

EQAF 2025

Proactive and Agile External Quality Assurance in the Age of Generative AI

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Workshop Aims

- Explore how GenAI can enhance EQA systems agility and responsiveness
- Gain insights from GenAI in EQA pilot projects
- Examine ethical, operational, and collaborative considerations of GenAI
- Identify practical inter-agency collaboration opportunities in GenAI
- Identify strategies to foster agency – HEI collaboration on implementing GenAI in QA



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Why GenAI in QA?

- GenAI is reshaping education and QA (IQA and EQA)
- QA must be agile, forward thinking, and resilient
- Opportunity to lead change, not just respond to it
- Manage risks and challenges



"Artificial intelligence is no longer just a frontier technology – it's a pervasive force shaping how we live, work and learn."

— World Economic Forum, 2025

"Quality assurance can play a crucial role in equipping the higher education sector to face rapid and dramatic shifts in political, economic and technological landscapes."

— EQAF 2025 Call for Contributions

About QQI

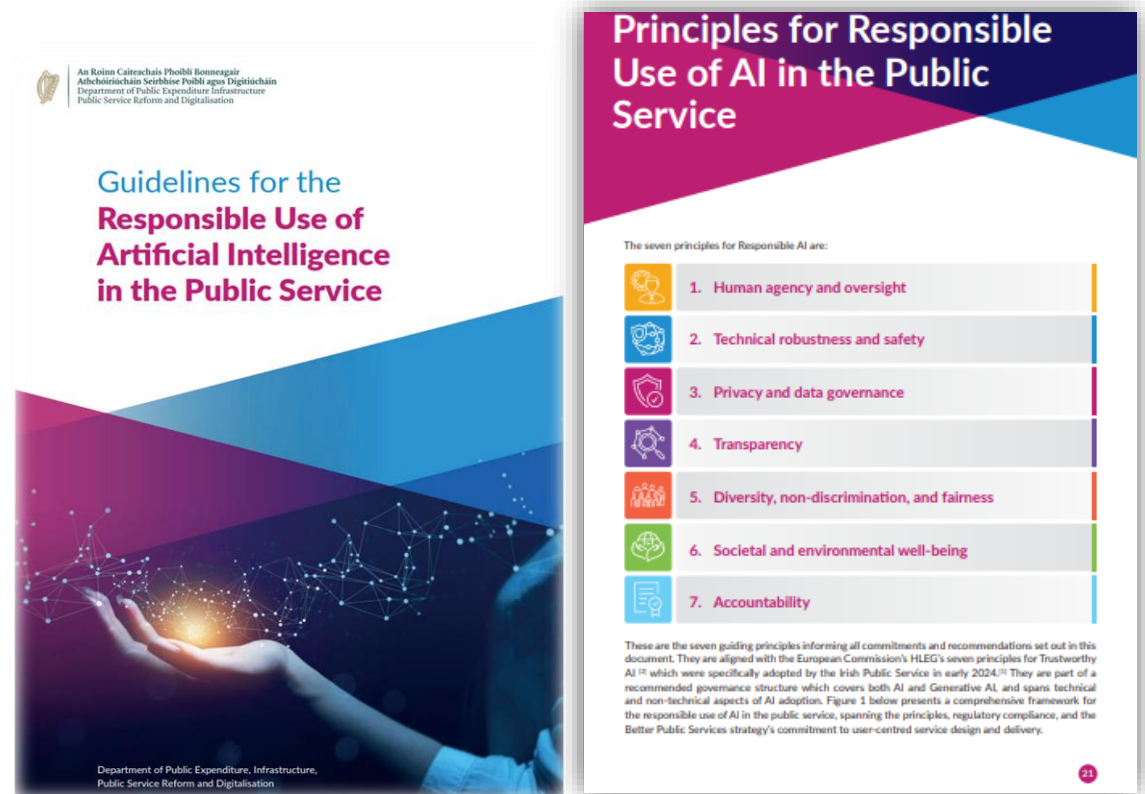
- Independent State Agency for external QA of further and higher education (public and private providers)
- Maintain the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)
- Conduct cyclical institutional reviews and monitoring
- Award the TrustEd Mark for international education quality
- Align QA practices with the ESG
- ENQA member, EQAR registered



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National & Strategic Context

- National strategy and guidelines
- Core principles for responsible use of AI in the public sector
- Strategic commitment to “publish system-level analysis of our annual monitoring and periodic evaluation of providers, using artificial intelligence where appropriate”



GenAI Pilot Projects

- Explore GenAI for thematic analysis of qualitative data from external QA processes
- Focus: Institutional review reports and annual quality reports (x 15) from HEIS
- Tools piloted: Microsoft Copilot and MAXQDA Tailwind

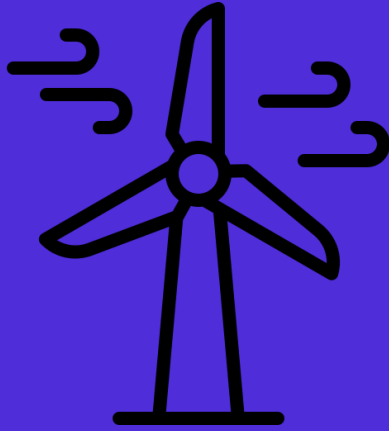


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Annual Quality Reports(AQRs) and Synthesis Report Process

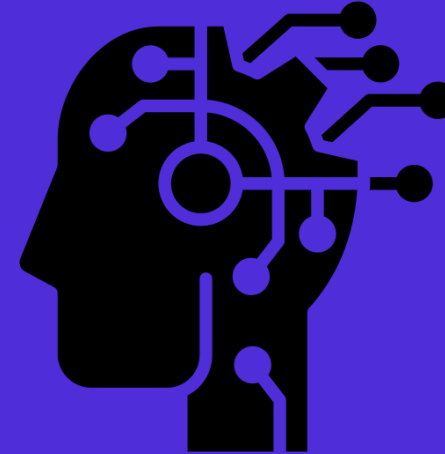
- AQRs submitted by all public and larger private HEIs
- Comprehensive overview of QA developments
- QQI produces a sector-wide annual synthesis
- Highlights trends, good practices, challenges; informs policy, supports enhancement
- Traditionally resource heavy and costly to produce
- GenAI offers greater efficiency and potentially deeper insights

Process Innovations with GenAI



MAXQDA Tailwind (Licensed)

- Coding and analysing (15) annual quality reports
- Identifying key themes and trends



Microsoft Copilot (Licensed)

- Assist with writing and proofreading (Proof reader agent created)

Process Overview

Input

- Annual Quality Reports from HEIs
- Uploaded to MAXQDA Tailwind

GenAI Tools

- MAXQDA Tailwind (Coding and theme extraction)
- Microsoft Copilot (Proofing, research, writing style)

Process

- Thematic analysis, cross-institutional theme identification
- Synthesis of main cross-cutting themes and topics arising
- Thematic map

Output

- Enhanced synthesis report
- Improved efficiency – shorter timeframe



Human Validity and Cross Checking

- Human oversight and validation:
 - All GenAI outputs were cross checked by QQI staff
 - Validation of findings against original AQRs
 - Individual AQRs reviewed with GenAI search tool
 - Ensures accuracy and reliability of thematic trends

Examples of Core Themes

- Strategy, Governance and Management of QA
- Effectiveness and impact of QA
- Academic Integrity
- Programme development and delivery
- Research and Innovation
- Monitoring and review
- Emerging Themes: Digital transformation, GenAI, Cybersecurity, Micro-credentials, EDI initiatives

MAXQDA Tailwind

Projects

Go ahead and create projects!

+ New Project

Setting up the project

Project	Description	Files	Topics	Summary T...
Thematic Framework	Summary of key themes, sub themes ...	1	0	0

Topics

Create & manage up to 20 topics

Export Find Topics

Identifying Initial Core Topics

Equality Diversity and Inclusion

Description

This theme incorporates institutional strategic commitments and developments in all elements of equality, diversity, inclusion and equity.

Topic Summary

Report) and annual quality reports (Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology AQR 2025 Report, Munster Technological University AQR 2025 Report, National University of Ireland AQR 2025 Report, South East

Digital Transformation

Description

Digital transformation in higher education refers to the strategic integration of digital technologies to enhance teaching, learning, administration, and student support services

Topic Summary

System Upgrades and Integrations: A dominant theme across the documents is the significant investment in upgrading and integrating IT systems. Many institutions, including ATU (Atlantic Technological University AQR 20

Summary Table

Comparative Tables

Add Data 15 Add Topics 1

Digital Transformation

Atlantic Technological University AQR 2025 Report

Atlantic Technological University (ATU) has undertaken significant digital transformation initiatives 70-71 75-83 107-110 120 125 127-129 133 151 168 198-208 283-293 382-450 483-486 595-607. These include the integration of core HR and payroll systems, completed in November 2024 71. The integration of student record systems (Banner) is an ongoing project in conjunction with EduCampus 71. An integrated applications system and CRM for online, flexible, and professional development (OPFD) applicants is also underway 71. A single module management system (Academic Module Manager, AMM) is being rolled out across campuses 71 78 133-134 611-619, with three instances currently in place 71. A Research Information Management System (RIMS) is being introduced in phases 71 168. Enhanced cybersecurity services, including penetration testing and threat

Dublin City University AQR 2025 Report

Dublin City University (DCU) implemented a new Student Information System (SIS) in August 2024, transforming student interaction and improving the experience for both students and staff 11. The Quality Improvement Office (QIO) developed PowerBI dashboards to enhance strategic business

Chat

Chat function – can use for all or individual documents

Search chats...

CHAT HISTORY 26/100

September

Topics

AQR Synthesis 2025

AQR Synthesis: Trinity College D...

AQR Synthesis Examples Review

AQR Synthesis References

AQR Synthesis Report Cross-Ch...

Concluding Chapter Draft

August

EDI Case Study Extraction

Graduate Attributes & Curriculu...

Digital Transformation Summary

Research Strategic Planning Ap...

Welcome! How can I assist you today?

Select the documents you want to chat with.

Chat with 16 documents

Enter your question

0/2000

M365 Copilot

M365 Copilot

Search

Chat

Agents

Researcher

Analyst

Quality Analysis Assistant

Writing and Proofreader

All agents

Create agent

Conversations

Pages

Notebooks

Create

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Agent Store

Find agents with the expertise to help you complete complex tasks

Search agents

Your agents

Researcher

Analyst

Quality Analysis As...

Writing and Proofr...

Built by Microsoft

Create agent

UPDATE



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Quality Assurance in Higher Education:

A Synthesis of Annual Quality Reports

QQI INSIGHTS

October 2025

Quality Assurance in Higher Education:
A Synthesis of Annual Quality Reports

QQI INSIGHTS.

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This report is a synthesis of the 2025 Annual Quality Reports submitted to QQI by fifteen public higher education institutions.

This report is a synthesis of the 2025 Annual Quality Reports submitted to QQI by six independent and private higher education institutions.

AQR Synthesis – 2 Reports

October 2025

Thematic Analysis of the CINNTE Review Reports of Technological Universities (TUs)

QQI INSIGHTS.

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June 2025

Thematic Analysis of the CINNTE Review Reports of Independent and Private Higher Education Institutions

QQI INSIGHTS.

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Institutional Review Synthesis – 2 Reports



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METHODOLOGY FOR SYNTHESIS

This methodology for this synthesis report employed an iterative qualitative data analysis process using licensed versions of [MAXQDA³](#) desktop application and [MAXQDA Tailwind](#). Firstly, a coding framework was developed based on the AQR template and relevant sections of the AQRs were coded within MAXQDA desktop application.

Secondly, MAXQDA Tailwind's AI-drive thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes. The coding scheme was then refined based on initial findings and insights generated by the MAXQDA Tailwind's AI-driven analysis.

MAXQDA reporting tools were used to extract illustrative examples and conduct the thematic synthesis. This combined approach significantly expedited the identification of key themes and the subsequent thematic synthesis, facilitated by MAXQDA reporting tools.

In addition, a licensed Microsoft Copilot Proofreader Agent was used to assist with proofreading during the development of this synthesis. All suggested edits were reviewed by the executive. The tool provided an efficient first layer of proofing.

³ Qualitative data analysis software

A Synthesis of Annual Quality Reports of Public HEIs

Insights and Lessons Learned

- Process efficiency – Time and cost savings
- Positive impact on process (Quality Synthesis)
- Human oversight – does not replace the team
- Training, capacity building – GenAI for staff
- Rate and pace of change (enhancement GenAI tools)
- Security – managing data risks (IT support)
- Positive staff feedback



Next Steps

- Embed GenAI into our annual synthesis report process
- Explore GenAI tools in IQA processes with HEIs
- Organisation-wide principles and GenAI framework
- Plans for licenced Microsoft Copilot for all agency staff
- Develop staff skills and capacity
- Consider wider applicability - Other operational/administrative tasks

Round Table Discussions



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SLIDO

<https://app.sli.do/event/38Q9CGetd9GLNqTGnSWrrP>



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Discussion 1

(15 Mins + 5 mins feedback)

Exploring the Integration of GenAI in QA Processes

- 1) What specific challenges has your agency or institution faced in implementing GenAI within QA processes?
- 2) What steps can QA agencies take to ensure responsible and ethical use of GenAI technology?
- 3) What opportunities do you see for GenAI to promote collaboration and informed decision-making within QA systems?



Discussion 2

(15 Mins + 5 mins feedback)

Future Directions & Practical Applications of GenAI in QA

- 1) What potential applications of GenAI can be explored to further innovate QA processes in higher education?
- 2) What strategies can be employed to increase adoption and integration of GenAI technologies across institutions and/or QA agencies?
- 3) What tools could agencies use to better understand stakeholder perceptions of GenAI in QA?



***I hope you found this workshop
interesting!***

Thank you!

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