

CORK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

**PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW
OF THE FACULTY OF
BUSINESS & HUMANITIES**

PHASE 1: STRATEGIC REVIEW
(MAY 2015)

REPORT OF THE

EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW GROUP

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW AT CORK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Programmatic Review is a statutory five-yearly quality process in which peer evaluators analyse the effectiveness of the suite of programmes of a CIT faculty, college or school, with an emphasis on quality and flexibility of response to changing needs.

Under the CIT quality system, Programmatic Review is conducted in two phases. While Phase 1 looks at strategic and high-level issues, Phase 2 is devoted to a detailed programme review. Each phase is built on a self-study by the unit under review, supplemented by meetings of the Peer Review Group with staff, students and other stakeholders.

The overall aims of the 2015 Faculty of Business and Humanities Programmatic Review were to ensure that

- the programmes of Faculty remain relevant to learners, employers and other stakeholders;
- the strategy, resources and systems of the Faculty are sufficient to support and develop the academic activities;
- there is demand for the graduate profile produced by the Faculty programmes;
- the Programme Outcomes correctly describe the desired graduate profile; and
- the Faculty programmes deliver the Programme Outcomes.

The two review phases address these aims with different emphases and to a different extent.

Externally, Programmatic Review contributes to the enhancement of public confidence in the Institute and its awards. Internally, it is an important 'way stage' in a continuous quality improvement cycle which affords the opportunity to step back from the ongoing business of programme delivery to reflect on the current status and future direction of a faculty/college or school and its programme portfolio.

1.2 2015 PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW OF THE FACULTY OF BUSINESS & HUMANITIES

On May 21st and 22nd 2015, the Faculty of Business and Humanities completed Phase 1 of the current Programmatic Review. Over the two days of the site visit, the Peer Review Group met with academic management, staff, employers and students of the Faculty.

Phase 1 panel meetings was arranged in line with developmental strategies for the Institute as a whole with all meetings focusing on the three strands of teaching & learning, research and engagement. In

particular, having reviewed the self-study report, a number of themes emerged with which the panel engaged with the various stakeholders. These themes included

1. Lessons learned from last Programmatic Review
2. Faculty Structure, staffing and staff development
3. Programme Mix, Programme Operation, CAO figures, Retention, RPL, Marketing
4. Curriculum Delivery and Assessment Methodologies
5. Engagement with Industry and Stakeholders
6. Facilities
7. Research
8. Strategic Plan, Environmental Analysis, MTU

This report contains the interim findings and recommendations of the Peer Review Group based on the desk-review of the Faculty Submission and the meetings held during the site visit.

1.3 PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Mr Terry Twomey (Chairperson) Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar Limerick Institute of Technology	Marese Bermingham, Head, CIT Strategic Student Engagement and Retention Initiative/ Head TLU
Mr Denis McCarthy CIMA Ireland Director Chartered Institute of Management Accountants	Mark McGranaghan Senior Psychologist Tusla, Child & Family Agency
Mr Michael Vaughan Former President Irish Hotels Federation	Dr Patricia Moriarty Head of School of Business & Humanities Dundalk Institute of Technology
Dr Giles Warrington Deputy Head of School School of Health and Human Performance Dublin City University	Professor Aidan Berry Director, Brighton Business School

1.4 FACULTY STRUCTURE AND PROGRAMMES UNDER REVIEW

The Faculty of Business and Humanities consists of two Schools, a School of Business and School of Humanities, and their constituent Departments.

The School of Business consists of the following departments

- Department of Accounting & Information Systems
- Department of Management & Enterprise
- Department of Marketing & International Business
- Department of Organisation and Professional Development

The School of Humanities includes the following departments

- Department of Applied Social Studies
- Department of Tourism & Hospitality
- Department of Sport, Leisure & Childhood Studies

In the Faculty a total of 85 programmes across Level 6 to 10 are offered.

DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING & INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Information Systems

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Accounting

Bachelor of Business in Accounting

Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agriculture

Bachelor of Science in Agriculture

Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Horticulture

Bachelor of Science in Horticulture

Master of Business (Research)

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT & ENTERPRISE

Bachelor of Business (Honours)

Bachelor of Business in Business and Management

Master of Business (Research)

Doctor of Philosophy

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING & INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Marketing

Bachelor of Business in Marketing

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in International Business with Language

Master of Business (Research)

Master of Science in Marketing Practice

Doctor of Philosophy

DEPARTMENT OF ORGANISATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bachelor of Business in Business Administration

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Business Administration

DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, LEISURE & CHILDHOOD STUDIES CODE

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Montessori Education

Bachelor of Arts in Early Years Education

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Years Education

Bachelor of Business in Recreation & Leisure Management

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Sport & Exercise

Masters of Arts

Master of Science (Research)

Doctor of Philosophy (in association with department of Biological Sciences)

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Tourism

Bachelor of Business in Tourism

Bachelor of Business in Hospitality Management

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Hospitality Management

Bachelor of Business in Culinary Studies

Bachelor of Business in Bar Management

Bachelor of Business in Culinary Arts

Higher Certificate in Arts in Culinary Studies

Higher Certificate in Arts in Hospitality Studies

Advanced Certificate in Professional Cookery, Total Immersion Programme

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED SOCIAL STUDIES

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Social Care

Bachelor of Arts in Social Care

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Community Development

Bachelor of Arts in Community Development

Masters of Arts

Doctor of Philosophy

The Faculty offers a range of its programmes in part-time mode, including both major and special purpose awards as well as professional body courses. These include

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT & ENTERPRISE

Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Business Studies

Bachelor of Business in Management

Higher Certificate in Business

DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING & INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Bachelor of Business (Honours) Accounting

Bachelor of Business in Accounting

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING & INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Higher Diploma in Business in Sales Management

Certificate (SPA) in Digital Marketing

DEPARTMENT OF ORGANISATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Human Resource Management

Bachelor of Arts in Human Resource Management

Master of Arts in Human Resource Management

Master of Business

Doctor of Philosophy

ACCA Qualification

ACCA Diploma in Accounting and Business

Introduction to Bookkeeping and Accounting

CPA Professional 2 Part-time

IATI Admission Level 2 Part-time
CIMA Certificate in Business Accounting
CIMA Blended Learning
Chartered Accountants Ireland Tuition

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

Bachelor of Arts in Culinary Arts
Food, Photography, Styling
Bakery Techniques (Pastry, Modern & Classical)
Pastry: Tarts and Small Gateaux (Bakery & Pastry)
Introduction to Management for Hospitality Services
Professional Bar Operations
The Art of Mixology & Cocktail Making
Advanced Certificate in Professional Cookery National Traineeship

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED SOCIAL STUDIES

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Counselling & Psychotherapy
Master of Arts in Integrative Psychotherapy
Master of Arts in Play Therapy
Doctor of Philosophy
Higher Certificate in Arts in Counselling Skills
Institute Certificate in Counselling Skills

In total, there are 3776 students in the Faculty with the majority being full-time undergraduate students at Level 7 and Level 8. There is a relatively even gender breakdown with 47.1% Male and 52.9% Female among the student cohort. In terms of nationality, 90.04% may be classified as Irish, 1.2% currently classified as international-non EU with a further 8.73% non-Irish EU. 73.21% of the Faculty students come from the Cork City or County area

There are 234.5 wholetime equivalent staff (WTE) in the Faculty; 208 academic, 10.5 Administrative, 6 Technicians and 10 Management. The annual non-pay budget is €911,516 with the Faculty contributing €3.5 million to CIT's bottom line in 2014. It accounts for 40% of the total CIT student cohort and 50% of its graduates. The Faculty accounts for 49% of student cohort on the Bishopstown Campus. The Faculty students at Level 9 and 10 account for 25% of CIT numbers

1.5 PRINCIPAL PHASE 1 FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.5.1 Principal Phase 1 Findings

The Panel was very impressed by the clear sense of engagement on behalf of the College by the Faculty staff and students whom they met. The Panel was also pleased by the positive assessment of the Faculty by the learner representatives, in particular regarding the approachability and expertise of staff. The Panel recognises the high level of engagement with industry and the professional bodies by the Faculty. In discussions with employers, the high quality of the programmes delivered by the Faculty was acknowledged. Various stakeholder groups identified the integration of theory and practice within the programmes as being a particular strength with the value of including work placement elements in programmes being noted in many sessions. In particular, the graduate attributes profile of Faculty graduates was identified as one of having a rounded education, being work ready, being entrepreneurial and ready to engage with the external world.

The Panel notes that the Faculty have considered, evaluated and addressed, where appropriate, the recommendations of the previous programmatic review. The Panel wishes to acknowledge the significant progress made by the Faculty across a broad spectrum of activity including, inter alia, course development, professional body accreditation, staff development, research and student engagement since the last Programmatic Review.

1.5.2 Phase 1 Requirement

- 1.5.2.1 Feedback to the panel from every stakeholder group prioritised physical facilities. The provision of appropriate physical facilities is a fundamental prerequisite to the achievement of the strategic objectives set out in the five year plan of the Faculty. The panel **requires** that the Faculty develop an implementation plan to address the issues identified in relation to the physical facilities of the Faculty and submit this plan to the Institute Executive for consideration.

1.5.3 Commendations

- 1.5.3.1 The Faculty are to be commended on their rigorous consultation process undertaken as part of this review. The panel noted the shared vision for the development of the Faculty evident across the various staff groups.
- 1.5.3.2 The panel commends the Faculty on the quality of the documentation presented.

- 1.5.3.3 The panel commends the staff of the Faculty on their engagement with stakeholders, in particular, their support for learners within the Faculty.
- 1.5.3.4 The panel commends the range of curriculum innovations introduced by the Faculty including for example broadening modules that build and accredit professional and personal skills development, entrepreneurship and employability. The range of assessment methodologies employed across its programmes which are relevant to the workplace is also to be commended.
- 1.5.3.5 The panel commends the significant increase in the level of research activity within the Faculty. The provision of dedicated postgraduate rooms is a very positive addition.
- 1.5.3.6 The panel commends the retention initiatives undertaken by the Faculty.
- 1.5.3.7 The panel commends the levels of communication, both formal and informal, with students of the Faculty.

1.5.4 Phase 1 Recommendations

- 1.5.4.1 Given the value placed on work placement by students and employers, the panel recommends that the Faculty explore how work placement may be expanded, where appropriate, across its entire suite of programmes. The Faculty should endeavor to ensure that existing good practice models within the Faculty in the area of work placement design, mentoring, supervision and assessment are disseminated across the Faculty.
- 1.5.4.2 The panel recommends that the Faculty build on its existing student communication processes and seek to develop more formal staff /student partnership and feedback mechanisms.
- 1.5.4.3 The panel recommends that the Faculty monitor staff development in a formal way and encourage more staff to pursue continued professional development opportunities.
- 1.5.4.4 The panel recommends that the faculty builds on its existing research base to seek to develop strategic networks and clusters appropriate to its specialist areas of expertise.
- 1.5.4.5 Given the reduction in the number of RPL applications to the Faculty, the panel recommends that the Faculty, in conjunction with relevant units within the Institute, would seek to identify the factors causing this reduction and to propose, where appropriate, amendments to RPL policy and/or procedures.
- 1.5.4.6 Arising from initial feedback from student and industry stakeholders in the area of Tourism, the panel recommends that the Faculty engage with a variety of industry stakeholders to identify the emerging industry requirements for this area.

1.6 THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS

As stated earlier, having reviewed the self-study report, a number of themes emerged with which the panel engaged with the various stakeholders. These themes were

1. Lessons learned from last Programmatic Review
2. Faculty Structure, staffing and staff development
3. Programme Mix, Programme Operation, CAO figures, Retention, RPL, Marketing
4. Curriculum Delivery and Assessment Methodologies
5. Engagement with Industry and Stakeholders
6. Facilities
7. Research

A commentary outlining the discussions held with staff, students and industry representatives relating to these themes is given in this section.

Lessons Learned from Last Programmatic Review

The Faculty have considered the range of recommendations of the last programmatic review and included their findings and progress in the documentation. Shared modules are possible in some programmes but not possible in all. Entrepreneurship can only be offered in small class sizes and business classes are mainly large. The recommendation for social and community development programmes was considered and there is now a CAO programme offered in this space. Integrated assessments were piloted within the Faculty and this pilot initiative is under review.

Faculty Structure

The Faculty has undergone a restructuring process over the past few years. This restructuring facilitated the integration of part-time and full-time delivery of programmes together within the relevant departments. A comprehensive consultation process with faculty staff ensued a successful transition to the structure.

Staffing and Staff Development

Over the past few years 26 staff retired. Only 14 were replaced due to the constraints of the Employment Control Framework. More importantly their expertise was lost and this has lessened options to grow and develop new programmes. The faculty also has a very high proportion of part-time

staff (42.5%) and therefore added value activities are limited. This staffing structure places a significant additional administrative burden on full-time staff and therefore adds to their workload. The Faculty is currently developing adjunct faculty positions.

The Faculty have put forward a proposal for five additional staff including a Placement Officer, Marketing PR, Administrative Data Analysis, and an Attendant. These were discussed in detail including the grading level and whether the Placement Officer should be an academic or administrative position. Due to financial restrictions, faculty management may need to prioritise roles and look at possibilities such as secondments to fill the positions. Graduate recruitment and research interns are also being considered.

Currently there are 17 academics pursuing doctorates and staff are encouraged and facilitated by reductions in lecturing hours.

Programme mix and diversity within the Faculty

There are two schools in the Faculty with very different programmes and levels of professional body accreditation. The panel notes that the Department of Applied Social Studies has contributed to the ongoing professionalisation process of Social Care with CORU. Where the School of Business programmes are very integrated, the School of Humanities range of programmes are more disparate in nature spanning social care, counselling and psychotherapy, sport, culinary arts and tourism.

Retention

Overall the figures are good and have improved since the last programmatic review, with a 1% improvement in the past year. CIT has commenced a CIT Student Engagement and Retention Initiative with a number of focused projects that are actively targeting those students who are at risk of non-progression for a variety of reasons. The “Good Start” student induction programme, Peer Assisted Learning and Support, expansion of Academic Learning Centre supports for challenging modules, early alert and intervention projects have all been welcomed and fully embraced by the Faculty. Students who leave or withdraw are encouraged to meet with the relevant Head of Department and discuss their situation before filling the CIT Early Withdrawal form, this meeting facilitates an exploration of options and possibilities before final decisions are made by students.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Further Education Level 5 and Level 6 graduates have a progression route available to them within the Faculty. The panel notes from the Faculty self-study report that the number of RPL applications within the Faculty has declined from 224 in 2009-2010 to 71 in 2014-2015. The panel expresses some concern in relation to this decline of RPL applications, particularly as CIT is seen as a national leader in RPL. The RPL process is particularly valuable for industry-led programmes and so merits some re-examining of the factors causing reduced numbers availing of RPL.

CAO Figures

The CAO figures for the Faculty are good and have increased in the past few years. Due to student demand more level 8 programmes have been developed. CAO points for level 8 programmes are higher than previously and this has resulted in better retention rates. The ladder system is also proving very effective in gaining a diverse cohort of students. Most of these students progress to level 8 add on programmes.

Marketing

A wide variety of marketing and promotional activities are engaged in by faculty. Research students' articles have been published weekly in the local newspaper. The Irish Business Research Journal which is a peer reviewed recognised journal, and postgraduate students are encouraged to submit their work for review. Photographs of various events, including the Faculty Awards recipients are published in the newspapers. The Faculty hosts many industry events e.g. Sales Institute, Marketing Institute and Professional Accountancy organisations. Various initiatives, such as charity cooking demonstrations are organised to which past students are invited. Career Fairs are very effective ways of promoting and selling Faculty programmes.

It is believed that the creation of the Marketing position will help enhance the profile of the Faculty

Delivery and Assessment

With the introduction of semesterisation and modularisation, over assessment may become an issue for students. The changes in programme structure of assessment has helped improve the process and alleviated the stress expressed by students in their surveys. The faculty has considered shared assessments and a reduction in final written exams. Programme structure and delivery will be discussed in more detail in Phase 2 of the Programmatic Review.

The Programmatic Review Critical Self Study document states that 26 new programmes have been developed since the last programmatic review and 9 of those are at level 8. Only one programme has been discontinued and this was a Springboard initiative which did not happen subsequently. Reflective journals and presentations in 2nd and 3rd year are proving very worthwhile and it is hoped to include them in more programmes.

Placement modules currently offered in programmes are structured and regulated and dedicated staff visit all placements on a regular basis. It is planned to include placement in most, if not all programmes, where possible. Sustainability is an issue as to date as there is a lot of goodwill from staff necessary to maintain this module. It is hoped that the Placement Officer post will help alleviate this problem. The panel believe that placement will enhance students' work readiness.

Internationalisation is being developed and currently there is a working 5 credit module with the School of Business in Utrecht, This is an intensive module where students work with students from other countries on a marketing strategy simulation project. There is also a 5 credit module in Creative Entrepreneurship with partners across Europe.

Engagement with Industry and Stakeholders

CIT prides itself in having work ready graduates and feedback from industry supports that view. Breakfast briefings with industry have been very successful and the Faculty propose to continue and grow them in the future. One area for improvement is with students' interview skills and techniques. Students do have a module on communication skills, which includes mock interview skills. It is planned on including interview techniques in a 3rd/4th year module in the future, perhaps as an Employability Works module.

Course monitoring reports help identify programme change recommendations from industry. Industry panel visits, advisory panels and guest lecturers give feedback on the changing needs of industry. Extended campus engagement and feedback are communicated by the faculty representative.

Facilities

The Faculty established footprint is fragmented. Staff and classrooms are scattered throughout the campus. Where the Faculty does have a state of the art Tourism and Hospitality Building it does not have a Faculty Building and there are accommodation issues in the Department of Sport, Leisure and Childhood Studies and the Department of Applied Social Studies. Current facilities are not ideal and

there is serious concern with the suitability of the G Block building and sports hall for teaching. Views were expressed to the Panel by all stakeholders that if the Faculty is to grow and develop then improved learning spaces are essential. It was noted that, under current financial constraints, faculty management may need to be creative in sourcing the income necessary to fund a proposed new Faculty building as recommended in the last programmatic review.

The nature of the current funding model with internal allocation means that the Faculty of Business and Humanities is subsidising other schools/colleges. The internal funding allocation model is less amenable to the Faculty of Business and Humanities and more STEM focused. The lack of facilities appears to be impacting on growing new programmes and is impacting on current delivery especially in the sports area. The sports hall is in need of refurbishment and a fit for purpose glasshouse is needed for horticulture. The faculty would like to change D260 to an executive suite to address future challenges and offerings in executive education. These are institute wide decisions, but the Panel were convinced by arguments that they are impacting negatively on opportunities for growth and development within the Faculty.

Research - Staff

To enable and encourage staff to become research active, the Faculty has agreed to a reduction of two hours from their lecturing timetable for the supervision of postgraduate research. They are required to publish their research work. Staff wishing to be supported by the Faculty submit proposals for review by the Faculty Board of Studies Research Group. Within the next 3-4 years 26% of staff will have PhDs. CIT has funded 17 staff within the Faculty to pursue their doctoral studies.

Research - Students

Progress to Level 9 has increased impressively by 92% but admittedly from a low base since the last programmatic review. The Faculty has engaged in cross schools research projects and are considering creating linkages with industry to promote research. There are two dedicated post graduate research rooms in the faculty. This has been a very positive development where research staff benefit from the interaction with other research students. There is embedded research dissertation in 4th year for some level 8 programmes to give undergraduate students an introduction to research.

Faculty Strategic Goals

The Faculty has identified a range of areas which it is looking to develop. Included amongst these are

- Increasing research activities, publications and outputs and funding.

- Enhancing existing communication and feedback mechanism from students with a view to implementing changes, where necessary.
- Making greater use of social media for promotion of programmes.
- Increasing engagement with Alumni and leveraging their expertise through strategic initiatives and sponsorships.
- Increasing the number of international students.
- Embedding work placement and Entrepreneurship across the Faculty programmes, where practicable.
- Examining a range of alternative curriculum delivery paradigms including blended learning, online and flexible learning and problem based learning.
- Further developing the use of adjunct faculty positions.

Munster Technological University (MTU)

The Faculty is looking forward to the new Munster Technological University and the opportunities and benefits that it will bring for our stakeholders. There is no funding allocation for research in the current HEA funding model. Internationally, it is expected that having CIT's status recognised as a technological university will attract more international students in the future. There is a good consultation process in place with two union/management forums in operation. Currently, CIT is waiting on the relevant legislation to be finalised, which is expected in the current academic year. The HEA compact insists on increased research activity and a criteria for technological university designation relates to a significant proportion of staff holding a doctoral qualification.

1.7 SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER SESSIONS

In this section, a summary of the panel discussions with employers, staff of the Faculty and students is given. A full list of attendees at these sessions is given in the Appendices.

1.7.1 Plenary Session with Employers / Industry

The Panel met with industry personnel who were asked what engagement they had with the faculty and what their experience was like. Most of the speakers stated that they had a very positive experience, with ongoing engagement and consultation. They also praised the competencies and quality of the graduates who were capable of hitting the ground running. They were work ready and eager to learn. CIT has a good relationship with professional bodies and this needs to be maintained.

To be fit for purpose for the next five years, feedback from industry included:

1. Language/ cultural awareness training would be helpful in developing graduates for a global marketplace.
2. Longer placements/more placement where programmes have none.
3. Introduce Manual handling training in Early Years Education courses.
4. Stagger placement groups in EYE so that the industry can accommodate more student placements.
5. Reflective practice should be expanded and encouraged.
6. Tourism industry has changed and programme needs updating to reflect developments.
7. Formal communication and English writing skills is an issue for some graduates
8. Job seeking and interview skills should be included in programmes, perhaps through the development of a placement preparation module.

1.7.2 Plenary Session with Staff of the Faculty

The Chairperson welcomed the large number of faculty staff from the academic, technical, and administrative departments He opened the session by asking them what they thought was good about the Faculty of Business and Humanities in CIT?

The first comment was that communication and collegiality among all staff within the faculty was very positive and staff felt a sense of belonging. They enjoyed being able to have a personal relationship with students and felt that this is what differentiates CIT. They welcome the level of communication and consultation from management and feel that their opinions matter. They are proud of their students and try to give them a rounded education to prepare them for industry and life in general. Graduates are work ready and there is a strong critical engagement with industry.

The negatives included the lack of facilities and the sub-optimal condition of some of the facilities that are in place, serving to create a negative perception for prospective students. G Block was mentioned and overcrowding of offices and classrooms was highlighted. Staff felt restricted and frustrated by the lack of facilities as it prevented them from broadening course offerings and developing new modules. Staff felt that computing facilities were inadequate for the size of the Faculty which is growing on a yearly basis.

Student workload and the number of assessments were raised by the Panel. The lecturing staff felt that the standard of assessments was very high. They did feel that students were under pressure because of

the short timeframe and would be willing to consider alternative assessment methods and review scheduling of some across modules. They were very positive about the feedback on the reflective journals and would like to see its use expanded to all students. They were very supportive of the benefits of placements and would like to see all students undertake at least one. Staff raised the issue of their own workload and the additional pressure to find placements, so any support in this area would be very welcome.

Staff were very positive about opportunities to undertake personal development programmes and courses with many actively involved in their own scholarly development at level 10. There is an interest in research and the reduction in timetables was viewed as a positive development and encouraging.

The Chairman thanked the staff for engaging in a positive manner and for giving their time to attend.

1.7.3 Plenary Session with Students of the Faculty

The Chairperson welcomed the group of 70 students who were enrolled in a wide variety of programmes. They were asked about their experiences in CIT and their level of enjoyment.

In general the students were very supportive of the staff and had a very positive experience throughout their time in CIT. Their biggest issue was the sub-standard learning environment and lack of quality teaching facilities on campus. Some said that they chose CIT because it was close to home. Students felt that CIT a very friendly and accessible campus where students get to know lecturers on a personal level. Placement was a positive experience for them and students believed it would help them gain employment when they finished their course. Some students were critical of the amount of assessments and the timeframe for completion. They felt that lecturers should consult with each other more often regarding the scheduling of assignments so that they would know how many assessments the students had to complete within the timeframe. Staff feedback from assessments completed was varied. The lack of a placement in accounting is a serious problem as industry is now looking for placement to be included as part of the curriculum. For example, a student stated that one accountancy firm only hires graduates with placement experience.

Class representatives said that there are issues with the current feedback system. Culinary Arts students stated that they feel that progression for them is difficult as it is not a recognised business degree. The choice of electives was an issue for students as sometimes all electives did not run. The suitability of the library as a facility was raised. The noisy flooring, poor lighting, lack of electrical points, and opening

hours were particularly highlighted. Also, the students felt that WIFI on campus is not up to standard, particularly in the IT Building.

1.8 Conclusion

Overall, the panel were very impressed with the extensive and detailed documentation that was presented before panel meeting, the energy, attitude and knowledge of faculty members and the strong endorsements received from both student and employer panels.