University College Dublin

Institutional Quality Review Report for
UCD Recognised College
Institute of Banking

Review Panel Report

November 2018

Accepted by the UCD Governing Authority at its meeting of
9 May 2019

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Executive Summary

This Quality Review was undertaken as part of University College Dublin (UCD)'s Quality Review Framework and to meet the statutory requirements for Designated Awarding Bodies (UCD) and linked providers (Institute of Banking (IoB)) as set out under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. UCD conducted a quality review of IOB in September, 2018.

Key findings about IOB

The Review Panel was satisfied that confidence can be placed in how IoB manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of UCD. The Review Panel was also satisfied that the IoB meets its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers to students.

The Review Panel also considers that reliance can be placed on the public information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Good practice

The Review Panel noted, in particular, the following areas of good practice:
- Collaborative and effective working relationship between IOB and the UCD College of Business
- Flexibility in IOBs course offerings that are adapted to the ongoing requirements of the financial service industry and requirements of the financial services regulator.
- Close working relationship of IOB with its financial services stakeholders that informs and guides programme development and enhancing the students' learning experience.

Recommendations

The Review Panel also identified a number of **recommendations** for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

The Review Panel recommends that IOB:
- As part of the new IoB strategic five year plan IOB should the development and application of management information and business intelligence tools to support more complex analysis and reporting that will including, among other areas, relevant analysis on the quality of the student learning experience.
- Student representation within the Institute becomes an agenda item in the UCD-IOB Strategic Management Committee, if requested by the student body.
- IOB consider whether further opportunities to access the resources and supports delivered by UCD Teaching and Learning exist as part of the current IOB-UCD MOA.

Section 1: <u>Introduction and Context</u>

1. This Quality Review was undertaken as part of UCD's Quality Review Framework and to meet the statutory requirements for Designated Awarding Bodies (UCD) and linked providers (Recognised College, the Institute of Banking (IoB)) as set out under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, namely to review the effectiveness of the linked providers quality assurance procedures at least once every seven years (Section 37). This report presents the findings of the Institutional Review of IoB. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the Institute discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students (See Panel Terms of Reference in paragraph 3 below). The review applies to programmes of study that IoB delivers on behalf of UCD. A Review Panel (RP) was appointed by UCD. The members of the RP were:

- Professor Gethin McBean, UCD School of Biomolecular and Biomedical Science, Chair
- Professor John Ashton, Bangor Business School
- Ms Aisling McKenna, Dublin City University

<u>Outline of the Review Process</u>

2. The key stages of the review process consisted of the following elements:

a) Institutional self-assessment, which included the preparation of an analytical and reflective self-assessment report (SAR) that included a consultation process conducted within the IoB

b) Review site visit by the RP to the IoB premises, 1 North Wall Quay, Dublin 1.

c) Production of a report by the RP, in which commendations and recommendations are clearly set out and distinguished from the general findings

d) Production by the IoB of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) which addresses all recommendations and includes a timeline in respect of their implementation

e) Publication of the RP's Report, the IoB response to the Report, the QIP and, where applicable, any decisions of UCD, as the degree awarding body.

f) Establishment and implementation of a clear and timely follow up process in respect of any quality improvement recommendations, which may include publication of updates on progress.

<u>Review Terms of Reference</u>

3. The Review Terms of Reference were:

- How effectively does IoB fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

- How effective are the IoB's internal quality assurance processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision making and strategic management in the context of quality assurance and enhancement of educational provision?

- How effectively does IoB fulfil its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

- How effectively does IoB communicate public information about learning opportunities that the Institute is responsible for providing to students and other stakeholders?

- How effectively does IoB discharge its responsibilities within the context of its agreement with UCD?

4. The RP conducted the review in agreement with the Institute and in accordance with the *UCD Recognised College Quality Review Handbook*. Evidence in support of the review included a range of internal documentation, including the SAR, policy, procedure and strategy statements, records of meetings, a range of information produced for students and staff, including handbooks, curriculum and teaching materials. The RP examined a sample of assessed student work and held meetings with staff and students. The RP also considered reports from external examiners and met with external stakeholders and graduates of the Institute. Information for prospective students and the public, both online and in print, was also examined.

5. *Comments on the SAR and documentation*
The SAR and accompanying documentation provided a clear and comprehensive oversight of the operation and management of the IoB. The RP were particularly impressed with the high quality of presentation and easy-to-follow system of reference to information contained in appendices. From reading the documentation, it was evident that the standard of administrative support and organisation in the Institute is very high.

6. <u>Commendation</u>: the IoB is commended for its high quality of administrative support and document preparation

7. The Review Panel also considered the IoB's use of the relevant external reference points:

- Guidance/Policy Material provided by UCD

- The National Framework of Qualifications

- Guidance material published by Quality and Qualifications Ireland

- European Standards & Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

Detailed Findings about the Institute of Banking

8. The IoB is an independent college of higher education located within a modern office block at 1, North Wall Quay, Dublin 1. The Institute was established in 1898 and is one of the world's oldest banking institutes. The IOB employs 79 full time staff and 101 associate faculty, many of whom are employees of the Financial Sector. The IoB became a recognised college of UCD in 2011. A new memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the IoB and UCD for the period up to and including 2022 was signed in 2017. Under the terms of the MOA, the key role of IoB, as a recognised college of UCD, is to 'provide and

promote education, to undertake and facilitate research, and to engage with and support the wider community which it serves'. The IoB-UCD strategic management committee has responsibility for implementing and developing the strategic alliance between the two institutions. This committee reports to both the IoB Board and to the Governing Authority of UCD. In addition, a joint IoB-UCD Academic Programme Board oversees the development and implementation of IoB's educational and research programmes that fall within the remit of the MOA. In implementing the MOA, IoB has adopted many of UCD's academic regulations and procedures in regard to course development and delivery, and quality assurance. The Institute is currently developing its next five year plan (2019-2024). Membership of the IoB comprises individual (35,000) and corporate members (25), and registered students (9,000).

9.   Commendation: Branding- high visibility of the association with UCD on IoB documentation and website.

10.   The Institute offers more than fifty (2017/18) academic programmes in business and management that include professional certificates and diplomas, and bachelor and masters' degrees, which correspond to levels 7-9 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The course structure is designed to enable a student to progress from one level to another, depending upon the type of qualification that he/she wishes to achieve. Several of IoB's courses cater for the continuous professional development (CPD) of individuals in the financial services industry. Of particular note are the close links between course content and the changing requirements of the industry and the use of blended learning techniques in the delivery of IoB courses. The latter have been developed to cater for the wide geographical spread of the student population. Courses are organised on a part-time basis to facilitate access by students who are in full-time employment. The full number of courses on offer by the IoB during 2016/17 is listed in Appendix D of the SAR. The IoB academic year extends through three semesters. All of the IoB's degrees, certificates and diplomas are awarded by UCD.

11.   Commendation: flexibility in course offerings that change in accordance to the requirements of the financial services industry.

12.   Commendation: excellent use of blended learning techniques to support distance learning.

13.   In the 2016/17 academic year, the number of registered students in the IOB was 10,450 with a 54:46 ratio of males to females (SAR, Appendix H #21). 92% of students were based in Ireland, with the majority living in the vicinity of Dublin (57%). At that time, most students were in employment in an Irish retail bank (71%), with 22% working in other financial organisations and 7% unemployed.

14.   The IoB is a not-for-profit organisation whose mission is 'to make a defining contribution to the renewal of professional standards and standing of Irish banking and financial services to the ultimate benefit of customers and society' (www.iob.ie). The IoB seeks to fulfil its mission through providing a suite of courses that are specifically aimed at meeting current and future needs of employees in the banking and financial services sector. Arising from the RP's discussion with external stakeholders, it is evident that the IoB is held in high regard by employers in the sector. Furthermore, it is evident that IoB actively maintains close links, through the Director of Development and her team, with industry in seeking input into opportunities and requirements for course development.

15.   Commendation: The IoB maintains close links with the financial services industry that informs and guides programme development.

16. <u>Commendation</u>: The IoB responds actively and with immediacy to the changing requirements of the industry in terms of course offerings and content.

17. The IoB has benefitted from its alliance with UCD in terms of the adoption of the university's policy and procedures in the management of programmes and quality assurance. [Further information on IoB's policy and procedures is contained within SECTION 2 of this report]. The IoB underwent a positive institutional review by UCD in 2011. The outcomes from that review, as captured in the IoB's 2011 implementation plan, convey a meaningful and serious approach by the Institute to improvement in the quality of its teaching, learning and the student experience.

The IoB's Stated Responsibilities

18. The IoB has responsibility for all aspects of assessment, including the setting, marking and moderation of assignments, and providing feedback. The IoB is also responsible for quality monitoring and review, student admissions, guidance and support, staff development, resources, student appeals and the collection and use of student feedback. It has overall control over information about learning opportunities and is responsible for ensuring that the information is fit for purpose. There is shared responsibility, with UCD, for monitoring the quality of learning and teaching, and guidance for student progression.

Recent developments

19. There has been a significant shift towards students taking higher level (8 and 9) courses over the past five years. In 2012/13, 94% of students were registered for level 7 courses, whereas the distribution was 53% level 7, 30% level 8 and 17% level 9 in 2017/18. The growth in the number of students taking higher level courses has been ascribed to a post-recession response to upskilling of personnel employed in the financial services sector. Other changes during the same five year period include a shift towards gender parity, with an almost 50:50 split between genders recorded for 2017/2018. The average age of students taking level 7 courses is 33 years, whereas those registered for level 9 courses have an average age of 39 years. In previous years, the main emphasis of courses was to provide students with minimum competency for working in financial services. More recently, the remit of the IoB has broadened and their current portfolio includes courses in fund management, business transformation and fintech developments in addition to core competency courses. The continuous development and improvement in distance and blended learning techniques is a key strength of the Institute.

Emphasis on Quality

20. The IoB places a strong emphasis on quality provision at several levels of its activities. These include, but are not confined to, strong academic governance, an excellent working relationship with UCD, provision of programmes that are academically rigorous and industry relevant, a quality culture and ethos amongst all staff and a rich student engagement model.

Link with University College Dublin

21. As stated in paragraph 6 of this report, the current MOA between IoB and UCD covers the period 2017-2022. Through this agreement, the IoB has developed an excellent working relationship with UCD. The RP noted that the association between the IoB and UCD is effective at several levels. Several examples of the positive working relationship between the two institutions are provided in the following Sections.

Section 2: Institutional Management of Academic Standards

How effectively does the Institute fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

22. The Institute operates and applies UCD policies and procedures on academic quality with a degree of autonomy. The IoB issues its own QA handbook which details the QA policies and procedures of the Institute and operates its own registry function. The academic policies and procedures are developed from and map to the current UCD policies and procedures and apposite national laws and regulations. These links are clearly detailed in the SAR documentation forwarded as part of this review process. There is evidence that staff training within the Institute is appropriate and complies with UCD policies and procedures.

23. There are numerous instances of good practice in the management of academic standards. The assessment process, in particular, is robust and a source of institutional integrity. External Examiners are appointed for a three-year period to review and provide feedback on the assessment process. Assessment materials are reviewed both internally and externally before use and are deemed an appropriate challenge from both the academic and professional perspective. The RP is satisfied that examples of student work provide evidence that internal assessment policies are being applied. Feedback was observed to be helpful, instructive and consistent with student learning. Examination scripts are clearly annotated with an indication as to how and why marks are allocated. Examiners comment positively on the good elements of assessed work and indicate where improvements could be made and how such improvements could be effected.

24. The RP finds that the current procedure in IoB for submission of student work does not meet the UCD requirement that all such work is automatically checked for plagiarism as part of the submission process. In the IoB, each student is required to self-check their work, meaning that the onus for adhering to plagiarism policy is therefore placed on the student. Whilst no evidence of plagiarism was observed or suspected by the RP, it is recommended that a plagiarism detection software package that will assess all student work on submission is employed. Use of this software should follow the procedures already operating across UCD and the adoption of the same process by the IoB would fulfil the expectation that all students' work is assessed consistently by a robust system.

25. To address any further deviations from UCD academic policy and procedures that could exist or develop, the RP proposes that the adherence to UCD academic procedures and policies should be included as a standing agenda item of the IoB-UCD Strategic Management Committee.

26. The Institute has a well-defined structure for managing its delegated responsibilities for academic standards. The Institute operates as an autonomous college with its own council, management team, registry and educational advisory group. Links between UCD quality assurance procedures and the Institute are maintained through a number of fora including the IoB-UCD Strategic Management Committee and the joint IoB-UCD programme board that report to the university governing body and the university programme board, respectively. Many of the activities of the different committee structures within the Institute and between the Institute and UCD are coordinated through an academic Dean and Senior Academic Staff Education Committee in the Institute. The provision of academic programmes is overseen within the Institute by a sequence of persons and posts from programme managers, module directors, and programme directors which report to the Dean of the Institute. The Dean reports to the

registry and Registrar of the Institute and has reporting links to UCD. Institute module coordinators and UCD coordinate through Programme Examination Boards and PERSAR (Programme Exam Review and Subject Area Review). For student affairs, a number of sub-committees including Institute and UCD representatives operate to establish communications between the Institute and UCD.

27. The Institute's engagement with the financial services regulator, the Central Bank of Ireland, and financial services firms within Ireland and beyond is important in the role of ensuring high quality academic and professionally relevant materials. These external links are exceptionally well developed. Further instances of the close association between the IoB and members of the industry are provided in Sections 31 and 32 of this report.

28. Throughout, the IoB system of management of academic standards appears to work well in ensuring compliance with the academic policies of UCD, the operation and management of the academic programmes by the Institute and fostering good academic practice and educational standards. However, it is evident that current links with UCD are largely centred upon academic staff of the UCD Smurfit Graduate School of Business. The RP recommends that the IoB-UCD Strategic Management Committee should identify and explore additional associations with other UCD schools. It is further recommended that the Institute should expand its association with relevant units within UCD, such as Registry, in order to enhance and extend this successful collaboration on strategic matters.

How effectively does the linked provider use management information to evaluate its procedures/processes and practice in support of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities?

29. During the review visit, staff, students and external stakeholders reflected positively on innovation in programme content and delivery, closely reflecting the emerging needs of the financial services sector. The Institute has faced a changing business environment and has responded by either introducing or withdrawing a large number of programmes and modules. These changes reflect the sweeping developments seen across the financial services industry during the last decade. They encapsulate developments as diverse as the emergence of 'fintech', new payment systems and financial service delivery channels, the growing importance of corporate culture in a regulatory context and the increasing focus on the training and qualification of senior financial services executives. Against this fast changing backdrop, the Institute has responded by updating its product portfolio rapidly and frequently. The RP commends the Institute for its responsiveness to a changing market place and agility in navigating and delivering these changes swiftly.

30. The IoB is committed to change, development and innovation in educational provision. The value of information and analysis to understand the student experience is widely shared among staff, and there is an awareness of how such analysis of student data can inform improvements in the students' learning experience. Currently, there is an emphasis on the application of student information to understand and review individual student performance and engagement. Descriptive statistics are used in considering student performance at class and programme level. However, it is the view of the RP that the Institute has the administrative and technical capacity to improve their methods of analysis and enhance how information is used. The assessment of module outcomes, in particular, could be productively augmented through increased use of statistical techniques to assess programme and module performance, student engagement, satisfaction and performance. Greater comparative analysis could be undertaken for the purpose of academic management. To monitor module and programme performance, assessment of very

low average or dispersed marks could be clearly signalled as points whereby further discussion and consideration of module and programme performance is triggered. The performance of modules could also be tracked in order to determine whether the module has displayed a sharp upward or downward trend of performance, student satisfaction or engagement over time. Information could also be obtained on whether gender, international status or teaching location impacts upon student performance. It is proposed the statistical information used within examination boards, module level meetings, annual programme level meetings and five year programme reviews would benefit from further analysis, to systematically signal and direct further discussions in an orderly manner. There is also an opportunity for greater use of data analytics to assess performance at the level of the Institute. A wide range of statistical tools including correlation, regression, box plots and mean deviations, all used by other higher education institutions for the purposes of assessing module and programme performance and aspects of student performance, engagement and satisfaction, can enhance the analysis of academic performance at the module, programme and Institute level.

31.   Feedback on the student experience is routinely collected through online surveys, which are collated, and summary results used to inform module and programme review. Response rates to online surveys are generally less than 25%, which is broadly reflective of expected response rates for online surveys in higher education. Currently, programme and module performance data is analysed at a module level. The analysis of this data focuses on the distribution of grades on individual modules. Student satisfaction data is presented at the module level using descriptive statistics at class and programme level. It would appear from discussions with students and staff, that ongoing informal channels for feedback and dialogue are considered relatively more valuable in effecting timely changes and enhancements in the student learning experience. However, the RP recommends that methods through which student feedback surveys are distributed to students should be reviewed to ensure maximum engagement with the surveys. Consideration should also be given to organising student satisfaction surveys on completion of programmes in addition to the current end-of-module surveys.

32.   Recommendation: As part of the new IoB five year strategic plan, which will incorporate a range of initiatives to support business transformation, the RP recommends that the IoB consider the development and application of management information and business intelligence tools to support more complex analysis and reporting that will include, among other areas, relevant analysis on the quality of the student learning experience.

How does the College use external moderation or examining to assure academic standards?

33.   The monitoring reports considered during the site visit confirm that the Institute has responded effectively to the recommendations of external examiners and clearly documents how external examiner recommendations are implemented. This is evident in the paperwork considering the response to external examiner recommendations and within the SAR documentation. This response has been observed at multiple levels including on individual modules. Assessed materials are all checked internally and are also seen by external examiners before use.

34.   In conclusion, the RP is satisfied with the Institute's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of UCD. In its management of academic standards the Institute takes proper account of the UCD Academic Infrastructure and other external reference points.

35. Section 17.2 of the IOB QA Handbook 2017 outlines that IOB cannot, under UCD academic policy and QQI Core Statutory Guidelines (April 2016), enter into collaborative arrangements with any other third-party provider or serial franchiser (national or international) where a University qualification is awarded. The Review Group supports this policy. The Review Group noted that some programme offerings are currently being delivered in Poland and India which would require some discussion/clarification with UCD.

36. Recommendation: Adherence to UCD's policy on serial franchising should be actively monitored by the University. Where any clarification is required this should be undertaken by IOB with the University (UCD Governance and UCD Quality) in line with good practice.

Section 3: Institutional Management of Learning Opportunities

How effectively does the College fulfil its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

37. The quality of learning opportunities in IoB are formally managed through the Institute's PERSAR and Programme Exam Board Committee structures, as well as by strategic oversight of formal quality review processes through the IoB-UCD Academic Programme Board. The outputs of annual review are summarised, with areas for enhancement outlined in an annual action plan that provides a framework through which the enhancement of learning opportunities can be advanced and progress in relation to enhancement monitored.

38. Responsibility for quality enhancement of the student learning experience is shared widely among IoB staff. The RP found clear evidence of a strong commitment to a quality enhancement in a number of areas. The responsiveness of staff to student feedback on the learning experience is particularly evident. Similarly, support for student learning is responsive and sympathetic to learner needs, many of whom are balancing competing priorities in their professional, personal and student life. With respect to blended learning, there is a clear commitment by staff to the careful consideration of the appropriateness of various pedagogies to support students in achieving learning outcomes, and a strong culture of innovation and development of eLearning approaches that are appropriate to programme delivery.

How effectively does the College make use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities?

39. IoB staff, students and external stakeholders value the relationship with UCD very highly. The RP found evidence of a broad awareness, understanding and application of UCD procedures and policies, where appropriate, to advance the quality of learning opportunities. The RP recommends the that the IoB continues to actively engage with UCD to ensure, where appropriate, the new or revised UCD policies and procedures are actively adopted and operationalised consistently across UCD accredited programmes. This may be progressed through the IoB-UCD Management Committee.

40. The Institute, its students and external stakeholders value accreditation of programmes by UCD, and consider that this accreditation provides credibility and a recognised transferability for the quality of the programmes delivered by the Institute. The academic credibility of awards is further enhanced by the

unique blend of academic and industry expertise applied in the development and delivery of IoB programmes.

41. Within the governing structure of the Institute, multiple stakeholders (including the Irish financial regulator, the major Irish banks and other financial services firms) exercise significant influence, particularly on the Council of the Institute. These stakeholders and council members provide many benefits for the Institute and ultimately, UCD through guidance as to future of training needs and requirements of financial services education in Ireland and beyond. A large number of stakeholders hold senior positions in financial services firms and are graduates of the Institute. Many of the Council members represent financial services organisations which pay for their employees to attend the Institute as students. These members have a deep comprehension of both training and education needs in the financial sector and a thorough knowledge of the Institute and its activities. The involvement of stakeholders is a commendable feature of the Institute which clearly confers many benefits and opportunities to the Institute and UCD.

42. Many of the Institutes' programmes are developed to ensure that graduates are appropriately qualified to undertake a responsible regulated function in the financial services industry. The benchmarking of syllabi and study materials involves not only reference to educational benchmarks such as those set by the Quality Qualifications Ireland, the National Framework of Qualifications and UCD, but also the standards expected for these regulated roles. The IoB are actively and meaningfully engaged with external stakeholders and industry relevant "thought leaders" within the financial services sector, both for the development of programme content and in ensuring a balance in academic and practitioner-led programme delivery. This approach is highly valued by both students and their sponsoring employers. The Institute's engagement with the financial services regulator and financial services firms within Ireland and beyond is an area of clear strategic strength for the IoB in regard to development and delivery of programme offerings, and contributes to their effectiveness in building long-standing relationships with both industry stakeholders and individual learners.

43. Throughout the SAR, study materials and programmes are seen to be of high academic quality and professional relevance. The academic level of study materials develops in critical and evaluative challenge with the increasing academic level assessed. These materials are seen to be pitched at the appropriate academic level and are aligned to the relevant levels of the National Framework of Qualifications. The professional relevance of the materials has been strongly signalled by both the appropriate financial regulator requiring these qualifications for regulated financial services roles and also by representatives of banks and major financial services firms employing persons in these regulated roles. The Institute clearly exerts considerable effort in ensuring that dialogue with stakeholders is on-going and deep.

44. IoB staff are actively engaged with relevant fora and networks in relation to considering new innovations in learning, particularly in relation to the student journey and approaches to eLearning. As the IoB continues to expand, the RP consider that there may be further opportunities for extending relationships within national and international networks, to inform the enhancement of approaches to student learning, student support, and operational effectiveness.

Commendation: the RP commends the Institute for making effective use of external reference points in the management of academic standards.

How does the College assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

45. The Institute employs a mix of full-time employees and associate faculty from the banking and financial services industry to support the delivery of its education programmes. UCD faculty also teach on a number of programmes. Students and sponsoring employers appreciate and value the mix of academic and practitioner delivery, and express a high level of satisfaction with the quality of lecturing staff for both the academic rigour and industry relevance perspectives of the programmes. External stakeholders positively endorse the IoB sectoral leadership in developing programmes in line with emerging trends within the sector.

46. Modules are developed with a comprehensive set of learning resources that include study guides, lectures and associated reading and textbooks, as appropriate. The academic materials provided to students were seen to be of a high quality. Academic delivery is informed by staff with significant subject-level expertise. This includes professional practitioners and academic staff with academic and research expertise in key areas of the curriculum, or expertise in national and international policy development. Subject level expertise is supplemented by the availability of professional development opportunities in pedagogical approaches.

How does the College assure itself that students are supported effectively?

47. The College is aware, and responsive to, the needs of the student body. The student body has unique needs, as its members are often working a full time job, studying part-time, or either entering higher education for the first time or re-entering higher education after a considerable absence. Modes of delivery and the design of blended approaches to learning are supportive of the competing priorities of the student body. Students particularly appreciate the availability of a range of online resources to support academic learning, available through the 'MyInstitute' portal. Overall, students express a high level of satisfaction in the design and management of programmes, which facilitate students to complete studies while working full-time.

48. Student representation is provided through student representatives selected from the Institutes' student body. Liaison is undertaken through student-staff fora and informal discussions between staff and students. The IoB displays a responsive attitude toward student requests and demands. The Dean, programme coordinators and programme managers all play a key role in the dissemination and maintenance of this responsive approach. Clearly, the close working relationship between the Academic Dean, Module Co-ordinators, Programme Co-ordinators and Programme Managers, provides a multi-layered approach to student support. The continuous high level of communication and support provided by Programme Managers was very highly commended by the student body.

49. Notwithstanding the IoB's responsive culture, the 'student voice' in the Institute is less formalised than arrangements seen in many higher education institutes. While the Institute staff are approachable and reactive to the demands of students, involvement of students in decision making bodies of the Institute is limited. This may arise for many reasons, not least that IoB students may neither desire nor require representation in the same format to that provided to other higher education students. It is acknowledged that IoB students undertake their studies part time and many are working full time. Students of the

Institute also have a distinct status relative to other UCD students as indicated in the MOA, which may preclude them from involvement in UCD arrangements for student representation. The IoB Council could provide an avenue for voicing student concerns, albeit from an employer led perspective. While student representation does not appear to be a pressing concern, the RP's opinion is that if there was a concerted student desire for greater representation within the Institute, then these arrangements should be revisited.

50. Recommendation: It is recommended that student representation within the Institute becomes an agenda item in the UCD-IOB Strategic Management Committee, if requested by the student body.

How effectively does the College develop its staff in order to improve student learning opportunities?

51. New staff to the institute routinely undergo induction training, which is designed to familiarise staff with a wide range of activities relevant to their teaching. There is a dedicated Associate Faculty Portal, which includes information to support associate faculty, including access to all relevant policies and procedures, and the UCD Teaching and Learning Toolkit. A dedicated Academic Advisor role is focused, among other responsibilities, on the ongoing development of a portfolio of learning opportunities to support academic staff development.

52. The Institute is open to, and supportive of, the professional development of its staff. Staff note that financial support is available for staff availing of accredited learning in teaching and learning, and staff are encouraged and supported in attending relevant conferences and networks to support their professional development. Ongoing seminars and workshops on a range of areas are offered, e.g. IT skills, and training on broadcasting for live webinars.

53. Recommendation: The RP recommends that the IoB consider whether further opportunities to access the resources and supports delivered by UCD Teaching and Learning exist as part of the current IoB-UCD MOA.

How effectively does the College ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes?

54. IoB approaches to academic learning resources for students are available through the IoB learning management system, 'MyInstitute' that provides a central portal for information and resources to support student learning. Students are provided with information on accessing student supports during the induction process. During the review visit, students reported that these resources are useful and generally easy to navigate. Similarly, student study guides, which are available at the commencement of each module, were viewed as a valuable resource in assisting students to familiarise themselves with the details of each course. The study guides are regularly updated by staff to endure the accuracy and immediacy of content. The development of the learning management system is ongoing, informed by external best-practice, a culture of innovation, and led by an enthusiastic and committed eLearning team. The RP consider that there are opportunities for IoB to further develop its online learning resources in accordance with a sustainable and strategically planned trajectory, mindful of student need and sectoral best-practice.

Section 4: Public Information

How effectively does the Institute of Banking communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?

55.   The clear and easily navigated website (www.iob.ie) is the primary channel for publishing information, providing access to a wide range of materials for students, staff and other stakeholders. It includes helpful information for potential students and a comprehensive section on items of interest to current students.

56.   Student information is publicly accessible on the IoB website and this section provides links to several policy documents relating to assessments, leave of absence, student code and student complaint procedures, for example. Many of the documents are those that are published by UCD, which reinforces the close link between IoB and UCD in regard to policy and procedures. Information on the IoB quality assurance and quality enhancement policy is also accessible on the website.

57.   In the closed section of the website, members of the Institute have access to an online career support centre that provides helpful information on career management, self-development, curriculum vitaes, applications and interviews.

58.   The IoB student prospectus is published annually and contains detailed programme information on all level 7, 8 and 9 courses. Operational information relating to registration and examinations is also included. The prospectus is easy to navigate and includes material on the content, delivery, timetable, entry requirements and assessment for each course. The prospectus is embellished by inclusion of personal recommendations from stakeholders and former students.

59.   A student handbook provides information for registered students on assessments, quality assurance and student supports. For course guidance, each module is accompanied by a detailed study guide that has been carefully compiled to provide comprehensive support to students in organising their approach to distance learning and self-directed study. The Institute is commended for the excellent quality of the student study guides.

How effective are the IoB's arrangements for assuring that published information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and accurate?

60.   The publication of course information is the responsibility of the IoB Corporate Development team, whose members work closely with the Institute's members, programme directors and registry to ensure the accuracy and relevancy of information for public and student readership.

61.   The Communications Oversight Group (COG) of the IoB assesses website and social media impact and engagement. The COG seeks input and feedback from staff in advance of making changes to the content available via the website and social media platforms. Information relating to academic details is reviewed and signed off by Programme Co-ordinators. The institute's academic year planning process, led by the Dean and Registrar, begins approximately 10 months in advance of student applications for the following academic year. The RP found that this process is well managed by IoB staff and that sufficient time for review of content by Programme and Module Co-ordinators is embedded in the schedule and timeline for preparation of material. However, the Institute has observed, through its self-

assessment review, that communication of changes to procedures to staff members needs to be improved.

62. The IoB has identified a need to engage in more frequent assessment of the effectiveness of its published information for both students and members of the Institute. As discussed with the RP during the site visit, plans are afoot to consolidate reporting on items regarding communication and publication of information to senior management at key points in the planning cycle of the Institute.

63. The Review Panel concludes that reliance can be placed on the information that the IoB produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Section 5: Alignment with QQI Core Statutory QA Guidelines and ESG

64. IoB QA procedures align well with the QQI and ESG requirements. The RP were impressed by how staff at all levels actively engage with QA procedures and take responsibility for ensuring best practice throughout the Institute.

Section 6: Conclusions

65. The RP concludes, that overall, the IoB quality assurance procedures are effective for managing and enhancing academic standards and learning opportunities.

Response by the Institute of Banking to the Review Panel Report

We are very grateful to the members of the Review Group for their time and effort in the review process and we welcome the commendations and recommendations included in the report. Our experience of the quality review process was a very positive and constructive one. We would also like to thank colleagues from the UCD Quality Review office for their guidance and engagement with the Institute during the review process. We are particularly pleased with the commendations around:

- Excellent use of blended learning techniques to support distance learning.
- The Institute's close links with the financial services industry that informs and guides programme development.
- The Institute's responsiveness to the changing requirements of the industry in terms of course offerings and content.
- The Institute makes effective use of external reference points in the management of academic standards.

With specific reference to the recommendations identified by the Review Group, the Institute's initial comments are outlined below:

<u>**Review Panel Finding 24**</u>

"The RP finds that the current procedure in IoB for submission of student work does not meet the UCD requirement that all such work is automatically checked for plagiarism as part of the submission process. In the IoB, each student is required to self-check their work, meaning that the onus for adhering to plagiarism policy is therefore placed on the student. Whilst no evidence of plagiarism was observed or suspected by the RP, it is recommended that a plagiarism detection software package that will assess all student work on submission is employed. Use of this software should follow the procedures already operating across UCD and the adoption of the same process by the IoB would fulfil the expectation that all students' work is assessed consistently by a robust system".

Response: Currently the Institute's associate faculty play a role in checking for plagiarism as part of the grading process. The Institute recognises the need for an integrated plagiarism checking system for students to support faculty and will commence work on the implementation of a plagiarism checking system.

<u>**Review Panel Finding 25**</u>

"To address any further deviations [plagiarism checker] from UCD academic policy and procedures that could exist or develop, the RP proposes that the adherence to UCD academic procedures and policies should be included as a standing agenda item of the IoB-UCD Strategic Management Committee".

Response: At a meeting of the Recognised College Steering group of 11 January 2019, UCD Academic Secretariat introduced an initiative to coordinate the implementation of UCD academic procedures and policies in the Recognised Colleges. The Institute has commenced work on this initiative and will review

reporting from the IoB-UCD Programme Board on academic policy and procedures to the IoB-UCD Strategic Management Committee.

Review Panel Finding 28

"The RP recommends that the IoB-UCD Strategic Management Committee should identify and explore additional associations with other UCD schools. It is further recommended that the Institute should expand its association with relevant units within UCD, such as Registry, in order to enhance and extend this successful collaboration on strategic matters".

Response: The Institute welcomes this recommendation and will seek, through the IoB-UCD Strategic Management Committee to deepen its relationships with other units in UCD where mutually beneficial synergies may exist.

Review Panel Finding 31

"However, the RP recommends that methods through which student feedback surveys are distributed to students should be reviewed to ensure maximum engagement with the surveys".

Response: In recent years the Institute has incentivised completion of surveys (by offering a prize to "one lucky winner" drawn from survey respondents) and the Institute will continue to review and assess means to maximise engagement with surveys.

Review Panel Finding 32

"As part of the new IoB five-year strategic plan, which will incorporate a range of initiatives to support business transformation, the RP recommends that the IoB consider the development and application of management information and business intelligence tools to support more complex analysis and reporting that will include, among other areas, relevant analysis on the quality of the student learning experience".

Response: The Institute has commenced a review of student data and its use for student enhancement in conjunction with its business transformation initiative as part of its Strategic Plan 2019-2024.

Review Panel Finding 36

"Adherence to UCD's policy on serial franchising should be actively monitored by the University. Where any clarification is required this should be undertaken by IOB with the University (UCD Governance and UCD Quality) in line with good practice".

Response: The Institute takes its obligations for the avoidance of serial franchising seriously and in conjunction with the University, monitors its operating arrangements to ensure it continues to eliminate the risk of serial franchising.

Review Panel Finding 39

"The RP recommends that the IoB continues to actively engage with UCD to ensure, where appropriate the new or revised UCD policies and procedures are actively adopted and operationalised consistently across UCD accredited programmes."

Response: At a meeting of the Recognised College Steering group of 11 January 2019, UCD Academic Secretariat introduced an initiative to coordinate the implementation of UCD academic procedures and policies in the Recognised Colleges. The Institute has commenced work on this initiative.

Review Panel Finding 50

"It is recommended that student representation within the Institute becomes an agenda item in the UCD-IOB Strategic Management Committee, if requested by the student body".

Response: The Institute will review student representation on its committees and working groups.

Review Panel Finding 53

"The RP recommends that the IoB consider whether further opportunities to access the resources and supports delivered by UCD Teaching and Learning exist as part of the current IoB-UCD MOA".

Response: The Institute welcomes the opportunity to engage with UCD Teaching and Learning to provide opportunities for its staff and associate faculty to enhance teaching and learning in the Institute.

Review Panel Finding 54

"The RP consider that there are opportunities for IoB to further develop its online learning resources in accordance with a sustainable and strategically planned trajectory, mindful of student need and sectoral best-practice".

Response: The Institute is currently researching additional online learning resources as part of the business transformation initiative under the Institute's Strategic Plan 2019-2024.