



# PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW REPORTS 2015 – 2017

A Thematic Analysis

## [Abstract](#)

This report presents a thematic analysis of the commendations, recommendations and requirements made by Programmatic Review Panels during the 2015 – 2017 period.

## Contents

Contents	1
Introduction	2
Methodology	2
Overall Approach to Thematic Analysis	2
Methodological Developments	3
Highlights	5
All Reports – Collated Data Set for 2015 – 2017	7
Overall Strength of Individual Themes across Both Phases	7
Continuity of Themes across Both Phases	8
Phase 1 Reports – Collated Data Set for 2015 – 2017	9
Overall Distribution of Phase 1 Commendations and Recommendations/Requirements	9
Distribution of Broad Phase 1 Themes 2015 – 2017	9
Distribution of Individual Phase 1 Themes 2015 – 2017	10
Annotations on Individual Phase 1 Themes	11
Phase 2 Reports – Collated Data Set for 2015 – 2017	13
Overall Distribution of Phase 2 Commendations and Recommendations/Requirements	13
Distribution of Broad Phase 2 Themes 2015 – 2017	13
Distribution of Individual Phase 2 Themes 2015 – 2017	16
Presentation and Discussion of Individual Phase 2 Themes 2015 – 2017	19
Assessment Methodology & Scheduling	19
Programme Structure and Subject Streams	22
Professional Value, Graduate Profile and Career Path	24
Module Content and Delivery	26
Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback	27
Programme Information & Documentation (ESG 1.8)	30
Additional Points of Interest	33
Appendix: Abbreviations	36
Phase 1 Reports	36
Phase 2 Reports	36

## Introduction

This report follows on from the Thematic Analysis of Programmatic Review Reports for 2015/2016 presented to the CIT Academic Council at the same time last year.

The academic year 2016/2017 saw a rather more manageable amount of programmatic review activity than the previous year, with one Phase 1 review for the School of Science & Informatics and eight Phase 2 panels. The Phase 2 reviews covered the majority of programmes in the Departments of Biological Sciences and Computing, as well as the BBus (Hons) in Information Systems and the postgraduate programmes of the Teaching & Learning Unit.

Rather than analyse the resulting 9 PR Panel Reports for 2016/2017 separately, this Thematic Analysis builds on the findings of the previous report, with the aim of achieving a composite picture of the outcomes of programmatic review for the overall review period, 2015 – 2017.

As yet, the reports informing the analysis stem only from one review cycle per area reviewed, with some additional disciplines due to undergo review in the 2017/18 academic year just commenced.

Therefore, presentation and analysis of the statistical data presented in this report is based on a collation of data across the two years of reviews. In addition, while less useful for Phase 1, the presentation and discussion of the Phase 2 comments revisits and synthesises the commendations and recommendations/requirements of both years. It is hoped that this approach will contribute to an increasingly more rounded and reliable picture of programme provision in CIT across disciplines as assessed by academic and professional peers.

## Methodology

The general methodological approach of the first thematic analysis was maintained and somewhat refined, for instance with regard to the detailed presentation of individual themes.

### Overall Approach to Thematic Analysis

The following summary of the methodology employed in the 2015/16 report still applies:

“Thematic analysis of the commendations, recommendations and requirements contained in Programmatic Review Reports involved structured qualitative judgments on thematic correlations and units within a criteria framework derived from CIT and national quality assurance policy.

Themes were arrived at by grouping together sets of thematically related CRRs under headings derived largely from the programmatic review criteria, with addition of some topics raised by panels or, in the case of Work Placement, introduced by the faculty on foot of significant programme development activities.

This meant that in some cases a commendation or recommendation as formulated by the panel was determined to belong to more than one theme. By contrast, comparable comments were at times included under differing headings in different reports.

Commendations or recommendations deemed to be uninformative or of very low ‘transfer’ value for other programmes (e.g. largely formulaic expressions of appreciation; comments applicable to a particular specialism only) were not included in the collation and comparison. Most Phase 2 reports in particular would have contained a (moderate) number of these.

While detailed findings were occasionally drawn on to fully clarify panel intentions, the analysis was restricted to commendations, recommendations and requirements, as these represent ‘actionable’ aspects brought to the attention of the Institute to highlight either a need for future action or the success of actions already taken. In the following the term “panel comments” should be read as shorthand for commendations, recommendations and requirements, rather than all panel findings.

Apart from being assigned to different thematic groups, the panel comments analysed were separated into commendations and recommendations/requirements, to gain a better indication of how the provision performed against CIT’s strategic commitments and the *Standards & Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA* (ESG). A distinction of recommendations and requirements was not deemed meaningful in this context; experience has shown that panels have a variety of reasons for deciding on one or the other which are rarely verbalised in the report itself.

It needs to be emphasised that any figures and percentages given relate only to the data set generated by the method outlined (i.e. generalisable/ transferrable thematic units identified on the basis of commendations, recommendations and requirements). While they may be useful in pointing towards trends and preponderances, their reliability for establishing exact hierarchies and numeric correlations between individual themes has to be considered low.”<sup>1</sup>

## Methodological Developments

For purposes of the presentation and analysis of each theme in the present report, the 2015/16 panel commentary was revisited, and where necessary, the original reports were re-consulted to ensure accurate representation and a coherent approach across both years.

Developments and revisions of the original methodology for data analysis and presentation in this revised report for the 2015 – 2017 period concern three points:

### *Amalgamated Presentation of Phase 2 Commentary on Individual Themes*

For the Phase 2 commentary only, the summative presentation of panel points under each theme amalgamates the panel comments from both years and groups them under new descriptive sub-headings intended to identify commonalities at a more detailed level.

### *Inclusion of Commentary on Programme Information & Documentation (ESG 1.8) in the Data Count<sup>2</sup>*

Panel comments on *Programme Information & Documentation (ESG 1.8)* were not included in the original PR statistics, albeit the existence of comments pertinent to ESG 1.8 was noted and discussed. Given that the ESG constitute the national reference standards for internal quality assurance in HE, this collated analysis now includes the theme in its data set.

To enable this, the 2015/16 data were revisited and calculations revised accordingly prior to collation of overall data set. Where a comment was deemed to relate in equal measure to a programme feature and the information/documentation provided about this, it was counted under both themes. Where

---

<sup>1</sup> CIT Office of the Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs, “Programmatic Review 2015/16 – A Thematic Analysis of Panel Reports”, Jan. 2017, p. 5f.

<sup>2</sup> Comments relating to ESG 1.7, Information Management, had been counted under “Benchmarking & Analysis of Performance Data”. A revised thematic label was used for this report to more clearly align with ESG 1.7.

it related to information provision exclusively, it was subtracted from the count for the theme it had originally been assigned to. Formulaic introductory commendations on “the quality of the documentation submitted” or similar were neither counted nor included in the analysis; they represent a form of customary civility rather than specific examples of good practice. (See also the detailed presentation of Phase 2 comments on [Programme Information & Documentation](#) below).

#### *Revisions Following Transcription of Semi-Manual Data*

In both years, unit counts were initially carried out manually following qualitative processes of iterative interpretive alignment of the collated lists. Following presentation of the second analysis, it was decided it would be advisable to transcribe and preserve the data in fully searchable electronic format sooner rather than later to improve accessibility and avoid data loss.

On transcription of the semi-manual data set, it became obvious however that methodological streamlining during the ‘second round’ had led to slight variations between the years in how some thematic units were determined and/or counted. This was mainly due to a somewhat stronger summation of closely related Commendations or Recommendations/Requirements at point of collation in 2015/16.

In addition, on reverting to the 2015/16 reports, six comments were identified which had been omitted from the collation of 2015/16 commentary where comparable comments had been included in the 2016/17 data set. These were added to the collated data for consistency.

Following transcription and compilation, the resulting finalised data set for 2015 – 2017 was re-counted (electronically) and all relevant figures, tables and graphs amended accordingly. In all, the data set grew by 18 thematic units (2.7%; of which 2 for Phase 1 and 16 for Phase 2), to 672 thematic units overall.

In terms of consequences of this work for the presentation and discussion of the data, in a small number of cases, the detailed presentation of individual themes was amplified to take into account specific aspects not previously recorded. The observations and conclusions on general preponderances and trends (as captured in [Highlights](#) and subsequent high-level discussion below) remained unaffected.

## Highlights

- a) The overall 2015 – 2017 data set consists of 672 thematic units, of which
- 168 (25%) are Commendations (COM);
  - 504 (75%) are Recommendations or Requirements (RR);
  - 77 (11%) COM/RR derive from Phase 1; and
  - 595 (89%) COM/RR derive from Phase 2.

b) In the absence of both an institutional baseline and external benchmarks, the overall **ratio of Commendations to RR of 1:3** should be considered preliminary. However, it does not seem out of line with PR guidance or a general understanding of the purpose of programme review.

c) The thematic area which saw the strongest panel engagement overall was **Assessment Methodology & Scheduling**, regardless of the fact it did not feature in Phase 1 in either year.

*Assessment ...* received both the **highest number of overall panel comments** (72 COM/RR, or 11% of the total) **and of Recommendations/Requirements** (64, or 13% of all RR).

d) Second in overall panel engagement came **Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback**, with 65 COM/RR (10% of the total) received across both phases of PR (14 in Phase 1; 51 in Phase 2).

Not only did panels show a strong interest in student support and feedback mechanisms, much of the commentary was complimentary of departmental, School or Institute efforts in this regard: with 36 Commendations (22.1% of all COM), *Student Supports ...* was the **most commended theme** in the 2015 – 17 review period.

A large number of the Commendations focused on a few specific aspects, notably Student Success and Engagement Measures. Both departmental and Institute-wide measures were referenced in this respect. This reflects not just the success of these measures per se, it also illustrates the merit of adopting an appropriate promotional strategy from the outset, while not neglecting to also evidence the value of the work through gathering and publishing relevant performance data.

e) Of the themes generating both COM and RR, **Student Supports ...** and **Professional Value ...** are the **only areas for which Commendations exceed Recommendations/Requirements** (*Student Supports ...*: 36 COM : 29 RR; *Professional Value ...*: 35 COM : 23 RR)<sup>3</sup>.

This result reinforces the observations on these themes in the first Thematic Analysis, not least since the ratio of COM to RR for *Professional Value ...* strongly improved as against 2015/16 alone<sup>4</sup>.

The initial report noted that it could “probably be stated [...] that the distribution of commendations **aligns well with the CIT mission of providing ‘student-centred, career-focused education and research’**”<sup>5</sup>. The collated results for 2015 – 2017 support the validity of the original conclusion.

---

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the 2015/16 Phase 1 theme *Programme Portfolio* gained 2 COM and no RR.

<sup>4</sup> In 2015/16, *Professional Value ...* received 1 COM: 1 RR in Phase 1, and 17 COM: 18 RR in Phase 2.

<sup>5</sup> CIT Office of the Registrar & VP for Academic Affairs, “Programmatic Review 2015/16 – A Thematic Analysis of Panel Reports”, Jan. 2017, p. 13

- f) For both review phases, the **distribution of Broad Themes aligns well with the focus and aims of the phase** in question.

In Phase 1, *Governance, Management & the Operation of Institutional Functions* received roughly twice as many comments (33, or 42.9% of the phase total) as the next two themes, with COM and RR attracting fairly comparable percentages of their respective totals.

In Phase 2, 47.6% of the comments (283) related to aspects of the *Programme Design & Specification*, clearly in excess of the 201 comments (33.8% of the phase total) on the next-highest area, *Programme Operation & Performance*.

In each case, the clear preponderance of the highest-ranked theme seems unsurprising. If nothing else, it may be taken to indicate that the review process functioned as intended, with both faculties and panels broadly focusing on the 'job they had been asked to do'.

- g) While not one of the 'top five', *Programme Information & Documentation (ESG 1.8)* received a considerable level of interest from Phase 2 panels in both years, gaining 2 COM and 34 RR (6% of total Phase 2 comments, resp. 5% of overall thematic units for 2015 – 2017).

Comments are spread over a range of aspects, with the need for clarity and completeness of programme documentation and a need to formalise and document guidance on skills development pathways and elective streams standing out.

- h) *Work Placement* continued to generate good panel interest in 2016/17, despite the fact that only one report related to a Business programme. As for 2015/16, all panels supported the inclusion of work placement or an extension of its duration, and any recommendations focussed on the operational supports necessary to make placement a success.

- i) Distinct new topics which appeared in panel Commendations or Recommendations include *Internationalisation & ERASMUS* and *Gender Balance / Female Participation*.

The number of comments here is modest (2 Ph. 2 RR for *Internationalisation ...*; 1 COM / 3 RR (both phases) for *Gender Balance ...*<sup>6</sup>). However, the emergence of any distinct new themes in panel commendations or recommendations which were not specifically referenced in faculty or panel guidance may merit some attention. Provided that panels keep to the remit of PR in other respects, and occasional 'pet themes' aside, the reflection of such topics at the level of COM or RR may signal issues of sufficient importance sectorally that sectoral peers feel the need to encourage continuation of good practice, or provide advice towards enhancement of practice, even where they were not explicitly asked to.

---

<sup>6</sup> Captured under the theme of *Access, Transfer & Progression* for purposes of the collation.

## All Reports – Collated Data Set for 2015 – 2017

### Overall Strength of Individual Themes across Both Phases

The overall data set for 2015 – 2017 amounts to 672 thematic units, of which 168 (25%) are Commendations and 504 (75%) Recommendations or Requirements.

Given the differing focus of Phase 1 and Phase 2, an alignment of broad themes would make little sense. Similarly, attempting to rank individual themes across the two phases has an element of ‘apples and oranges’, so the results should not be overstated.

However, a cross-phase collation of individual themes – some of which recur in both phases – may give some indication at least of the relative strength of panel engagement with particular themes across the Programmatic Review process as a whole.

Of the 28 ‘combined’ themes thus identified for 2015 – 2017<sup>7</sup>, 6 themes (21.4%) generated over half (55%) of all Commendations and Recommendations/Requirements. These are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1: ‘TOP 6’ PR THEMES (BOTH PHASES) FOR 2015 – 2017 (IN COM, RR, OVERALL THEMATIC UNITS)

2015 – 2017 PR THEME	Ph. 1	Ph. 2	Commendations		Recomm./Requ.		Thematic Units	
			No.	% of COM	No.	% of RR	No.	% of Th. U.
Assessment Methodology & Scheduling	✘	✓	8	4.8%	<b>64</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>11%</b>
Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback	✓	✓	<b>36</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	29	5.8%	65	10%
Programme Structure and Subject Streams	✓	✓	22	13.1%	38	7.5%	60	9%
Professional Value, Graduate Profile and Career Path	✓	✓	35	20.8%	23	4.6%	58	9%
Module Content & Delivery	✘	✓	0	0%	57	11.3%	57	8%
Work Placement	✓	✓	11	6.5%	41	8.1%	52	8%

Commentary:

- Two of the six ‘top’ themes drew panel commentary in Phase 2 only, including the most frequently commented-on theme, *Assessment Methodology & Scheduling*.
- Assessment Methodology ...* also received the most Recommendations/Requirements of any theme across both phases, while *Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback* gained the largest amount of Commendations, closely followed by *Professional Value, Graduate Profile and Career Path*.
- Of those themes which received both, *Student Supports ...* and *Professional Value ...* are the only themes for which Commendations exceed Recommendations/Requirements in the overall data

<sup>7</sup> For purposes of the collation, the Phase 1 theme *Governance and Management* was amalgamated with the Phase 2 theme *Programme Management & Governance*, and Phase 1 comments on *Teaching, Learning & Assessment Methodology* were combined with Phase 2 comments on *Teaching & Learning Methodology* alone.



set. For *Student Supports* ... this is also true for each phase separately. *Professional Value* ... gained significantly more COM than RR in Phase 2, and received one COM and one RR each in Phase 1<sup>8</sup>.

### Continuity of Themes across Both Phases

Themes which carry through both phases of PR will not necessarily receive the same amount of attention in each phase. As well as this, comparable issues, such as engagement with industry, may be discussed from different vantage points.

Of the 28 'combined' themes, 15 were commented on by panels in both phases, while 4 were addressed in Phase 1 only (*External Engagement; Strategic Positioning, USP & Identity; Programme Portfolio; Programme Viability*), and 9 themes (including *Assessment* ...) only featured in Phase 2.

Table 8 presents the 15 themes which received COM and RR from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 panels during either year, or both years, within the review period.

TABLE 8: THEMES CARRIED THROUGH BOTH PR PHASES IN 2015 – 2017 (BY COM, RR, OVERALL THEM. UNITS)

RECURRENT THEME	Total COM 2015-17	Total RR 2015-17	Total Th. Units 2015-17	% of Total 2015-17 Th. Units
Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback	36	29	65	10%
Programme Structure and Subject Streams	22	38	60	9%
Professional Value, Graduate Profile and Career Path	35	23	58	9%
Work Placement	11	41	52	8%
Access, Transfer & Progression	14	23	37	6%
Teaching & Learning Methodology <sup>1</sup>	11	20	31	5%
Staffing & Staff Development	2	27	29	4%
Resources, Facilities & Funding	0	24	24	4%
Professional & Academic Skills Development	3	15	18	3%
Research and PG Research Study	3	13	16	2%
Collection & Use of Performance Data (ESG 1.7) <sup>2</sup>	2	14	16	2%
Delivery Modes	4	10	14	2%
Programmatic Review Process	4	9	13	2%
Management & Governance <sup>3</sup>	3	5	8	1%
Programme & Module Credit Weighting	0	5	5	1%
<i>(... of total thematic units across both phases:</i>	<i>168</i>	<i>504</i>	<i>672</i>	<i>100%</i>

Notes:

- 1) Incl. one Phase 1 COM and one RR each (both 2015/16) on Teaching, Learning & Assessment Methodology.
- 2) Count includes 4 linked Phase 1 RR from 2015/16 on Benchmarking specifically.
- 3) It should be noted that the scope of the comments on management & governance issues differs between phases. Phase 1 comments are directed at School/College level and up, while Phase 2 comments for the most part are directed at departmental or programme board level.

<sup>8</sup> In addition, *Programme Portfolio* gained 2 Phase 1 COM in 2015/16, and no RR in either year; *Access, Transfer & Progression* gained more Phase 2 COM than RR in 2016/17 (7 COM: 5 RR); and Phase 1 COM and RR for *External Engagement*, all of which were made in 2015/16, were evenly matched (4 COM: 4 RR). In all other cases Recommendations/Requirements exceeded Commendations.

## Phase 1 Reports – Collated Data Set for 2015 – 2017

### Overall Distribution of Phase 1 Commendations and Recommendations/Requirements

TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF PH. 1 COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMEND./REQUIREMENTS ANNUALLY / COLLATED

PHASE 1	2015/16 Number	2015/16 % (of total Th. Units)	2016/17 Number	2016/17 % (of total Th. Units)	Collated 2015-17 Number	Collated 2015-17 %
<b>Commendations</b>	22	33.8%	4	33.3%	26	<b>33.8%</b>
<b>Recomm./Requ.</b>	43	66.2%	8	66.7%	51	<b>66.2%</b>
<b>Total Them. Units</b>	65	100%	12	100%	<b>77</b>	<b>100%</b>

Commentary:

While 77 Phase 1 comments may be insufficient to claim reliable statistical trends, it may be noted that the ratio of Commendations to Recommendations/Requirements is ca. 1:2 in both years.

### Distribution of Broad Phase 1 Themes 2015 – 2017

TABLE 3: COLLATED DISTRIBUTION OF BROAD PHASE 1 THEMES 2015-2017 (BY COM, RR, OVERALL THEM. UNITS)

PHASE 1 2015 – 2017 <b>Broad Theme</b>	<b>Commendations</b>		<b>Recommend./ Requirements</b>		<b>Total Thematic Units (COM + RR)</b>	
	No.	% of COM	No.	% of RR	No.	% of Them. U.
A) Institutional Identity & Societal Role	4	15.4%	12	23.5%	16	20.8%
B) Governance, Management & Operation of Institutional Functions	<b>11</b>	<b>42.3%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>43.1%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>42.9%</b>
C) Features of the Taught Provision	8	30.8%	9	17.6%	17	22.1%
D) Research and PG Research Study	3	11.5%	8	15.7%	11	14.3%
Totals	26	100%	51	100%	77	100%

Commentary:

- a) The thematic labels of broad themes A, B and D have been revised slightly for brevity or clarity. The scope of each area remains as previously identified.
- b) Even though the exact percentages should again be taken ‘with a grain of salt’, the collated comments on *Governance, Management & the Operation of Institutional Functions* clearly exceed those on any other broad theme. In addition, Commendations and Recommendations/Requirements on this theme attracted fairly similar percentages of the total COM and RR each.

Given the strategic focus of Phase 1, this may be taken to indicate that the review process operated as intended, with the faculty and panel focus broadly speaking matching guidance during the two review years.

## Distribution of Individual Phase 1 Themes 2015 – 2017

TABLE 4: COLLATED DISTRIBUTION OF PHASE 1 THEMES 2015-2017 (BY COM, RR AND OVERALL THEMATIC UNITS)

PHASE 1 THEME	BT	No. COM 15-16	No. COM 16-17	Total COM 15-17	No. RR 15-16	No. RR 16-17	Total RR 15-17	Total Theme 15-17	Total in % 15-17
<b>Student Supports, Welfare &amp; Feedback<sup>1</sup></b>	b	6	2	8	5	1	6	14	18%
<b>Research &amp; PG Research Study</b>	d	2	1	3	7	1	8	11	14%
<b>Staffing &amp; Staff Development</b>	b	1	0	1	7	0	7	8	10%
<b>External Engagement<sup>2</sup></b>	a	3	1	4	3	1	4	8	10%
Benchmarking <sup>3</sup>	a	0	0	0	4	0	4	4	5%
Strategic Positioning, USP & Identity <sup>4</sup>	a	0	0	0	4	0	4	4	5%
Prog. Structure & Subject Streams <sup>5</sup>	c	2	0	2	2	0	2	4	5%
Work Placement	c	1	0	1	2	0	2	3	4%
Access, Transfer & Progression <sup>6</sup>	b	0	0	0	1	2	3	3	4%
Resources, Facilities & Funding	b	0	0	0	1	2	3	3	4%
Governance and Management	b	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	3%
Programme Viability <sup>7</sup>	b	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	3%
Programme Portfolio	c	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	3%
Professional Value, Graduate Profile and Career Path	c	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	3%
Prof. & Acad. Skills Development <sup>8</sup>	c	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	3%
Teaching, Learning & Assessment Methodology <sup>9</sup>	c	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	3%
Programmatic Review Process	b	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1%
Prog. & Module Credit Weighting	c	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1%
Delivery Modes	c	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1%
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Notes:

- 1) Incl. one 2015/16 COM also captured under *Research & Postgraduate Research Study*.
- 2) Many Phase 2 comments also reference industry engagement. However, Phase 2 generally focuses on features of the provision which benefit from the engagement (frequently the graduate profile or professional value of a programme), rather than the extent and quality of the engagement activity itself. Conversely, any Phase 1 comments which specifically relate to features of the programmes or to their intended graduate profile were grouped under *Professional Value ...*
- 3) Linked recommendations, all concerning the same School.
- 4) Of which one 2015/16 RR was closed on follow-up in Phase 2.
- 5) Incl. one 2015/16 RR on embedding external engagement in the curriculum.
- 6) For 2016/17, the two RR concerned the issue of **Gender Balance / Female Participation**.
- 7) Incl. one 2015/16 RR also captured under Benchmarking.
- 8) 2015/16 RR relates to guidance to make graduates industry-ready; under “Student Support” in the report.
- 9) Split into two separate themes in Phase 2.

### Commentary:

- a) The ‘top four’ Phase 1 themes (21.1%) generated 52% of the collated Phase 1 comments.
- b) In parallel with the overall data set, the theme with most collated Phase 1 comments, *Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback*, also attracted the highest number of Commendations, and was the only Phase 1 theme for which COM exceeded RR (8 COM : 6 RR).

## Annotations on Individual Phase 1 Themes

Since only Phase 1 report with 4 COM and 8 RR was produced in 2016/2017, with few points which significantly widened the scope of the commentary previously presented, the following annotations should be read as supplementary to the presentation of Phase 1 themes in the previous report (p. 7ff).

### *Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback*

Both the Commendations and the Recommendation on *Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback* received in 2016/17 relate to aspects referenced by several 2015/16 panels. The panel expressed itself impressed by the retention and engagement initiatives at all levels undertaken since the last PR, with a specific commendation for the “obvious partnership model in place” (SoSI Ph.1 Report, 1.6.2.1) between the Departments and the CIT Student Engagement and Retention Initiative.

The recommendation “encourages more formal representation of students on Course Boards and other deliberative committees” (ibid., 1.6.3.4), reinforcing the earlier finding that formalised learner representation will require further attention in the run-up to the next review.

### *Resources, Facilities & Funding*

This theme also received two further Phase 1 RR in 2016/17, one regarding development of a physical plan to identify spatial needs – comparably to an earlier recommendation –, the other calling on the faculty and CIT to address immediate space requirements. Again there were no direct requests for increased funding; instead the panel “acknowledged” (SoSI Ph.1, 1.6.1) the challenging external context and listed several factors impinging on School operations. These encompassed the funding model and levels, spatial constraints (esp. lack of laboratory space), equipment in need of upgrading, the employment control framework, and uncertainties over the TU timeline and status leading to strategic stasis.

### *Gender Balance / Female Participation (under Theme ‘Access, Transfer & Progression’)*

‘New to programmatic review’ at CIT are two recommendations on gender balance and female participation. Two further RR on these issues were also made by two Phase 2 Computing panels (see Subsection [Gender Balance / Female Participation](#) in Additional Points of Interest below).

From the vantage point of our current PR criteria and Strategic Plan, gender balance and female (or male) participation represent access issues; therefore the comments were subsumed under this thematic heading in both phases. However, on a wider societal level the achievement of gender balance is an issue of primary importance in its own right, and gender balance and female participation are well established topics in international STEM discourse in particular. Thus, for instance, ‘Gender and Science’ is the first UNESCO [priority area](#) for the Natural Sciences.

In connection with the stated strategic aim of the School of Science & Informatics to increase the number of female learners, particularly in Computer Science, which the panel expressed itself in support of, one recommendation suggested a review of the work of Carnegie Mellon University, which “had successfully increased female participation in core computer programmes” (SoSI Ph.1, 1.6.3.2). In addition, the development of a framework to evaluate the impact of relevant initiatives was suggested, which might also be applied to assess the impact of outreach and recruitment activities.

### *Research and Postgraduate Research Study*

As for the Schools of Business and Humanities previously, the significantly increased level of research activity in the School of Science & Informatics and its associated research units was commended.

The additional recommendation concerned the possibility of additional Institute funding for early stage researchers, e.g. in the form of scholarships and bursaries, to alleviate difficulties experienced by this group in obtaining external research funding.

### *External Engagement*

Again aligning with points previously made, the extensive engagement of SoSI with industry across the broad spectrum of activities was commended. The panel noted that it found “evidence of good practice” in engagement relating to work placement, undergraduate projects, programme and module development, consultancy and industry-based research.

The recommendation also touched upon another familiar issue, asking that the School look to formalise the informal engagement relationships to support the ongoing mutually beneficial relationships between industry and the School where this was practicable.

### *Delivery Modes*

A single Phase 1 recommendation across both years concerns this theme, in the context of the increasing number of new programmes (especially at Masters level) delivered wholly online. Citing learner and employer feedback which indicated that learners value face-to-face delivery, the recommendation asks the School to reflect on the feasibility of more traditional face-to-face or blended part-time delivery options for CPD programmes.

This resonates with some Phase 2 recommendations suggesting a more detailed appraisal of the pedagogical effectiveness and requirements of online delivery (see [Teaching & Learning Methodology](#) in Additional Points of Interest below).

### *Programmatic Review Process / Programme & Module Credit Weighting (2015/16 Addenda)*

On transcription of the manual data, it was decided that two further comments by 2015/16 Phase 1 panels should be included with the data set. Each belongs to a theme which had not been previously identified for Phase 1, *Programmatic Review Process* and *Programme & Module Credit Weighting* respectively.

The Commendation on *Programmatic Review Process* lauds the rigorous consultation process undertaken as part of PR in the Business & Humanities Faculty.

The comment on *Programme & Module Credit Weighting* – included as a Recommendation in the relevant report – “endorses the premise that module design and credit weighting needs to explicitly acknowledge the workload involved with music and drama performance” (CSM 1.6.2).

## Phase 2 Reports – Collated Data Set for 2015 – 2017

### Overall Distribution of Phase 2 Commendations and Recommendations/Requirements

TABLE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF PH. 2 COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMEND./REQUIREMENTS ANNUALLY / COLLATED

PHASE 2	2015/16 Number	2015/16 % (of total Th. Units)*	2016/17 Number	2016/17 % (of total Th. Units)	Collated 2015-17 Number	Collated 2015-17 %
<b>Commendations</b>	69	19.3%	73	30.8%	142	<b>23.9%</b>
<b>Recomm./Req.</b>	289	80.7%	164	69.2%	453	<b>76.1%</b>
<b>Total Them. Units</b>	358	100%	237	100%	<b>595</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* NB: Uses revised figures for 2015/16; see p. 3.

#### Commentary:

The fluctuations in the percentages of Commendations and Recommendations/Requirements between 2015/16 and 2016/17 should be seen as part of a multi-year process of establishing a baseline. As yet the data only represent one review cycle per area, and some disciplines did not undergo review in 2015 – 2017. Currently the collated ratio between Commendations and Recommendations/Requirements lies around 1:3.

As also stated in the first Thematic Analysis, even without benchmarking data from other institutions, this distribution does not seem unusual for Phase 2, in the context of a PR model which encourages but does not require panels to record good practice under set headings. The emerging ratio appears consistent with an understanding that the core function of programme review is to identify areas in need of enhancement and to suggest possible enhancement measures.

### Distribution of Broad Phase 2 Themes 2015 – 2017

TABLE 6: COLLATED DISTRIBUTION OF BROAD PHASE 2 THEMES 2015-2017 (BY COM, RR, OVERALL THEM. UNITS)

PHASE 2 2015 – 2017  <b>Broad Theme</b>	<b>Commendations</b>		<b>Recommendations/ Requirements</b>		<b>Total Thematic Units (COM + RR)</b>	
	No.	% of COM	No.	% of RR	No.	% of Them. U.
A) Professional Value, Graduate Profile, Career Path, Award	36	25.4%	56	12.4%	92	15.5%
B) Programme Operation & Performance	<b>53</b>	<b>37.3%</b>	148	32.7%	201	33.8%
C) Programme Design & Specification	50	35.2%	<b>233</b>	<b>51.4%</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>47.6%</b>
D) Other*	3	2.1%	16	3.5%	19	3.2%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>100%</b>

NB: Uses revised figures for 2015/16; see p. XX.

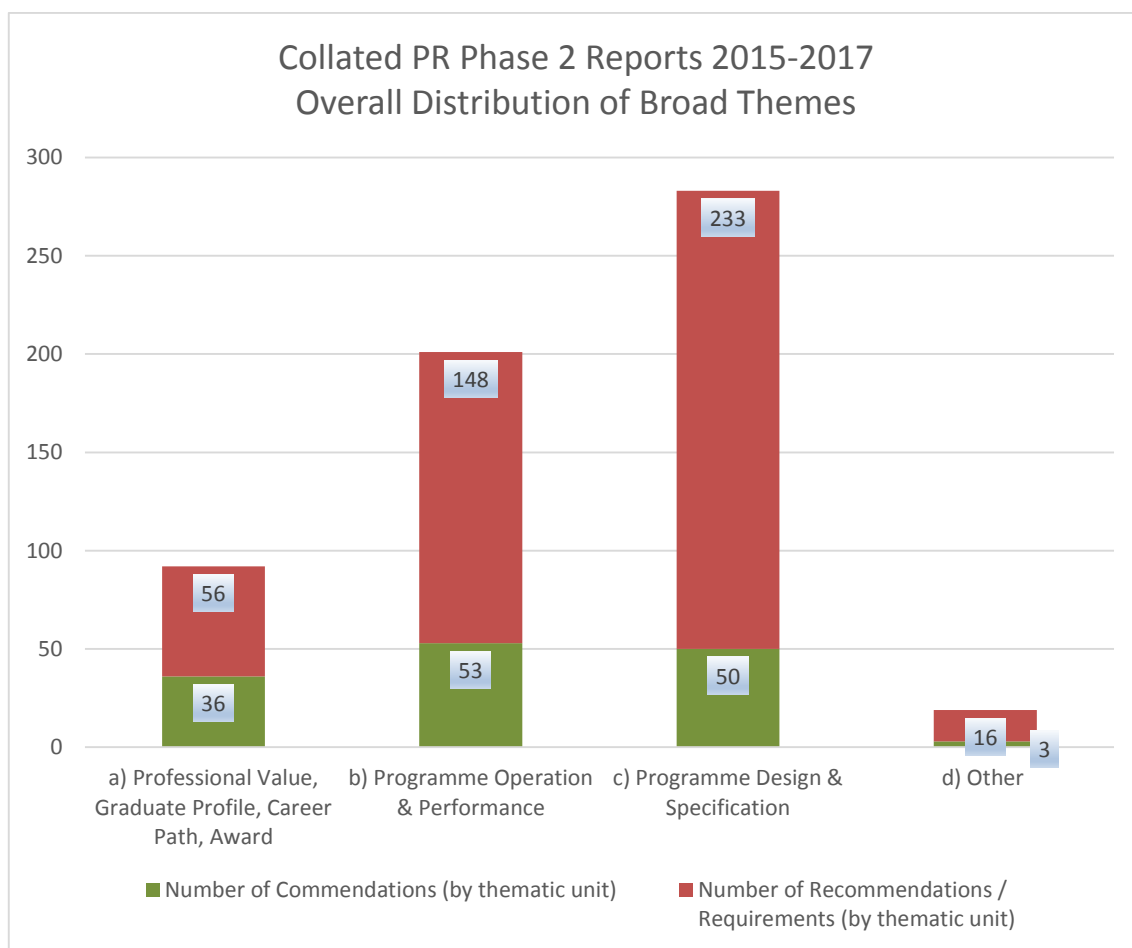
\*d) 'Other' includes sub-themes: PR Process; Research; Internationalisation & ERASMUS

Commentary:

- a) Phase 2 Recommendations/Requirements show a far more uneven distribution across the broad themes than Commendations. This goes both for the collated data and for each year separately<sup>9</sup>.
- b) *Programme Operation ...* (B) and *Programme Design ...* (C), which are quite close, attract the highest number of collated Commendations, with operational commendations ahead by a slim 2.1% (3 comments). The results for the individual years differ; while operational aspects gained most Commendations in 2015/16, programme design features gained most kudos the following year. Together, the two areas account for 72.5% of the Commendations.
- c) Issues related to *Programme Design & Specification* (C) received the highest number of Recommendations & Requirements, both across the overall period (close to half of all RR) and for each year. RR under this theme clearly exceed the RR for the next-highest category, *Programme Operation & Performance* (B), for each data set.

Graph 1 below illustrates the comparative strength of Phase 2 Broad Themes for 2015-17.

GRAPH 1: DISTRIBUTION OF BROAD THEMES IN THE COLLATED PHASE 2 PR REPORTS 2015-2017



<sup>9</sup> Theme D, *Other*, may be disregarded here, as it is only a holding category to capture observations which do not fit well with the Phase 2 criteria covered by A – C. In a functioning review process this category would normally encompass a smattering of comments only.

- d) As for Phase 1, there are no great surprises in the distribution of the Phase 2 panel commentary for 2015 – 2017 across the broad themes; it appears in keeping with the review parameters as well as with an established understanding of the purpose of PR.

If nothing else, the distribution would again seem to confirm that the 2015-17 panels ‘did the job’ they had been asked to do, and saw little reason to diverge from their remit.

- e) Collated comments on additional topics assigned to category D, *Other*, for 2015-17 relate to:
- the Programmatic Review process itself – observations on which are customarily encouraged verbally or via post-review email by the CIT Registrar’s Office;
  - Research – which explicitly features in Phase 1 of the CIT PR model, but is not referenced in Phase 2 guidance (e.g. links between research and taught provision are not to date explicitly queried in the School/Faculty SER template); and
  - Internationalisation & ERASMUS.

The theme of *Internationalisation & ERASMUS* was raised by two Phase 2 panels in 2015/16 and may merit some further investigation.

Occasional ‘pet themes’ of individual panellists aside, if different panels introduce themes which go beyond the review criteria, this might signal issues of sufficient importance to sectoral peers that they feel the need to comment even where they were not specifically asked to.

Outside of our joint awards with Hochschule Darmstadt, we do not currently specifically target our internationalisation efforts and the operation of ERASMUS in the context of programme QA. In view of CIT’s growing international engagements and the likely introduction of a mandatory internationalisation ‘mark’ across Irish HE, CIT may wish to use the appearance of this theme in PR commentary as a prompt to review if – and how – these areas should be considered more systematically in future programme QA.



## Distribution of Individual Phase 2 Themes 2015 – 2017

TABLE 7: COLLATED DISTRIBUTION OF PHASE 2 THEMES 2015-2017 (BY COM, RR AND OVERALL THEMATIC UNITS)

PHASE 2 THEME	BT	No. COM 15-16	No. COM 16-17	Total COM 15-17	No. RR 15-16	No. RR 16-17	Total RR 15-17	Total Theme 15-17	Total in % 15-17
<b>Assessment Methodology &amp; Scheduling</b>	c	3	5	8	30	34	64	72	12%
<b>Module Content &amp; Delivery</b>	c	0	0	0	33	24	57	57	10%
<b>Professional Value, Graduate Profile and Career Path</b>	a	17	17	34	18	4	22	56	9%
<b>Prog. Structure and Subject Streams</b>	c	5	15	20	24	12	36	56	9%
<b>Student Supports, Welfare &amp; Feedback</b>	b	19	9	28	9	14	23	51	9%
Work Placement	c	4	6	10	28	11	39	49	8%
Programme Information & Documentation (ESG 1.8) <sup>1</sup>	b	1	1	2	25	9	34	36	6%
Access, Transfer and Progression	b	7	7	14	15	5	20	34	6%
Teaching & Learning Methodology	c	6	4	10	12	7	20	29	5%
Staffing and Staff Development	b	0	1	1	11	9	20	21	4%
Resources, Facilities & Funding	b	0	0	0	14	7	21	21	4%
Prof. & Academic Skills Development	c	1	1	2	9	5	14	16	3%
Programme Outcomes and Core Intended Graduate Attributes	a	0	0	0	10	3	13	13	2%
Delivery Modes	b	3	1	4	8	1	9	13	2%
Promotion and Recruitment	a	0	0	0	10	2	12	12	2%
Collection & Use of Performance Data (ESG 1.7) <sup>2</sup>	b	0	2	2	5	5	10	12	2%
Programmatic Review Process <sup>3</sup>	d	0	3	3	5	4	9	12	2%
Award and Programme Title	a	2	0	2	7	2	9	11	2%
Programme Management & Governance <sup>4</sup>	b	1	1	2	1	3	4	6	1%
Timetabling <sup>5</sup>	b	0	0	0	2	3	5	5	1%
Research and PG Research Study <sup>6</sup>	d	0	0	0	5	0	5	5	1%
Prog. & Module Credit Weighting <sup>7</sup>	c	0	0	0	4	0	4	4	1%
Attendance <sup>7</sup>	b	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0%
Internationalisation and ERASMUS <sup>7</sup>	d	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0%
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>69</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Notes:

- 1) New theme for purposes of data collation. ESG 1.8 was discussed, but did not form part of the stats for the first PR Report Analysis. The 2015/16 data were revisited and calculations revised accordingly. Many comments are double-counted, as they equally relate to other themes such as assessment.
- 2) Revised label for category *Benchmarking & Analysis of Performance Data* used 2015/16.
- 3) Some comments are also counted under *Collection & Use of Perf. Data* and *Prog. Info & Documentation*.
- 4) New theme; subsumes 2015/16 theme *Integrated & Collaborative Activities* (2015/16 data calculation & presentation was revised accordingly). Incorporates some strategic aspects exceeding provision.
- 5) Revised category label (... *and Module Choice* dropped).
- 6) Revised category label (... *and PG Research Study* added). No commentary in 2016/17, though one RR on the desirability of research-led modules is included under *Programme Structure & Subject Streams*.
- 7) No commentary in 2016/17.

Commentary:

a) 49% of the overall Phase 2 panel commentary 2015 – 2017 (in thematic units) went on 5 themes (= 20.8% of 24 themes). These are:

- Assessment Methodology & Scheduling (72 comments, 12%)
- Module Content & Delivery (57 comments, 10%)
- Professional Value, Graduate Profile and Career Path (56 comments, 9%)
- Programme Structure and Subject Streams (56 comments, 9%)
- Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback (51 comments, 9%)

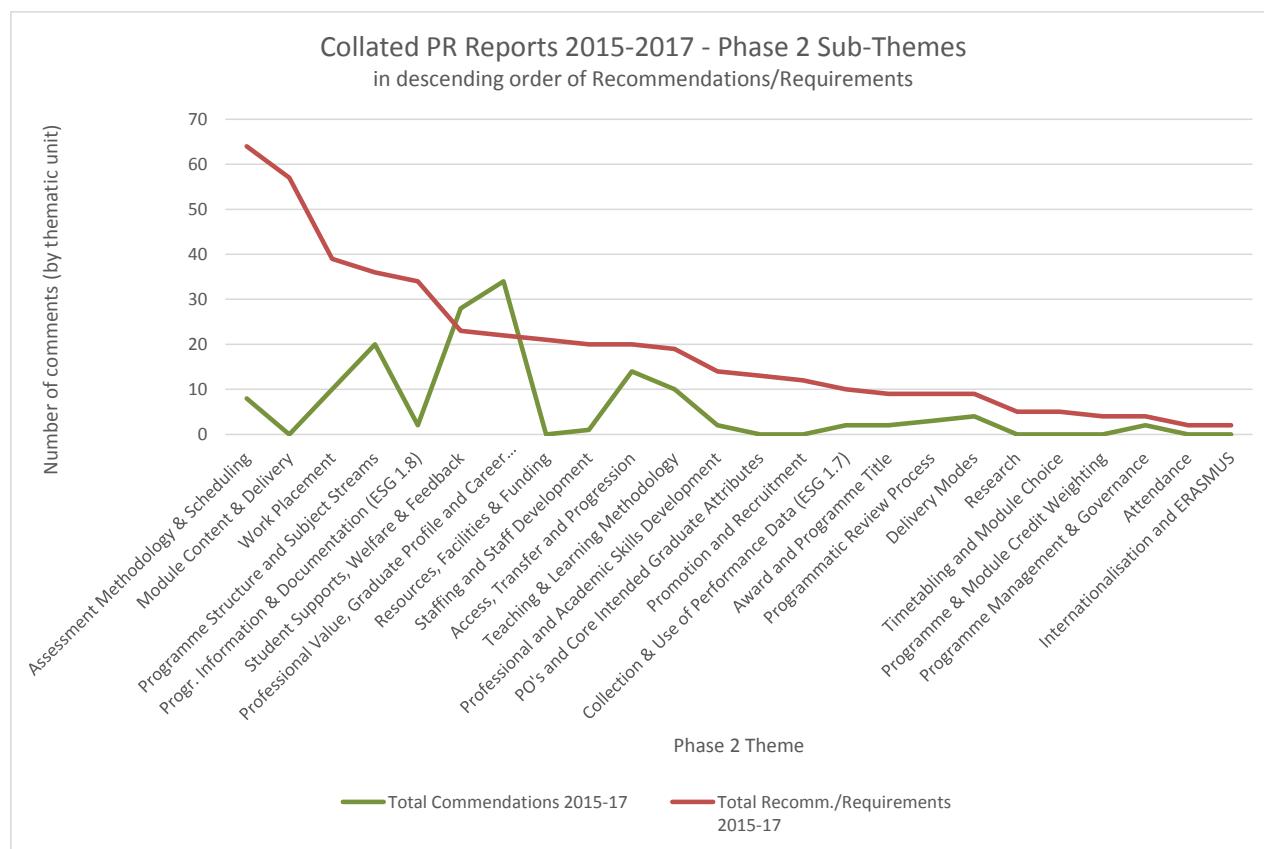
*Assessment Methodology & Scheduling* also received the highest number of Recommendations/Requirements overall and for each year.

b) For themes attracting both, Commendations exceed Recommendations/Requirements for only two themes, *Professional Value ...* (34 COM : 22 RR) and *Student Supports ...* (28 COM : 23 RR).

This roughly echoes the 2015/16 results. However, for the overall period, *Professional Value ...* has the highest number of Phase 2 Commendations and the best ratio of COM to RR (1.55).<sup>10</sup>

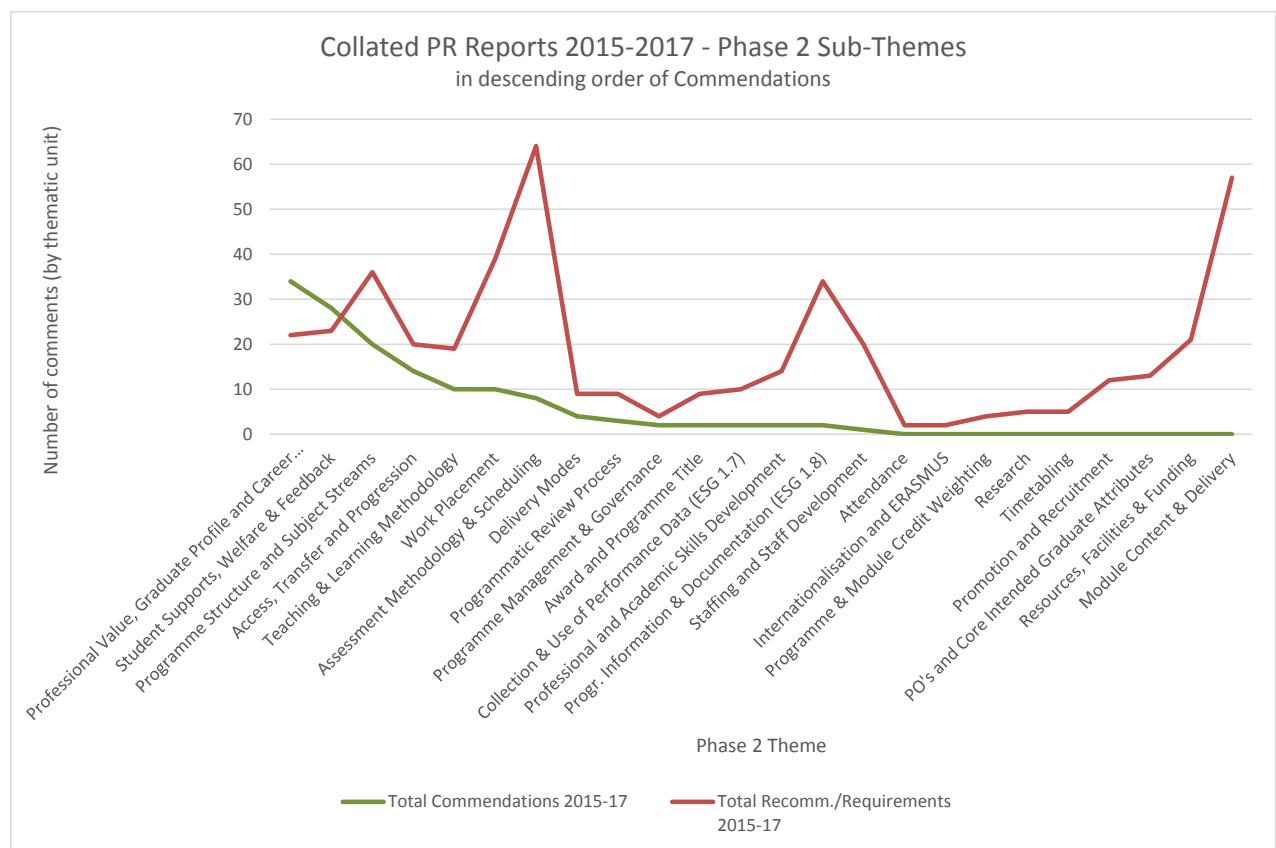
The relative distribution of COM and RR across themes is visualised in the following two graphs:

GRAPH 2: DISTRIBUTION OF SUB-THEMES 2015-2017 (IN DESCENDING ORDER OF RECOMM. & REQUIREMENTS)



<sup>10</sup> As noted above, in 2016/17 alone, COM for *Access, Transfer & Progression* also exceeded RR (7 COM : 5 RR).

GRAPH 3: DISTRIBUTION OF SUB-THEMES 2015-2017 (IN DESCENDING ORDER OF COMMENDATIONS)



- c) With the given approach to PR, the absence of Commendations under a theme per se is less likely to be meaningful than their presence. *Module Content & Delivery* may be a case in point: this theme received a good number of commentary overall, but no specific Commendations.

Based on this, one can conclude with some certainty that the 2015 – 2017 panels paid more attention to, and/or found more reason to comment on, module issues than, say, general professional & academic skills development or delivery modes. As a rule, Phase 2 panellists, who are subject experts, like to engage with module content as far as is possible with the sheer number of modules before them (2,000 modules distributed over 26 panels in 2015 – 2017).

What should *not* be concluded is that there is “a problem with the modules”. While some recommendations cut across several descriptors (e.g. resource listings), most concern issues specific to a particular module or few modules. To be counted as part of the data set, an issue raised in a module had to be deemed generalizable, that is apt to provide steerage for future programme development across the board: a mismatch between the title and other elements of one module, for instance, might equally arise in other modules, regardless of discipline. While different panels might well make comparable recommendations, most of the module-related comments still only relate to one or two modules at a time.

(See also sub-section [Module Content and Delivery](#) below).

## Presentation and Discussion of Individual Phase 2 Themes 2015 – 2017

This section looks at the 5 most commented-on themes of the 2015 – 2017 period in greater detail. The new theme of *Programme Information & Documentation* is also presented, with some added commentary on noteworthy points arising elsewhere.

The summary presentation of features or issues noted by panels under each theme integrates the summaries of the 2015/16 PR Report Analysis with the points made by the 2016/17 panels, to arrive at a more comprehensive picture of panel comments within one review cycle.

### Assessment Methodology & Scheduling

Assessment Methodology & Scheduling moved from ‘second place’ in 2015/2016 to a very clear ‘first place’ in terms of active panel interest in the overall period. It should be noted that, while all eight 2016/17 panels commented on assessment, only 14 of 18 panels did so the previous year (altogether, 85% of 26 Phase 2 panels).

2016/17 recommendations and requirements on assessment largely cover the same ground as those of the previous year, with variations mainly down to discipline-specific assessment formats and conventions.

For 2015 – 2017, **Commendations** on Assessment pick up on:

a) **General Rigour, Validity and Formative Value of Assessment Across the Programme**

b) **Variety and Mix of Assessments**

A good assessment mix within modules was felt to promote student reflection on their own learning and allow “more personalised” assessment of different learner types (FNHS 6.15).

The inclusion of authentic practical and skills assessments was also considered beneficial.

c) **Use of Integrated / Cross-Modular Assessments**

d) **Well-Distributed Assessment Schedule**

This was felt to reduce unnecessary stress and “assessment fatigue” (Soft 5.6). A proposed distribution with no more than two CA elements per week was positively received by one Computer Science panel.

e) **Fully Coursework-Assessed Modules in Early Semesters**

In a lab-based subject, coursework-only assessment was commended as aiding development of core practical skills and learner transition to third level.

2015 – 2017 **Recommendations or Requirements** on Assessment relate to the following issues:

a) **Assessment Scheduling and Planning**

‘Bunching’ of assessments; a need to provide semester assessment schedules to learners early on to “facilitate them in prioritising their effort” (BioMed 5.7).

b) **Assessment Weighting and Workload**

Inconsistencies in the weighting and requirements of the same assessment type across modules; imbalances in the weighting of different assessment types in relation to each other and/or to workload.

**c) Number and Volume of Assessments**

Overassessment; a high number of (especially low-weighted) assessment events; ‘overly comprehensive’ assessment of module learning outcomes (every MLO assessed by every one of several assessments).

One 2016/17 panel also pointed out “the need to balance regular formative assessment with the overall quantum of work demanded of the students” (Soft 5.9).

**d) Assessment Formats and Range**

Limited and/or unvarying range of assessment formats; overreliance on written assessment; overreliance on the final written examination; no suitable assessment of theory associated with practical elements within modules.

What constitutes the ‘default’ written assessment format varies by area. For FBH programmes, this might be the written report or essay, while Science panels noted a heavy reliance on lab reports, SAQs and MCQs. (The latter were however specifically recommended by a Science panel as an assessment format for theory components not hitherto assessed separately.) An overdependence on terminal examinations was also observed for some programmes (e.g. Gen Bus/Acc’tg/BIS, but also Soft).

A “more practical approach” (TLU 5.3) using “innovative” (FNHS 5.4.1) alternative assessment instruments was deemed particularly appropriate to reflect and assess the development of practical skills components or competences in modules.

A number of 2015/16 panels had suggested Reflective Journals and/or Portfolios as means to promote independent learning and enable summative assessment of ongoing skills learning. Additional formats suggested the following year include Concept Maps/Mind Maps (underpinned by instructional narrative); Discussion Forums; Blogs; Audio Submissions; and Scientific Briefing Papers (in Stage 4).

Integrated / Cross-Modular Assessment was favoured as a solution to overassessment or exam dependency in both years. One panel saw the potential of a final-stage assessment building on Stage 3 work placement to “exhibit incremental year on year development” (BIS 5.6). A multi-disciplinary cross-modular ‘capstone’ project was also suggested.

Finally, a need to balance individual, group and peer assessment was also noted.

**e) Formative Feedback**

A need to include formative assessment elements in the first place, or to give more regular formative feedback; a need to balance formative and summative assessment; to provide formative feedback on academic writing skills; to allow sufficient time for learners to incorporate formative feedback into later assignments; and to ensure that learners are aware when formative feedback is given.

One specific suggestion was the introduction of early low-stakes assessments into first-semester modules, with the twin aims of giving early feedback to students and helping staff identify students in danger of disengaging from the programme (IT 5.4).

**f) Group Assessment**

A need to ensure consistency; to provide learners with suitable standardised “rubrics” (Soft 6.8) for group work assessment and their individual contributions within this; to standardise

the approach to peer assessment; to balance individual, group and peer assessment in the schedules; and to ensure that the individual marks awarded reflect individual student effort.

**g) Skills-Based Modules with Continuous Practical Assessment**

A need to formally document attainment criteria for, and to allocate formal marks to, ongoing practical skills learning; a need to include summative assessment.

These issues apply particularly to predominantly skills- and craft-based modules.

**h) Programme Assessment Philosophy and Strategy**

A need to articulate a programme teaching, learning & assessment philosophy and/or strategy and to reflect this in the programme and the modules; a need to support delivery of group-based projects, presentation skills and problem-based learning through a suitable programme assessment strategy (see also above for further points on group projects).

Amongst others, such an assessment strategy might cover “valid, reliable and authentic assessment strategies for large class groups” and the use of technology (AppBio 5.3).

**i) Dissertation/Thesis and Final Year Project**

Noted issues relate to the balance of project/thesis components; the research methodology; the use of draft reports as intermediary assessments; the achievement of fair marking of projects in large class groups with many project supervisors; and the absence of a second reader for the Literature Review stage of the final project, especially when this is constituted by a separate 5-credit module.

A suggestion to increase transparency and fairness in the marking of large numbers of Final Year Projects was to make all first-[semester] project submissions available to all supervisors for viewing. To alleviate the noted pressures of high enrolments on project organisation and supervision, departmental suggestions noted by a panel included stratification of projects by type (in this case, into wet and dry labs) and completion in teams.

**j) Reassessment Modalities**

Alignment of schemata for initial assessment and reassessment; appropriateness of allowing reassessment without re-attendance in large studio-based modules (2015/16 panels only)

**k) Capstone Portfolio**

Specific to programmes incorporating a final ‘capstone’ portfolio of evidence of work/learning, a need to ensure individual module assessments can function both independently and contribute to the portfolio of evidence of learning and reflection across the programme was noted.

Observations on the description of assessments in the module descriptors are now included under the new theme of *Programme Information & Documentation*.

Finally, it should be reiterated that some issues, such as the number and balance of assessments within and across a programme, are bound up with features of a modularised delivery model such as module sharing. They may therefore not have – or indeed need – any other solution than ongoing care and attention in programme operation and further development. Panel suggestions in this regard were quite ‘standard’ and encompassed improved coordination and production of a – pedagogically sound – programme assessment strategy resp. schedule.

## Programme Structure and Subject Streams

Programme Structure and Subject Streams received both a good number of Commendations and of Recommendations/Requirements (20 COM and 36 RR in the collated data set for Phase 2). For the year 2016/ 2017 alone, Commendations under this theme actually exceeded RR.

**Commendations** on Programme Structure and Subject Streams in 2015 – 2017 relate to the following programme features:

**a) Programme Coherence and Integration**

A good integration of theory, technology and industry practice; well-thought out, instructionally coherent programmes; good flow between stages; good articulation between modules; achievement of practitioner “congruence” within modular delivery (CouTher 5.1)

**b) “Clear Progression within Identified Programme Pillars” (IT5.1)**

**c) Programme Currency and Responsiveness to Emerging Industry Trends**

Introduction of new knowledge and skills to keep students up to date; development of new professional and technical skills through mandatory modules, with an opportunity to create additional CPD offerings through SPAs

**d) Programme Development Processes**

Evidence-based redevelopment, informed by critical reflection on operation and structure of the current programme; collegial approach to programme design; systematic, iterative, “themed approach to curriculum development” (Soft 5.3), based on a recognition of industry trends and employment opportunities; programme development involved ongoing stakeholder consultation; addition of material in response to stakeholder feedback

**e) ‘Curricular’ Support of Graduate Profile**

Programme specification prepares for full spectrum of required professional skills, enabling learners & graduates to “hit the ground running” in placement and employment (Soft 6.4)

**f) Programme Induction and Development of Fundamental Skills**

Revisions to fundamental academic and professional skills modules (Maths, Business) to aid learner engagement and retention; programme induction schemes; learners being introduced to fundamental professional skills through the CIT module.

**g) Structural Improvements**

The proposed transition to 10-credit modules in a Masters programme to reduce overall learner workload and improve retention (on the *MA in T&L in HE*).

**h) Final Year Projects**

Successful project implementation; a systematic and thoughtful approach to the project/ research proposal process, supervision and reporting.

Structural issues giving rise to **Recommendations and Requirements** may be grouped as follows:

**a) Operational Robustness of Programme**

Risk to programme quality and standards arising from increased enrolments (incl. due to improved retention), especially where there are elements requiring significant administrative staff inputs (work placement, final year project)

**b) Academic Level**

The level-distinctive feature of an add-on Honours programme (dissertation) is not mandatory, meaning the higher level of the add-on award vis-à-vis the underpinning Ordinary programme may not be justified in all cases.

**c) Subject Mix**

Imbalances between thematic strands; a need to ensure the programme contains the required percentage of specialist content to obtain professional accreditation; a need to ensure that amplification of a particular subject stream (e.g. driven by professional accreditation requirements) does not create a void with regard to preparing graduates for other viable career paths.

**d) Sequencing / Subject Progression and Integration between Strands**

Sequencing issues and continuity breaks within thematic strands; a need for more holistic integration between strands (esp. theoretical / practical).

In addition, the replacement of a specific programming language with a language better suited to introductory modules gave rise to a recommendation to monitor the impact of the change for two years, to ensure learners did not subsequently struggle with the 'jump up' to more difficult material later on in the programme.

An operational recommendation to better align delivery of labs with lecture content might also be noted in this context (though this was counted under *Timetabling*).

**e) Delivery of Core Graduate Skills & Competences**

Omission of content on core areas of knowledge required for professional practice; key themes delivered only through electives, endangering delivery of the programme outcomes; a need to establish a clearer programme identity by reducing the number of electives and creating explicit pathways of related modules, identifying the competences developed.

A specific suggestion to avert or flag omissions was the use of external professional competence frameworks to identify and review core themes.

**f) Elective Choice and Regulations**

The factual removal of elective choice through a combination of structural issues (only one cognitive elective offered per semester) and operational ones (timetabling); a need to clarify and strengthen elective regulations.

It was also suggested that inclusion of additional electives would support learners in developing sub-specialisms within their field, "as far as resources and a possible move towards accreditation allow" (FNHS 5.7).

**g) Modular Structure**

It was suggested to investigate the possibility of a small number of 'long thin modules' in conjunction with the M&S Implementation Group and Academic Council.

In addition, a panel felt that in light of the impending retirement of a key staff member "any historically agreed deviations" (CouTher 8.1) from the CIT modular framework relating to placement, achievement of practitioner congruence across modules, and stage progression would need to be codified and formally agreed.

**h) Development of Practical Skills**

A need to continue developing the practical skills required of specialists in the field.



**i) Integration of Work-Based Learning Opportunities**

One panel suggested including site visits at different programme stages: visits early in the programme could serve as a general introduction to the professional environment, while later visits might introduce specialist equipment and procedures.

A suggestion was also made to integrate current TLU activities into a related Masters programme (the MA in T&L in HE) and provide showcase opportunities throughout.

**j) Responsiveness to Emerging Trends**

A need for built-in mechanisms to allow varied coverage of rapidly changing industry trends to maintain programme relevance, within modules or via guest lectures.

**k) Issues Specific to Taught Masters**

One panel suggested extending the duration of a Masters programme to better spread a heavy workload.

Implementation of an induction programme emphasising the development of critical reflective skills was also suggested by a panel.

Professional Value, Graduate Profile and Career Path

For the 2015 – 2017 period, aspects attached to *Professional Value ...* attracted the most positive attention from the Phase 2 panels, with Commendations clearly exceeding RR (34 COM to 22 RR).

**Commendations** on *Professional Value, Graduate Profile and Career Path* repeatedly return to a number of key points across the different areas and years, acknowledging:

**a) Professional Relevance and Responsiveness to Employer / Community Needs**

The programme has industry focus, depth and relevance to the field; the programme and graduate profile are fit for purpose and reflect industry needs; the programme has been future-proofed through alignment with current and emerging industry trends and practices and local employment opportunities; the programme responds to community needs. A department is commended for continuing to offer a programme which covers a critical aspect of the professional field.

**b) Graduate and Learner ‘Quality’ and Competences**

Both Level 7 and Level 8 graduates are “top quality” (AppBio 2.2) and reflect real world industry needs; graduates are very capable, well-rounded, adaptable and industry-ready; graduates have high practical competency skills endorsed by employer representatives, possess good communication skills and a “preparedness for future learning and performance challenges” (Soft 3.1).

Employers were very happy with the quality of work placement students.

**c) Quality of Engagement with Industry**

Panels commended the significant and dynamic departmental engagement with industry; the excellent engagement ethos of a department; the reflection of industry engagement in proposed programme revisions, new modules and work placement, opening up new career opportunities; and the proactive integration of employer feedback into a programme.

The exemplary use of an industry panel for programme and module feedback was also positively noted.

**d) Commitment to Practitioner Development**

There is commendable commitment to practitioner development; the programmes prepare well for work or academic progression.

**e) Stakeholder Regard**

There is high regard for programmes from stakeholders and professional bodies nationally / internationally.

**f) Work Placement and Industry**

The inclusion of work placement is key to graduate employability and creates follow-on learner opportunities to gain experience and financial support through P-T work; a panel commended the “impressive care” of a department in matching students to placement employers (Culi 3.1); the key mentoring role of industry stakeholders was noted.

**g) Professional Accreditation, Recognition & Certification**

The level and extent of exemptions awarded, and the efforts to maintain these in the revised programmes; the learners’ skills base and graduate opportunities for professional registration/ accreditation are enhanced through the embedding of specific professional training respectively professional awards; the embedding of SPAs opens new CPD opportunities for working professionals.

**Recommendations / Requirements** regarding *Professional Value ...* centre on:

**a) Entrant Demand and Professional ‘Value Proposition’**

Uncertainty over entrant/learner demand and the ‘professional value proposition’

**b) Range and Awareness of Graduate Opportunities**

A need for departments to actively develop the range of graduate opportunities further through forging links with relevant external organisations; a need to enhance graduate awareness of professional opportunities, e.g. in conjunction with the CIT Careers Office.

**c) Professional Aim and Functions**

A need to establish the professional aim and functions of a programme more clearly; a suggestion to develop SPAs based on existing curricula to enable PhD graduates to transition to industry.

**d) Professional Accreditation, Recognition & Certification**

A strong need to achieve professional body accreditation within a given field; and to map the modules against the relevant professional body competencies. A need to alert learners to emerging opportunities for professional recognition. A suggestion to investigate opportunities for embedding (additional) professional certifications, or to develop SPAs in specialised areas of the relevant field.

**e) Value to CIT**

A need to recognise the contribution of a programme to CIT itself.

## Module Content and Delivery

*Module Content and Delivery* attracted healthy interest from Phase 2 panels in both years, with 52 thematic units identified for 2015 – 2017, **all Recommendations or Requirements**.

With almost 2,000 modules before panels in this time period, it would be quite remarkable if module-related comments did not constitute a good proportion of the overall commentary.

This might be even higher if panel members were not advised in the pre-panel induction session that all CIT modules undergo a thorough internal moderation process, leaving them free to focus on recurrent issues and core modules, rather than getting bogged down in fruitless attempts to ‘get through’ everything in the limited time available.

It should also be noted the 57 comments on *Module Content & Delivery* do not include COM or RR from the “Modules” sections of the reports which were found during collation to align better with other, more general themes, to which they were reassigned as a consequence.

Transferable module-level issues in the resulting collated data set include:

### a) **Duplication / Overlap of Module Content**

Duplication was a recurrent issue noted by various panels in both years.

A suggestion to avoid or help remove duplication was to conduct a mapping of the module content against professional body competencies documents where these existed (see also a similar suggestion to identify omissions of key content above).

### b) **Module Load**

Excessively broad range of topics which overburdens learners and/or permits only superficial coverage of each topic; overloading.

Proposals include covering fewer aspects at greater detail, or leaving ‘ancillary’ content not required for the minimum intended learning outcomes to independent learning.

### c) **Internal Consistency of Module Elements (incl. Title)**

A need to ensure the alignment and internal consistency of the different elements of a module, including a good fit between module title and content/learning outcomes.

### d) **Alignment of Module Level and Subject Matter**

The subject matter is too demanding or too unchallenging for the given module level and/or the learners’ current level of knowledge, skills and competences.

With regard to potentially challenging content, suggestions included delivery at a very basic level and provision of step-by-step learner guidance for challenging tasks.

### e) **Module Learning Outcomes**

*Active Verbs*: ‘Demonstrability’; sufficiency of range of verbs to fully represent the range of lower & higher order thinking developed.

*Overall MLOs*: Consistency “of format and language [...] with recommended practice” (BioMed 6.3); alignment with the module level; consistency across modules; consistency with the POs; MLOs too broad to be achievable; overly complex MLOs embedding too many sub-outcomes, or amalgamating different kinds of outcome.

**f) Resource Listings**

A need to keep resource listings up-to-date; a need to balance resource listings across modules; a need to ensure consistency of referencing standards and to ensure their correspondence to the standard set for written student work; a need to include web-based resources.

**g) Workload Breakdown**

A need to show the different forms of delivery in the breakdown of contact hours; to allow for independent student learning; to allow for staff contact time in a dissertation module; and to include a part-time workload.

**h) Shared Modules**

A need to include specific examples of relevance to the given student cohort(s) in the delivery of shared modules.

**i) Research Link in Science Modules**

A need to ensure that Stage 3 and 4 modules are research-led and based on recent research within the discipline.

**j) Industry-Based Modules**

Descriptors need to allow reasonable flexibility in relation to the type of organisation.

**k) Technology-Related Modules**

A need for module descriptors to show awareness of emerging technologies; and a need to increase student exposure and access to specialised IT systems and software while recognising resource and licencing limitations.

**l) Dissertation**

A need to include more “content time” (Sport 6.2).

Lastly, some module-internal recommendations to make greater use of guest speakers or site visits (supported by reflective logs) in industry-relevant modules were assigned to Teaching & Learning Methodology, as they were deemed to be of general methodological relevance.

### Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback

While Commendations under this theme did not exceed RR in 2016/17, *Student Supports ...* still received a good number of COM during that year, thus retaining a ‘positive ratio’ of Commendations to Recommendations/Requirements for the overall period.

Despite the considerable amount of **Commendations** on Student Supports, Welfare & Feedback overall, a large number focused on one or two aspects, especially Student Success and Engagement Measures.

**a) Student Success and Engagement Measures**

The multiple commendations, largely variations of each other, acknowledge an obvious commitment to student welfare, development and academic progress; the clear evidence of work being done in the area of student success; and the active measures taken to address progression and retention issues. Departments / Schools are commended for their own measures as well as for implementing Institute-wide initiatives.

Departmental supports specifically mentioned include programme induction; newsletters and online fora (in online programmes specifically); random group assignment of first-year students; reducing the number of first-year lecturers; and field trips.

At programme level, small class groups in practical subjects were praised, as it was felt that they maximise the learning experience and ensure that each learner receives regular lecturer feedback on her/his work.

Named Institute-wide initiatives were Good Start, Just Ask, PALS, Academic Success Coaching, Early Intervention and SParQS. Also mentioned were Pitstop Leadership, Get Connected and the Academic Learning Centre.

The Commendations under this theme reflect not just the success of the support measures in itself, but also illustrate the value of promoting the work appropriately from the outset, while at the same time ensuring that its effectiveness is evidenced and validated through the gathering and publication of relevant performance data.

**a) Accessibility of Staff**

Several mentions were made of good staff-student relations; the accessibility of staff, their generosity with their time and their interest in student progress; a partnership approach between staff and students; and the flexible and accommodating approach of staff throughout a programme.

**b) Student Welfare Mechanisms**

*Programme level:* Programmes are well-scaffolded, and student welfare is closely monitored and supported (in relation to both a programme with clinical / therapeutic elements and a Computer Science programme).

*School level (both CSM):* The CSM Tutor system was particularly commended. A commendation was also made on the successful management of the ensemble approach.

**c) Student Representation and Feedback Mechanisms**

Two panels commended the active role of learners on programme boards and the fact that student concerns were addressed.

**d) Health & Safety Mechanisms**

Strong protocols and procedures around ethics and health & safety-relevant aspects of training; a proactive demonstration of a collaborative attitude to and good practice around health & safety inspections.

**e) Cross-Programme Collaboration**

The creation of 'synergies' through wide-ranging collaboration across programmes was positively noted for CSM.

Equally, across both years the **Recommendations / Requirements** centre on a few recurrent aspects:

**a) Programme and Module Induction**

A request for more guidance on module content and expectations on learners at the start of a module (Finding only); a suggestion to introduce internal and external module leaders during programme induction; a need to strengthen aspects of the induction related to the professional environment and to seek industry support for this.

**b) Academic Support**

A need for a department to proactively facilitate learners in obtaining additional support in a (supporting) Science subject.

**c) Student Welfare Mechanisms**

A suggestion to establish opportunities for informal peer gatherings allowing extended interactions between year groups; a potential need for additional staff supports for emotional work, and the clear signposting of available supports from the start of 1<sup>st</sup> Year.

**d) Support for Online Learners**

A “sense of isolation while engaging in aspects of [...] online [...] delivery” (CloudM 4.2); a concern that loss of ‘face time’ onsite due to the move of a programme online could compromise beneficial learner access to staff; a need to seek ongoing learner feedback on the sufficiency of support from staff in a course due to move online.

Suggestions for combating learner isolation online, particularly in Sem. 1, include ‘touch point communication’ with learners at semester midpoint, peer-to-peer working groups or a buddy system for labs and projects. A programme team proposal to factor in of an extra hour’s student-lecturer time online was also welcomed.

**e) Student Representation and Feedback Mechanisms**

Multiple recommendations were given on this aspect. These included a need to put in place formal, structured mechanisms for capturing learner feedback on a regular basis; to formally seek feedback from learners mid-semester in order to allow time for a response to identified issues; to actively encourage learners to give feedback through existing representative mechanisms; and to encourage feedback with a clear articulation of the resulting actions.

One panel suggested investigating possible complementary feedback structures such as “periodic, minuted meetings of a small group of designated liaison lecturers with a programme or year group” (Music).

Provision of formal feedback is frequently linked with the existence of formal structures for learner representation. Several panels mentioned the absence of evidence for student participation on programme boards. A need to “source” student representation more proactively (CloudM 4.4) was also noted.

Other mechanisms referenced by panels were the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) and mechanisms for provision of feedback on programmes and modules.

Recommendations on feedback mechanisms were received from panels in both years and form the largest group of RR under this theme.

**f) Health & Safety Mechanisms**

Consideration of health & safety issues (in this case regarding work with pathogens) was suggested.

## Programme Information & Documentation (ESG 1.8)

Since the quality of programme information and documentation does not currently constitute a separate PR Phase 2 review criterion in CIT, panel comments on this theme were originally not included in the Phase 2 statistics.

However, both in 2015/16 and the following year analysis showed that, mixed in with comments on particular programme features, there were quite a few comments focused solely or predominantly on the quality of the information provided on a feature, rather than the feature itself, or else focused on the quality of the programme documentation (including PR documents).

Since the current *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG 2015 for short), the QA standards adopted by QQI, include Public Information as a separate standard (ESG 1.8), it was decided to revisit the data for both years so that commentary on information provision and programme documentation would form part of the data set.

While not one of the 'top five', Programme Information & Documentation still engendered stronger interest than many other themes, drawing 2 Commendations and 30 Recommendations / Requirements for the 2015 – 2017 period.

The two **Commendations** relate **a)** to the **format of the CIT Module Descriptor**, "which captures key information such as module resources and detailed descriptions regarding the nature and timing of assessment" (BioMed 5.7), and **b)** the presentation of an informative **Assessment Matrix**.

The **Recommendations / Requirements** relate to:

### **a) Documented Guidance on Thematic Streams and Competence Development**

A need to formalise and document guidance on thematic through-lines and competence development; a need to provide formal guidance on elective pathways and the development of key skills, competences and specialisms.

Clear and formally documented guidance on developmental through-lines was considered particularly necessary for programmes offering multiple electives.

In addition to producing appropriate guidance documents, panels also suggested that programme information could be disseminated through regular formalised information events. Several panels asked for information to be provided visually, via "infograms" (Media 5.1) or similar.

### **b) Documented Access, Transfer & Progression Routes and Requirements**

A need for clear, formal documentation of experiential entry requirements; a need to clearly document commonalities between related programmes and the implications for transfer and progression between programmes; a need to explicitly mention an available bridging route (in the form of an SPA) in the promotion of a Masters programme to highlight entry opportunities for potential entrants with qualifications in unrelated disciplines;

A need to formalise and clearly set out success criteria for individual modules and different programme streams (in a Masters with a diverse intake), including recommended prior learning where appropriate.

### **c) Accuracy and Completeness of Programme Schedules and Module Descriptors**

Accurate reflection of real delivery schedule of a Masters: Presentation of a 12-month, 90-credit Masters programme as a two-stage programme in the programme schedule is potentially misleading.

Embedded awards: A need to produce a programme schedule (describing content, POs and Educational Aim) and statement of professional purpose for an embedded award.

Consistency: Noted inconsistencies between programme schedules and the presentation of proposed programme changes in the tables and narrative of departmental PR documentation.

Module descriptors: A need to specify the P-T workload in each module descriptor, but conversely to only have one programme descriptor including both F-T and ACCS (P-T) modalities of one and the same programme. Module descriptors for large / studio modules do not clearly break down the delivery modes (lecture, seminar, group tutorial, individual tutorial).

Accurate reflection of actually available elective options: A panel also pointed out the unavailability of the elective options identified in programme schedules to students due to timetabling and other constraints “as real elective choices” (ToHo 3.4). The panel recommended that further efforts should be made to provide the range of electives indicated, but that “in any event, programme schedules should consistently reflect the actual available elective module options” (ibid.).

While the collated observations relate to a variety of issues, a common tenor running through some comments appears to be the perception that the presentation of the delivery structure ‘blueprint’ in the descriptors does not fully correspond to resp. reflect the operational reality.

### **d) Documented Assessment Modalities and Criteria**

Several panels commented on the need to provide a far more detailed and informative description of the nature of the individual assessments in the Assessment Description section of the Module Descriptors. By contrast, panels noted that the current assessment descriptions provided in many modules were “bare bones” (FNHS 5.4.2). A more detailed description of the assessment modalities was considered particularly necessary where assessments attract a high percentage of the module mark.

A need to formally document assessment criteria for practical skills-based modules; a need to publish an overall assessment strategy and schema; and a need to clearly articulate the general assessment philosophy and pedagogy in the programme literature and ensure their reflection in individual module descriptors were also identified.

### **e) Provision of Information on Employment Opportunities and Professional Qualifications / Entitlements**

A need to explicitly state the employment opportunities and professional qualifications achieved on completion; a need to explicitly advise learners of additional professional registration entitlements arising from programme revisions and of the process for registration; and a need to give clear and consistent advice on exemption options and career paths, especially in the transition to a new programme version.

The recommendation to clearly indicate what professional qualifications the graduate will have obtained was given in the context of recent revisions to the teacher registration framework by the Teaching Council.



**f) Provision of Information on Programme and Award Regulations**

A need for clarification of the Elective Regulations in the Programme Descriptor; a need to clearly document the consequences of certain elective choices on the entitlement to a particular award (*MA/MSc in Music & Tech*).

**g) Provision of Information on Student Supports and Feedback**

A need to “clearly signpost” the available existing supports for students involved in emotional work at the outset of 1<sup>st</sup> Year; a need to clearly articulate the actions based on student inputs (in the interest of encouraging student feedback).

**h) Documentation of Work Placement Arrangements**

A need to clearly articulate the “context, philosophy and operational management structure” (Media 5.6) of work placement in the relevant documentation, especially the handbook.

As part of this, the panel suggested publication of case studies for both students and employers to exemplify how placement would operate “from start to completion” (*ibid.*) from the different vantage points.

**i) Dissemination of Information on Public Showcases / Exhibitions of Student Work**

A need to optimise the public visibility of student showcases by improving communication and interactions with the relevant industries, particularly potential graduate employers.

**j) Documented Approach to Health & Safety**

A need to explicitly document, in both programme literature and PR documentation, the approach to potential health & safety risks within the design and operation of a programme (in this case, the potential for exposure to pathogenic organisms).

**k) Programmatic Review Documentation**

A panel noted the “unwieldy nature” (Mus 7.1) of the programme documentation, in particular the presentation of programme and module specifications.

Panels also recommended inclusion of more and more detailed examples of teaching, learning and assessment practices, with evidence of continuous, formative assessment; and inclusion of minutes of stakeholder consultation meetings which shaped programme changes, samples of course monitoring reports and minutes of student focus groups etc., as they would be “informative to the review team” (Sport 2.2).

References to PR documentation are also comprised in c) Accuracy and Completeness of Programme Schedules and Module Descriptors and j) Documented Approach to Health & Safety.

## Additional Points of Interest

### *Gender Balance / Female Participation*

This topic also generated comments from two different Phase 2 panels, both in Computer Science. For Phase 2 these were assigned to the theme of *Access, Transfer & Progression*.

One panel issued a Commendation regarding a series of online HDip programmes, noting that they were “particularly attractive and empowering to women at home” (CloudM 4.1).

The Recommendation acknowledged departmental efforts to improve the gender balance among applicants and the student body, and recommended that the department should continue and if possible “augment” (Soft 3.3) these and monitor the effects over time.

Four points might be added for context:

- a) *Male* underrepresentation resp. female *over*representation among learners in areas such as Art or Social Science did not – and does not generally – draw panel comment.
- b) The most recent Phase 2 reports for the Schools of MEP Engineering, Building & Civil Engineering and NMCI, whose student contingents are overwhelmingly male (in the case of NMCI, 93%), include no commentary on gender balance or female participation (as ascertained by keyword searches).
- c) The last PR of the School of Science & Informatics (2011/12) included one reference to gender only, in an appendix to the Phase 1 Submission. This summarised the key recommendations of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2008), including the statement that there needed to be a “gender dimension” to communicating career opportunities in Computing, Software and Electronic Engineering (rev. SoSI PR Submission for the Strategic Phase, p. 76). Faculty and panel members themselves did not comment on this topic during the last PR.
- d) Other jurisdictions provide examples of programme review models which explicitly include the achievement of gender parity in the criteria, for instance those applied the German federal states. Achievement of gender parity is inscribed in German HE legislation as a high-level institutional function of HE providers. Flowing from this, implementation of gender parity is a specific and separate criterion for programme accreditation and review in the Regulations of the German Accreditation Council, which regulate programme and system accreditation and review nationwide. Gender issues will therefore generate commentary and form part of the validation decision in all programme review reports.

### *Collection and Use of Performance Data (ESG 1.7)*

This topic was included in 2015/16 as *Benchmarking & Analysis of Performance Data*, but was renamed to better reflect the relevant ESG Standard and the scope of the collated comments for both years.

Commended were the detailed, informative presentation of student and enrolment data and the detailed presentation of graduate and industry survey results in departmental PR documentation.

Recommendations concerned the benefits of tracking graduate destinations and career paths and the need to monitor the long-term effects of proposed programme changes, based on appropriate metrics. It was also recommended to monitor the effect of learner support initiatives both

quantitatively and qualitatively, taking account of the individual student experience, and to utilise the results to inform future retention and progression efforts.

#### *Work Placement*

In 2016/17 also, this was also quite prominent in the Phase 2 reports, despite the fact that only one report on programmes in the School of Business, which had extended work placement across all relevant programmes the previous year, was included.

Commentary continued along the lines previously described for 2015/16. All panels were supportive of the inclusion or extension of work placement periods. One panel commended a department for continuing placement despite the workload pressures this brought with rising student numbers.

Recommendations again focussed on the operational supports necessary to make placement a success. They concerned the need for additional administrative resources, clarity around learner and workplace expectations, guidance documentation, preparatory and debriefing /"back-to-study" mechanisms. A suggestion for the introduction of a 'training log' to be used as both a mentoring aid and an assessment mechanism was also included.

#### *Programme Management & Governance*

This new theme was added to bundle a number of Phase 2 comments contained in the collated data set which deal with programme-level management and governance mechanisms.

Commendations were given for the overall level of collaboration and integration of activities between two related departments and for the dedicated manner in which the programme team for a joint programme applied "a number of manual interventions and work-arounds" (BiomMd 4.3) to resolve various logistical challenges arising from the different administrative systems and academic calendars of CIT and, in this case, UCC.

Recommendations concerned the introduction of a second programme board meeting in an academic year; the integration of the activities of the Institute's Teaching & Learning Unit into the related Masters programme; and the request to fill a key vacancy arising from a retirement in a timely manner to ensure a smooth transfer of academic and leadership functions and avoid compromising programme delivery. In the context of the joint Biomedical Studies programme, the two institutions were asked to streamline the administrative processes for the programme to enhance the student experience and lessen the workload of the programme team.

#### *Teaching & Learning Methodology*

With regard to online delivery, a Masters panel recommended a regular reappraisal of the use of online technology to ensure maximum fitness for purpose. If more of the programme was moved online, the online T&L strategy should get formal consideration at programme level, "with a clear rationale for determining which modules will be delivered online, what format online delivery will take, the minimum expectations / requirements of an online lesson including how interactivity will be ensured, how learning will be facilitated, learners supported and a sense of community developed among the learner body". (TLU 4.3) A comparably cautious note with regard to the rationale for moving a programme online was struck by a 2015/16 panel for another Masters. The more qualified approach taken here contrasts somewhat with other comments (under *T&L Methodology* and other themes) which are less hesitant to commend or suggest use of online technologies as a means to broadening access or improving flexibility of delivery.

One panel further recommended use of peer evaluation as an effective T&L tool to support the learning of teamwork skills in the context of cross-modular projects.

*Resources, Facilities & Funding*

Phase 2 commentary on resources again included recommendations to prioritise funding for the ongoing maintenance and updating of equipment and for the provision of graduate study spaces. Securing adequate staff funding to safeguard quality and standards in the face of strong increases in placements and final year projects was also a concern.

HEA capital funding calls were identified as a potential source of funding by two panels. A suggestion to overcome issues with regard to accessing labs and resources was provision of a VPN or other ways of enabling students to bring their own device.

*Eva Juhl  
Office of the Registrar & Vice-President for Academic Affairs  
27 November 2017*

## Appendix: Abbreviations

### Phase 1 Reports

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Report</b>
CCAD	Programmatic Review of the CIT Crawford College of Art & Design, Phase 1: Strategic Review (June 2015), Report of the External Peer Review Group
CCAD-FUR	Programmatic Review of the CIT Crawford College of Art & Design, Phase 1 Follow-Up Report, 27 – 28 April 2016
CSM	Programmatic Review of the CIT Cork School of Music, Phase 1: Strategic Review (December 2015), Report of the External Peer Review Group, Executive Summary
FBH	Programmatic Review of the Faculty of Business & Humanities, Phase 1: Strategic Review (May 2015), Report of the External Peer Review Group
SoSI	Programmatic Review of the School of Science & Informatics, Phase 1: Strategic Review (November 2016), Report of the External Peer Review Group

### Phase 2 Reports

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Report</b>
Acc	Programmatic Review of the School of Business, Programme Panel Report, Department of Accounting & Information Systems, Accounting Programmes, 12 – 13 April 2016
AgHort	Programmatic Review of the School of Business, Programme Panel Report, Department of Accounting & Information Systems, Agriculture/Horticulture Programmes, 12 – 13 April 2016
AHCP	Programmatic Review of the CIT Crawford College of Art & Design, Programme Panel Report, Department of Arts in Health & Community Practice, 27 – 28 April 2016
AppBio	Programmatic Review of the School of Science & Informatics, Programme Panel Report, Department of Biological Sciences, Applied Biosciences/Pharmaceutical Biotechnology Programmes, 28 – 29 March 2017
ArtEd	Programmatic Review of the CIT Crawford College of Art & Design, Programme Panel Report, Department of Art [sic] Education, 27 – 28 April 2016
BAHR	Programmatic Review of the School of Business, Programme Panel Report, Department Organisation & Professional Development, Business Administration/HR Programmes, 12 – 13 April 2016
BioMed	Programmatic Review of the School of Science & Informatics, Programme Panel Report, Department of Biological Sciences, Biomedical Science Programmes, 28 – 29 March 2017
BIS	Programmatic Review of the School of Business, Programme Panel Report, Department of Accounting & Information Systems, BBus in BIS, 8 March 2017
CloudM	Programmatic Review of the School of Science & Informatics, Programme Panel Report, Department of Computer Science, Cloud Computing HDips/Masters, 30 – 31 March 2017

CouTher	Programmatic Review of the School of Humanities, Programme Panel Report, Department of Applied Social Studies, Counselling/Psychotherapy/Play Therapy Programmes, 19 – 20 April 2016
Culi	Programmatic Review of the School of Humanities, Programme Panel Report, Department of Tourism & Hospitality, Culinary Programmes, 19 – 20 April 2016
EYE	Programmatic Review of the School of Humanities, Programme Panel Report, Department of Sport, Leisure & Childhood Studies, Early Years/Montessori Programmes, 19 – 20 April 2016
FAAA	Programmatic Review of the CIT Crawford College of Art & Design, Programme Panel Report, Department of Fine Art & Applied Art, 27 – 28 April 2016
FNHS	Programmatic Review of the School of Science & Informatics, Programme Panel Report, Department of Biological Sciences, Food/Nutrition & Health Science Programmes, 28 – 29 March 2017
GenBus	Programmatic Review of the School of Business, Programme Panel Report, Department of Management & Enterprise, General Business Stream, 12 – 13 April 2016
IT	Programmatic Review of the School of Science & Informatics, Programme Panel Report, Department of Computer Science, Information Technology/Information Management Programmes, 30 – 31 March 2017
MBus	Programmatic Review of the School of Business, Programme Panel Report, Department Organisation & Professional Development, Master of Business, 12 – 13 April 2016
Media	Programmatic Review of the CIT Crawford College of Art & Design, Programme Panel Report, Department of Media Communications, Multimedia/Visual Communications Programmes, 27 – 28 April 2016
Mkt	Programmatic Review of the School of Business, Programme Panel Report, Department of Marketing & International Business, Marketing Programmes, 12 – 13 April 2016
JourHPE	Programmatic Review of the CIT Crawford College of Art & Design, Programme Panel Report, Department of Media Communications, Journalism/PR/E-learning Programmes, 27 – 28 April 2016
Music	Programmatic Review of the CIT Cork School of Music, Programme Panel Report, BMus/Taught MA in Music, 14 – 15 March 2016
PopTDS	Programmatic Review of the CIT Cork School of Music, Programme Panel Report, Popular Music/Theatre & Drama Studies Programmes, 14 – 15 March 2016
SoCom	Programmatic Review of the School of Humanities, Programme Panel Report, Department of Applied Social Studies, Social Care/Community Development Programmes, 19 – 20 April 2016
Soft	Programmatic Review of the School of Science & Informatics, Programme Panel Report, Department of Computer Science, Software Development/Web Development/Computer Systems Programmes, 30 – 31 March 2017 [report erroneously dated 29 – 30 March 2017]
Sport	Programmatic Review of the School of Humanities, Programme Panel Report, Department of Sport, Leisure & Childhood Studies, Recreation & Leisure/Sport & Exercise Programmes, 19 – 20 April 2016

TLU Programmatic Review of the Teaching & Learning Unit, Programme Panel Report, Teaching & Learning in HE Programmes, 6 April 2017

TourHosp Programmatic Review of the School of Humanities, Programme Panel Report, Department of Tourism & Hospitality, Tourism Management/Hospitality Management Programmes, 19 – 20 April 2016