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**Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Leitir Ceanainn**  
Letterkenny Institute of Technology

# **Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies (Including LYIT Graduate Attributes) 2015-2020**

**October 2016**

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## Document Approval

<b>Policy Owner</b>	<b>Dr Lynn Ramsey</b>
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## **1. Foreword**

Our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies and Graduate Attributes builds on principles established in the Institute's Strategic Plan 2014-2017: Our Commitment to the North West Gateway Learning Region.

The Strategies are central to LYIT's commitment to providing an excellent learning environment which supports students in fulfilling their potential by working in partnership with industry and community.

The Strategies have been developed through extensive consultation and discussion with our staff and students. Learning and teaching within LYIT will continue to flourish with the on-going support and commitment of our staff and students.

## **2. Learning and Teaching Strategy 2015-2020**

### *Strategy Architecture*

Letterkenny Institute of Technology's mission aims to confirm its significant national profile for excellence in higher education through the pursuit of an ambitious development agenda informed by public policy, strong regional engagement, and a fundamental commitment to a student-centred ethos.

Our vision for Learning and Teaching at LYIT is laid out in our Strategic Plan 2014-2017, *to be widely recognised as a leading higher education institution for the quality of our graduates and employment-focused education programmes.*

This Strategy is underpinned by LYIT's six core values: integrity; inclusion; ambition; excellence; regional engagement and collaboration. These values define and shape the culture of learning and teaching at Letterkenny Institute of Technology and ensure our commitment to fulfilling student potential. This Strategy supports the achievement of LYIT Graduate Attributes.

The Strategy reflects the broader national policy landscape and is informed in particular by the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 and the work of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. The Strategy is cognisant of regional collaborations in particular the Connacht-Ulster Alliance, the West North-West Higher Educational Cluster and cross-border collaboration.

This Strategy is framed by the LYIT's Mission based performance compact with the HEA 2014-2016 and the subsequent Academic Plan which provides the architecture to achieve the agreed performance targets.

In so doing, this strategy builds upon our strong commitment to excellence in learning and teaching supported by on-going staff development through accredited and professional programmes. The MA in Learning and Teaching has been offered in LYIT since 2013 and forms the basis for a suite of research informed learning and teaching minor and major awards for all teachers in the region.

### 3. Guiding Principles

Learning and teaching is the core mission of LYIT. The Institute aims to deliver a vibrant, high quality, inclusive, student centred learning environment. The three core principles which support Learning and Teaching at LYIT are excellence, fulfilling student potential and inclusion and engagement.

LYIT promotes enquiry, reflection and evaluation enabling our graduates to develop professional expertise for the changing workplace. LYIT facilitates students' active engagement in their own learning and in realising their potential. Curricula are relevant, innovative, reflective of industry needs and benefit from partnerships with both public and private sectors. LYIT is committed to civic engagement and, through the student experience, enables individuals to become active citizens.

#### *Excellence*

LYIT provides inclusive, relevant curricula, and up-to-date knowledge and skills which support effective learning. Teaching, learning and assessment approaches enhance student development as subject specialist, enquiring and reflective learners. We recognise that all members of staff have an important role in the creation of a quality environment for the delivery of excellence in learning and teaching. Our staff will be encouraged and supported in development opportunities which enhance their teaching.

#### *Fulfilling Student Potential*

LYIT has as its fundamental mission the development of its students both as learners and as citizens. Students at LYIT will develop a capability for lifelong learning and for a lifelong contribution as active citizens.

#### *Inclusion and Engagement*

LYIT promotes an open, friendly and caring approach to students and colleagues, fostering an inclusive community culture encouraging a high level of student and staff engagement. Our diverse student body learn in a supportive, stimulating environment shaped through industry and community engagement.

#### *Strategic Objectives*

LYIT's strategic objectives for teaching and learning are as follows:

#### *Excelling in Learning and Teaching*

- a) To enhance the quality of our learning and teaching through the provision of programmes which draw on methods of learning, teaching and assessment which support students in the development of relevant knowledge, skills and competence.
- b) To ensure that our staff have excellent skills in teaching and supporting learning. We will encourage staff development through support for and the provision of opportunities to improve their skills throughout their careers.
- c) To continually review and develop assessment and feedback strategies to support effective learning.
- d) To support research informed teaching and learning and provide opportunities for knowledge transfer and curriculum enrichment through engagement with industry and the community.
- e) To provide programme structures which are flexible, promote inclusion in education and offer parity in access.

### *Providing an Excellent Student Experience*

- a) To provide a stimulating learning environment which supports students in taking responsibility for their own learning and personal development.
- b) To continue to build upon our strong staff- students relations. The LYIT learning environment builds a sense of community and prepares students for their future roles as responsible and informed citizens, expressing ethical and social responsibility.
- c) To articulate and embed the opportunities to develop attributes that enhance personal and professional development within our programmes and through student experience.
- d) To continually improve our physical and virtual learning environments to enhance student learning.

### *Collaboration with Industry and Community*

- a) To continue to promote opportunities for knowledge transfer and curriculum enrichment through engagement with industry and the community
- b) To provide programmes which make best use of opportunities for knowledge transfer, placement/work-based learning and professional development
- c) To continue to develop curricula which are designed through dialogue and partnerships between teaching staff, students, graduates, employers and voluntary and community sectors.
- d) To provide students with the opportunity to engage with key national and international issues as global citizens and potential leaders in a wide variety of fields and roles

### *Prioritisation within the Strategic Objectives*

The Learning and Teaching Strategy implementation plan is annexed below.

The current priority areas in the short term (2015-17) are:

- Student retention
- Student recruitment
- Digitally enhanced learning
- Assessment and Feedback
- Embedding graduate attributes in programme provision (2015-16, articulating graduate attributes and then 2016-17 embedding graduate attributes)
- Articulating and embedding industry and civic engagement in learning and teaching.

### *Performance Indicators*

The Institute Strategic Plan outlined the broad use of HEA Institutional and Sector profiles which will be used to benchmark Institute performance against the strategic plan. The following indicators will be used to monitor progress against the Learning and Teaching Strategy;

- Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) and international comparators
- Online QA1 and QA3
- U-Multirank
- Student progression
- Graduate destination information
- Student population demographics

- Staff development indicators: Registration and completion figures for: EdD; LYIT's MA in Learning and Teaching or equivalent; LYIT's diploma in Learning and Teaching, or equivalent; LYIT minor awards at L9 for Learning and Teaching or equivalent; Journal and conference papers in learning and teaching; Membership of and participation in Learning and Teaching organisations; and unaccredited continuing professional development activity.

### *Consultation Process*

This Learning and Teaching Strategy was developed under the direction of working group comprised of Dr Gertie Taggart (Chair, Head of School Science), Michael Margey (Head of School of Business), Dr Lynn Ramsey (Head of Department of Law and Humanities) and Dr Averil Meehan (Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator).

The strategic plan developed through a series of consultations, discussions and workshops with the following groups:

- a) Academic managers group
- b) All academic staff invited to participate in workshop
- c) Student group review
- d) External review by Dr Marion Palmer.

The working draft was be considered by Executive Board at its meeting on 12/10/2015 and was submitted to the Academic Council on 16/10/15. The Teaching and Learning and Student Affairs Sub-Committee reviewed the draft and recommendations were presented to Academic Council on 27/11/15. The revised draft as then submitted to Executive Board.

### *Timeframe*

The teaching and learning strategy will run from 2015-2020 and will be subject to an interim review after two years coinciding with the adoption of the new institute strategic plan.

## **4. LYIT Assessment Strategy 2016-2020**

LYIT recognises the fundamental relationship between assessment and learning in Higher Education. Assessment is central to student engagement, motivation and performance and shapes teaching and learning within our institution.

LYIT Teaching and Learning Strategy supports excelling in teaching and learning and commits to the continual review and development of 'assessment and feedback strategies to support effective learning'.

## **5. Strategic Context**

LYIT's Assessment strategy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- LYIT's Teaching and Learning Strategy 2015-2020
- LYIT Quality Assurance Handbook, particularly sections 6, 7, 8, and 9.

- LYIT Strategic Plan 2014-2017
- LYIT Graduate Attributes
- LYIT Assessment Handbook
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015 , particularly section 1.3
- QQI Assessments and Standards, revised 2013
- IOTI Guidelines for managing Assessment Process

Assessment of student learning in LYIT has three interconnected purposes:

- To certify student achievement;
- To support student learning, including lifelong learning and
- To maintain quality and standards.

## 6. General Principles of Assessment

LYIT is committed to ensuring that all assessment has the following characteristics which will guide programme and module assessment practices:

**Validity**- assessment is an accurate measure of the attainment of the intended learning outcomes.

**Reliability**-assessment generates grades which are comparable over time and between assessors in order to ensure academic standards.

**Effectiveness** – assessment design supports in-depth and active student learning.

**Comparability and consistency**- summative assessment is based upon consistent and comparable approaches to awards at the same level across programmes and institutions in terms of student workload and academic challenge.

**Equity and Diversity** –assessment methods, policies and practices are fair to all students and provide all students with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their learning by appropriate methods.

**Practicability and Efficiency** – assessment is practical for both students and staff in terms of workload and time to complete, assess and provide feedback.

**Transparency** – clear, accurate, accessible and consistent information on programme and module syllabi, learning outcomes and assessment criteria and standards, rules and policies is available to all students, staff and examiners.

**Attributable**- assessment is reliably attributed as the work of an individual students.

**Relevance**- assessment supports student learning and the development of graduate attributes, including both discipline specific knowledge and skills but also critical, analytical, problem - based learning skills and transferable skills to prepare the student for graduate employment and active citizenship.

## 7. Strategic Objectives

1. To provide assessment and feedback in all programmes and modules which supports and enhances student learning and effective teaching.
2. To ensure that adequate academic and/or professional standards are achieved by LYIT graduates through appropriate marking, grading and assessment of their knowledge, skills and competencies.



3. To design assessment methods which develops a wide range of skills and abilities as well as academic ability.
4. To develop students' understanding of assessment processes through active student engagement and dialogue with teaching staff on all aspects of assessment and feedback, including assessment design, learning outcomes and evaluation.
5. To assist students' educational development by the provision of timely, qualitative feedback in both formative and summative assessments.
6. To adopt a comprehensive range of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment methods including peer and self-assessment to develop the students' reflection and self-monitoring of the quality of their own learning.
7. To develop a programme based approach to assessment where students demonstrate the intended programme outcomes, not just specific aims of individual modules.
8. To continually monitor and evaluate assessment and feedback processes to support effective learning.

### *Consultation Process*

This Assessment Strategy was developed through consultation with the following:

- a) Teaching, Learning and Student Affairs Committee of the Academic Council (4/5/16);
- b) LYIT Executive Board (18/4/16).

The Teaching, Learning and Student Affairs Committee comprises Dr Sharon McLaughlin (Chair, Department of Law and Humanities), Dr Joanne Gallagher (Secretary, Head of Department of Science), Dylan McGowan (SU President), Dr Lynn Ramsey (Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator), Joe Coll (Department of Design), Maureen O'Neil (Department of Science) and Deirdre MacNamara (Department of Hospitality and Tourism). In order to ensure representation from each of the Institute's four Schools in the development of the assessment strategy Dr Jim Morrison, Head of Department of Mechanical and Electronic Engineering was co-opted onto the committee. The draft strategy will be submitted to the Academic Council on Friday 6 May.

The working draft will then be considered by Executive Board and each of the School Executives. The Teaching, Learning and Student Affairs sub-Committee will review the draft and recommendations and will present a revised draft to the Academic Council on Friday 10 June.

### *Timeframe*

The assessment strategy will run from 2016-2020 and will be subject to an interim review after two years coinciding with the adoption of the new institute strategic plan

## **8. LYIT Graduate Attributes**

### *Strategic Context*

LYIT Graduate Attributes reflects the broader national policy landscape and is informed in particular by the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 and the work of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. The Graduate Attributes are cognisant of regional collaborations in particular the Connacht-Ulster Alliance, the West North-West Higher Educational Cluster and cross- border collaboration.

This Strategy is framed by the LYIT's Mission based performance compact with the HEA 2014-2016 and the subsequent Academic Plan which provides the architecture to achieve the agreed performance targets.

LYIT's Graduate Attributes forms part of the LYIT Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategies should be considered in conjunction with the following:

- LYIT Strategic Plan 2014-2017
- LYIT Quality Assurance Handbook
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015
- The Report of the Working Group on Student Engagement in Irish Higher Education (HEA, 2016).

Agreed working definition of graduate attributes as follows:

**9. Qualities, academic skills and personal attributes (developed by students during their time at LYIT through programme based, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities).**

The Letterkenny Institute of Technology Graduate Attributes are:

1. Discipline expertise and commitment to lifelong learning
2. Communication skills
3. Team-working
4. Ethical and social understanding and competency
5. Personal effectiveness and Leadership
6. Career readiness

*Discipline expertise and commitment to lifelong learning*

- Breadth and depth of knowledge within and across disciplinary areas
- Discipline relevant professional skills, knowledge and abilities
- Research skills and the capacity for lifelong learning

*Communication skills*

- Communicate clearly and confidently to a range of audiences
- Listen and engage effectively with others
- Communicate effectively using relevant technology

*Team-working*

- Contribute positively when working in a team
- Engage effectively with others
- Experience of collaborative working in a variety of roles

### *Ethical and social understanding and competency*

- Conduct themselves professionally, consistent with relevant professional, ethical and legal frameworks
- Actions informed by ethical, social and global responsibilities
- Civic minded

### *Personal effectiveness and Leadership*

- Respond effectively and positively to change
- Demonstrate resilience, drive and creativity
- Self-sufficient, independent thinkers, motivated and enterprising
- Demonstrate leadership and the ability to positively influence others

### *Career readiness*

- Academic, employability and technical skills developed in collaboration with industry and social partners
- Reflective learners with the ability to set and achieve goals for on-going personal and professional career development
- Apply and develop learning to professional practice

## **10. Process to Articulate LYIT Graduate Attributes**

8 stages:

1. Background paper and Power Point Presentation by Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator to Executive Board
2. Cross-institution working group workshop – identification of key themes
3. Industry and graduate working group – identification of key themes
4. Coding and analysis of working group data
5. Draft graduate attributes reviewed by Teaching, Learning and Student Engagement Committee of Academic Council
6. Review of Graduate Attributes by Academic Council, Executive Board, School Executive and Career's Officer
7. Final review by Teaching, Learning and Student Engagement Committee
8. Adoption by Academic Council

### *Implementation Process*

The implementation of LYIT Graduate Attributes is identified as a priority area for LYIT for the academic year 2016-2017. The stages and consultation process is as follows:

#### *Stages*

1. Articulation of LYIT Graduate Attributes with each School
2. Embedding of graduate attributes to all programmes through Programmatic Periodic Evaluation and in new programme development
3. Adoption of an e-portfolio/digital badging which enables our graduate to evidence attributes

4. Embedding LYIT Graduates in all strategic planning and quality assurance policies and processes.

#### *Consultation Groups*

1. Cross-institutional working group
2. Industry and graduate working group
3. Student working group

#### *Timeframe*

The LYIT Graduate Attributes will apply from 2016-2020 and will be subject to an interim review after two years coinciding with the adoption of the new institute strategic plan. The review process will be informed by data from the Irish Survey of Student Engagement, student, graduate and industry collaboration and the broader policy context.

## 11. Annex One

### Learning, Teaching and Assessment Implementation Plan

<b>LT - Learning and Teaching</b> <i>LYIT is committed to ensuring that students can fulfil their potential by empowering students to take greater responsibility for their own learning on high quality coherent programmes of study that are closely aligned with the needs of employment.</i>								
Strategic Objective	Component Actions	Ownership	Risk (Residual)	Risk Mitigating Actions	Performance Indicator	Baseline	Targets	Progress (Quarterly)
<b>Learning and Teaching:</b> <b>LT1</b> - Develop our student-centred culture and further support students to fulfil their potential; important initiatives will include easing the transition into higher education, encouraging students to take greater responsibility for their own learning, and preparing students for a lifetime of learning.	Undertake a study to determine important factors in both retention and progression, identify measures aimed at improving both, and agree improved targets at department level for retention and progression.							
	Examine new and existing programme proposals in terms of the opportunities they afford learners to take responsibility for their own learning; including elective elements, supports for independent study, problem based learning, student research, and individualised student selected assessment/projects.							

	Further improve the induction programme for new entrants, continue the development of peer-to-peer initiatives, and examine opportunities for coordination of personal tutor roles.							
	Encourage students to fulfil their potential via a broader engagement within the Institute, support students to engage with broader society, and further develop processes that recognise these positive endeavours.							
<b>LT2</b> - Assist lecturing staff with their continuous professional development, including: developments in their particular discipline area, trends in teaching and learning, new technologies, and initiatives of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.	Develop the induction programme and ongoing assistance for new staff members to ensure there is sufficient Learning and Teaching training, information on the HE environment and LYIT processes, and other important supports for a lecturing career.							
	Continue to develop the supports available to staff in respect of Teaching and Learning built around the existing MALT programme and							

	supplemented with an ongoing series of workshops on L&T.							
	Support staff in their broader CPD to ensure they can continue to stay up-to-date with developments in their particular discipline area and with new technologies. Particular supports will be put in place for staff wishing to complete postgraduate study.							
	Work closely with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and ensure that LYIT staff are supported in actively engaging in initiatives supported by the National Forum.							

Strategic Objective	Component Actions	Ownership	Risk (Residual)	Risk Mitigating Actions	Performance Indicator	Baseline	Targets	Progress (Quarterly)
<b>LT3</b> – Foster excellence in curriculum design to ensure a portfolio of programmes of the highest quality reflecting existing strengths in the STEM area; the resulting portfolio will be aligned with national and regional policy objectives, best practice in teaching and learning, innovative assessment methodologies, QOI award standards, and student demand.	Review the existing programme portfolio in terms of national and regional policy objectives, transitions debate, support from employers, and student demand.							
	Strengthen mechanisms for programme development to ensure a consistency of approach, reflecting the integrity of the Institute's QA processes.							
	Ensure adequate preparation for the forthcoming PPE process so that all identified steps can be completed on time. Develop programme and module databases through the PPE process that will be accessible to all Institute staff and students.							
	Capture best practice in teaching and learning, and assessment so that new programmes documents are informed by these approaches – a key focus will be innovative assessment and the development of marking rubrics.							



<p><b>LT4</b> - Enhance structures at an Institute level that will underpin students' career ambitions and offer pathways to employment in partnership with employers; initiatives will include integrated career supports, generic and transferable skill development, industry visits, service learning, and work experience.</p>	<p>Design into programmes a clear focus on employment roles and further study opportunities. Integrating guest lectures, industry visits, and employment challenges within programmes.</p>							
	<p>Integrate Career's Service more closely with programme provision – e.g. CV preparation, interview preparation, career opportunities, links with employers and other HEIs, tracking careers of graduates, and collating career information for students.</p>							
	<p>Ensure programme design takes sufficient cognisance of generic and transferrable skills, addresses ethical issues, and provides for opportunities for students to learn to work in a team environment.</p>							
	<p>Further develop Institute supports for Work Placement provision. Develop models for work placement based on best practice reflecting programme type, programme level, desired learning, and available credits.</p>							

Strategic Objective	Component Actions	Ownership	Risk (Residual)	Risk Mitigating Actions	Performance Indicator	Baseline	Targets	Progress (Quarterly)
<b>LT3</b> – Foster excellence in curriculum design to ensure a portfolio of programmes of the highest quality reflecting existing strengths in the STEM area; the resulting portfolio will be aligned with national and regional policy objectives, best practice in teaching and learning, innovative assessment methodologies, QQI award standards, and student demand.	Review the existing programme portfolio in terms of national and regional policy objectives, transitions debate, support from employers, and student demand.							
	Strengthen mechanisms for programme development to ensure a consistency of approach, reflecting the integrity of the Institute’s QA processes.							
	Ensure adequate preparation for the forthcoming PPE process so that all identified steps can be completed on time. Develop programme and module databases through the PPE process that will be accessible to all Institute staff and students.							
	Capture best practice in teaching and learning, and assessment so that new programmes documents are informed by these approaches – a key focus will be innovative							

	assessment and the development of marking rubrics.							
LT4 - Enhance structures at an Institute level that will underpin students' career ambitions and offer pathways to employment in partnership with employers; initiatives will include integrated career supports, generic and transferable skill development, industry visits, service learning, and work experience.	Design into programmes a clear focus on employment roles and further study opportunities. Integrating guest lectures, industry visits, and employment challenges within programmes.							
	Integrate Career's Service more closely with programme provision – e.g. CV preparation, interview preparation, career opportunities, links with employers and other HEIs, tracking careers of graduates, and collating career information for students.							
	Ensure programme design takes sufficient cognisance of generic and transferrable skills, addresses ethical issues, and provides for opportunities for students to learn to work in a team environment.							

	Further develop Institute supports for Work Placement provision. Develop models for work placement based on best practice reflecting programme type, programme level, desired learning, and available credits.							
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<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Component Actions</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Risk (Residual)</b>	<b>Risk Mitigating Actions</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Progress (Quarterly)</b>
<b>LT5-</b> Implement procedures that recognise the increasingly many ways in which students may wish to access programmes of study, ensure greater parity in terms of access for part-time students to programmes and services, further develop RPL mechanisms, and ensure that the standard of award made is independent of the mode of study.	Expand the provision of programmes available via flexible means working collaboratively with other HEIs, employers and community organisations; particularly supporting initiatives such as Springboard to help restart careers.							
	Further develop processes for the design, development and validation of part-time programmes and minor awards; and examine RPL processes to ensure transparency and widespread, consistent adoption of RPL across the Institute.							

	Examine access to Institute supports and services for part-time students addressing identified deficiencies; and develop and promulgate the equivalent of a part-time student handbook.							
	Ensure that part-time programmes mirror equivalent provisions in full-time programmes particularly with respect to assessment to ensure that standard of award made is independent of mode of study.							
<b>LT6</b> -Build on our success as a national leader in widening participation by growing student numbers assisted via the Access Office (The Curve), enhance supports for these students groups, coordinate these activities with the academic schools, and integrate Access processes within the	The Curve will develop a handbook setting out all of the services and supports available to students.							
	More formal links will be developed between the academic Schools through the various programmes. These links will build on ongoing activity in respect of the Maths Learning Centre and the Communications Learning Centre.							

<p>Institute's quality assurance framework.</p>	<p>A new section will be developed for the QA handbook encompassing all aspects of Access Office activity that impact on assessment of learners e.g special examination provisions for students with particular learning difficulties and health conditions.</p>							
	<p>The Curve will develop its capacity to track and trend the profile of the student population from the tests carried out at admission. This information will be collated for the benefit of the Executive Board and the academic Schools.</p>							



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