

*Institutional Review of St Patrick's College, Thurles – 21-22 April 2009*  
*Report of the Expert Panel*  
*Final Report*

# **HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING AWARDS COUNCIL, IRELAND**

Comhairle na nDámhachtainí Ardoideachais agus Oiliúna, Éire

**Institutional Review of Providers of Higher Education and Training**

**Institutional Review of St. Patrick's College, Thurles  
on 21-22 April 2009  
Report of the Expert Panel**

[www.hetac.ie](http://www.hetac.ie)

## **HETAC Institutional Review**

The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) is the qualifications awarding body for third-level educational and training institutions outside the university sector in Ireland. All providers offering HETAC awards are subject to external quality assurance review of their institutions. HETAC carries out such reviews as part of its institutional review process.

HETAC appointed a panel of experts to carry out the institutional review of St Patrick's College, Thurles on its behalf. Under the chairmanship of Dr. Richard Thorn, the review panel membership reflected a wide range of expertise and experience, in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the review. HETAC wishes to record its thanks to the panel for having accepted the task and for their generous and professional commitment to the review.

The College will submit a follow-up report to HETAC not more than twelve months after the publication of this report. This will outline how the College has implemented the plan contained in its response to the report and evaluate the initial impact of such implementation. The College's follow-up report will be considered by the Academic Committee of HETAC, along with a commentary by the HETAC Executive. The Academic Committee may adopt the follow-up report and may consider further conditions. Following adoption by the Academic Committee, the follow-up report and any further observations by the Council will be published on the Council's website.

### **Note:**

*HETAC's institutional review process is designed to address only those objectives described in the Terms of Reference appended to this Report.*

*In particular, the Expert Panel cannot make any finding regarding: -*

- (a) The financial standing and commercial viability of the institution reviewed,*
- (b) The institution's compliance with its general statutory obligations, or*
- (c) The general fitness of the institution's systems and arrangements for the governance and management of financial matters.*

*The Report of the Expert Panel contains no assurances, warranties or representations, express or implied, regarding the aforesaid issues, or any other issues outside the Terms of Reference.*

*While HETAC has endeavoured to ensure the information contained in the Expert Report is correct, complete and up-to-date, any reliance placed on such information is strictly at the reader's own risk and in no event will HETAC be liable for any loss or damage (including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage) arising from or in connection with the use of the information contained in the Expert Panel Report.*

## **Report of the Expert Panel - Executive Summary**

This is the report of the expert panel appointed by HETAC to undertake the Institutional and Programmatic Review of the St. Patrick's College, Thurles on 21/22 April 2009. The review process was carried out in accordance with the HETAC Policy on Institutional Reviews.

### **Findings**

The following is an executive summary of the findings of the expert panel:-

- The effectiveness of the Quality Assurance arrangements operated by St. Patrick's College has been assessed and they have been found to be effective in accordance with the seven elements of *Part One of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance 2007, Helsinki, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition* and the *HETAC Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance Procedures in Higher Education, 2004*. However, because of a concern that they are overelaborate the College is required to review the Quality Assurance policies and procedures, to ensure that they are fully fit for purpose.
- St. Patrick's College, Thurles has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression, as determined by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI).

### *Commendations*

The panel wishes to commend St. Patrick's College, Thurles on the following achievements. The commendations are classified in relation to the objectives of the Institutional Review as set out in the Terms of Reference. (See Appendix A.)

#### ***Objective 1- Public Confidence***

1. The Panel commends the College on the uniformly positive reaction it received from external stakeholders, such as school principals and career guidance counsellors and from its students with regard to their experience of the college. There is clear evidence of the cultivation of good relationships, both internally and externally.
2. The quality of the College's brochure and other publicity material is commended. The College's promotional and branding literature available to the panel was considered to be impressive, well produced and fit-for-purpose.
3. The panel commends the recognition that the College has achieved from the Teaching Council for the two programmes - Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business and Religious Studies and the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Irish and Religious Studies.

***Objective 2 – Strategic Planning and Governance***

4. The internal leadership provided by the President is obvious and commended. The Panel considers that the Self Evaluation Report is a good example of a focused, reflective and self analytical document.
5. The panel commend the clear sense of purpose and commitment which was evident with all staff with whom the Panel met. There was also evidence of good relationships among staff at all levels within the Institution.

***Objective 4 Qualifications Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression***

6. The College is to be commended for its responsiveness to student needs in general.

***Objective 6 Recommendations for Enhancement***

7. The panel commends the investment in the physical infrastructure, as detailed in the President's presentation and observed by the panel during the site visit.

**Recommendations and Conditions**

The panel makes the following recommendations and conditions. The recommendations and conditions are classified in relation to the objectives of the Institutional Review as set out in the Terms of Reference. (See Appendix A.)

***Objective 1- Public Confidence***

1. The panel recommends that the College focus on the management of stakeholder relationships with local schools, committees, business groups and career guidance counsellors etc. This will help increase both the quality and quantity of public awareness, public relations and the profile of the College.

***Objective 2 – Strategic Planning and Governance***

2. The panel recommends that the College develop a dedicated oversight function at the governing body/authority level to include additional expertise from the higher education and training sector. Advice on the new governance arrangements should form part of the work of the proposed strategic adviser as referenced under objective 7 below.
3. The panel recommends that the College review its decision making structures and processes to ensure there is a separation of governance, operational management and academic decision-making. All elements should have clearly defined Terms of Reference.
4. The panel recommends that the College review the development of its Strategic Plan, in particular the sequencing between vision, mission and implementation.

5. The panel recommends that a more clearly defined Academic Council be constituted, with clearly articulated Terms of Reference. The Council should have a constitution which includes a clear demarcation of its role and functions. The College may consider including external representation on its Academic Council from experienced academics or academic managers in other Higher Education institutions.
6. The panel recommends that the College's internal management and academic committees and boards should meet in accordance with a coherent schedule and Terms of Reference for each committee and board.

### **Objective 3 – Quality Assurance**

7. The panel recommends that the College review its Quality Assurance policies and procedures and ensure that they are fully fit-for-purpose. The quality assurance procedures are considered by the panel to be over elaborate for the size of the College, for example, the procedures describe a six committee structure where two committees may be sufficient such as an executive committee and a programme committee.
8. The panel recommends that the College develops a strategic Human Resources Plan that, *inter alia*, takes into account the current significant reliance on part-time staff. The proposed plan should focus staff development on higher education development needs rather than operational matters.
9. The panel recommends that the College develop a clear Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy to include more rigorous internal moderation on, for example, joint project supervision and double marking arrangements. The HETAC Policy on Assessment and Standards, 2009 refers.
10. The panel recommends that the College develop internal and external options for students who fail to achieve the necessary standard for teaching required for the Bachelor of Arts (Honours).

### ***Objective 4 Qualifications Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression***

11. The panel recommends that the College progress the development of a College Policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
12. The panel recommends that the College issue the European Diploma Supplement to graduates of the College in accordance with the State requirements on the National Diploma Supplement Template.

### ***Objective 6 Recommendations for Enhancement***

13. The panel recommends that the College consider developing both internal and external options for students who fail to achieve the necessary standards for teaching in the Bachelor of Arts programme.

14. The College is encouraged to enhance the stock, particularly for Business Studies and also for modules in the Religious Studies stream.

***Objective 7 – Programmatic Review of BA (Honours) Programme in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies***

The panel makes the following recommendations and accompanying conditions to HETAC on programme revalidation:

15. The Bachelor of Arts (Honours) incorporating the subject streams of Religious Studies, Education and Business, be granted continuing approval for two further intakes in September 2009 and September 2010 which may be extended subject to the fulfilment of the recommendations specified in this report and subject to the fulfilment of the conditions set out below:

**15.1 Condition**

The panel recommends that in order to ensure the ongoing orderly growth and development of the College, it should take immediate steps to appoint an Advisor to work directly with the President, at a strategic level to address issues of governance, effective development of the Strategic Plan and the development of a strategic alliance with another higher education institution.

**15.2 Condition**

St. Patrick's College, Thurles should enter into a formal strategic alliance with a higher education institution that will help ensure sustainability for the College in terms of planning and taking appropriate action to meet the current and future needs of the College and provide for its continued development.

A follow up review should take place in early 2010 to ensure the conditions have been met or substantial progress has been made to meet the conditions. In recommending these conditions the panel understands that the continuing validation of this programme (and all associated streams) is only possible if these conditions are fulfilled to the satisfaction of HETAC.

**Programme recommendations to the College:**

The panel recommends for all three subject streams, Religious Studies, Education and Business that the College:

- Reduce the number of stated learning outcomes for all modules to a more realistic number and realign the individual module learning outcomes with the programme learning outcomes.
- Apply the weighting of the final award classification as indicated in the Self Evaluation Report (page 48) - with a greater weighting placed on the final year assessment of 25:75.
- Establish alternative options, as part of the counselling service, for students who wish to change their career direction and move out of teaching.
- Explore the use of a greater variety of assessment instruments in the continuous assessment of the modules.

The panel makes the following recommendations to the College for each of the specific subject streams:

*Religious Studies*

- The College should re-appraise programme content and ethos to ensure that a possible over-emphasis on the Roman Catholic faith is avoided and that students are fully equipped also to teach in non Roman Catholic schools.

*Education*

- The practice of having only one 'Teaching Practice' supervisor per student should be revised. Legislation that is relevant and appropriate to the 'Teaching Practice' component should be re-located in the curriculum.

*Business*

- Due to the fact that graduates of the business stream of this programme will not have Teaching Council Recognition to teach Economics, the College should review the volume of ECTS credits currently allocated to the 'Economics' module with a view to reducing it.
- The variation between continuous assessment and terminal examination weightings in the Business modules should be reviewed to ensure that they reflect a broader range of assessment strategies relevant to business.

The panel is grateful to the College for the co-operation and assistance provided to the review panel and wishes it well in its future work.

## **Background to St. Patrick's College, Thurles**

St Patrick's College, a third level educational institution, is located in the town of Thurles, Co. Tipperary. The College has a history of religious and humanities education dating back to 1837 when it was opened as a seminary. By the late 1990s the number of students began to decline and the seminary closed in 2002. The College currently offers a range of programmes, both full-time and part-time in education, business, religion, theology, philosophy, pastoral care, and psychology. All programmes are delivered on the Thurles campus.

St. Patrick's College is primarily engaged in the professional preparation of trainee teachers of Religion, Business and Irish subjects for second level schools. The College also serves as a centre for theological, pastoral and spiritual renewal in the region. It is now expanding its range of part-time and full-time programmes. The college is operated as a charitable organization.

### **Programmes offered:**

St. Patrick's College currently offers two level 8 ab initio courses as follows:

- The Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies & Religious Studies (full-time) was introduced in September 2004. Irish has been added as an additional stream to the Bachelor of Arts to provide a new subject combination and additional programme - Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Irish and Religious Studies. The Irish stream also has Teaching Council recognition. The development of this four-year Level 8 degree programme was in response to a need for fully qualified Religious and Business Teachers at second level. There are currently 159 students enrolled on this programme with an average intake of 40 students per year. The first cohort of students graduated in November 2008.
  
- The Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Theology. This is a three year part-time programme. A strategic decision was taken by the College in February 2009 not to offer this programme in the future. The current cohort of students is expected to complete in May 2011). There are currently 28 students registered on the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Theology. The programme was developed to add an option for lifelong learning to the College Prospectus.

The College provides short community learning programmes and has recently run programmes in Parish Ministry, Biblical Studies, Philosophical Studies, Liturgy Bereavement Counselling and two summer schools.

St. Patrick's College has developed a close collaborative relationship with Tipperary Institute (TI), and this relationship includes the deployment of lecturers and two stream leaders from Tipperary Institute, as part-time faculty in St. Patrick's College, mainly in the fields of Education and Business Studies. Close links have been fostered with Mary Immaculate College, Limerick for whom St. Patrick's College hosted their Masters Colloquium in 2007 and 2009.

From 2002 to 2006 the college has undergone a re-generation project. It has been re-furnished and re-fitted to the highest modern standards. The College describes itself as having excellent educational, residential, catering and recreational facilities. The spacious grounds, ample parking and strategic location provide an ideal setting to pursue higher education.

### **Learner Cohort Profile:**

The learner cohort of St. Patrick's College includes both second level and mature students. 90 percent of the learners enrolled on the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies & Religious Studies come directly from second level education. The remaining 10 percent on this

programme are mature students. The average targeted intake of students on this programme has traditionally been limited to 40 per year due to teaching practice requirements.

All students on the Bachelor of Arts (Theology) are mature students. There are currently 13 students enrolled in first year of programme. The last intake into the programme was September 2008.

**Funding Arrangements:**

St. Patrick's College is privately funded. It is administered by a Board of Trustees. The Patron is the Archbishop of Cashel and Emly, Dr. Dermot Clifford. It is non-profit making organisation.

## **Institutional review methodology**

The review process was carried out in accordance with the *HETAC Policy on Institutional Reviews of Providers of Higher Education and Training December 2007*. The process consists of six phases which are outlined here:

1. HETAC sets the Terms of Reference following consultation with the College;
2. A Self-Evaluation is carried out by the College and the production of a Self-Evaluation Report;
3. Visit by an expert panel appointed by HETAC and production of a written panel report;

The next steps in this process are:-

4. Institutional response including implementation plan;
5. Publication of the panel report and response;
6. Follow-up report submitted by the College.

The Terms of Reference for St. Patrick's College, Thurles were discussed at a meeting between HETAC and the Institution on 12 February 2009.

The objectives of the institutional review of St. Patrick's College were set by HETAC as follows:

1. To enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by the institution and the standards of the awards made. [It is noted in this context that St. Patrick's College Thurles offers two parallel BA Programmes with its evening BA Programme, currently being phased out.]
2. To contribute to coherent strategic planning and governance in the institution. It is noted that St. Patrick's College Thurles is currently in the process of developing a new five year strategic plan (2009 – 2014). It is also recognised that the overall responsibility for governance of the College is vested in a Board of Trustees, chaired by the Archbishop of Cashel. The College President is a member of the Board of Trustees.
3. To assess the effectiveness of the quality assurance arrangements operated by the institution. St. Patrick's College Thurles has developed its Quality Assurance manuals, (in line with the National Framework and Qualifications, European developments and HETAC policies). Provisions of the QA Manual are reviewed by the College on an annual basis
  - A special consideration agreed under this objective - The Institutional Review should consider the collaboration with Tipperary Institute on the provision and delivery of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies. The College introduced this programme in 2004, in collaboration with Tipperary Institute and following accreditation by HETAC. The entire programme is delivered on campus at St. Patrick's College.
4. To confirm the extent that the College has implemented the national framework of qualifications and procedures for access, transfer and progression.
5. To provide recommendations for the enhancement of the education and training provided by the institution.
6. Objective 7 - To undertake a programmatic review of the following programmes:-
  - Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies
  - Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Irish and Religious Studies
  - Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Theology (to be discontinued)

### ***Additional Objectives for St Patrick's College***

Under Objective 7 of HETAC's prescribed objectives, it was agreed with the College that the Expert Panel would undertake a programmatic review of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business and Religious Studies. The format followed by the College involved internal preparation and self-study report for the programmatic review. This was combined with the internal preparation for the Institutional Review.

The full Terms of Reference for St. Patrick's College, Thurles is included in full in Appendix A.

HETAC appointed a panel of experts to carry out the institutional review on its behalf. Under the chairmanship of Dr. Richard Thorn, the review panel membership reflected a wide range of expertise and experience, in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the review. The composition of the institutional review panel in terms of expertise took this combined approach of institutional and programmatic review into account and the panel included relevant disciplinary experts. Panel members were asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest prior to their appointment. Panel members received an induction on the conduct of institutional reviews in advance of the site visit. The panel membership is outlined in full in Appendix B.

St. Patrick's College, Thurles undertook the following internal preparations in advance as part of the institutional review process:

The College carried out a series of consultative and information meetings over a period of more than a year, prior to the date of the panel visit. The College engaged the services of two facilitators from the Institute of Technology, Tralee as Project Coordinators. These facilitators assisted in the consultative process and provided hands-on co-ordination for the completion of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER). Both facilitators attended most sessions with the HETAC panel during the site visit.

The College submitted its SER, in addition to supporting evidence, in advance of the site visit. A desk-based review of the SER was undertaken by HETAC in advance of forwarding the report to the review panel. Each individual panel member reviewed this self-evaluation report in advance of the site visit and recorded their initial impressions of the SER. The impressions informed the discussion at the advance meeting with the senior representatives of the College, the HETAC representative, the Review Chairperson and Secretary.

The SER set out the following headings as follows –

- Introduction and data sources
- Objective 1 – Public Confidence
- Objective 2 – Strategic Planning and Governance
- Objective 3 – Quality Assurance
- Objective 4 – Qualifications Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression
- Objective 6 – Recommendations

The following documents were submitted in support of Objective 7 for Programmatic Review including –

- Programmatic Review – Executive Summary
- Programmatic Review – Self-Study
- BA (Honours) – Proposed Programme Document

- BA (Honours) – Proposed Programme Document (Irish Stream only)

A number of other documents were submitted in support of the Institutional Review Self Evaluation Report.

An advance meeting was held between the Chairman, Secretary and HETAC project manager with the President and the Academic Coordinator, St Patrick's College, Thurles, on 7 April 2009. This meeting set out the broad agenda for the site visit and agreed the most salient issues for the visit.

The site visit took place on 21-22 April 2009. The panel met with staff of St. Patrick's College, Thurles and Tipperary Institute, learners and other stakeholders according to an agenda drawn up by the panel in consultation with the College. The agenda for the site visit is given in Appendix C. A list of stakeholders met by the panel is provided in Appendix D. A glossary of the documentation available to the panel during the site visit is provided in Appendix E.

The members of the panel were satisfied that they received full co-operation from the College and had the necessary documentation and discussions to reach their conclusions and produce their report.

## **Findings in relation to objectives of Institutional Review**

### **Objective One – Public Confidence**

This objective is to enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by the College and the standards of the awards made. This is an overarching objective which covers all areas of the College's activity. The quality of the institutional review process itself is a critical part of this as is the publication of the Self Evaluation Report, Panel Report and the Institution's response and action plan. The information provided by the College to the public falls within this objective.

### **Self Evaluation Report**

The review Chairman and panel members were uniformly impressed with the quality and clarity of the documentation provided for both the institutional review and programmatic review under Objective 7. The Self-evaluation Report (SER) was coherent and well presented and the supporting documentation was comprehensive and navigable. The SER was considered to be a good example of a focused, reflective and self-analytical document. Issues which were not fully addressed in the documentation provided by the College were comprehensively explored during the dialogue between the panel and the College personnel.

It is evident that the self-study incorporated broad consultation with internal stakeholders of the College, including learners.

The College acknowledged that it needs to improve its presence in the 'market place'; the two Bachelor of Arts (Honours) programme are virtually the sole offering of the College at present.

### **Stakeholders**

St. Patrick's College Thurles considers its public to be

- Careers Guidance Counsellors;
- Students; School Principals; Teachers;
- Parents of current and potential students

The College receives large numbers of queries from these stakeholders.

A good level of satisfaction was expressed in the positive feedback being received by the College from schools and colleges where St Patrick's College students and graduates are employed and/or are placed on teaching practice. This is borne out by an employment rate of 85 percent of last year's graduating class.

The College has indicated that it will enhance its profile by holding public lectures and organising conferences throughout the year, for example, the College is planning a seminar on suicide and addiction fronted by a 'high profile' speaker. Evidence indicates that 'Word of Mouth' is important in promoting the College's programmes. The College considers that Central Applications Office (CAO) points and the CAO cut-off points for its BA course(s) to be a crucial metric and indication of the demand for the College's programmes. There is evidence of leadership at all relevant levels within the College and all relevant staff has been engaged in the self-study process.

### **Information provided by the Institution to the public**

The panel concurred with the College's considered view that there is significant scope for improvement of the College's engagement with its stakeholders and with the public at large, both in terms of the quality and extent of the engagement.

The College will continue to work towards improving its image in the wider community through advertising its programmes, using local radio and the local and national media to make the public aware of the educational programmes provided by the College.

### ***Key findings***

St. Patrick's College Thurles enjoys a good standing and reputation with its key stakeholders. Outside of its own niche area, in Humanities and Education, the profile of the College is virtually unknown. The College's website is satisfactory, however the panel agree with the College that it requires updating.

The panel found that the Public Confidence objective was interpreted by the College as being mainly centred around public relations and marketing issues. The College should also focus on the management of stakeholder relationships (local schools, community groups, relevant statutory bodies, career guidance, business community, emerging alumni etc) via consultation and other appropriate mechanisms in order to enhance the profile of the College.

### ***Commendations***

1. The Panel commends the College on the uniformly positive reaction it received from external stakeholders, such as school principals and career guidance counsellors and from its students with regard to their experience of the college. There is clear evidence of the cultivation of good relationships, both internally and externally.
2. The quality of the College's brochure and other publicity material is commended. The College's promotional and branding literature available to the panel was considered to be impressive, well produced and fit-for-purpose.
3. The panel commends the recognition that the College has achieved from the Teaching Council for the two programmes - Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business and Religious Studies and the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Irish and Religious Studies.

### ***Recommendation***

1. The panel recommends that the College focus on the management of stakeholder relationships with local schools, committees and business groups and career guidance counsellors etc. This will help increase both the quality and quantity of public awareness, public relations and the profile of the College.

## **Objective 2 – Strategic Planning and Governance**

This objective is to contribute to coherent strategic planning and governance in the College. The review may address the coherence of the College mission, vision and values and overall institutional strategic planning.

### ***Summary***

The President of the College, made a clear and comprehensive presentation on the context and work of St. Patrick's College. In this presentation, the President clarified the governance and management of the College, including the unique relationship between the College's management and its Board of Trustees (of which he, the College President, is a member).

The President is a 'conduit' between the Board of Trustees and the Management Team. The Board of Trustees concern themselves with such matters as finances and Human Resources matters. However, academic and internal College policy issues are dealt with and determined by the College management team. This management team consists of six persons (President, Registrar, Academic Coordinator, Senior Lecturer [former Registrar], the Head of Religious Studies Department and the Chaplain).

### ***Key findings***

On the question of the Academic Council, the panel has some concerns that the Council is effectively a 'mirror-image' of the Management Team (referred to as the Operational Committee), supplemented by the Librarian and the three discipline Stream Leaders.

The panel noted that whilst the College's internal committees and boards meet with regular frequency, these meetings do not occur on a systematic basis.

There was an absence of a clear structure within which committees had differentiated terms of reference and membership. There were meetings but it was difficult to see how groups differed in either their constitution or agendas.

An overarching challenge to St. Patrick's College is the informal nature and scope of its relationship with Tipperary Institute. The Tipperary Institute staff, with whom the panel met, were most impressive – in terms of both professionalism and commitment and there is evidence that a good deal of goodwill exists between the College and the Institute staff. St Patrick's College is clearly the component leader for the Religious Studies stream on the programme. However, the College relies on Tipperary Institute staff almost entirely for the delivery of the education component, a core element in the existing programme and the programme commencing in 2009 with Irish as a new stream choice to create a new programme- the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Irish and Religious Studies. The Tipperary Institute staff also contribute significantly to the delivery of the Business stream. The panel considered the relationship with Tipperary Institute to be informal as there was no formal inter-institutional agreement provided to the panel. This lack of clarity, rigour and formality regarding the relationship with Tipperary Institute is a significant concern and potential risk for St Patrick's College, given the extent of reliance and dependence the College has on the Tipperary Institute staff.

***Commendations***

4. The internal leadership provided by the President is obvious and commended. The panel considers that the Self Evaluation Report is a good example of a focused, reflective and self analytical document.
5. The panel commend the clear sense of purpose and commitment which was evident with all staff with whom the panel met. There was also evidence of good relationships among staff at all levels within the College.

***Recommendations***

2. The panel recommends that the College develop a dedicated oversight function at the governing body/authority level to include additional expertise from the higher education and training sector. Advice on the new governance arrangements should form part of the work of the proposed strategic adviser as referenced under objective 7 below.
3. The panel recommends that the College review its decision making structures and processes to ensure there is a separation of governance, operational management and academic decision-making. All elements should have clearly defined Terms of Reference.
4. The panel recommends that the College review the development of its Strategic Plan, in particular the sequencing between vision, mission and implementation.
5. The panel recommends that a more clearly defined Academic Council be constituted, with clearly articulated Terms of Reference. The Council should have a constitution which includes a clear demarcation of its role and functions. The College may consider including external representation on its Academic Council from experienced academics or academic managers in other Higher Education institutions.
6. The panel recommends that the College's internal management and academic committees and boards should meet in accordance with a coherent schedule and Terms of Reference for each committee and board.

### ***Objective 3 – Quality Assurance***

This objective is to assess the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance arrangements operated by the College. This will be based on Part One of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance<sup>1</sup> (ESG). By including this in the institutional review process the statutory requirement for review of quality assurance is met. How the College reviews the effectiveness of its quality assurance for the “**seven elements**” of the European standards should be explicitly addressed by the review process.

<i>Summary</i>
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The panel noted that St. Patrick's College Thurles has adopted the procedures and ethos of the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance. The College submitted the Quality Assurance Manual as part of the supporting documentation. The Quality Assurance Manual is accessible on the College's website. It was confirmed to the panel that the Quality Assurance Manual is reviewed – and if necessary redrafted – annually.

In the SER, the College addressed the ‘seven elements’ of the European Standards and Guidelines and these were used as the headings for this part of the Institutional Review Self-Evaluation and Report.

#### *Policy and Procedures for Quality Assurance*

The College's Quality Assurance Manual has been approved by HETAC, and as noted above the manual is reviewed on an annual basis. It is planned that any adjustment/redrafting arising from the review, in addition to any feedback from staff and students, will be implemented and documented in the Quality Assurance Manual. However, amendments proposed need to be formally agreed with HETAC. The College is satisfied that a quality assurance ethos is now well embedded in the College and reflected in the procedures. However, it was felt that the procedures in place were over-elaborate for a College the size of St Patrick's College, Thurles given the small number of full-time staff. For example, the quality assurance procedures refer to a six committee structure when two committees, an executive committee and a programme committee, may be appropriate to the capacity of the College which is providing only two main full-time Bachelor degree programmes, with significant overlap.

#### *Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes*

The College makes use of statistical reports as well as qualitative and quantitative research to assist the College staff and Stream Leaders to monitor its higher education provision and to review provision. In this context it is recognised that the institutional review incorporated the programmatic review of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies programme (this is dealt with in detail below under *Objective 7*).

It is noted that the College has two other offerings, viz. Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Irish and Religious Studies (an additional stream in Irish was very recently approved by HETAC and recognised by the Teaching Registration Council), and the part-time Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Theology. The latter programme is currently being ‘wound down’ by the College due to its having already met the demands of learners for such a programme in the College's catchment; (the panel will

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<sup>1</sup> “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area”. European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2007, Helsinki, 2nd edition.

recommend later in this report that the College may wish to reconsider its decision in regard to this programme and perhaps continue to deliver this programme under an alternative qualification category such as the Special Purpose award category.

#### *Assessment of Students*

Decisions in regard to assessment of students are given by Stream Leaders, and decisions are taken in light of advice from External Examiners. The panel members questioned the balance between terminal examinations and continuous assessment as this varies somewhat from subject to subject. **The panel also raised the issue of the absence of clear procedures and arrangements for the internal moderation of student work. This is dealt with under Objective 7.**

The Academic Coordinator liaises across the constituent disciplines, and ensures that External Examiner inputs are fully incorporated into assessment determinations. The panel was advised that External Examiners' reports are acted upon by Stream Leaders and the panel was pleased to note that stated learning outcomes feed directly into assessment methodologies and instruments. The staff members were agreeable to further exploring and utilising Moodle and Blackboard.

The College has in place a documented Appeals Process, which includes the continuous assessment component of all subjects on the Bachelor of Arts. Student feedback is conducted on a one-to-one basis or in tutorials as soon as possible after assessment events. The College staff also use e-mail to communicate with students and provide and discuss assessment feedback.

#### *Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff*

The College's heavy reliance on part-time staff can potentially have implications for the quality of delivery, measurement of staff performance and continuity in general. This was referenced by College staff as a resource-dependent matter and that the College has recently advertised for a full-time position for the Head of Irish. The high dependence the College has on the Tipperary Institute staff for the supply of part-time staff as significant contributors to the delivery of the main streams on the Bachelor of Arts programme was again discussed as a possible risk to the ongoing quality assurance and overall coherence of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Programme. This was acknowledged by the College but the enthusiastic support and excellent contribution of the Tipperary Institute academics was recognised by the panel as a hugely valuable asset to the College's academic offerings.

The panel noted the relatively low level of research in the College; this was explained as being due to staff devoting much of their effort and time to date to getting the taught academic programmes up and running. The commitment to engage more actively in research was stressed by the President and all other senior staff.

There is a good level of information circulation to staff on both campuses, St Patrick's College and Tipperary Institute. Notification to staff regarding Programme Board Meetings is timely and well distributed, staff are encouraged to attend and actively participate in meetings. However, continued professional development opportunities are limited, as many staff members are part-time. The Self-Evaluation Report indicated that consultation with both management and staff suggested that the mechanism in place to implement Continuing Professional Development could be improved.

### *Learning Resources and Student Support*

The College President and part-time staff outlined, in considerable detail, the day-to-day delivery of the subject matter of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Programme, including the logistics of delivery and the integration (wherever possible) between the individual subject streams (Religious Studies, Education and Business) in the programme. The staff members emphasised the coordination required to ensure that the articulated Learning Outcomes, for each of the subject modules, are met. The centrality and cohesion within the overall programme of the Teaching Practice component was discussed; particular emphasis was placed on the supervision and assessment of the Teaching Practice component. This is discussed in more detail under Objective 7.

The panel also explored the safeguards and supports which the College has in place for students who experience academic difficulties during their studies. There is a student mentoring system in place with staff volunteers who meet with students up to five times a year. However, feedback gathered by the College indicated that the students did not recognise the mentoring system as a resource and some students are by-passing the mentoring system. Although there was positive feedback from students on the mentoring system in the first two years of study they were less inclined to use it as they progressed. As a result students with difficulties are not being identified. The College is currently trying to identify the gaps in the system and College staff have met with students to gather further feedback in an effort to re-assess and rectify the system. The panel was advised that all feedback both formal and informal goes to the Student Counsellor who is available and pro-actively liaises with the student body. Detection of potential problems is now identified by the College at the earliest opportunity. Academic difficulties are referred to the Registrar. Professional development is measured and assessed through the Education department.

With regard to the child protection policy and legislation, the Student Counsellor promotes awareness of relevant legislation and preventative guidelines during student induction.

The College has a number of students with reading and other disabilities, two of which are long-term and wheelchair access ramps have been provided as appropriated around the College. The College should ensure that legal instruments, such as the Equal Status Act 2000 etc. should be available on the College's website for students.

The two libraries in the College have a total of 27,000 volumes. The library seems to cater well for the Education stream, but not so well for either Religious Studies or Business Studies. It is acknowledged that St. Patrick's students can access the Tipperary Institute's library, but this is on a restricted basis. The distance between the two campuses also acts as a major disincentive. Also, as classes for St. Patrick's students have moved back to the St Patrick's College campus and no longer take place on the Tipperary Institute's campus, this further deters students from using the Tipperary Institute library.

Information Technology facilities are provided for students and they are serviced by Tipperary Institute staff. The relevant Information Technology staff member, from Tipperary Institute, attends St Patrick's College for three hours each day and this arrangement appears to be working satisfactorily.

### *Information Systems*

The Information Technology support service, including support of the College's e-mail system is provided and supported by part-time staff also employed by Tipperary Institute.

The College indicated that a customised database for student records on biographical data will be developed at an early date. There is currently no integrated Management Information System or database in place in the College. A bank of data has been developed as part of the programmatic and institutional self study process which provides basic information on student retention, analysis of assessment results, information on Central Applications Office analysis and demographic profiles of the student cohort.

The type of information collated and analysed by St Patrick's College on a systematic basis includes the following:

- Central Applications Office Data
- Student Registration and Biographical Information
- Student Examination Marks and Results
- Graduates Destination Data (this is an annual graduate survey carried out by the College).

The College also referred to Information Systems used for planning purposes and to support the self study exercise, however little information was available on this. The Stream Leaders use the Information Technology System to develop excel sheets for student activities, examinations, grades, Teaching Practice placements etc. Students are encouraged to contact lecturers by e-mail.

### ***Key findings***

St. Patrick's College has cultivated a good Quality ethos. The College's Quality Assurance Manual is reviewed and revised as necessary on an annual basis, but the procedures are over-elaborate for a College of this size.

The library stock is deficient in holdings to support the Business Studies and Religious Studies subject streams on the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) programme.

### ***Recommendations***

7. The panel recommends that the College review its Quality Assurance policies and procedures and ensure that they are fully fit-for-purpose. The quality assurance procedures are considered by the panel to be over elaborate for the size of the College, for example, the procedures describe a six committee structure where two committees may be sufficient, such as executive committee and a programme committee.
8. The panel recommends that the College develops a strategic Human Resources Plan that, *inter alia*, takes into account the current significant reliance on part-time staff. The proposed plan should focus staff development on higher education development needs rather than operational matters.
9. The panel recommends that the College develop a clear Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy to include more rigorous internal moderation on, for example, joint project supervision and double marking arrangements. The HETAC Policy on Assessment and Standards, 2009 refers.

10. The panel recommends that the College develop internal and external options for students who fail to achieve the necessary standard for teaching required for the Bachelor of Arts (Honours).

## **Objective 4 – Qualifications Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression**

This objective is to confirm the extent to which the College has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and procedures for access, transfer and progression. This has two main strands: (1) Review of the Institution's activity in implementing the National Framework of Qualifications and

(2) Procedures for access, transfer and progression. The National Qualifications Authority has produced guidelines in relation to this<sup>2</sup>. For example, this includes issues such as credit transfer and progression rules between levels and award types, entry arrangements and information provision. This will include policies and procedures for the Recognition of Prior Learning.

In general terms St. Patrick's College has designed its programmes in compliance with the requirements of the National Framework of Qualifications. The full-time Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Programme is a level 8 programme of study which meets the entry standard and ECTS credits and other criteria set down by the National Qualifications Authority and HETAC requirements. The panel did have some questions about the total credits allocation in the part-time Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Theology part-time programme, however as the programme is in the process of being phased out, it was considered not appropriate, by the panel, to pursue this issue in this review. On a general point the panel were concerned that the College was withdrawing from the only programme offering part-time provision that is currently recognised on the National Framework of Qualifications.

The panel noted that St. Patrick's College, Thurles regularly offers a series of short duration programmes, mainly in the areas of religious and theological studies. The panel suggested that these part-time and occasional College programmes may be considered for recognition on the National Qualifications Framework (as special purpose or minor awards), provided they attract the appropriate European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits. The possibility of utilising such accrued credits for exemption purposes in future academic and training careers could then be explored. At present students undertaking these programmes receive only certification of their attendance. The College agreed that it does not award credits or exemptions for these short programmes, but will now actively explore this option. Consultation with HETAC is recommended in this respect. The possibility of recasting the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Theology as a special purpose award in order to retain this niche programme and part-time provision was highlighted by the panel.

Reference was made to a cooperative relationship with Mary Immaculate College (MIC), Limerick, by which students of St Patrick's College registering on certain programme(s) in Mary Immaculate College can acquire exemptions on cognate academic programmes. The panel was pleased to note that St. Patrick's College has in place a transfer arrangement with Mary Immaculate College.

The College implements a policy of attracting up to 20 percent mature students on to the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies. In the current academic year, the volume of mature registrations reached 12 percent. The College is hoping to increase mature student entry to 20 percent in the academic year 2009/2010.

In regard to transfer, both into St. Patrick's College programmes and transfer from St. Patrick's College to other Higher Education Institutions, there has been comparatively little mobility of students. A small number of students has transferred into St. Patrick's College. The panel members

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<sup>2</sup> "Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression". National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. 2003. [www.nqai.ie](http://www.nqai.ie).

stressed the need to harmonise the portfolio of learning outcomes already attained by learners transferring into the St. Patrick's College Programme. The College staff agreed that each transfer case would be evaluated on its particular merits.

The panel was advised (and it is reported in the Self-Evaluation Report) that the College does not currently provide a European Diploma Supplement to graduating students and has never produced one. In accordance with national requirements and the National Diploma Supplement template, these requirements are set out on the website of Qualifications Recognition - Ireland ([www.qualificationsrecognition.ie](http://www.qualificationsrecognition.ie))

It was found, in discussion with the students and graduates, that students of St. Patrick's College are broadly aware of the National Framework of Qualifications. At present the College is only aware of two of its graduates (of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business and Religious Studies) having progressed to Level 9 studies. This progression refers to the first year of graduates from the programme.

St. Patrick's College does not at present have a policy or procedure in place for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The staff stated that development of policy and procedures in this area is a priority for implementation in the immediate future.

### *Key findings*

The panel considers that St Patrick's College has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications with regard to the provision of the Bachelor of Arts (honours) programme and the four streams of Education, Religious Studies, Business and Irish. The College should critically evaluate its decision to withdraw from part-time provision.

Concern was expressed that the College does not and has never issued the European Diploma Supplements to any of its graduates to date.

The College does not have a policy in place for the Recognition of Prior Learning.

### *Commendation*

6. The College is to be commended for its responsiveness to student needs in general.

### *Recommendations*

11. The panel recommends that the College progress the development of a College Policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
12. The panel recommends that the College issue the European Diploma Supplement to graduates of the College in accordance with the State requirements on the National Diploma Supplement Template.

## **Objective 6 – Recommendations for Enhancement**

This objective is to provide recommendations for the enhancement of the education and training provided by the College. This will include both the recommendations arising from the external peer review process and recommendations arising from the internal self study process.

St. Patrick's College Thurles undertook a detailed, reflective and analytical Self-Evaluation Review. In this process the College consulted with a wide range of individuals and key institutions. These included the key part-time academic staff (mainly drawn from Tipperary Institute, with which the College has a crucial collaborative relationship); students and graduates of the College, and the College's main stakeholders (teachers, career guidance counsellors and employers of graduates).

This was the first institutional and programmatic review carried out by the College. It engaged the services of two external consultants from Institute of Technology Tralee to bring the process to fruition, to help collate the documentation and complete the Self-Evaluation Report (SER). The level of dialogue with the College staff both internal and external (part-time) was excellent, and the commendations, recommendations and conditions detailed in this Institutional Review Report are made, with respect to both the College's stage of development and academic credentials.

In its Self-Evaluation Report, the College identified and acknowledged areas which required enhancement and improvement. The panel agrees with the proposals highlighted for improvement by the College and it is hoped that this Institutional Review Report likewise points to areas of enhancement and potential for improvement which will complement and validate the College's own self-evaluation process.

In this spirit, the following Recommendations for Enhancement are articulated.

<i>Recommendations</i>
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13. The panel recommends that the College consider developing both internal and external options for students who fail to achieve the necessary standards for teaching in the Bachelor of Arts programme.
14. The College is encouraged to enhance the library stock, particularly for Business Studies and also for modules in the Religious Studies stream.

### ***Additional Objectives***

#### **Objective 7 – Objective 7 is an additional objective to undertake a programmatic review of the following programmes under the remit of the Institutional review process:-**

In addition to the prescribed HETAC objectives and the special considerations noted in relation to them, institutions have the option to include additional objectives to maximise the benefits of the review process.

The panel may recommend the revalidation of the programme(s) presented:

- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Irish and Religious Studies (identical programme with an additional stream 'Irish')
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Theology (to be discontinued)

The format for including programme revalidation in an institutional review is one where internal preparations and self studies for programmatic review (underway and advanced) are combined with the internal preparations for institutional review. The composition of the institutional review panel was designed to take the combined approach into account and include relevant disciplinary experts.

### **Background**

The programmatic review of the *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies* was merged with the Institutional Review of St Patrick's College Thurles. As both processes coincided, it was decided to merge them following a meeting with the HETAC representative.

The college commenced the delivery of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies in September 2004. An identical programme with an alternative stream, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Irish and Religious Studies was approved for delivery in 2008. Both programmes are also approved by the Teaching Council. As part of the programmatic review undertaken at the college it was agreed to phase out the other existing programme, the part-time, three year Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Theology. Therefore this was not included in the programmatic review.

The Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education is essentially a single programme with three subject streams and with the recent addition of the Irish stream to facilitate a second programme option - Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Irish and Religious Studies. The Irish stream was recently validated by HETAC and was not subject to programmatic review. All other aspects of the programme were subject to programmatic review by the Institutional Review panel.

The College submitted a separate set of comprehensive programme documentation relating to the Programmatic Review Self-study and the proposed programme document plus other supporting hard-copy and soft-copy material on the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) programme and subject streams.

The College's choice of subject disciplines; Religious Studies, Education and Business was based on its background and ethos. Market research undertaken at the time of the programme's development indicated that this combination of disciplines would provide graduates with viable subject combinations for the second-level sector.

As mentioned previously, the College has arrangements with a number of part-time staff to deliver the various programme streams. Given the proximity and the availability of relevant academic staff, the College occasionally use staff from Tipperary Institute.

#### **FACILITIES AND SERVICES:**

In recent years St. Patrick's College has been extensively refurbished in order to update its facilities, to ensure that it will be in a better position to respond to the requirements of a modern higher education campus. It now has the following facilities:

- Six new lecture halls
- Six tutorial rooms
- Micro-teaching room
- Two libraries
- Computer room
- Conference Room
- Prayer room
- Refectory
- Canteen
- Student Car Park
- Toilets for persons with disabilities
- Playing pitch
- Basketball Court
- Handball alley
- Tennis Court

Each lecture room is fitted with PowerPoint facilities of the highest standard including internet access. Each of these rooms also comes fully equipped with modern teaching aids e.g. projectors, flipcharts, white/black boards, and student seating incorporating desks (for both right hand and left hand users). Each room also has DVD or video facilities with the optional use of speakers and microphones.

**Refectory:** This is an area where teas/coffees and snacks are provided for both staff and students. This room facilitates both study and tea-breaks for up to 120 people.

<i>Summary</i>
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The panel raised the issue with College staff regarding options available as a 'safety net' for students that may require an alternative route if they do not wish to qualify as teachers or have difficulties with teaching practice.

The College staff responded by stating that every effort is made to ensure that students are committed to entering the teaching profession. In addition it has transfer arrangements for credits accrued in the business programmes in place with Tipperary Institute.

The panel raised a number of issues with the College that are common to all three subject streams of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) as follows:

- (i) The number of stated Programme Learning Outcomes (ca. 48) seems extremely large and hence scarcely attainable. The College staff should endeavour to be more succinct in this regard and is encouraged to look at realigning the individual module learning outcomes with the higher level programme outcomes.
- (ii) The College proposes that the final degree award classification be based on third and fourth year grades. The panel recommends the weighting of 25:75 as indicated by the College in the Self Evaluation Report.
- (iii) The panel considered that students may benefit from counselling, if they wish to change their career direction away from teaching.
- (iv) The panel recommends the College introduce a greater variety of assessment instruments in all modules. The panel noted that continuous assessment in the majority of modules is allocated 40 percent of module marks (there are some exceptions in the Business Studies area). In view of this, the panel recommends that a greater variety of assessment instruments should be explored in the generation of marks allocated to continuous assessment.
- (v) The panel noted that the External Examiners' Reports and recommendations are positive in general and are acted upon at the appropriate level in the College.

The following issues were raised under each specific subject stream:

#### **Religious Studies Stream of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours)**

The panel expressed some misgivings about a possible over-emphasis on Roman Catholic programme content and ethos in several of the Religious Studies modules. The panel wondered to what extent students- Roman Catholic or not- would be prepared for teaching in a non Roman Catholic school. The College staff responded by pointing out that many of the second level schools subscribe to a Roman Catholic ethos, and the subject does include a module on comparative religions. However, the panel urges the College to re-consider the question of balance in the provision of programme content. The panel also noted that some of the Religious Studies bibliographies were somewhat dated.

The panel questioned the consistently lower grades awarded in Religious Studies compared to the other two subject streams- Education and Business. While the staff expressed the view that compared with the other subjects, Religious Studies lent itself less well to quantitative assessment, the panel felt that the assessment of Religious Studies is more demanding than it should be.

### **Education Stream of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours)**

Students in the second, third and fourth year on Teaching Practice receive two visits by the same Teaching Practice (TP) Examiners, one of whom may be a staff lecturer on the programme in St Patrick's College. External Examiners express satisfaction with the process, however, the panel considers that the practice of having only one Teaching Practice supervisor per student is unsatisfactory. The panel recommends that this should be reviewed.

A transparent appeals process is in place in St. Patrick's College. Students are not permitted to progress academically if they fail Teaching Practice twice. The panel endorses this regulation.

The students' 'Reflective Journal' forms part of the assessment of the programme. College staff perceive this aspect as useful, and state that it works well for students. The panel recommends that this practice be kept under review.

The panel is concerned that the syllabus content does not show evidence of covering legislation which impinges on the Teaching Practice component, for example the Equal Status Act 2000. The College staff pointed out that such material is covered in the Sociology Module. The panel recommends that consideration should be given to dealing with the legislation which impinges on the Teaching Practice component on a more explicit basis in the curriculum.

### **Business Studies Stream of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours)**

The Business stream of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) has not gained Teaching Council recognition for graduates of this programme to teach Economics. This would suggest that a 10 ECTS credit module represents excessive weighting to Economics on the programme. The panel recommends reducing the credit allocation for Economics.

The Business Studies lecturers avail of many opportunities for 'Bringing Business to Life' through for example, Irish Times Business Education articles, business-related quizzes, linkages to County Enterprise Boards and business case studies. By means of these and other such initiatives, both students and staff can be kept up-to-date with the business environment. The panel commends this approach.

The panel expressed concern regarding the variation of continuous assessment and terminal examination weightings in the Business Modules, which may be due to the demands of the Accountancy professional bodies. The influence of such professional bodies may not be entirely relevant in the context of a teaching education programme and the panel encourages the College to re-visit these weightings to reflect the broader range of assessment strategies relevant to business.

The panel commends the extensive use of group-work in the delivery of the Business subject stream.

The view was expressed by both the panel and staff that entrepreneurship can be cultivated through education by focusing on relevant skills and competencies.

<i>Commendation</i>
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7. The panel commends the investment in the physical infrastructure, as detailed in the President's presentation and observed by the panel during the site visit.

### ***Recommendations and Conditions to HETAC on the revalidation of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) - Education, Business and Religious Studies***

The panel makes the following recommendations and accompanying conditions to HETAC on programme revalidation:

15. The Bachelor of Arts (Honours) incorporating the subject streams of Religious Studies, Education and Business, be granted continuing approval for two further intakes in September 2009 and September 2010 which may be extended subject to the fulfilment of the recommendations specified in this report and subject to the fulfilment of the conditions set out below:

#### **15.1 Condition**

The panel recommends that in order to ensure the ongoing orderly growth and development of the College, it should take immediate steps to appoint an Advisor to work directly with the President, at a strategic level to address issues of governance, effective development of the Strategic Plan and the development of a strategic alliance with another higher education institution.

#### **15.2 Condition**

St. Patrick's College, Thurles should enter into a formal strategic alliance with a higher education institution that will help ensure sustainability for the College in terms of planning and taking appropriate action to meet the current and future needs of the College and provide for its continued development.

A follow up review should take place in early 2010 to ensure the conditions have been met or substantial progress has been made to meet the conditions. In recommending these conditions the panel understands that the continuing validation of this programme (and all associated streams) is only possible if these conditions are fulfilled to the satisfaction of HETAC.

#### **Programme recommendations to the College:**

The panel recommends for all three subject streams, Religious Studies, Education and Business that the College:

- Reduce the number of stated learning outcomes for all modules to a more realistic number and realign the individual module learning outcomes with the programme learning outcomes.
- Apply the weighting of the final award classification as indicated in the Self Evaluation Report (page 48) - with a greater weighting placed on the final year assessment of 25:75.
- Establish alternative options, as part of the counselling service, for students who wish to change their career direction and move out of teaching.
- Explore the use of a greater variety of assessment instruments in the continuous assessment of the modules.

The panel makes the following recommendations to the College for each of the specific subject streams:

*Religious Studies*

- The College should re-appraise programme content and ethos to ensure that a possible over-emphasis on the Roman Catholic faith is avoided and that students are fully equipped also to teach in non Roman Catholic schools.

*Education*

- The practice of having only one 'Teaching Practice' supervisor per student should be revised. Legislation that is relevant and appropriate to the 'Teaching Practice' component should be re-located in the curriculum.

*Business*

- Due to the fact that graduates of the business stream of this programme will not have Teaching Council Recognition to teach Economics, the College should review the volume of ECTS credits currently allocated to the 'Economics' module with a view to reducing it.
- The variation between continuous assessment and terminal examination weightings in the Business modules should be reviewed to ensure that they reflect a broader range of assessment strategies relevant to business.

## **Appendix A**

### **HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING AWARDS COUNCIL, IRELAND**

Comhairle na nDámhachtainí Ardoideachais agus Oilúna, Éire

**Institutional Review of Providers of Higher Education and Training**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
**St. Patrick's College, Thurles**  
**Status- SET**

[www.hetac.ie](http://www.hetac.ie)

**Higher Education and Training Awards Council**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF**

(incorporating Programmatic Review of named programmes)

**St. Patrick's College, Thurles in April 2009**

STATUS: FINAL

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**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to specify the Terms of Reference for the institutional review of St. Patrick's College, Thurles in April 2009. This institutional review incorporates programmatic review of the following programmes:-

- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Irish and Religious Studies
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Theology (to be discontinued)

The HETAC Institutional Review policy applies to all institutions providing HETAC accredited programmes, or programmes accredited under delegated authority. In the case of specialised institutions having a single (or few related) programmes Institutional Review and Programmatic Review may be combined, subject to the agreement of HETAC. These Terms of Reference are set within the overarching policy for institutional review as approved in December 2007 and should be read in conjunction with same. These Terms of Reference does not replace or supercede the agreed policy for Institutional Review. The Terms of Reference once set may not be amended and any significant revision required to the Terms of Reference will result in a new Terms of Reference to be set by HETAC following consultation with the college. These Terms of Reference should be read in conjunction with the supplementary guidelines for institutional review paying particular attention to Section 5.3.1 (appended) relating to the incorporation of programmatic review in the Institutional Review process.

The objectives of the institutional review process are:

5. To enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by the College and the standards of the awards made;
6. To contribute to coherent strategic planning and governance in the College;
7. To assess the effectiveness of the quality assurance arrangements operated by the College;
8. To confirm the extent that the College has implemented the national framework of qualifications and procedures for access, transfer and progression;
9. To evaluate the operation and management of delegated authority where it has been granted;
10. To provide recommendations for the enhancement of the education and training provided by the College.

*Additional Objective for [Institution]*

11. To undertake a programmatic review of the following programmes:-

- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Irish and Religious Studies
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Theology (to be discontinued)

It is possible that, within the objectives outlined above, Institutions may have specific sub-objectives to which they will attach particular importance and wish to emphasise in their TOR. To maximise the benefits of the review process, Institutions may also consider including additional objectives relevant to its context.

The approach taken by HETAC to institutional review will:

- Acknowledge that institutions have ownership of and responsibility for their activity;
- Be conducted in a spirit of partnership with institutions, with a view to improvement and enhancement, whilst acknowledging statutory requirements for accountability;
- Be conducted in a manner which adds value to the institution, minimises overhead and assists in building institutional capacity;
- Be flexible, adaptable and scalable in order to meet the needs of diverse institutions;
- Be conducted in an open, consistent and transparent manner;
- Be evidence-based in accordance with established criteria;
- Promote learning and development for all involved;
- Reward innovation and experimentation when it seeks to enhance our understanding of good practice;
- Promote collaboration and sharing of good practice between institutions;
- Take cognisance of international best practice and contribute to European and international developments in this area.

## **2. Institution Profile**

### **Background**

St Patrick's College, a third level educational institution, is located in the town of Thurles, Co. Tipperary. The College has a history of religious and humanities education dating back to 1837. The college currently offers a range of courses, both full-time and part-time in education, business, religion, theology, philosophy, pastoral care, and psychology. All programmes are delivered on the Thurles campus.

As well as offering a number of full-time academic courses, St. Patrick's College serves as a centre for theological, pastoral and spiritual renewal in the region. The college is closely linked to Tipperary Institute. It is now greatly expanding its range of part-time and full-time courses. As the college is operated as a charitable organisation, tuition fees are reasonable.

From 2002 to 2006 the college has undergone a massive re-generation project. It has been completely re-furnished and re-fit to the highest modern standards. The College has excellent educational, residential, catering and recreational facilities. The spacious and properly maintained grounds, ample parking and strategic location provide an ideal setting to pursue higher education.

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### **The College goals are stated as follows:**

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- The training of teachers of Religious Education and Business Studies who will be competent professionals capable of performing to the highest standard in the classroom.
- The ongoing training and updating of pastoral personnel who will be competent in the delivery of effective ministry in a pastoral setting, especially at parish level.
- The development of St. Patrick's College as a centre for theological/spiritual enrichment and personal renewal in this region.
- The desire to respond, in a creative and collaborative manner, to the educational and training needs, both formal and informal, of the region
- The achievement of approval from the Teaching Council for the newly proposed Level 8 Bachelor of Arts in Education, Irish & Religious Studies (full-time).
- The achievement of approval from HETAC of accreditation for the Postgraduate Diploma /M.A. in Special Educational Needs.

### **Learner Cohort Profile:**

The learner cohort of St. Patrick's College includes both second level and mature students. 90% of the students enrolled on the BA in Education, Business Studies & Religious Studies come directly from second level education. The remaining 10% on this programme are mature students. The average intake of students on this programme is limited to 40 per year due to teaching practice.

All students on the BA in Theology are mature students. There are currently 13 students enrolled in first year of programme. The last intake into the programme was September 2008.

### **Disciplines/Levels/Programmes offered:**

St. Patrick's College currently offers two level 8 ab initio courses as follows:

- Bachelor of Arts in Education, Business Studies & Religious Studies (full-time)

- Bachelor of Arts in Theology (part-time). (A strategic decision was taken in February 2009 not to offer this programme in the future. The current cohort of students is expected to complete in May 2011).
- Bachelor of Arts in Education, Irish & Religious Studies (full-time). The college is also hoping to offer a third level 8 ab initio bachelor degree programme from September 2009 subject to approval from the Teaching Council for the newly proposed Irish stream.

### **Evolution of QA**

The academic coordinator was responsible for overseeing the development of the current Quality Assurance handbook in place for some time but recently agreed by HETAC. This process was undertaken in consultation with management, staff and relevant stakeholders of the college. This document was re-submitted with amendments as requested by HETAC.

### **Unique attributes of the Institution:**

St. Patrick's College specialises in Religious Education and offers students a friendly and supportive learning environment in which dedicated staff are on hand to facilitate the formation of professional and positive educators of the future. Each student is allocated an individual mentor to assist them during their time at St. Patrick's.

The Bachelor of Arts in Education, Business Studies & Religious Studies includes studies in Education which incorporate an annual teaching practice component. Graduates can therefore teach these subjects (i.e. Business Studies & Accounting and Religious Studies) at second level without completing a Higher Diploma in Education.

### **Funding Arrangements:**

St. Patrick's College is privately funded. It is administered by a Board of Trustees. The Patron is the Archbishop of Cashel and Emly. It is non-profit making organisation.

St. Patrick's College currently deliver two HETAC accredited Level 8 programmes, a *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies* and a *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Theology*. The *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies* was introduced in September 2004. The development of this four-year Level 8 degree programme was in response to a need for fully qualified Religious and Business Teachers at second level. There are currently 159 students enrolled on this programme with an average intake of 40 students per year. The first cohort of students graduated in November 2008.

A *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Irish and Religious Studies* has been approved by HETAC and is currently awaiting approval from the Teaching Council. The Education and Business Studies streams of this new programme are identical to those in the existing approved *Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies*.

There are currently 28 students registered on the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Theology. This is a three year part-time programme. The programme was developed to add an option for lifelong learning to the College Prospectus. A strategic decision has been taken to discontinue this programme.

### 3. Institution's Team

**Head of Institution:**

**Name:** Rev. Thomas Fogarty  
**Address:** St. Patrick's College, Thurles, Co. Tipperary  
**Title:** President  
**Contact Details:** 0504-20534. 086-2425425  
**Email Address:** [tomfogarty@stpats.ie](mailto:tomfogarty@stpats.ie)

**Registrar:**

**Name:** Paula Hourigan  
**Address:** St. Patrick's College, Thurles, Co. Tipperary  
**Contact Details:** 0504-20535  
**Email Address:** [phourigan@stpats.ie](mailto:phourigan@stpats.ie)

**Project Managers:**

**Name:** Lorraine Halpin  
**Address:** Institute of Technology, Tralee, Co. Kerry  
**Email Address:** [lorraine.halpin@staff.ittralee.ie](mailto:lorraine.halpin@staff.ittralee.ie)

**Name:** Marion Lynch  
**Address:** Institute of Technology, Tralee, Co. Kerry  
**Email Address:** [marion.lynch@research.ittralee.ie](mailto:marion.lynch@research.ittralee.ie)

**Academic Co-Ordinator**

**Name:** Shane Dempsey  
**Address:** St Patrick's College, Thurles, Co Tipperary  
**Email Address:** [sdempsey@stpats.ie](mailto:sdempsey@stpats.ie)

#### **4. HETAC objectives for institutional review**

The prescribed objectives for institutional review (incorporating programmes review) are outlined below. Institutions may wish to highlight any areas of specific importance to the Institution within each of the objectives.

##### **Objective 1 To enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by the institution and the standards of the awards made**

This objective is to enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by the Institution and the standards of the awards made. This is an overarching objective which covers all areas of the Institution's activity. The quality of the institutional review process itself is a critical part of this as is the internal self study, the publication of the Self Evaluation Report and panel report. The information provided by the Institution to the public falls within this objective.

*Special considerations for St. Patrick's College, Thurles*

- None

##### **Objective 2 To contribute to coherent strategic planning and governance in the institution.**

This objective is to contribute to coherent strategic planning and governance in the institution. The review may address the coherence of institutional mission, vision and values and overall institutional strategic planning. For recognised institutions with delegated authority this objective also includes the Operation and Management criterion of the review of delegated authority (governance, management, administration, planning and evaluation) and the Objects of the Qualifications Act criterion relating to national contributions *etc.*

*Special considerations for St. Patrick's College, Thurles*

- None

##### **Objective 3 To assess the effectiveness of the quality assurance arrangements operated by the institution**

This objective is to assess the effectiveness of the quality assurance arrangements operated by the institution. This will be based on Part One of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance<sup>3</sup>. By including this in the institutional review process the statutory requirement for review of QA is met. How the Institution manages its QA for the **“seven elements”** of Part One of the European Standards and Guidelines should be explicitly addressed by the review process including: Policy and procedures for quality assurance; Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards; Assessment of students; Quality assurance of teaching staff; Learning resources and support; Information systems; Public information.

*Special considerations for St. Patrick's College, Thurles*

The Institutional Review should consider the collaboration with Tipperary Institute on the provision and delivery of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies. The College introduced this programme in 2004, in collaboration with Tipperary Institute and

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<sup>3</sup> “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area”. European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2007, Helsinki, 2nd edition.

following accreditation by HETAC. The entire programme is delivered on campus at St. Patrick's College.

**Objective 4 To confirm the extent that the institution has implemented the national framework of qualifications and procedures for access, transfer and progression**

This objective is to confirm the extent that the institution has implemented the National Framework of Qualifications and procedures for access, transfer and progression. The National Qualifications Authority has produced guidelines in relation to this<sup>4</sup>. For example this includes issues such as credit, transfer and progression routes between levels and award types, entry arrangements, information provision, learning outcomes and assessment. As part of this objective, HEA-funded Institutions should be mindful of the goals of the HEA's National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (2008-2013) and pay particular attention to the objectives relevant to Higher Education Institutions.

*Special considerations for St. Patrick's College, Thurles*

- None

**Objective 5 to evaluate the operation and management of delegated authority where it has been granted**

This is not applicable to St. Patrick's College, Thurles

**Objective 6 To provide recommendations for the enhancement of the education and training provided by the institution**

This objective is to provide recommendations for the enhancement of the education and training provided by the institution. This will include both the recommendations arising from the external peer review process and recommendations arising from the internal self study process.

*Special considerations for St. Patrick's College, Thurles*

- None

**5. Institution-specific objectives**

In addition to the prescribed HETAC objectives and the special considerations noted in relation to them, institutions have the option include additional objectives to maximise the benefits of the review process.

*Additional Institutional Objectives*

Objective 7 - To undertake a programmatic review of the following programmes:-

- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Education, Irish and Religious Studies
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Theology (to be discontinued)

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<sup>4</sup> *Policies, Actions and Procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression*. National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. 2003. [www.nqai.ie](http://www.nqai.ie).

The proposed format is one where internal preparations and self studies for programmatic review (underway and advanced) are combined with the internal preparations for institutional review. The composition of the institutional review panel will be comprised to take the combined approach into account and include relevant disciplinary experts.

The panel may recommend the revalidation of the programme(s) presented.

## 6. Schedule for St. Patrick's College, Thurles

As outlined in the Institutional Review policy, the process consists of six phases

1. HETAC sets terms of reference following consultation with institution;
2. Self-study by the institution;
3. Visit by expert panel appointed by HETAC and written panel report;
4. Institutional response including implementation plan;
5. Panel report and response published;
6. Follow-up report submitted by the institution.

The major milestones in the timeframe for the institutional review of St. Patrick's College, Thurles are outlined below. This should be read in conjunction with the supplementary guidelines for institutional review.

<b>Relative timeframe</b>	<b>Actual Date</b>	<b>Milestone</b>
At least 6 months before panel visit	September 2008	Institution indicates timeframe for institutional review as per overall HETAC schedule of reviews
At least 6 months before panel visit	October 2008	Terms of Reference set following consultation with Institution
3 to 6 months before panel visit	October 2008	Institution undertakes self study process and produces self evaluation report
5 weeks before site visit	20 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Submission of Self Evaluation Report and other documentation
4 weeks before site visit	27 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	Desk based review of SER and feedback to Institution
3 weeks before site visit	7 <sup>th</sup> April 2009	Advance Meeting between Chair, Secretary and Institution
Panel Visit	21 <sup>st</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2009	Site Visit by external peer review panel (2 days approximately as determined by TOR) Preliminary (oral) feedback on findings.
Approx 12 weeks after site visit	5 <sup>th</sup> August 2009	Draft report on findings of panel sent by HETAC to Institution for factual accuracy
Usually 4 days after this	19 <sup>th</sup> August 2009	Final report on findings of panel sent by HETAC to Institution
Approx 5-6 weeks following receipt of report	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2009	Response by Institution to HETAC including plan with timeframe for implementation of any changes
Next available HETAC Council meeting	14 <sup>th</sup> September 2009	Consideration of report and institutional response by HETAC Council Publication of report and response on website once adopted
12 months after Council adoption	Sept 2010	Follow up report by Institution to HETAC on implementation of recommendations

## **Appendix (to the Terms of Reference) 1**

**Extract from ‘*Institutional Review of Providers of Higher Education and Training – Supplementary Guidelines*’ March-December 2008**

**5.3.1 Integrated Institutional and Programmatic Reviews model :** Newer Institution with less established track record in managing QA. To illustrate this concept: This Institution may have with a relatively small number of programmes in within a single discipline area. Programmatic review and Institutional Review could be combined in this instance into a cohesive whole. The practicality and appropriateness of using the institutional review panel as a programmatic review panel needs to be considered and this should be agreed with HETAC when the Terms of Reference are set. (There are a number of models which could be used here (i) use the same panel for both (ii) undertake programmatic reviews separately with different panels, but using similar internal preparations etc.). For smaller institutions it may make sense that internal preparations and self studies for programmatic review are combined with the internal preparations for institutional review. The composition of the institutional review panel will be comprised to take the combined approach into account and include relevant disciplinary experts.

## **Appendix B**

### **St Patrick's College, Thurles- Review Panel**

Dr. Richard Thorn  
**Chairperson**

Dr. Pat Cashell  
**Review Secretary**

Dr. Rose Malone  
**NUI, Maynooth, Lecturer in the Education Department and course leader for the Education Doctorate (EdD)**

Dr. Tom Whelan  
**Milltown Institute, Associate Professor of Theology & Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Spirituality**

Ms. Janet Alleyne  
**University of Ulster, Head of Quality Management and Audit**

Mr. Gabriel Harrison  
**Previously Assistant Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Science**

Ms. Therese Moylan  
**Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology, Head of Department of Business and Enterprise**

Ms. Mary Murray  
**Graduate of the Open Training College, currently Social Care Leader with the HSE**

## Appendix C

### Agenda – St Patricks College Thurles

The format of each session is a discussion in question and answer format unless otherwise indicated. Dr Richard Thorn is Chair of Institutional Review sessions, Dr Patrick Cashell is the review Secretary.

<p>Day One</p> <p>Tuesday 21 April 2009</p>	<p><b><u>Venue : Hotel meeting room – Anner Hotel</u></b></p> <p><b>9.30am - 12.30pm – Private meeting of panel – induction and site visit planning</b></p> <p><b>12.30pm – 1.30pm Lunch in Anner Hotel, Thurles</b></p> <p><b>Depart for St Patrick’s College Thurles at 1.30pm</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Venue - St Patricks College</b></p> <p><b>2.00pm – 2.15pm – introductions with college (programme) staff</b></p> <p><b><u>Parallel Sessions</u></b></p> <p><b>A) 2.15pm – 4.30pm Objective 7 – Programmatic Review clarification. Academic staff present</b> (brief overview of the programme and review process 15mins) - Stream leaders (syllabus creators) and lecturing staff – detailed programme discussions – (Session format – initial overview by Academic coordinator , each stream to be addressed consecutively))</p> <p><b>B) 2.15pm – 4.30pm – review of documentation for institutional review -</b> (Quality Assurance and other documentation previously indicated)</p> <p><b>4.30pm – 5.15pm – Full Panel reconvene – Coffee and private panel discussion</b></p> <p><b>5.15pm – 6.00pm – Objective 2 – Strategic planning and governance, overview of institutional review process</b> (Senior management team, governing body present as appropriate). Collaboration with Tipperary Institute. (Head of Institution to make a short presentation setting the context).</p> <p><b>6.00pm – 6.30 - Objective 1 – Public Confidence</b> including approach taken to self study for Institutional Review. (management team as above – review co-ordinators)</p> <p><b>7.30pm – Dinner for panel members at Anner Hotel</b></p>
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<p>Day 2 Wednesday April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009</p>	<p><b>Venue: St Patrick's College (depart for college by 8.30am)</b></p> <p><b>9.00am to 10.30am – Objective 3 - Educational Philosophy and Quality Assurance issues (Seven Elements Review) :Overview of QA System (Learner Support Staff)</b> The “seven elements” covered by the European guidelines and the stage of development of the Institutions QA system in each area ; evidence of performance of QA system in each area; evaluation of effectiveness of QA system in each area; improvements identified; integration between processes, governance, management and planning etc.</p> <p><b>10.30am – 11.00pm Objective 3 continued - meeting with lecturing staff</b></p> <p><b>11.00am- 11.15 coffee</b></p> <p><b>11.15 – 11.45 – meeting with a cross representation of Learners and graduates from all programmes (including the BA in Theology).</b></p> <p><b>11.45am – 12.15am – Meeting with Stakeholders; Employers of graduates; Principals of schools (and other identified by St Patrick's College)</b></p> <p><b>12.15pm – 1.00pm Objective 4 - Access, Transfer and Progression:</b> Review of Implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications and procedures for access, transfer and progression. Access issues in general - linkages and collaborations, Recognition of prior learning, learning outcomes. (IR Team and Course Directors)</p> <p><b>1.00pm – 2.00pm Private lunch for panel -</b> Panel to consider QA documentary evidence during lunch.</p> <p><b>2.00pm – 5.00pm - Private Meeting of Panel for final recommendations</b></p> <p><b>5.00pm – 5.30pm - Preliminary oral Feedback from panel to Executive</b></p>
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## Appendix D

## List of Attendees at Meetings with Panel

Time	Objective	St. Patrick's College Representatives
Tuesday, 21 <sup>st</sup> April 2009		
2.00pm - 2.15pm  2.15pm - 4.30pm	Introductions with college/programme staff  Objective 7 Programmatic Review	Fr. Tom Fogarty, College President Shane Dempsey, Academic Coordinator Paula Hourigan, Registrar Diane Corkery, Religious Studies – Stream Leader/Management Team Jean Forbes Cooke, Business Studies - Stream Leader Martin Fitzgerald, Joint Education Stream Leader Michael Ryan, Joint Education Stream Leader Molly Daly, Education Stream – Lecturer Mark O'Leary, Education Stream – Lecturer Geraldine McGrath/Patricia Quigley, Education Stream – Lecturer Darren Morris, Business Stream - Lecturer Georgina Skehan, Business Stream – Lecturer Maria Ryan, Business Stream – Lecturer Mary McCaughey, Religious Studies Stream - Lecturer Salvador Ryan, St. Pat's, Maynooth (Former Academic Coordinator/lecturer in St.Pat's Thurles) Lorraine Halpin, Tralee IT (Project Coordinator) Marion Lynch, Tralee IT (Project Coordinator) Dr. Muiris O'Laoire, Senior Lecture, Tralee IT (Designed Irish Stream)
5.15pm – 6.00pm	Objective 2 Strategic Planning & Governance	<u>Management Team</u> Fr. Tom Fogarty, College President Shane Dempsey, Academic Coordinator Paula Hourigan, Registrar Diane Corkery, Religious Studies – Stream Leader Caitriona Spooner – Senior Lecturer, former registrar Catherine McCormack – Student Counsellor/School Liaison Officer  <u>Tipperary Institute</u> Ciaran Lynch – Director of Rural Development TBC  Lorraine Halpin, Tralee IT (Project Coordinator) Marion Lynch, Tralee IT (Project Coordinator)
6.00pm – 6.30pm	Objective 1 Public Confidence	<u>Management Team</u> Fr. Tom Fogarty, College President Shane Dempsey, Academic Coordinator Paula Hourigan, Registrar Diane Corkery, Religious Studies – Stream Leader Caitriona Spooner – Senior Lecturer, former registrar Catherine McCormack – Student Counsellor/School Liaison Officer  <u>Tipperary Institute</u> Ciaran Lynch – Director of Rural Development TBC  Lorraine Halpin, Tralee IT (Project Coordinator) Marion Lynch, Tralee IT (Project Coordinator)

<b>Time</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>St. Patrick's College Representatives</b>
Wednesday, 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2009		
9.00am – 10.30am	Objective 3 Overview of QA System	Management Team (see objective one above) Lorraine Halpin, Tralee IT (Project Coordinator) Marion Lynch, Tralee IT (Project Coordinator) Mary Murphy, Head Librarian (10.00 – 10.30) Austin Cooney, IT Department – Tipperary Institute (10.00 – 10.30)
10.30am – 11.00	Meeting with lecturers	<u>Business Stream</u> Maria Ryan, Georgina Skehan  <u>Education Stream</u> Martin Fitzgerald, Core education module lecturer Michael Ryan, Core education module lecturer  <u>Religious Department</u> Fr. Joe Tynan, David Butler
11.15am – 11.45am	Meeting with learners/graduates	<i>BA in Education, Business Studies and Religious Studies:</i> 1 graduate 4 current student  <i>BA Theology:</i> 1 graduate 2 current student
11.45am – 12.15pm	Meeting with stakeholders	<b><u>TBC</u></b> Aim to have 2- 4 from following: Principals, teachers, career guidance teachers
12.15pm – 1.00pm	Objective 4 Access, Transfer & Progression	Management Team (see objective one above) Lorraine Halpin, Tralee IT (Project Coordinator) Marion Lynch, Tralee IT (Project Coordinator)
5.00 – 5.30	Feedback from panel	Management Team (see objective one above)  <i>Stream Leaders</i> Diane Corkery, Religious Studies – Stream Leader Martin Fitzgerald, Joint Education Stream Leader Michael Ryan, Joint Education Stream Leader Jean Forbes Cooke, Business Studies - Stream Leader  Lorraine Halpin, Tralee IT (Project Coordinator) Marion Lynch, Tralee IT (Project Coordinator)

## **Appendix E List of Documentation Provided to the Panel**

- Quality Assurance Manual
- Staff Handbook
- Student Handbook     Year I  
                                  Year II  
                                  Year III  
                                  Year IV
- Programme Board Meeting Minutes
- Staff Meeting Minutes
- Academic Council Minutes
- External Examiner Reports
- Annual Academic Staff Questionnaires
- Graduate Destination Survey Forms (BA Theology)
- Graduate Destination Survey Forms (BA in Education, Business Studies & Religious Studies)
- Stakeholder Survey Forms
- Feedback from Modular Evaluation Questionnaires
- Stream Leaders Online Questionnaire
- Student Online Questionnaires
- Mature Student Interview Questions
- Mature Student Marking Scheme
- Appeals Details
- Scholarship Committee Notes
- Feedback from Teaching Practice Supervisors on Induction Process
- Feedback from Teaching Practice Supervisors – post placement
- IT Service Level Agreement with Tipperary Institute
- Prospectus