Programme Validation Manual Revised 2013 • University of Wales' Validation Unit Quality Handbook: Policies and Procedures 2015/16 • Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers Revised (QQI 2013) • Subject benchmark statement: General business and management (QAA 2015) • Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA 2015)

	University of Wales' Validation Unit Quality Handbook: Policies and Procedures 2015/16
Amendment History	- Amendment to Chapter 7: - Order, Structure and Layout & Supporting Documentation - Insertion of: - Section 7.2, 7.3, 7.4

7.1 Rationale

The guidelines and procedures in this document refer to the programmes with curricula devised internally by Galway Business School (QQI, University of Wales). Students partaking in programmes that have external validating bodies will be supplied with appropriate assessment guidelines (The Institute of Commercial Management). Such assessment Policies, Procedures and Regulations are designed to meet the regulations of assessment and examination of students on all programmes delivered by Galway Business School.

7.2 Assessment Policy

Assessment can be defined as any process that appraises an individual's knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills. Galway Business School is committed to ensuring that the assessment policy is,

- Unbiased and consistent with the standards formed by QQI and other relevant approved accreditation bodies.
- Compliant with the accreditation body's standards as related to the National Frameworks of Qualifications award type descriptors.
- Demonstrating that appropriate standards are being maintained in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance.
- Generating valuable student learning activity.
- Providing a fair and transparent guideline for students to understand the assessment procedures.
- Relevant in guiding the student towards reaching and meeting the intended learning

outcomes as detailed in the *National Framework of Qualifications Grid of Level Indicators August 2005* and *Assessment and Standards (QQI 2013)*.

- Contributing to the development of the learner by providing constructive and applicable feedback and adapting to evolving requirements.
- Providing an appropriate balance of formative and summative assessment.

7.3 Assessment Purpose

Galway Business School has implemented the following methods to ensure that the student,

- Understands the means by which they will be graded and what constitutes a pass or fail as well as clear criteria for the achievement of each grade. The means of grading are linked to the intended learning outcomes as presented to the learner.
- Knows the minimum requirements for academic progression and award qualification and is provided with timely, relevant, and appropriate feedback which enables performance improvement.
- Has the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching methods.
- Similarly when creating assessment methods, best practice and developments in assessment are also included in topics for staff development ensuring that lecturers:
 - Assign appropriate assessment in line with learning outcomes
 - Provide criteria for the assessment, including a description of the weighting for the assignment and relevant due dates
 - Encourage creativity and innovation in fulfilling the assignment

The broad purpose of the assessment purpose in Galway Business School is to consider issues of equality and diversity when developing assessment instruments. The language used in any assessment tool should be appropriate for the level and standard of the learners. When developing assessment tools, the following characteristics should be considered:

- Validity
- Reliability
- Transparency

It is also the purpose of the examiners in assessing the programme learning outcomes, to focus on the range of assessable qualities developed by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI): Knowledge, Know-How and Skill and Competence.

7.3.1 Internal Examiners Role

An Internal Examiner is a member of the GBS academic staff responsible for assessing students. The role of the Internal Examiner in consultation with the Examinations Officer is ensuring:

- Assessment instruments and marking criteria are consistent with the approved module descriptor
- Assessment instruments considering transparency, validity, and reliability
- The timing and weighting of assessments is in accordance with the approved programme schedule and the assessment schedule, as stipulated to students as per the approved module descriptor
- Implementation of learner feedback on their assessment performance
- Draft examination papers, model answers and a marking scheme are submitted to the Examinations Officer in line with requirements
- The considerations of all suggestions proposed by the external examiner(s)
- The examinations material for both first sitting and repeat papers should be submitted to the Examinations Officer several weeks prior to the first sitting examinations so that the Registrar can forward them to the Extern for approval in the case of the UOW programmes. The UOW appointed Moderator approves assessment materials prior to issue to the Extern examiner
- Following a standardised format for all assessment materials, materials are submitted to the External Examiner. Each piece of assessment must specify the title of the programme(s), the title of the subject/module, the names of the internal examiner(s), time allowed (for examinations), total number of pages, total number of questions, mandatory questions (if any) and the number of questions to answer, and any special conditions. Where additional material has been appended, or otherwise provided, this should be listed on the front cover
- Consulting the Examinations Board with any special examination

requirements or deviations from normal practice required for assessments. For example, specific calculators may be required

- All examination papers, soft files, model answers, and marking schemes are password protected and securely retained and securely stored
- Learners are informed at the beginning of the term of the structure of the assessment. Any changes to that structure should be made known to student at least four weeks prior to the examination
- They are present at the examinations centre for the first 15 minutes of the examination and available throughout the examination
- Organisation of assessment correction
- A consistent approach when correcting, keeping in line with the model answers and the marking scheme
- Every examination script is marked anonymously
- Marks and written feedback are transferred to the relevant feedback sheet and annotations should be made on the examination script
- Total module marks including any continuous assessment and exam results are collated
- The examination scripts, individual feedback sheets and overall Module Results Sheets are returned to the Examinations Officer to ensure that no errors have occurred from marking assessments and examination scripts, and are recorded in the final mark on the marks sheet
- The continuous assessment marks of students not present for final examinations must also be recorded on the marks sheet. The marks sheet is the means of recording students' work for future years. A final grade of absent should be recorded for students absent from the final exam
- Organising a time for consultation with students to handle queries. Together with the role of rechecks, reviews and appeals
- Availability to meet extern examiners prior to the Board of Examiners meeting to discuss examination issues
- Attendance at the internal exam board meeting to ensure that the marks on the marks sheets are correctly recorded on the Examination Broadsheet

- Attendance at the Board of Examiners meeting and any other relevant meetings, including Joint Board of Studies for University of Wales programmes, as required

7.3.2 External Examiners Role, Nomination and Appointment

External examiners act as independent and impartial advisors providing Galway Business School with informed comment on the standards set and student achievement in relation to the *QQI Effective Practice Guideline for External Examining, HETAC, March 2010*. External examining is therefore an integral and very important part of the School's quality assurance system. The School recognises that the main purposes of external examining are:

- To verify that the minimum learning outcomes as assigned to a programme / module to which the external examiner has been appointed have been met by the learners.
- To verify the actual attainment of learners using assessment material provided by the School.
- To ensure that the School's assessment processes are valid, reliable, consistent and fair and are fairly operated and are in line with the School regulations.
- To ensure that the School's assessments conform to the assessment policies of QQI and advise staff on necessary or desirable improvements in assessment processes and strategy.
- To pay particular attention to award stage assessment to ensure that the programme outcomes overall have been met and that the distribution of grades of awards is appropriate.
- Where *minor* changes have been made to the programme following validation to ensure that the overall programme outcomes are not affected significantly.
- Where necessary and appropriate to adjudicate where students request a review of decisions of internal examiners or examination boards.
- To report on these issues to the School and to advise the School on whether:
 - Particular students' performances have been judged properly against the awards standards of the National Framework of Qualifications.
 - The assessment process has measured Learning Outcomes appropriately.

- The range of assessment and their type are suitable tools for the measurement of the learning outcomes.
- In the opinion of the examiner the programme outcomes have been achieved by award stage learners; and on request.
- To advise the School on overall design and structure of existing programmes.
- To attend the school at the beginning of each academic year. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss with the programme leader and academic team the assessment strategy for the year and to view where possible suggested continuous assessment tasks.
- To attend the School at the time of final determination of results and/or at such other times as may be determined by the School in consultation with the External Examiner for the purpose of assessing the standard of the programme and / or the standard of student performance.
- To ensure that quality is assured, External Examiners shall inspect all draft examination papers and propose modifications and amendments prior to final printing.
- To inspect any or all programme work, project work and assignments which form part of the continuous assessment material for any student and which affects the final module mark.
- Together with the Programme Leader responsible for ensuring that such material is collated in good time.
- Where it is included in the Approved Programme Schedule and an External Examiner wishes to carry out a viva-voce on candidates, (s)he shall notify the School in good time to permit the candidates to be notified. Such notice should be a minimum of two weeks.
- Requested to visit the School at any time during the academic year where it is necessary to oversee some important assessment event or at such other times as may be determined by the School.
- Requested to attend a meeting in the School or other location for the purposes of:
 - Induction of new appointees as External Examiners
 - Discussion of issues in relation to External Examiners in the context of

Quality Assurance

- Other general matters relating to examinations including requests for reviews of assessments by students as they arise
- On termination of their period of appointment the examiner will be required to give a final report detailing their overall impressions of the programmes, on the issues they feel are important and on the response of the School to issues raised during the course of their appointment.
- Requested to declare any circumstances, which may constitute a conflict of interest with the School or with an Examinee.
- Requested where a conflict of interest is identified, the External Examiner may not be involved in any consideration of that particular Examinee.

It shall be the School's task to respond to any observations made by the External Examiners in an appropriate manner. The school recognises that the External examining process is one part of the overall quality assurance system. It acts in concert with the internal quality systems and is integrated with them. It ensures that the standards are maintained and by reference to submissions and validation documents that the assessment strategy is been implemented. On request it acts as a quality driver, advising the school on developments in the disciplinary field or in assessment. Finally, by the stature of the appointees it enhances the reputation of the school and guarantees the quality of its graduates.

7.3.3 Nomination of External Examiners

Galway Business School implements the following process when nominating an external examiner:

- 1 The Academic Council of Galway Business School approves the terms of office and appointment of persons to act as External Examiners to its programmes.
- 2 The Academic Council shall request the Registrar to seek nominations for persons to act as External Examiners. The Council may also nominate persons to act as External Examiners.
- 3 The Registrar shall consult with QQI and programme leaders as to suitable persons

for nomination as External Examiners. The nomination of external examiners shall be made before May 1st of the year of appointment.

- 4 Persons nominated as external examiners shall be acknowledged experts in the community of practice within the programmes broad area of discipline. They shall be qualified and experienced senior practitioners within higher education with knowledge of best practice in assessment processes and the standards of the NFQ. Alternatively, they can be industrial, commercial or management professionals with acknowledged experience within their profession. Ideally the latter would also have some higher education practice experience or an involvement with their professional organizations.

7.3.4 Appointment of External Examiners

External Examiners for QQI programmes are appointed by GBS under Section 23 of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012. It is a role of the Academic Council to appoint external examiners. The Academic Council shall consider nominations for appointment as External Examiners as motions in the name of the Registrar, or those nominated by the Council itself, if appropriate. The Academic Council shall satisfy itself that persons nominated for appointment will normally satisfy the criteria for appointment as detailed in Criteria for Nomination and restriction on eligibility set out below. In exceptional circumstances, where it is proposed to nominate a person who does not satisfy these formal criteria for appointment, this shall be clearly noted on the External Examiner nomination form and reasons given for the nomination.

The Academic Council shall approve the appointment of such and as many persons as it deems necessary to act as External Examiners of the School for such periods as it decides, in accordance with Section 4 of these procedures. Approval of appointments of External Examiners will normally be completed by end of May of the year proceeding their term of office.

Following approval of nominations by the Academic Council of the School and the Registrar, the General Manager shall issue a letter of appointment to the External Examiner, along with a contract to be signed by the External Examiner which shall include, inter alia:

- External Examiners: Duties and responsibilities
- Term of office
- Reporting relationships and requirements, including standard report form and the terminal report
- Fees payable by the School
- Conditions relating to other appointments
- Termination of contract procedures
- Conflict of Interest declaration.

The External Examiner shall be appointed from the date of signing of the Contract by the External Examiner and the Registrar/General Manager. The term of office shall normally be for a period of four years as in exceptional circumstances, the appointment may be extended by one further year. The circumstances shall be reported to the Academic Council which shall decide on the extension. The School will ensure that team of external examiners are not appointed for the same period. This will mean that there will be no point, except initially, where a completely new set of examiners will be required.

The Registrar shall maintain a register of External Examiners appointments and periods of tenure. The register shall be available to learners and the names of external examiners will be included on all formal final examinations together with the internal examiners.

Following appointment, the Registrar shall ensure that the External Examiner receives adequate additional documentation to enable him/her to understand the examination systems operated by the School. Such documentation might include:

- Quality assurance policies and procedures of the School
- Relevant documentation relating to the NFQ, Assessment policy of QQI and Effective Practice Guidelines for External Examiners.
- Programme submissions with validation reports, module descriptors and programme schedules.
- Contact details for relevant programme leaders.
- Assessment and examination procedures.
- Examination rules and regulations.
- Policies in relation to equal opportunities.

In addition the Programme Leader shall ensure that the External Examiner is provided with adequate documentation to enable her/him to carry out the functions of External Examiner, including:

- Staff lists indicating module / programme allocations
- Draft examination papers and related material
- Previous examination papers as appropriate.
- Previous external examiners reports
- Significant continuous assessment items

On appointment the School will invite the External Examiners to visit the School to become familiar with its operations; to discuss his/her responsibilities as External Examiners and to determine the requirements of the External Examiner. They will be briefed on the duties of external examiners, on the requirements of the School and of QQI and also on the detail of the programmes. Where necessary and feasible they will be supported in acquainting themselves with the outcomes based approach and with standards of the NFQ. They would also meet with staff on the relevant programmes to discuss assessment strategy for the coming year. This in particular would include briefing on continuous assessment tasks and schedule.

Where an external examiner has ceased to carry out their duties or where they are been out in a desultory or inefficient way or where they do not provide adequate and timely

reports they may be removed by decision of the Academic Council. This decision can only be made following a report from the Registrar to the Council and following adequate notice to the external examiner involved.

7.3.5 Number of External Examiners

Galway Business School ensures:

- Sufficient External Examiners are appointed so that it can be satisfied that the standard of its programmes and student performance can be adequately moderated and that the assessment, examination and determination of award processes are being fairly conducted and that there is a sufficient range of expertise to cover the academic topics involved.
- External Examiners are appointed to particular programmes, however in some cases they may be appointed to examine particular specialist modules e.g. Finance.
- Where External Examiners are appointed on a programme basis, there shall be at least two External Examiners appointed for each programme. As far as possible these externals with bring a different set of experiences and qualifications to bear on the programmes and complement each other.

Please see Appendix 4 – External Examiners Report Template

7.3.6 Board of Examiners (University of Wales) Role

The Board of Examiners is a quality assurance mechanism implemented by Galway Business School in accordance with the UOW assessment policy. Below sets out the roles of the Board of Examiners:

- Meetings of Board of Examiners are held for the purpose of deciding individual student results at such times as the School may determine. The meeting to determine examination results is termed the Examination Board meeting. The Minutes of such meeting shall be the Broadsheet of Examination results.
- The External Examiner should normally attend the School on the day prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners, or at such other times as may be agreed by

the School and the External Examiner, for the purpose of:

- Reviewing the overall performance of candidates, particularly borderline cases
 - Reviewing the proposed results for the programme as a whole
 - Reviewing module performance with Internal Examiners
 - Reviewing marked scripts, project work or continuous assessment material, as required or requested.
 - Carrying out viva-voce examinations, if required.
-
- The External Examiner shall indicate on the Module marks sheet any individual scripts, project work, or continuous assessment material reviewed by her/him as part of the assessment process, along with any proposed adjustment to the marks/grades as proposed by the Internal Examiner. Efforts should be made to achieve consensus with the Intern Examiner in relation to such proposed amendments.
 - Where the External Examiner proposes adjustments to a group of students as a whole, (s)he shall consult with the Internal Examiner and Registrar in advance of the meeting of the Board of Examiners. Efforts should be made to achieve consensus in relation to such proposed amendments.
 - The External Examiner shall attend the meeting of the Board of Examiners as a full member.
 - The External Examiner may comment on such matters relating to individual student performance, module performance, or programme performance, as (s)he deems necessary. The Board of Examiners shall give due consideration to such comments.
 - The External Examiner may request to have her/his dissenting opinion on any matter or other comments recorded on the Broadsheet of Results.
 - The External Examiner shall sign the Broadsheet of Results. Such signature indicates that the External Examiner participated in the Board of Examiners and approves of the decisions of the Board. Where the Examiner wishes to dissent from a decision of the board he/she should indicate this and a report should be made immediately to the Academic Council.

- In the case of the External Examiners dissenting from the decisions of the internal examiners the examination board shall attempt to reconcile the two groups. Normally the opinions of the External Examiners shall take precedence over the internal examiners. If agreement cannot be reached the matter should be referred to the Academic Council. The Academic Council should again consider the matter again giving precedence to the External Examiners. Where it feels that a grave injustice would be done by agreeing with the external examiners it should refer the matter to additional external examiners appointed for this purpose.

7.3.7 Reporting Arrangements

- The External Examiner shall provide a report to the Registrar of the School by 1st October of each year, or at such other times as may be specified by the School following the assessment/examinations on a standard report form provided by the School. This report will be called the External Examiner's Report.
- The External Examiner may, in addition, submit a special written report to the Registrar on such other matters as (s)he deems appropriate, and may request that such matters be treated on a confidential basis.
- The Registrar shall provide a copy of the pro forma External Examiner's Report to the Director.
- The Registrar will circulate the external examiners report to the programme leaders and the relevant academic staff.
- The Registrar shall provide a copy of the External Examiner's report to the Academic Council.
- The Academic Council shall consider the External Examiners reports at an early stage in the first term and shall ask the Programme Boards to report on issue raised by the reports.
- Where issues have been raised the Registrar shall report on progress to the external examiners.

7.3.8 Nomination of the Board of Examiners

The overarching criterion for nomination of an External Examiner is that they can provide an independent, knowledgeable, informed viewpoint in regard of the ongoing assessment of students on a programme of study.

In order that no perception of impropriety or conflict of interest may arise, the External Examiner must be financially and socially independent of Galway Business School and shall conform to the following conditions:

- External examiners may be drawn from academic life and, where appropriate, from business, industry and professional practice. External Examiners should be professionally qualified where this is the normal practice for the industry.
- External examiners drawn from business, industry or professional practice should be in current practice and of senior standing in their fields.
- All External examiners should normally be suitably qualified with a minimum of a Master's degree or an advanced professional qualification. They should have both current and relevant experience in the areas of industry, education or research or profession practice.
- Academics may be nominated from Higher Education Institutions at home and abroad. In the case of NQAI 8 & 9 awards, at least one of the panel of External Examiners shall normally be drawn from an academic institution external to the Irish Republic. The School will seek to draw nominations from a variety of institutions, and within a single discipline will seek to avoid multiple nominations from the same institution.
- Normally, an External Examiner drawn from academic life should hold an academic qualification, in the appropriate discipline, to a higher level than that of the programme(s) to which he/she has been nominated. Such persons associated with NQAI Level 8 and Level 9 programmes in their own institutions may be nominated as external examiners to Level 8 and Level 9 programmes.
- Galway Business School should take due cognisance for the desirability of gender balance when nominating panels of External Examiners.

- It is viewed as inappropriate for individuals to canvass Galway Business School on their own behalf for the purpose of seeking a nomination as an External Examiner.
- In order to ensure the independence of the role of external examiner, restrictions must be placed on the selection of External Examiners. The following persons will be ineligible for appointment:
 - Persons who are currently employed or contracted or hold office at Galway Business School in any capacity, shall be ineligible for appointment as External Examiner.
 - Persons who might be likely to financially gain as a result of decisions as an External Examiner are ineligible for appointment.
 - Members of the Governing Body of the School.
 - Spouses, partners and children of persons in these categories are likewise ineligible.
 - All such persons shall be ineligible for appointment as External Examiner until a period of five years has elapsed after terminating the formal relationship with the School.
 - In the event of a spouse, partner or child accepting employment at or enrolling on relevant programs in the School or its subsidiaries, the External Examiner must resign their position.

7.3.9 QQI Programme Assessment and Standards Policy (Further Education – FE)

For Further Education (FE) programmes administered by QQI, following the External Authenticator's visit and approval, a Results Approval Panel is established by the provider to ensure assessment decisions and results are reviewed, judged and processed in a fair, consistent and transparent manner. The membership of the Results Approval Panel comprises the Examination Board with the relevant assessors. The Internal Verifier and External Authenticator reports are considered by the panel.

The role of the Results Approval Panel is to:

- Meet as required to review and approve assessment results
- Review reports of the internal verification and external authentication process
- Agree to the submission of final results to QQI to request certification
- Identify any issues arising in relation to the results and make recommendations for corrective action.

Once results are approved and signed off by the results approval panel they are made available to learners by the Registrar and forwarded to QQI through their online FBS system.

7.4 Assessment Strategy

Learners should understand the motivation behind the chosen assessment tool. Feedback is imperative to the learning process. Assessment tools should be constructed with consideration to learner feedback. Feedback should be clear: how a grade was obtained ought to be obvious; as should what the learner needs to do in order to improve their performance. All feedback should be given to students in a timely manner, enabling student improvement to occur within the module.

Assessment for the subject/module should be discussed at the beginning of the term. The policy and procedures for assessment and reassessment must be made explicit and clear to learners. Students should be made aware of what the assessment and reassessment will be, how it will be marked, when it will be assigned in detail, the due date, and the penalty associated with late submission. Assessment due dates should not overlap any more than necessary, and the design and scheduling of assessment tasks are coordinated by the Programme Board. Assignments must also be approved at Programme Board level and by the Examinations Board before being given to students. Assignments must be approved by the relevant External Examiner. Students are provided with an Assessment Schedule at the start of term.

7.4.1 Assessment Techniques

Acceptable assessment techniques come in a variety of forms:

- **Diagnostic assessment** is used to show a learner's preparedness for a module or programme. This identifies - for both learner and lecturer - any strengths or weaknesses relating to knowledge, skills, competences or other issues at the start of the programme. Particular strengths may lead to a formal consideration of accreditation of prior learning.
- **Formative assessment** has a developmental purpose and is designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance, and on how it can be improved and/or maintained.
- **Summative assessment** is used to indicate the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme.

An assessment process for a particular module can, and often does, involve more than one of these assessment techniques. Within a programme, use of a range of assessment types enables students to demonstrate their capabilities and achievements in a multifaceted manner with respect to learning outcomes. Diversity of assessment practice is to be expected and welcomed in order to test a wide range of outcomes. Our educational philosophy encourages the use of continuous assessment within a module/subject. Therefore assessments may be consecutively formative and summative.

7.4.2 Continuous Assessment & Criteria

The majority of programmes offered in Galway Business School feature some element of continuous assessment (CA). One or several of the following forms of assessment instruments are used to measure student performance and gain an insight into their knowledge, skills and competences:

- Written Essays
- Examination papers (including open book)
- Marketing Research (Primary and Secondary Research)
- Individual and Group Projects

- Case Study Analysis, including Virtual Games
- Direct observation
- Presentations
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Structured practical assessments
- Online exercises, including MCQs, discussion forums, wikis and blogs
- Self-assessment (which may be conducted on-line)
- Thesis/Dissertation Project

Internal examiners are required to ensure that they are fully aware of the weighting attached to the continuous assessment elements in each of the modules or subject delivered. As there are many forms of continuous assessment it is critical that the methods chosen remain consistent with the requirements of the approved module descriptors. Internal Examiners are also required to align to the intended learning outcomes of the assignment to the programme level and stage.

Assessment Criteria

Assessment is a compelling force for motivating students' efforts and improving overall programme standards. Conversely, it may lower student effort and standards if executed incorrectly. Therefore assessment criteria should cover the learning outcomes in a way that promotes analysis, synthesis, and evaluation at the appropriate level.

The purpose of assessment criteria is to establish clear and unambiguous standards of achievement, and to provide a method of measuring the outcomes of student learning. By following the guidelines set out in the National Qualifications Framework, Galway Business School aims to:

- Promote transparency in the assessment process.
- Promote consistency and fairness in marking.
- Promote understanding of the way in which the assessment process works between staff and students, and between markers.

- Help promote discussion about standards.
- Help provide feedback to students.
- Demonstrate to the outside world the standards that students have achieved.

The more explicit the learning outcome, the easier it is to create a valid assessment. When developing an assessment instrument, answers should be written at the same time highlighting a range of possible responses.

*7.4.3 Implementation of the Assessment Process **Internally Set Assessment***

For all internally set assessments a template is provided by the Programme Board to the lecturers to ensure consistency across individual programmes. Each student must be given clear and unambiguous written assessment specifications.

- Every Assignment / Examination should have assessment criteria stating:
 - Module name, code and name of assessor(s).
 - The nature of the coursework in detail.
 - Date of issue and date assessment is due.
 - Exactly what the examiner/ assessor is looking for.
 - Exactly how many marks should be awarded for the appropriate text/section.
 - Weighting of the assessment.
 - Specific deliverable(s) I.E. Word count, date of issue, date of submission should be included.
 - Penalties for late submission / non-submission
 - The GBS plagiarism policy.
 - Reassessment procedures.
- The marking scheme/assessment criteria is lodged with the Examinations Officer at the same time as the assignment / examination paper which are reviewed by the Programme Board.
- For QQI assessment, the assessment material is prepared by the lecturer under direction from the Programme Board. Assessment briefs are internally verified.

- For University of Wales Validated programmes, assessment must be sent for approval by the Examinations Officer to the University of Wales Moderator.
- All QQI and University of Wales assessments must be sent to the External Examiner for final approval.

Assessments are given to students with submission dates attached as per *Appendix 5A Sample QQI Assessment / Appendix 5B (i) & (ii) A Sample BA in Business Management Assessment*. Exams are held in the school and supervised by independent trained invigilators. Exam papers are corrected by the lecturer and internally verified.

Externally Set Assessment

Galway Business School administers externally set exams and assessments for the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) programmes. Exams take place according to the timetable issued by the ICM. Scripts are then sent by registered post to ICM immediately afterwards. The ICM takes approximately three months to issue results to students. Students are normally informed of results by Galway Business School by post.

ICM examinations take place in March, May, June, September and December. Students must complete the following forms to register with ICM:

- Student Registration Form – this is submitted annually
- The relevant Examination Entry Form – this is submitted for each exam sitting

The course coordinator ensures students are registered for the appropriate exams and that correct student registration fee bank drafts are submitted with registration documentation.

Students must register for their exams prior to the dates advised by ICM. If a student fails to register by the advised date, a student must register for the next sitting. Where students have failed or did not sit an exam they must ensure they register for this exam in another exam series.

Students undertaking an exam must pass to obtain credit for the module. The exam results and certificates are issued by ICM and not by Galway Business School.

7.4.3.1 Submission of Assignments

This procedure relates to QQI and the University of Wales only. It will also relate to any additional QQI programmes offered in the future, including the proposed Level 8.

Students should be informed of:

- The date of issue of each assessment requirement.
- The date and time by which each assessment should be submitted.
- The mechanism for submission of assessment.
- The date by which marked assessment is to be returned.

In some instances deadline extensions may be inevitable as assessment can sometimes only be completed after specific material has been covered in class. Some flexibility is required for deadlines and students should not be penalised for any adjustments to the assumed schedule.

Students submit the form entitled 'Galway Business School Assignment Submission Sheet' with their assignment. Students must submit their assignments in soft copy to assignments@galwaybusinessschool.ie and in hard copy to Reception or to their lecturer as per the policy outlined in the Student Handbook. This applies also to late submissions.

Please see Appendix 6 - Galway Business School Assignment Submission Sheet.

Soft copies of assignments will only be accepted with the explicit approval of the Registrar and in exceptional circumstances. Students are strongly advised to keep both soft and hard copies of all assessments.

Student Responsibilities

- Students must ensure they have paid all examination and programme fees in advance of the examination session. The policy is detailed in the Student Handbook.
- Students must be familiar with all information relevant to assessments and examinations.

- Students must be aware of the date, time and location of examinations.
- Students must be present in the examination hall 15 minutes prior to examination commencement.
- Students must obey examination and assessment regulations.
- Students must abide by assessment deadlines.
- Students must make requests for extensions as soon as they are aware they may need an extension and must submit supporting documentation, i.e. medical certificates, and/or a description of the extenuating circumstances which led to the request for the extension.

Late Submission

Assessment will be accepted if it is received after the specified submission date ONLY if there is a valid and approved reason for late submission.

Whenever possible, students should inform the lecturer and/or Registrar before the submission deadline, of a likely late assessment submission and of the reason for late submission by completing and handing in a *Mitigating Circumstances & Special Cases Form Appendix 7*. Although not exhaustive, valid reasons for late submission are:

- Illness or bereavement.
- Unavailability of key resources required for the completion of the work (this situation should be reported as soon as possible, and ideally before submission dates).
- Commitments of students which could not reasonably be predicted.

In the second case above, a serious difficulty may require an extension to the submission deadline applicable to all students. If this is the case, students should be informed of the new deadline in writing as soon as possible. Academic staff may exercise discretion with respect to other extenuating circumstances which may arise. All assessments received within agreed deadlines will be assessed in the normal way.

All information relating to late submission of assessment as detailed above should be placed

in the student's file. For example: medical certificates; written statements citing reasons for late submission; new negotiated deadlines, etc.

Penalties for Late Submission

Late submission is where an assessment is submitted after the specified due date and a deadline extension form has not been submitted. Assessments received late, after the specified submission deadline, will be deducted by 5% for every week delayed up to six weeks.

7.4.4 General Reassessment Policy

Students may be reassessed in any module where a fail or compensation pass grade is obtained, by repeating that module. Where a module examination is attempted by a student more than once, the student will be capped at 40% in subsequent attempts. Learners will be informed at the start of the module about the arrangements in relation to repeat continuous assessment elements such as assignments, projects, and practical work. Learners who fail a module will be required to repeat a significant element of the module assessment to achieve a pass. The reassessment will ensure that the module learning outcomes are attained before the learner progresses to the next stage of the programme.

It is School policy that all examinations of an individual module (initial sitting and repeat attempts) are of similar academic standard. Therefore, where practicable, students participating in repeat examinations of a particular modular assessment should do so under the same assessment criteria as for the first attempt. The School will strive to provide learners who fail a module with an opportunity to repeat the continuous assessment, project and/or practical work elements prior to the subsequent Examinations Board. This facility may be provided to learners, when appropriate, without the necessity of a repeat attendance at a module.

In the case of a repeat learner taking a module where all of the marks are for Continuous Assessment then the School may devise with the agreement of the Extern Examiner(s) alternative assessment arrangements in lieu of the module assessment. Arrangements for

such alternative continuous assessment shall be determined by the Programme Board and communicated to students. Such determination will be subject to maintaining academic standards and, in general, ensuring that equivalent module learning outcomes are assessed. Learners who fail a module of this type are required to repeat the equivalent of a significant proportion of the assessment for the module addressing those elements of the module assessment as deemed appropriate by the School, including elements where the learner failed to achieve a passing mark.

Group Work

The general policy on group work is as follows. In the case of a student who must repeat the group work element of continuous assessment, the School may again devise with the agreement of the Extern Examiner(s) alternative assessment arrangements that cover equivalent learning outcomes in lieu of the group work assessment. Students will have the opportunity to resubmit this alternative piece of assessment by the end of the subsequent examination series.

Further opportunities for repeating such elements are dependent on reasonable availability of module or reassessment opportunity. Repeat attendance in a module is where the learner has the opportunity to attend all classes, tutorials, practicals etc. and the mark they achieve at the end of the module is based solely on the repeat attendance. The School will advise learners on the merits or otherwise of a repeat attendance and will retain a record for the Examinations Board of learners undertaking a repeat attendance.

Examinations

In the case of a learner repeating an end-of-semester examination, marks awarded on the basis of continuous assessments shall normally be carried forward from the original examination to the repeat examination and shall be aggregated with the marks scored in the latter to determine the total marks to be awarded in respect of the repeat examination. However, in the case of a learner repeating an examination following a repeat attendance, only the marks awarded as a result of the repeat assessment and examination shall be considered. The results for such a learner following the repeat assessment shall be based on the marks awarded for the alternative assessment combined with marks carried forward

from any elements of the module assessment that the learner was not requested to repeat.

The reassessment strategy for each module will be worded as follows and be made explicit in each module descriptor in the programme document.

Opportunities to repeat failed assessments (exams or continuous assessments) are organised in the following way:

- a) Repeat examinations are held in February and June of each year, two weeks after the finish date of each semester. Students must present for the next examination period.
- b) Repeat continuous assessments will have to be submitted before the end of the next examination period.
- c) Any student failing group work will have to submit an alternative equivalent piece of assessment approved by the Programme Board and the External Examiner.

The Programme Board will have ultimate discretion on reassessment approaches in each module.

At the end of the examination session the School will advise learners who have failed to achieve a pass in one or more modules of all outstanding assessment tasks to be completed.

7.5 Examination Standards and Regulations / Moderation

The examination paper is drafted by the Internal Examiner (QQI & UOW). All draft examination paper must be set according to the GBS standards and must be consistent with previous examination papers in the same subject/ module. Whilst ownership of the paper remains with the Internal Examiner, all papers are reviewed by the designated External Examiner. Once drafted by the Internal Examiner, the exams and marking schemes are then forwarded to the External Examiner for review and approval. The reviews of the External Examiner are seriously considered by both the Internal and External Examiner, and the paper and/or marking scheme is amended if/as necessary by the examiner. The final draft of the paper and marking scheme is stored in the Examination Office.

The security of examination papers and scripts is carefully monitored and secured by the Examinations Officer. Exam Papers are password protected and only the Examinations Officer and the Registrar have access. A secure location is provided to store examination scripts until they are sent to the External Examiners for approval or collected by the Internal Examiners and Examinations Officer.

All internal examinations are written on dedicated examination booklets provided by Galway Business School. The Institute of Commercial Management provide examination booklets for their examinations. The School employs a number of experienced Invigilators for exam supervision to ensure full compliance with the exam procedures.

- Candidates must ensure that they are correctly registered on their programme, aware of the date, time and place of the examination, and aware of the following policies. Students on ICM programmes which involve externally set examinations register for examinations in class. Students are made aware of the registration dates and must ensure they are registered.
- All candidates are required to bring their identification cards to the examination hall and are advised to arrive at the hall at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the examination. Candidates without a valid School ID card will be asked to produce another form of valid photo identification.
- Candidates are not allowed to eat or drink in the exam hall.
- Candidates who arrive late are only allowed to enter within 30 minutes of the start of the exam, at the discretion of the Invigilator. Candidates are not allowed to leave the exam hall within the first 30 minutes of the exam. Once a candidate has handed in their exam booklet and left the hall, they will not be allowed to return. Candidates may not leave the exam hall in the final 30 minutes.
- Candidates are advised both when 30 and 15 minutes remain in the exam.
- Candidates are required to leave all personal effects in a dedicated separate room (i.e. jackets, bags, coats, handbags, mobile phones, all electronic devices etc.). All items are labelled and each candidate receives a ticket, which must be presented when collecting their items after they are finished their exam. Candidates must not

have mobile phones in their person during the exam and must ensure that they are turned off if left in the dedicated room. Candidates are advised not to bring any valuables to the exam hall, if they do, they do so at their own risk.

- Unless stated on the exam paper, calculators and handheld electronic dictionaries are not permitted in the exam hall.
- Dictionaries used during an examination must be paper based and they should only provide translations. They will be checked by an Invigilator.
- A standard set of announcements is read out by the Invigilator prior to the commencement of each exam.
- Candidates must not speak to or communicate with any other candidate. If a candidate has a question, the candidate must raise his/her hand to speak with the Invigilator.
- Candidates must stop writing when the end of the examination is announced.
- Writing after the end of the examination could result in the loss of marks, removal of exam, and/or a disciplinary action.
- Any unruly or disruptive behaviour may result in the candidate being removed from the examination and he/she may not be allowed to complete his/her exam.
- Once a candidate has completed his/her exam, he/she should raise his/her hand and an Invigilator will come to him/her to collect all exam material. If the exam has finished candidates are requested to remain seated until all exam scripts have been collected by an Invigilator.
- Once the examination period is closed all examination documentation is completed by the Invigilator and together with all exam material is stored securely for collection and distribution by the Examinations Officer to the Internal Examiners.

7.5.1 Failure to Attend an Examination

Any candidate who fails to attend for any examination, who arrives late, or who leaves early for any reason other than that they have completed the examination, is required to send a written explanation to the Registrar immediately. A medical certificate must be supplied in addition to the explanation if the absence was due to illness. All students must sit final examinations.

7.5.2 Breaches of Examination Regulations

Any breach of examination regulations of Galway Business School is a serious academic offence and will not be tolerated by the School. All such breaches or attempts to cheat will be brought to the attention of the Examinations Board. Examples of breaches and cheating include but are not limited to the following:

- Using an unauthorised text, set of notes, books, electronic aid, or any other non-approved material during an examination.
- Obtaining a copy of the examination before its authorised release.
- Acquiring help from or providing help to another student where such collaboration is not permitted.
- Hiring or outsourcing someone to complete an assessment.
- Attempting to or actually handing in work completed before the time of the examination.
- Any act of dishonesty in relation to the administering, taking, and/or evaluating of the exam.
- Plagiarism (see Section 5.6).

7.6 Assessment Correction and Feedback

7.6.1 Marking of Scripts

The lecturer should ensure that assessments are marked and returned to students as soon as possible, but normally no later than two weeks from the submission date. Students must be informed when they can expect return of assessment, and should also be told if there will be any delay in the return of assessment. Where there is a delay, students must be informed of a new return date. Assessment Schedules have been developed to ensure that assignments are spread throughout the academic year so that students are not overwhelmed with assignments at any given point. The schedule also details dates by which feedback will be given. A sample is included as *Appendix 8 BA Assessment Schedule*.

7.6.2 Double Marking Policy

For the University of Wales, assessments are corrected by the module lecturer. Subsequently, double marking is carried out internally, whereby 10% of the overall assessments including any borderline cases are selected for double marking. A sample of both single-marked and double-marked assessments are then sent to the External Examiner for further verification. The Extern receives a representative sample of assessment material; this includes borderline cases and a representative sample of each grade band. The sample includes sufficient material to enable the External Examiner to form a judgment as to the appropriateness of the marking at all levels of classifications.

For QQI, assessments are corrected by the module lecturer. Subsequently, double marking is carried out internally, whereby 10% of the overall assessments including any borderline cases are selected for double marking. A sample of both single-marked and double-marked assessments are then sent to the External Examiner for further verification. The sample includes sufficient material to enable the External Examiner to form a judgment as to the appropriateness of the marking at all levels of classifications.

7.6.2 Feedback

The method for returning marked assessments should also be made clear to students. Assessments may be returned to students during scheduled classes or students may be advised to collect them during the Lecturer's office hour. The feedback included on the feedback sheet is returned includes provisional, indicative grades which will be ratified by the Board of Examiners. Students should also be made aware of any further information or assistance that the lecturer has organised to aid students who may have failed an assessment.

7.7 Unfair Practice

7.7.1 Plagiarism

Galway Business School has a strict policy on plagiarism which is rigorously enforced in the institution. The act of presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own, without

permission or proper referencing, is considered plagiarism. A detailed description of what constitutes plagiarism is provided in the Student Handbook and is explained during Induction and throughout all programmes and modules.

Students who engage in any of these activities will be brought before the Disciplinary Committee:

- Direct copying from a source without proper acknowledgement.
- Using ideas from a book, journal, article, etc. to form the basis of your own work without acknowledging the source of these ideas.
- Creating an assessment that is mainly large blocks of others' text, improperly acknowledged, linked together by a few of your own sentences.
- Resubmission of work previously submitted for credit.

7.7.2 Turnitin

The Programme Board identifies specific modules and all assignments for their module are submitted through Turnitin software. The students are informed that this is the procedure.

7.7.3 Collusion

- Collusion occurs when, unless with official approval (e.g. in the case of group projects), two or more students consciously collaborate in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical, or substantially similar, form and/or is represented by each to be the product of his or her individual efforts. Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own.

Students enrolled on Galway Business School programmes receive a Student Handbook at the beginning of the programme, detailing Referencing & Attribution and how to avoid plagiarism. Referencing and Attribution workshops are held for all classes to ensure an appropriate standard of academic writing and discourage plagiarism. Students are encouraged to read widely and reference properly as this will generally result in the achievement of a better grade.

7.7.4 Disciplinary Committee¹

The Disciplinary Committee is established to address any situation where a student is suspected to have committed an act of cheating attribution and/or plagiarism.

Disciplinary Committee personnel include:

- Registrar
- Two independent lecturers (not involved in the case).
- Academic Coordinator
- Learner
- Learner representative

The Committee will be responsible for recommending a programme of action, based on the information provided to them. Penalties available range from:

- The issue of a formal reprimand to the candidate, a written record of which shall be kept.
- An instruction to the examiners, when marking, to ignore any plagiarised text, which may result in a reduced mark.
- The cancellation of the candidate's marks in part or in whole for module(s) concerned, or in all of the modules for the year in question or the equivalent for a part-time candidate, with a recommendation as to whether or not a re-assessment should be permitted, either with eligibility for the bare pass mark only, or for the full range of marks.
- The reduction of the award result by one class or the non-award of a distinction, as appropriate.
- The disqualification of the candidate from any future examinations.

A decision to suspend or expel the student is taken in consultation with and only with

¹ *For the purposes of the University of Wales the Disciplinary Committee is known as the Committee of Enquiry. Please see Appendix 14 UW Unfair Practice Procedure 2015-2016 for further details.*

the approval of the relevant validating body.

7.8 Rechecks, Reviews, Appeals & Complaints Policy

It is a requirement of Galway Business School that any complaint or dispute arising in relation to any result for the purposes of an award of QQI or by the University of Wales, shall be resolved promptly as set out in the procedures set out below.

- Decisions are taken in relation to candidates' examination and performance at the following points: allocation of marks, adoption of provisional results, recheck, review, and appeal.
- These checkpoints create a hierarchy of decision-making where the decision taken at any level may be changed at the next level, without referring to the previous level. The decision-making entity at any particular level has full powers in relation to any decision that is brought before it.
- Candidates contemplating a recheck, review or appeal of a piece of assessment are encouraged to discuss the matter with the appropriate lecturer prior to submitting such requests to ensure that they fully understand the context of the result achieved.

Galway Business School is committed to ensuring the assessment procedures are accurate and fair. However, we understand that students may sometimes have occasion to query the learner feedback they receive for assessments. All queries, rechecks, reviews, and appeals, (as defined below) will be addressed in a fair, transparent and timely fashion. Galway Business School offers programmes that are both internally and externally assessed. Where the programme is externally assessed (ICM programmes), Galway Business School indicates this to the student and assists them with the relevant Appeals Procedures.

This is the administrative operation of checking (again) the recording and combination of component scores for module and/or stage (*QQI Assessment and Standards, 2013*). A recheck is carried out to ensure that there have been no arithmetical or administrative errors, that the marks awarded are appropriate and that all the marks to which the student is entitled have been included in the final total. For the purposes of the UOW programmes rechecks are referred to as verifications. A student wishing to have the marks awarded for any module re-examined should seek a recheck of the relevant module.

The steps to request a re-check are as follows:

- All requests for a re-check must be in writing on the appropriate form and accompanied by the appropriate fee (€15.00 per module).
- The fee in the event of a successful recheck will be refunded. The candidate should supply any details that he/she believes will help expedite the recheck.
- A re-check must be made within 14 days of the dissemination of assessment results
- The school will complete the Re-check process within 14 days of receiving it.
- All recheck requests are coordinated by the Registrar
- Re-checks are completed by the Examinations Officer for that programme, except in the case of a conflict of module interest where another Examinations Officer within the school will be appointed to carry out the re-check
- The Registrar will inform the student in writing of the outcome of the re-check within 5 working days.

7.8.2 Reviews

The re-consideration of the assessment decision, either by the original assessor or by other competent persons or the Board of Examiners. Learners are required to state the grounds for the requested review. The grounds for review will normally be that the learner suspects that the assessment was erroneous in some respect (*QQI Assessment and Standards, 2013*). A request for a review must state the grounds upon which the review is sought and the candidate must supply evidence in support of his/her request.

The steps for a review are as follows:

- A review can only happen after a re-check has taken place.
- All requests for a review must be in writing on the appropriate form and accompanied by the appropriate fee (€50.00 which is refunded in the event of a review being successful).
- A request for a review must state the grounds upon which the review is sought and the candidate must supply evidence in support of his/her request.
- A review must be made within 14 days of a re-check having taken place.
- The school will complete the Review process within 14 days of receiving it.
- All review requests are coordinated by the Registrar.
- The review panel is made up of the Internal Examiners for that module and the Registrar.
- The Internal Examiners report to Examination Board / Board of Examiners.
- The Registrar will inform the student in writing of the outcome of the review within 5 working days.

7.8.3 Appeals

Is a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with decisions on student progression assessment and awards (*QAA code of practice 2015*). A student can appeal the outcome of the review within 14 days on the grounds that the review did not properly address his/her case. The introduction of new material that could have been included in the submission of the review will not be valid grounds for an appeal.

An appeal is reconsideration by the Appeal Board of the outcome of a review. Grounds for an appeal include:

- The examination regulations of the School were not implemented correctly
- The regulations do not adequately relate to the candidate in question
- Medical or compassionate circumstances exist which may not have been known to or considered by the Board of Examiners. Compassionate circumstances must be notified in writing to the Registrar when they occur.

The steps for an appeal are as follows:

- An appeal can only happen after a review has taken place.
- All requests for an appeal must be in writing on the appropriate form and accompanied by the appropriate fee (€50.00 refundable if the appeal is successful).
- A request for an appeal must be submitted within 14 days of a review being turned down.
- The school will complete the Appeal process within 14 days of receiving it.
- The introduction of new material that could have been included in the submission of the review will not be valid grounds for an appeal.
- All appeal requests are coordinated by the Registrar.
- The Registrar convenes the Appeal Board.
- The Appeal Board is made up of:
 - An Internal Moderator / Independent Assessor who is not directly involved with the delivery of the programme being appealed and who acts as Chair.
 - The Programme Leader.
 - The Registrar.
- The Appeal Board considers the report of the Review Board and can seek such information or advice as it considers necessary and appropriate.
- The decisions of the Appeal Board will be by majority vote, and in the event of a tie, by the casting vote of the Chair.
- The student will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, as will all appropriate faculty and staff members, by the Registrar.
- The Registrar will notify the validating body of the outcome of the appeal.
- If the candidate is still dissatisfied, he / she can appeal to the relevant external accrediting body.

QQI Appeals

As per '*QQI's Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers 2013*', all learner queries regarding QQI results may be appealed. Once the assessment materials have been approved by the External Authenticator, a Results Approval Panel takes place. Results are

then issued to the learners. Learners may appeal within fourteen days of issuance of results.

The appeals procedures should involve a review of the Assessment Process for the specific learner concerned; including where appropriate the review of learner evidence and the assessment results. The individual/assessor who evaluates a learner appeal should not be the individual/assessor who made the original assessment decision.

The only evidence which may be presented by the learner at appeal is that which has already been presented for assessment. New evidence may not be added by the learner for the appeal. The learner should be informed of the outcome of the Appeals Process within an agreed timescale. Following the completion of the provider's Appeal Process, the results for the learner(s) concerned are forwarded to QQI as the final result. These final results are the basis on which QQI will issue certificates.

The provider will flag all appealed results to QQI when forwarding the results data. QQI will issue certificates for all the results received except those flagged as under appeal.

QQI (FE) National Appeals Process

QQI operates a National Appeals Process. This is only on the basis of:

- The completion of the provider's Appeals Process and
- Appealing the process, not the result.

QQI only accepts appeals from providers, on behalf of learners.

QQI will not accept an appeal on behalf of a learner until that appeal has gone through 'due process' within the provider's Appeals Process and all opportunities to appeal within this process have been exhausted.

7.8.4 Complaints

The expression of a specific concern about the provision of a programme or module, or a programme of study, or a related academic service (*QAA Code of Practice 2015*).

Complaints are dealt with in a variety of ways. Minor complaints can be addressed immediately through administration or through discussion with a lecturer, Academic Coordinator or Registrar. Minor complaints relate to issues to do with the photocopier, access to the library, access to other services including accommodation, payment of fees, registration information etc. For serious complaints, students are required to fill up a Complaints Form to document the nature of their complaint. A panel is formed to address the complaint and consists of the General Manager and the Registrar or another academic as appropriate. The student is encouraged to bring a representative to the meeting who can be another member of the academic team or a fellow student. Minutes of the proceedings are recorded and recommendations for actions or redress are discussed and implemented.

Please see Appendix 9 – Student Complaints Procedures

7.9 Compensation

Any candidate, who fails, may re-sit final examinations and re-submit coursework. Such a candidate may be awarded a degree based on their overall marks in all subjects including the resit subjects. The only exceptions to this rule occur in the case of candidates who may be compensated. ICM programmes are outside the remit of GBS in terms of compensation rules.

7.9.1 Compensation and Carrying rules for QQI-approved programmes

Compensation will only be applied in cases where its application enables the student to pass the examination as a whole. Performance at the first attempt in a given semester (of at least 30 credits) may be used to compensate in the same semester, provided no module in the semester has been failed outright (mark less than 35%). The pass standard for a module is 40%. However, a student with marks of less than 40% in one or more modules will be deemed to have passed the semester provided (a) the aggregate mark for all modules of the semester is at least 40%; (b) the mark in every module is 35% or more; (c) the module(s) with marks in the range 35-39% total 10 ECTS or less per semester; and (d) the stage aggregate of credit-weighted excesses of percentage marks over 40 is greater than or equal to the stage aggregate of credit-weighted deficit of marks under 40.

Compensation may be applied only to enable a learner to pass a semester or stage (at the award stage) a learner who passes by compensation remains eligible for honours. Compensation does not change the result of the modules passed. When reporting module passes by compensation, the actual result is returned, the mark for the module will appear on transcripts with a grade of Pass by Compensation. Students who have a compensable grade on a given module will be allowed to resubmit continuous assessment or resit an examination to improve their result.

Rules for Carrying

A student can carry up to 10 credits from one year to the next (from year 1 to year 2, and from year 2 to year 3), provided that module is not a pre requisite for a module in the following year.

7.9.2 University of Wales Compensation

Compensation of marks under the University of Wales rules differs somewhat and only occurs in the degree year that (i.e. year three of the University of Wales degree).

Where a student has failed a module they may compensate if they have achieved a sufficiently high mark in another module.

- Fail of 35-39% - Student may compensate if they have a mark of 60%+ in another module
- Fail of 30-34% - Student may compensate if they have a mark of 65%+ in another module

Compensation may not apply to more than two failed modules. Borderline cases either of pass/failure or between degree classifications may be invited to attend a viva voce examination by the external examiner and at least one internal tutor.

Students who do not submit their work will not be considered for any compensation.

8. Access, Transfer and Progression

Policy Title	Access, Transfer and Progression
Date Approved	April 2016
Effective From	September 2016
Review Procedure & Responsibility	• Admissions staff • Registrar
Overview	Galway Business School provides multiple routes of entry to its programmes. This policy details how potential students may access, transfer and progress onto and onwards from Galway Business School programmes.
Supporting Documentation	• Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners Restated (2015) • Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of a National Approach to Credit in Irish Higher Education and Training (NQAI 2006) • Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training (QQI Restated 2015) • QQI Consultative Programme October 2014 • QQI Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL): Protocols for the Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act: Guidelines for Providers • Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012
Amendment History	- Amendment to Chapter 8: - Order, Structure and Layout & Supporting Documentation - Insertion of: Section 8.1

8.1 Rationale

Galway Business School's admission policies operate in accordance with the '*NQAI's Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of a National Approach to Credit in Irish Higher Education and Training 2006*' and the '*NQAI's Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training 2015*', Galway Business School offers access, transfer and progression routes into and onwards from every programme offered as per the '*NQAI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners 2015*'.

8.2 General Principles

All programmes offered on an academic year basis by Galway Business School are on, or are formally aligned to, the National Framework of Qualifications. Students can access Galway Business School programmes both through standard entry channels such as the Central Applications Office - <https://www.cao.ie/apply.ie>, and as mature students. All Students may also transfer or progress to Galway Business School courses after completing programmes delivered by other providers. Routes are also available for students who wish to transfer or progress from programmes taken in Galway Business School to programmes offered by other providers.

Galway Business School will seek clarification from the NQAI who offer a service dealing with foreign qualifications – <http://www.qualrec.ie>. Galway Business School evaluates a student's prior learning in accordance with Galway Business School policy detailed below.

In accordance with '*NQAI's Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression for Learners, Restated 2015*', Galway Business School ensures that the presentation of any particular programme does not lead learners to presume that successful completion of the programme will entitle them to enter a particular profession or progress to another programme unless that is actually the case. Galway Business School also ensures that a

programme's use of ECTS (credit) and provisions for recognition of prior learning is consistent with 'QQI's *Assessment and Standards 2013*' and with relevant national policy including:

Access: Galway Business School provides transparent, fair and consistent entry requirements to programmes. There are different entry requirements for programmes depending on whether learners are applying to a) The Institute of Commercial Management, b) University of Wales or b) our own Bachelor of Business programme.

Entry requirements for each course are detailed in marketing brochures and on the school website. As we are on the CAO from September 2016, all prospective full-time students must apply via the CAO system. For students applying via RPL route, they must submit a completed application form, statement of purpose and any supporting documentation including previous study and proof of English language level where relevant.

Programmes awarded by the Institute of Commercial Management require that supporting documentation is sent to the Institute of Commercial Management for approval. The Registrar and Academic Coordinator are responsible for sending the supporting documents and notifying students of their eligibility. Supporting documentation includes:

- Leaving Certificate results
- QQI (formerly FETAC) award transcripts
- Transcripts of any other study the prospective learner has completed
- Proof of IELTS score

Non-native speakers of English require a minimum of 6.0 IELTS or equivalent for entry into year one. Students who wish to go directly into year three (or year of proposed level 8 programme) or into the postgraduate diploma must have a level of 6.5 IELTS or equivalent.

Galway Business School seeks to broaden access to its programmes by offering certain programmes on a modular basis, allowing learners to build towards full programmes in a flexible manner. This allows students to build credits. Under the principle that such credit should only be awarded once, such prior learning is accorded recognition rather than accreditation. Modules passed are certified individually and can be accumulated over time

so as to facilitate the learner. This allows learners who may not feel that they are in a position to commit to, for example, a three year programme the opportunity to complete a full programme over a number of years or as they see fit.

Transfer: Galway Business School provides a number of routes into its programmes for learners who have completed programmes leading to awards from other providers. We have developed a detailed policy on RPL, APL and APEL as well as procedures on how it operates.

Progression: Progression by graduates of Galway Business School to other providers is based on the entry requirements of the relevant course and an evaluation by that provider of the graduate's transcript.

8.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

8.3.1 Introduction

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the generic term for learning assessment mechanisms such as Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or Advanced Academic Standing, which are used within Higher Education to describe the awarding of credit / exemptions to learners on the basis of demonstrated learning that has occurred prior to admission.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an important element of EU policy for widening access to qualifications and supporting lifelong learning. In common with its European partners, the Irish government has made a commitment to support RPL (*Education and Training Act 2012*). *The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 2012* established the right for a learner to receive recognition of prior learning. The Act reflects a national commitment to widening participation in education and is supported by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) guidelines. A major objective of the NQAI is to give equal recognition to all learning. For the purposes of developing a national approach to the recognition of prior learning, prior learning encompasses:

1. Formal learning which takes place through programmes of study or training that are delivered by education or training providers, and which attract awards.

2. Non-formal learning that takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training. It may be assessed but does not normally lead to formal certification. Examples of non-formal learning are: learning and training activities undertaken in the workplace, in the voluntary sector or trade union or in community-based learning.

3. Informal learning that takes place through life and work experience (which is sometimes referred to as experiential learning). Often, informal learning is unintentional and the learner may not recognise at the time that it contributed to his or her knowledge, skills and competences. RPL involves awarding the learner recognition in the form of admission to a programme, credits, exemptions or an award for the Prior Learning.

The Prior learning can be certified or experiential (non-certified).

- **Prior Certified Learning** is learning that has already been accredited by an awarding body such as QQI or other state recognised colleges or institutes. Prior certified learning also can also include qualifications received abroad.
- **Prior experiential (uncertified) Learning** is learning which has not been previously accredited or recognised and is typically uncertified. This is often described as learning which is non-formal or informal learning. The learning achieved is the focus in prior experiential learning, and not the experience itself. The process of giving formal recognition to this type of learning can be described as the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning (RNFIL) or the accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL).

8.3.2 General Principles of RPL

- Prior Learning refers to learning which has occurred before admission to a course or to the relevant stage of a course.
- Prior learning should encompass all forms of learning – formal, informal or non-formal.

- Participation is a voluntary matter for the individual.
- Recognition of prior learning should provide opportunities for access, transfer and progression to education and training and for the achievement of an award.
- The process of recognising prior learning should maintain the standards of the National Framework of Qualifications and its awards.
- The policies, processes and practices for the recognition of prior learning should be clearly stated and documented and are available to all potential applicants.
- Guidance and support should be made available for applicants and all involved in the processes of recognition of prior learning.
- An appropriate appeals mechanism should be in place.
- Learners seeking exemptions based on RPL should continue to attend class as normal until they receive written confirmation approving their application. This confirmation should come from the Registrar.
- Recognition of Prior Learning will normally be given for complete modules only.
- There should be no limit placed on the maximum credits allowed to be achieved via RPL in the non-award stages of a programme.
- RPL will normally only be given for a maximum of 35% of credits in Award stage. However learners that gain exemptions through Recognition of Prior Certified Learning in award year are entitled to an ungraded award only. Learners that gain exemptions through Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning in award year will receive a grade and are therefore eligible to receive a classified award.
- The cost to the applicant for applying for recognition of prior uncertified learning will be determined by the Registrar on an annual basis.

8.3.3 Recognition for Prior Certified Learning (RPCL)

Prior Certified Learning is where an applicant has already been awarded a qualification for a formal programme taken at an institution or training organisation. This prior learning can be **recognised** on the National Framework of Qualifications and may entitle the applicant to:

- Gain **access** onto a programme.
- The award of **advanced academic standing** (e.g. direct access into year 2, 3 or 4 of a programme).

- The award of **exemptions** from some parts of a programme.

The applicant is normally expected to submit details of his/her prior certified learning e.g. certificate, programme description, module description, assessment results etc.

8.3.4 Assessing Prior Certified Learning

When a learner presents prior certified learning in order to gain an admission, advanced academic standing or exemption(s), the assessor (Registrar or the Academic Coordinator) will base his/her decision to grant this exemption or advanced academic standing on the following:

Level of Prior Award in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

The Prior Certified Learning which the applicant is basing his/her exemption/advanced academic standing on must be at the same level or at a higher level in the framework that the level the learner is seeking the exemption in. For example if a learner is seeking an exemption from a level 6 module, then the learner's prior certified learning must be a level 6 or above. The process of recognising prior learning should maintain the standards of the National Framework of Qualifications and its awards.

Comparison of learning outcomes

The learning outcomes of the prior certified learning must be sufficiently similar in nature to the module(s) the learner is seeking exemption from.

Currency of Prior Certified Learning

The Prior Certified Learning must have been achieved in a comparatively appropriate time frame (in some instances this may be in the last 3 years, 5 years or 10 years – dependent on the learning achieved) i.e. computing learning 10 years ago is of limited benefit today on a current programme– psychology outcomes may be more timeless.

8.3.5 Guidelines for Prior Certified Learning

It is the Learner's responsibility to apply for the RPCL. Learners must submit their claim on the relevant form. The form can be obtained from the relevant lecturer. This form must be

completed on or before October 1st for semester 1 and on or before February 1st for semester 2. Learners must also include certificates, results, programme details and where possible learning outcomes of modules completed.

The Assessor should be a person qualified to deliver the module. The Registrar will appoint a suitably qualified assessor.

Learners must continue to attend class until a decision has been made (and written confirmation received) on whether to grant the exemption or not. The learner may be expected to attend an interview.

No grade will be awarded to the learner for the certified learning. The learner receives an exemption.

The assessor should make a decision regarding the RPL application within 10 working days of application. Assessors have the right to recommend that exemptions be granted with conditions (e.g. certain research is carried out, attendance at certain workshops etc.).

The Learner has a right to apply for a recheck or review. The appeal for a recheck / review should be made in writing to the Registrar within 5 working days of the initial decision. There will be a cost associated with the appeal. The appeal will be considered by the Registrar along with a qualified assessor not involved in the initial assessment. Their decision is final.

The Documentation submitted by the learner (RPL Application form, photocopies of certificates, learning outcomes, examination result etc.) together with the recommendation of the assessor must be kept for 2 years for quality assurance purposes and in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

8.3.6 Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)

This involves the awarding of credit for learning from experience. In this case, the candidate must demonstrate that the learning experience has occurred by e.g. producing a **Portfolio of Evidence** to support the claim for access, exemption or credit. Other assessment tools such as exam, assignment, interview or observation can also be used to assess the prior experiential learning. As a general principle, credit is given for learning, not for experience per se. The portfolio of evidence must be written in such a way that the matching of the

knowledge, skills and competencies of the module learning outcomes to the prior learning is clearly demonstrated.

The evidence the learner has to submit will be based on the learning outcomes of the module(s)/ programme he/she seeks credits for.

Supporting evidence may include:

- References
- CV (e.g. Europass CV)
- Job Descriptions and experiences
- Details of any training completed
- Certificates for qualifications, training courses etc.
- Sample work (e.g. drawings, minutes from meetings, business plan etc.).
- Evidence from the learner's personal life
- Published work
- Professional licenses/registrations or membership of professional organisations
- Acknowledged accomplishments
- Relevant recreational activities or hobbies

The applicant may be required to provide verification from previous or current employers that the experience stated has been achieved by the learner.

As part of the assessment, the assessor may also interview the applicant.

When assessing portfolios, it is important to consider the currency of the prior learning. It must be achieved within a suitable time frame – for example within the last five years (depending on the nature of the learning achieved).

8.3.7 Guidelines for Prior Non Certified/Experiential Learning

- It is the Learner's responsibility to apply for RPEL. Applications are made to the relevant lecturer or to the Registrar. Learners must submit their claim on the relevant form

(Appendix 9). This form must be submitted on or before October 1st for semester 1 and on or before February 1st for semester 2. Completed RPL assessments must be submitted to the relevant lecturer or Registrar on or before October 21st for semester 1 and on or before February 21st for semester 2.

- The assessor should make a decision regarding the RPL application within 10 working days. Learners are expected to attend class until they receive written verification from the Registrar / Lecturer.
- The portfolio is assessed and graded by an assessor appointed by the Registrar.

Learners should receive a grade for their portfolio of evidence which carries equal weight to modules taken in the conventional method. Assessors must satisfy themselves that the assessment methods used to determine the standard of the experiential learning gained be equivalent to assessment methods applied to conventional learners.

- Assessors have the right to recommend that credits be granted with conditions e.g. certain research is carried out, attendance at certain workshops etc.
- The Learner has a right to apply for a recheck or review. The appeal for a recheck / review should be made in writing to the Registrar within 5 working days of the initial decision. There will be a cost associated with the appeal. The appeal will be considered by the Registrar along with a qualified assessor not involved in the initial assessment. Their decision is final.
- The Documentation submitted by the learner (RPEL Application form, portfolio, CV etc.) together with the completed assessment form must be kept for 2 Years for quality assurance purposes and in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.
- Portfolios of evidence should go through the same quality control procedures as exams/assignments submitted by learners completing the programme in the conventional manner.
- Submission of a portfolio does not guarantee that the applicant gains credits. Learners must continue to attend class as normal until they receive written confirmation from the lecturer / Registrar indicating their application has been accepted.

8.3.8 The Process for managing RPL

Learners seeking exemptions based on prior Certified learning

In week 1 of each semester, learners are made aware of the RPL initiative. The process should be explained and interested applicants provided the relevant application form. Before learners apply for exemptions based on prior certified learning, the relevant lecturer should:

- Provide a **description** of his/her module in terms of learning outcomes, content and level.
- Explain to the learner that the module(s) the learner previously completed must be at the same **level** or at a higher than the current module (for example if a learner is seeking an exemption for a level 6 module, then the learner must have successfully completed a level 6 or higher module previously).
- Explain to the learner that the module previously completed must be **similar in nature** to the current module. If the assessor believes the learning outcomes are sufficiently similar, then an exemption may be awarded. It is at the discretion of the assessor to decide what is sufficiently similar. If possible the learner should be able to provide a description of the module previously completed (e.g. module description or module learning outcomes)
- Explain to the learner that the Prior Certified Learning must have been achieved in a comparatively appropriate **time** frame (in some instances this may be in the last 3 years, 5 years or 10 years – dependent on the learning achieved) i.e. computing learning 10 years ago is of limited benefit today on a current programme – psychology outcomes may be more timeless.
- Explain to the learner that if a learner is awarded an exemption for a module, he/she is not awarded a grade but receives an X. The overall average for the year is obtained from remaining modules completed in the conventional way.

Learners seeking exemptions / credits based on prior Experiential learning

In week 1 of semester, learners are made aware of the RPL initiative. The process should be explained and interested applicants provided the relevant application form. Exemptions based on prior experiential learning are relatively rare. However if a learner believes he/she has met the relevant learning outcomes through experiential learning, then he/she is

permitted to apply for credits by completing a RPL portfolio (or some other assessment e.g. exam, interview or demonstration). The RPL assessment should examine all learning outcomes associated with the module. Applicants must apply on or before October 1st for Semester 1 and on or before February 1st for Semester 2.

Learners seeking advanced entry based on RPL

Applicants seeking advanced entry on a programme based on prior **certified** learning must submit copies of certificates and exam results. Applicants may also be asked for programme / module descriptors. The assessor must ensure that the prior certified learning is at the correct level on the national framework, correct number of credits achieved, sufficiently similar in nature and all prerequisites modules are indeed covered.

Occasionally (although very rarely) applicants may seek advanced entry to a programme based on prior **experiential** learning. In these circumstances, the applicant must provide sufficient evidence that he/she has indeed the required knowledge, skills and competencies associated with the modules from earlier stages of the programme. For example, an applicant may seek entry on to year 2 of a programme based on his/her prior experiential learning. In this instance, the applicant would be expected to complete a portfolio (and possibly alternative assessment techniques such as exams, interview or observation) that clearly meets the learning outcomes of modules in stage 1 of the programme.

Please refer to Appendix 10 for the RPCL Application form and RPEL Exemption Application form.

9. Procedures for selection, appointment, appraisal & development of Staff

Policy Title	Procedures for selection, appointment, appraisal & development of Staff
Date Approved	April 2016
Effective From	September 2016
Review Procedure & Responsibility	Managing Director General Manager Registrar Quality Assurance Committee
Supporting Documentation	• Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines (QQI, 2016) • GBS Strategic Plan 2015-2020 • Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines (QQI 2016) • Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA 2015) • University of Wales' Validation Unit Quality Handbook: Policies and Procedures 2015/16
Amendment History	- Amendment to Chapter 9: - Structure and Layout & Supporting Documentation

9.1 Rationale

Galway Business School considers that the quality of its people is the single most critical factor in achieving success as a teaching and learning organisation and in equipping its students with the necessary academic and life skills to take their place in the work force and in society. It is committed to attracting qualified, committed and competent academic staff with the necessary expertise to meet the demands of the programmes and to support the learner in their chosen programme of study.

The selection, recruitment and retaining of competent and effective staff is fundamental to the on-going success of the school.

9.2 Recruitment and Selection

The Recruitment and Selection Policy ensures that the school identifies and appoints the ideal candidate with the necessary competence to effectively teach and / or support learners.

Consideration must also be given to whether the position is new or recently vacated, why the position is needed, how it will assist the school in achieving its strategic goals and mission, how it relates to other positions in the school, and what skills and other abilities are necessary to carry out its responsibilities.

The decision to recruit an employee is made in response to an identified need. With regard to academic staff, the need to recruit new members of the lecturing team is identified by the Programme Board and / or by the Registrar. The ongoing employment needs of Galway Business School are reviewed by management.

Once the need has been identified, a person specification and job description are produced. The person specification sets out the requirements of the position in terms of qualifications, personal skills and experience. The job description outlines the goals and objectives of the role including the main duties and the reporting relationships involved in the organisation,

and is sufficiently flexible to allow the roles and responsibilities to evolve. The selection and recruitment process is signed off by the General Manager.

9.3 Selection Process

The selection process includes advertising the position internally and externally on the school's website, on noticeboards in the school, in local and national newspapers and websites where necessary. All applicants are assessed against the person and job specification and a shortlist for interview is produced. The interview panel is formed and always consists of a minimum of two people. Normally for lecturing positions, a presentation forms part of the interview process. Originals of all qualifications are required at interview and a copy is kept on file together with the candidate's curriculum vitae. The decision to hire a candidate is made by consensus. In the event that agreement cannot be reached, the interview panel may recommend recalling certain candidates for a second interview or re-advertising the position.

9.3.1 Measuring the effectiveness of the procedures for selection, appointment, appraisal & development of staff

- The recruitment and selection procedures of new hires are reviewed and areas for improvement are determined.
- Interview training and interview panel performance are reviewed - new hires are determined to have been successful through feedback from mentors, the individual concerned and in performance reviews.
- Determine that the induction and initial training have been successful by reviewing feedback from both the mentor and the newly appointed candidate and in reviewing exit interviews conducted by the General Manager.

9.3.2 Appointment Process

Once a candidate has been selected the General Manager must undertake a background check to verify candidate details. Referees are contacted by phone to provide professional references. Once this process has been carried out successfully, an offer of employment is

verbally made to the candidate followed by a formal letter of offer including a contract of employment stating the terms and conditions of employment. The candidate has seven working days to respond in writing. A human resource file is completed on each candidate containing the candidate's CV, copies of qualifications, all interview notes and the completed and signed contract of employment.

9.3.3 Staff Induction

The General Manager is responsible for induction of all new staff. The General Manager provides all new staff with an introduction to the organisation including background, mission, structures, strategies and plans. The school's academic and administration procedures, health and safety requirements and an overview of the IT system and interactive displays are included at this point, as well as the reporting structures within the organisation, and the new member of staff is given access to the Employee Handbook. The new candidate is formally introduced to the other members of the team.

For Academic Staff, the Registrar, Programme Leader or Senior Lecturers provides the new lecturer with the Schedule of Academic Committees and Meetings, the Lecturer Handbook which includes induction into the programme, the module learning outcomes, programme and module assessment strategy, introduction to Moodle and school calendar as well as the quality assurance procedures associated with the programme and the assessment of students. Information about accrediting bodies and the lecturer's responsibilities with regard to same are also included at this point. New members of the academic staff will have a mentor appointed to provide guidance, support, advice and feedback.

9.3.4 Communication with Students

It is vital that staff maintain a professional distance from students. This is both an ethical consideration and a consideration regarding staff privacy. To that end, staff should not engage with students through the various social media, including Facebook, unless within a school framework. Staff are not allowed to give students non-school email addresses and mobile phone contact details. Communication with students should only occur through the formal and appropriate channels.

9.3.5 Staff Training and Development

Galway Business School fully supports training and development activities for all staff. Staff are required to engage in Training and Continuous Professional Development on an annual basis in Galway Business School. This includes but is not limited to subject specific conference attendance, training in teaching and learning and attendance at staff training days scheduled within the school which can be given by internal members of the team or external experts.

Training to improve the teaching skills of the team is also a priority. Any member of the lecturing team without a formal training qualification is given the opportunity to complete an in-house Train the Trainer course together with various training sessions using the IT systems.

The Registrar and General Manager ensure that there is adequate staff representation at the key conferences and workshops each year, including:

- HECA conference
- QQI / HEA conferences
- EAIE conference

A training and staff development fund is agreed by management. Staff who wish to access funding should apply in writing stating the details of the proposed funding and the benefit to the school. Requests are assessed by the Registrar, senior management or the Academic Council as appropriate.

Within one month of any such training or conference participation, staff are expected to provide a written report on any pertinent outcomes. Staff will be required to deliver the key points to their peers at training sessions or faculty meetings as appropriate. A full list of training by staff is documented by the General Manager.

9.3.6 Academic Research

Galway Business School's policy on Academic Research conforms to Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) policy regarding educational research in the independent sector, establishing a number of key research and innovation sectors in which HECA members can excel. These will include the design and delivery of programmes, professional training, teacher training and development across all education sectors. To achieve this, HECA Colleges have expanded and enhanced the annual HECA research based conference, and will seek research funding from national and international funding agencies, and collaborate with other institutions for the purpose of research and innovation.

9.3.7 Performance Review

The objective of a formal Performance Review is to ensure that staff receive constructive feedback, and to identify the individual developmental needs required to enable the individual to contribute optimally to the organisation.

Performance Reviews record staff performance, jointly identify key strengths and areas for improvement, re-clarify and modify roles and responsibilities and job descriptions (if necessary), increase staff motivation to perform effectively, improve communication and understanding between management and staff.

The General Manager or the Registrar is responsible for all Performance Reviews. The review itself is carried out in an atmosphere of openness, frankness, confidentiality, clarity, and fairness.

For academic staff, Performance Reviews ensure that lecturers receive constructive feedback on teaching performance, teaching and learning strategies, research, student feedback which allow them identify their strengths and areas for improvement or development and formulate an action plan. The Performance Review is based on a number of different feedback and evaluation techniques:

- Student Module and Programme Evaluations
- Lecturer Self Review

- Peer Review
- Feedback from Management

A Performance Review Form includes self-evaluation and management evaluation. Each staff member completes their self-evaluation in advance of the formal Performance Review and in discussion with management, the evaluation is completed and signed off by both the General Manager and the staff member / lecturer concerned and a record is retained.

Please see Appendix 11 - Staff Appraisal Form Part A.

9.3.8 Support for Staff

Should the performance of any staff member not reach the required level, steps are taken to support the staff member and are outlined in the Employee Handbook. An informal meeting with the General Manager and / or Registrar takes place to deal with the shortcomings on an informal basis. After this discussion, re-skilling, training, supporting, coaching and mentoring options are explored with a view to assisting the staff member achieve the necessary improvements. If such improvements are not met following informal and formal interventions, disciplinary procedures as outlined in Galway Business School Employee Handbook are invoked.

10. Procedures and Policies for Evaluating Quality Assurance

Policy Title	Procedures and Policies for Evaluating Quality Assurance
Date Approved	April 2016
Effective From	September 2016
Review Procedure & Responsibility	All staff, both academic and administrative, are responsible for ensuring compliance with the stated quality procedures. The Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for undertaking review of the quality procedures, ensuring implementation is happening as detailed and monitoring compliance. Where non-compliance is identified both the Academic Council and management are informed. The Quality Assurance Committee monitor that remedial action has been taken and examine preventative measures to ensure its non-recurrence.
Overview	Galway Business School is committed to self-evaluation and external review. The School monitors its Quality Assurance procedures through the annual Self Evaluation Report (SER), Annual Programme Monitoring Report, through stakeholder feedback, through self-evaluations carried out by the Quality Assurance Committee and through the Periodic and Institutional Review processes. This ensures that the Quality Assurance procedures are subject to the same rigorous monitoring and review process as the programmes delivered.

Supporting Documentation	• Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines (QQI, 2016) • GBS Strategic Plan 2015-2020 • Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines (QQI 2016) • Provider Monitoring Policy & Procedures (QQI 2014) • Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA 2015) • QQI Consultative Programme Oct 2014 • QQI HET General Programme Validation Manual Revised 2013 • University of Wales' Validation Unit Quality Handbook: Policies and Procedures 2015/16
Amendment History	- Amendment to Chapter 10: - Structure and Layout & Supporting Documentation

10.1 Rationale

The Quality Assurance Handbook establishes a coherent framework for enhancing the quality of education and training provided and demonstrates that standards are safeguarded by a system of transparent evaluations and checks and one that is accountable to the Governing Body and all stakeholders. The Quality Assurance Handbook explains the monitoring mechanisms used to guarantee that the policy is delivered and learners' rights are prioritised and protected in accordance with 'QQI's *Provider Monitoring Policy 2014*'.

Galway Business School has structured the organisation in a manner that integrates and reflects the principles of the '*Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA 2015)*', and those of 'QQI's *Policy on Registration of Providers 2008*', into all aspects of its operation and are cognisant of 'QQI's *Provider Monitoring Policy 2014*'.

Galway Business School is accredited by a number of accrediting bodies and is currently running programmes from three of those bodies, the University of Wales, QQI and the Institute of Commercial Management. Where differences exist in the requirements they are generally minor in nature and are clearly outlined in the Quality Assurance Handbook. All programmes delivered by Galway Business School, including proposed programmes to be validated by QQI, are underpinned by the seven areas identified in the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ENQA 2015)*, namely:

- Policy and procedures for quality assurance
- Approval, monitoring, and periodic review of programmes and awards
- Assessment of students
- Learning resources and student support
- Quality assurance of teaching staff
- Information systems
- Public information – Communication

10.2 Procedures for Quality Assurance

10.2.1 Continuous Improvement

The quality assurance system of Galway Business School is based on the principle of continuous improvement and the school strives to make the organisation and the Quality Assurance system more effective. All continuous improvement activities are recorded and tracked by the Quality Assurance Committee with regard to the procedures and processes they affect.

10.2.2 Verifiable Data and Monitoring Mechanisms

Galway Business School collates all necessary data electronically with regular back-ups in order to monitor critical quality indicators, including; continuous assessment results, examination results, class attendance rates, external examiners' reports, committee reports, graduate destination data. The data is analysed and tabulated to highlight trends and locate

any areas where corrective and preventive action may be required.

The Quality Assurance procedures are judged to be fit for purpose when based on verifiable data, both qualitative and quantitative. For example, student and staff feedback may provide qualitative feedback suggesting improvements that could be made to programmes, their delivery or to the provision of academic support services. Qualitative feedback is also provided through Extern reports, and where applicable, through Moderator reports. (University of Wales programmes generate an Annual Report from both an Extern and a Moderator.)

Please see Appendix 12 – Learner Survey Module Evaluation Forms, and Appendix 13 – Teaching Staff Survey.

Quantitative data comprises objective analysis of data, for instance, student progression, programme results, and programme attrition. Data is managed and used for planned interventions, i.e. corrective or preventative action. It is through the basic process of acting and intervening on results of verifiable data, and evaluating these interventions that change and ultimately continuous improvement can be achieved. All data is protected in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

10.2.3 Transparency & Accountability

Galway Business School's intention is to establish and maintain effective communication with all stakeholders, internal and external. The school provides learners with timely, accurate and relevant information relating to all aspects of the programme offerings. The school will publish objective information relating to student testimonials, programmes, qualifications, and Quality Assurance procedures for the general public on its website once QQI programmes have been approved.

All marketing material provides accurate and clear information on all programmes to prospective learners and their agents. Access, transfer and progression information is made clear to prospective learners on registration and application procedures for exemptions are

clearly documented. The Registrar with the General Manager with input from the Quality Assurance Committee ensures that marketing information is correct and accurately reflects Galway Business School's offering.

10.2.4 Communication

There is a culture of constant interaction between academic and administrative staff and students in Galway Business School. There is an 'open-door' policy at all levels and across all committees and departments of the School through the use of meetings, staff and student notices, the VLE, the SSLC and extra-curricular activities. This fulfils the School's core philosophy of putting students first.

Formal communication with academic staff takes place through the meeting structure at Faculty, Programme, Examination Board and at Academic Council meetings. Communication with administrative staff occurs through day to day interaction and through staff meetings chaired by the General Manager. Email, notice boards and Moodle is used to notify and remind staff of academic and operational matters i.e. meeting dates and times, assessment dates and schedules, conferences or other matters. All members of the academic cohort have specific Galway Business School email addresses to facilitate communication. Communication with students encompasses the initial enquiry and student registration, Student Induction at the commencement of the programme, the provision of Student Handbooks containing details of the programme, assessment schedules and related information, student feedback mechanisms, the Staff/Student Liaison Committee, and the system of student representatives elected at the start of the first semester.

10.2.5 Public Information

Galway Business School provides information on all programmes, including the accrediting body, programme content, level, entry requirements and progression routes, on its website and in brochures. The programmes of the school are promoted through Open Days, attendance at Careers Fairs, Education Fairs, conferences, media advertising campaigns and through the school website.

For Public information to be truly impartial and objective, final approval for all such information is the responsibility of the Registrar and the General Manager with input from the Quality Assurance Committee. Information is provided to awarding and accrediting bodies by the Registrar. The Marketing Department is also required to disseminate this approved information on programmes, including entry requirements, to international and European partners. This must be checked by the Registrar to ensure that student recruitment meets the minimum entry requirements.

Further public information including Annual Programme Reports, Periodic Review Reports, and the Quality Assurance Handbook, will be published on the Galway Business School website subject to agreement with QQI.

10.2.6 Equality

Galway Business School is committed to delivering programmes of education and training in a manner which accommodates diversity, combats discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity. Assessment is devised in accordance with “The Meaning of Fairness” as stated in *QQI’s Assessment and Standards 2013* document. Galway Business School has a comprehensive policy on disability. (*Appendix 3*)

Management is responsible for ensuring that all staff and students are aware of their responsibilities in relation to equality.

10.2.7 Library Facilities

Galway Business School has a library that provides access for learners to a range of books, journals, reference materials, study area and internet access. All core texts for programmes are available from the library. Books and reports in the library are organised by classification. Online library resources are accessible through EBSCO.

All lecturers and students of Galway Business School have a right to use the library and its services. Members may borrow books for a maximum of three working days at a time and a

fine is imposed if books are held past their due return date. Desk Reserve books can be reserved.

Academic staff are responsible for updating reading lists and requesting copies of additional, new or updated textbooks and for notifying the Registrar of these requests.

10.2.8 Learner Support

Galway Business School prides itself on the high level of academic, technological, and developmental support it offers its learners as a small educational institution. The School strives to maintain and improve the academic and general support services available to its learners through the provision of workshops in Study Skills, Career Guidance, Referencing & Attribution, and through the school's provision of Pastoral care.

Galway Business School is committed to providing a stimulating learning experience in a supportive environment. It is acknowledged that quality accessible support services combined with evaluation systems and procedures are necessary and inherent to an active quality assurance culture.

The Annual Programme Monitoring Reports, detailed in Section 5, are used to identify corrective and preventive action where improvements can be made or where new supports should be targeted.

10.2.9 Learner Protection

As a private educational profit-making institution, and in accordance with *QQI's Core Validation Policy and Criteria 2013, Section 6.1*, Galway Business School has specific arrangements in place to provide for and protect learners in the unlikely event that Galway Business School were to cease to provide a particular programme. Galway Business School is a member of HECA which gives it access to bilateral protection for learners to other HECA members offering a similar course. Galway Business School conforms to *QQI policy on Protection for Enrolled Learners (PEL)* for all QQI programmes.

Galway Business School has (PEL) for our students in the event of Galway Business School being unable to fulfil its commitment to students on QQI-accredited courses. For the Bachelor of Business Level 7 programme, GBS has formal PEL arrangements with Dorset and Griffith College Dublin and for the proposed Bachelor of Business in International Business level 8 programme, GBS has formal PEL arrangements with Dorset College and Griffith College Dublin.

10.3 Conclusion

Galway Business School has committed itself to embracing an inclusive Quality Assurance culture in order to improve and maintain the quality of education offered to learners. This Quality Assurance Handbook demonstrates the commitment. This document is a live document, it is constantly referred to and updated and is an important referencing point for all other GBS policies in the school. Importantly, it is also easily adaptable for the purpose of future-proofing its suitability to the current and future graduate needs.

The quality policies, systems and procedures described herein are in place in Galway Business School and underpin all academic and support activities within the school. This Quality Assurance Handbook formalises those procedures and is a definitive reference for all Galway Business School staff. The Handbook also provides information for other stakeholders, both internal and external, including students and employers and finally provides evidence that Galway Business School satisfies the national and European standards required of a higher education provider.