

Co-operation at the cusp of academic and corporate governance

Establishing and embedding a joint
quality committee in a university

European Quality Assurance Forum 2024

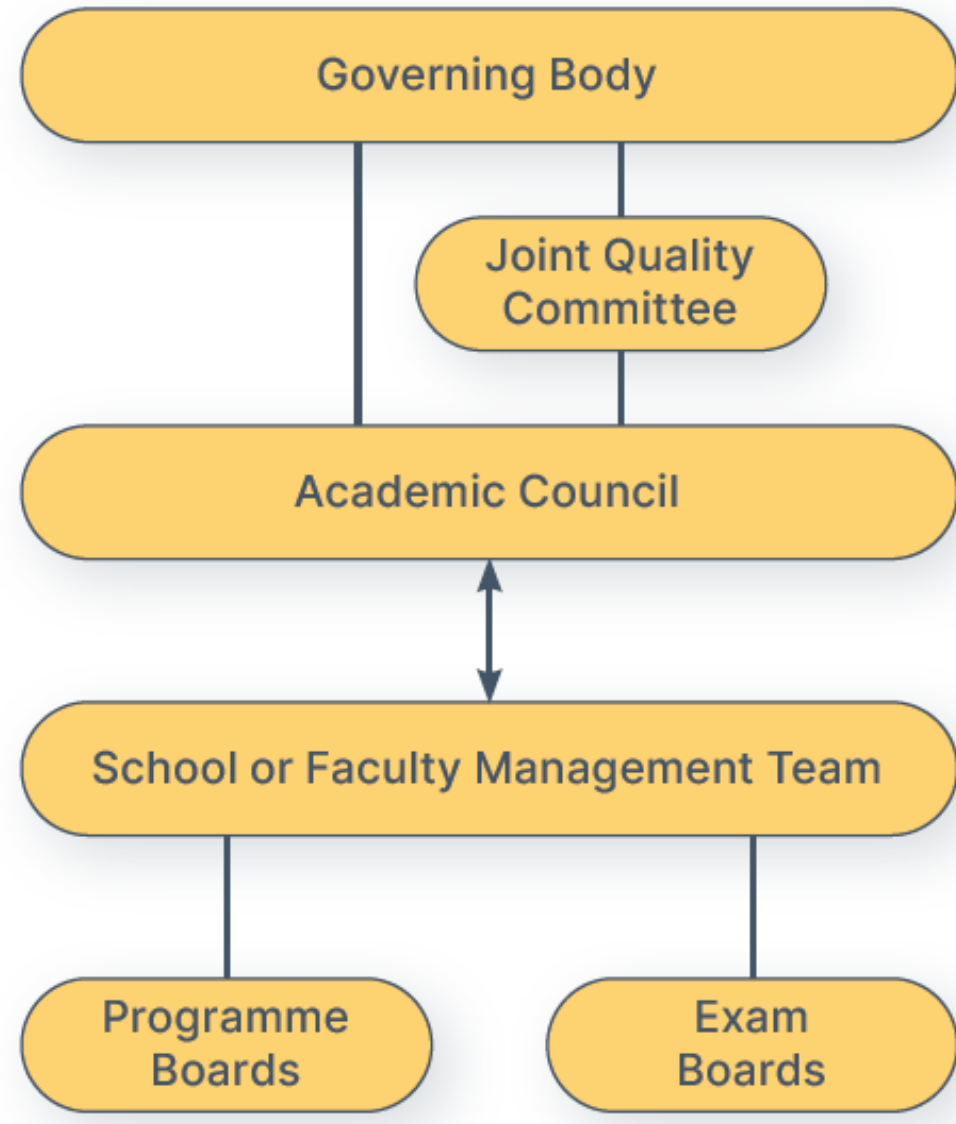
Establishment of SETU

- Founded on May 1st 2022
- **Merger** of two former Institutes of Technology, each **over 50 years old**
- 18,000 students, 1,500 staff, three primary locations in the South East of Ireland (population approx. 580,000)
- **Only Technological University in the region** (5 in Ireland in total)
- SETU Academic Council was in place from the outset
- Decided to **adopt a new design**, building upon **experiences** but also informed by **national and international practices**

Academic Council Design

- **Working Group** appointed by the Governing Body in October 2022
- **Twelve members**, including two external members (one as chair), President, VPs for Academic Affairs, staff and students
- Completed work in April 2023 and reported to the Governing Body, who **approved the design**
- Overarching purpose was to ‘**recommend a structure that connects SETU with national and international best thinking in the academic governance space**’

University Structures for the Management and Governance of Quality



Delivering Shared University Governance

- University governance is **challenging**
- Traditionally, in Ireland, it is **distributed** amongst:
 - Governing Body – **corporate governance**
 - Academic Council – **academic governance**
 - Executive Management Team – **business governance**
- **Delineation** and **separation** is important, including taking a **balanced** approach
- **Connectivity** is also vital, bodies working in tandem – cross membership and joint committees can help here
- Structures need to **fit contexts and purposes**

Delivering Shared University Governance

- Carnegie and Tuck's (2010) **integrated approach** to shared governance
- **Collaboration** between the various bodies, agree amongst themselves how governance will be shared
- Recognise the **interdependence** of bodies and how activities of each **influence** the areas of focus of the other bodies
- One form of governance does not have to be the **sole remit** of a specific body – see it all as part of **connected whole**
- How does this work at the **cusp of decisions** that cross over different bodies, such as **whole-university quality**?
- Consideration given to the use of a **joint committee** here

JQC Membership

- External member of the Governing Body (as Chair)
- VP for Academic Affairs, Teaching and Learning (as Secretary)
- VP for Research, Innovation and Impact
- Three members of Governing Body
- Three members of Academic Council
- One undergraduate and one postgraduate student representative
- Up to two additional members may be co-opted by the Committee
- Officers of the University may be in attendance as required, in addition to a recording secretary

JQC terms of reference

University Joint Quality Committee

Terms of Reference and Membership

Version 1.0

Agrees schedule of data to be submitted by university stakeholders to monitor quality delivery

Reviews schedule of data and reviews schedule for emerging issues

Amends data/review schedules in response to issues identified/in response to external environment

Implements university policy on academic risk and reviews and acts on academic and other quality risks

Implements policy on quality reviews; agrees and monitors the schedule of quality reviews and report on and monitor review outcomes/implementation

JQC relationships & activity

Joint Quality Committee	
Reports to...	• Governing Body, and/or • Academic Council
Refers matters (issues/risks) for response to...	• Other committees • Executive Management Team • Faculty • Department • ...
Identifies issue/theme and...	• Amends data schedule, or • Amends review schedule, or • Initiates review process
Identifies risks and...	• Enters as high/medium/low risk into academic risk register, and • Assigns to relevant entity, and • Monitors risk

JQC and data

Monitoring & oversight
(NB: complementary
to other committees)

Strategic,
organisational

Supported by
executive (Office
VPAA)

1. Confirm that **data are being generated by and, following analysis, informing** university quality processes (aggregate level)
2. Confirm that relevant **university bodies are taking appropriate action** on foot of data analysis
3. Confirm to Academic Council and Governing Body that the flows of data within the university are sufficient and appropriate to **assure it of and enhance the quality of education and service delivery, and to support the achievement of its strategy**
4. **Impact of data review** on academic risk register, conduct of reviews, data review...
5. **Separate and distinct to role** of other committees

JQC and academic risk

Monitoring & oversight

Strategic,
organisational

Supported by
executive (Office
VPAA)

1. Monitor, review and retain oversight of the **academic risk register** (standing item) – *supported by Office of VPAA*
2. **Discuss and categorise** academic risks prior to entry into academic risk register:
 1. *Risks relating to the currency of the policy environment*
 2. *Risks relating to compliance with the policy environment*
 3. *Risks relating to academic judgement*
3. Ensure that risks are **grounded in relevant data**, are measurable and can be understood
4. Ensure that **appropriate mitigation/management measures** are in place and that **responsibility** for risks are clearly assigned
5. Consider how monitoring and review of risk register may **impact** data/review activity

JQC and reviews

All areas of university activity (academic, services...)

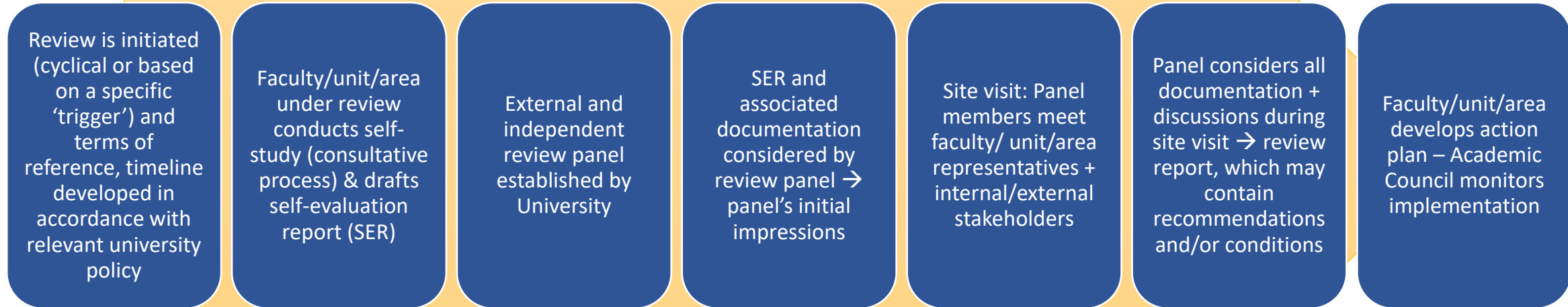
Strategic, organisational

Supported by executive (Office VPAA)

1. Develop, maintain and implement the **policy on university reviews** (alongside ancillary policies for academic, service-area, thematic reviews)
2. In collaboration with the executive, develop and implement a **schedule of reviews**
3. Ensure that **review outcomes** are reported upon and **responses (quality enhancement plans)** from the units under review provided
4. Maintain **oversight of the implementation of quality enhancement plans**
5. Support **complementarity between university review processes and other areas of JQC's remit** (i.e. academic risk register, quality data review)

JQC and reviews

Outcomes of reviews inform
conduct of future processes,
development of SETU IQA system
& feed into external QA review



→ cycle of continuous improvement

Roles & responsibilities

- Joint Quality Committee
- Office of VPAA
- Executive Management Team
- Academic Council
- Governing Body
- Faculty/programme/area/ activity management

**Review
duration:
6-9 months**

Lessons learned and future considerations ...

- Quarterly meetings of JQC – important to **co-ordinate agendas** of the various bodies, efficient conduct of activities
- **Student involvement** and voice – develop briefing session for student members prior to commencement
- **Connects** the primary governance bodies – kept apprised, while maintaining **appropriate separation**
- Support **increased engagement** with/between committees and the executive – **greater collaboration** across areas
- **Broader view of university governance**, collaborative approach to quality on the cusp of academic and corporate governance – **scope to use structure in other areas**

Thank You

Questions? Comments?