

Joint Quality Committee

Annual Report to Governing Body

Period September 2025 to May 2026

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1. Introduction

The Joint Quality Committee was established in 2024 and is a committee of the South East Technological University's Academic Council and Governing Body. It is responsible for ensuring the overall Quality of the University based upon reviews of aggregated data and other information and through its interaction with relevant University bodies arising from reviews.

As part of its role, the Joint Quality Committee is required to submit an Annual Report to Governing Body. This is the second Annual Report to be submitted since the Committees establishment and reflects the reporting period September 2025 to May 2026. During that period, the Committee met on four occasions.

This Annual Report includes information on the Committee's membership, the frequency of, and attendance at meetings, and an overview of the Committee's activities in that period.

Further information, including meeting agendas and minutes, are published on the University's website and can be found [here](#).

2. Membership

The Terms of Reference for the Joint Quality Committee sets out its membership.

Table 1: Membership of the Joint Quality Committee from September 2025 to May 2026

Position	Name	Background
Chairperson, Member of Governing Body	Pauline Oakes	Vice President of Operations EMEA/APAC, Integer Holdings Ireland
Secretary	Dr Derek O'Byrne	Vice President Academic Affairs, Teaching and Learning
Assistant Registrar	Andrea Boland	Assistant Registrar Quality and Reviews
VP Research, Innovation & Impact	Professor Marie Claire Van Hout	Vice President Research, Innovation and Impact
Member of Governing Body	Richard Lacey	Lecturer, Faculty of Science and Computing
Member of Governing Body	Dr Zeta Dooly	Lecturer, Faculty of Education and Lifelong Learning
Member of Governing Body	Professor Hannah McGee	Professor Emeritus, and former Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, RCSI
Member of Academic Council	Dr Kevin Doolin	Executive Director, Walton Institute Information & Communication Systems Science

Position	Name	Background
Member of Academic Council	Aubrey Storey	Lecturer, Faculty of Health Sciences
Member of Academic Council	Emer McGann	Lecturer, Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment
SU VP Education <i>ex officio</i>	Brian Power	Vice President for Education – Carlow Campus, SETU Students' Union
SU VP Education <i>ex officio</i>	Daniel Fagan	Vice President for Education – Waterford Campus, Students' Union

3. Meetings

During the period September 2025 to May 2026, the Joint Quality Committee met on four occasions. Under the Code of Governance, the Joint Quality Committee is required to meet at least four times per year.

Meetings September 2025 to May 2026		
Committee Member Name	Number of Meetings Attended	Meeting Dates
Pauline Oakes	4/4	1. 23 September 2025 2. 9 December 2025 3. 17 February 2026 4. 26 May 2026
Dr Derek O'Byrne	4/4	
Andrea Boland	4/4	
Professor Marie Claire Van Hout	2/4	
Richard Lacey	4/4	
Dr Zeta Dooly	3/4	
Professor Hannah McGee	1/1	
Dr Kevin Doolin	0/4	
Aubrey Storey	4/4	
Emer McGann	4/4	
Brian Power	2/4	
Daniel Fagan	0/4	

4. Committee Activities

In carrying out its responsibilities, the Joint Quality Committee considered the following within the reporting period, allowing it to fulfil its responsibility of ensuring the overall Quality of the University:

1. Agreed terms of reference for the Joint Quality Committee and its workplan for the 2025/26 academic year.
 - The Committee's work-plan 2025/26 is included in Appendix 1. Its completion is largely on schedule (see point 2, 3, 5 and 9 below) with the exception of the approval of a policy relating to the University's third-party arrangements, now estimated to be presented in quarter 4 of 2026, and the schedule for Academic Unit Reviews which is currently in the process of being agreed following the completion of the Academic Integration Project. It is estimated that preparations for Academic Unit Reviews will commence in the 2026/27 academic year, with approval of the related terms of reference by Committee once the schedule is approved.
2. Ongoing monitoring, review and updating of the University's Academic Risk Register.
 - As part of the Committee's ongoing monitoring and review of the University's Academic Risk Register, additional risks, and amendments to existing risks, were made. These include:
 - The addition of risks relating to the possibility of inaccurate and incomplete award data potentially leading to University awards being granted when the required standards have not been achieved, and of academic activities not reflecting the University's strategic objectives potentially resulting in the University not meeting its commitments to stakeholders.
 - Amendments to risks including the possible breach of academic integrity as a result of the inappropriate use of AI, recognition of the approval of the University Governance Protocol for Professional Accreditation, the Professional Accreditation Risk Procedure, and the Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies Relationship (PSRB) Register, and recognition of the University's student complaints process.
3. Approved the schedule for Professional Service Unit Reviews 2026-2031 (see Appendix 2).
 - The University's first cycle of Professional Service Unit reviews is scheduled to take place over a five-year period commencing in quarter 4 of 2026 and completing in 2031. In that period, 22 Professional Service Unit Reviews are scheduled.
 - The review schedule was considered by the Executive Management Team and agreed with the Vice Presidents of the relevant Professional Service Units.

- The number of reviews scheduled to take place in each academic year is as follows:
 - Academic year 2026/27 – 4 reviews
 - Academic year 2027/28 – 5 reviews
 - Academic year 2028/29 – 4 reviews
 - Academic year 2029/30 – 4 reviews
 - Academic year 2030/31 – 5 reviews
 - To date, the Committee has approved Professional Service Unit Review Terms of Reference for three of the first four scheduled reviews which are scheduled to take place in Quarter 4 of 2026 and Quarter 1 of 2027:
 - i. Library
 - ii. Strategy Office
 - iii. Sustainable Development Office.
4. Considered Internal Review Outcomes.
- i. Academic Unit Review of the Department of Nursing and Health Care.
 - a. The review took place in September 2025 and took nine months to complete, from approval of the Terms of Reference by Committee in May 2025, to consideration of the Departments response to the Peer Review Group Report, and corresponding Quality Improvement Plan in February 2026. In consideration of the Quality Improvement Plan, the Committee recommended that the Department monitor progression rates across all years of its programmes. The Committee will continue to monitor the implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan.
 - ii. Review of the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment: Engineers Ireland Accredited Programmes.
 - a. This review was undertaken to assist the Faculty on the Waterford campus in its preparations for an Engineers Ireland accreditation visit and to evaluate the effectiveness of the Faculty's application for accreditation. The review took place in May 2025 and took four months to complete.
5. Approved Thematic Review Terms of Reference.
- The Committee approved the Terms of Reference for the Thematic Review on Retention, the first thematic review undertaken by the University. The review took place in April 2026. The approval of the Peer Review Group Report and subsequent monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations included in the report, will be conducted by the Committee.
6. Approved documents relating to the governance of the University's activities relating to professional accreditation These include:
- i. The Governance Protocol for Professional Accreditation.
 - ii. The Professional Accreditation Risk Procedure.
 - iii. A Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies' Relationship Register.

7. Reviewed and considered data presented as set out in the University's Quality Data Cycle and Schedule, including:
- i. **Grade Distribution & Awards Classifications** – The Committee reviewed data on grade classifications for final awards of fulltime undergraduate Level 7 General Degrees, and Level 8 Honours Degrees made during the period 2019/20 to 2023/24. Among its discussions, the Committee noted the consistency in findings across disciplines and years during the reporting period, and the variations in some discipline areas and possible causes. The need for ongoing monitoring of distributions and identification of possible trends over the coming years was noted by the Committee.
 - ii. **The Student Survey** – Data relating to the Student Survey was presented on two occasions. The Committee discussed the surveys response rate and its comparability to other Higher Education Institutions (HES's), strategies for increasing the response rate, the communication of the survey outcomes to students, and whether an action plan in response to the survey findings would be included. The survey gathers information on various topics including, where students live during term time, how students financially support themselves, budget management, in-person attendance, time spent per week attending lectures and tutorials etc., library services, and feedback on assessment. The Committee noted that internally the survey data highlights the significance of the SUSI grant as a source of funding for its students. However, externally it highlights the University's importance in providing access to higher education for all.
 - iii. **Progression and non-progression** – The Committee considered data on student progression and non-progression rates over a five-year period up to the 2023/24 academic year. As part of its discussions, the Committee noted the progression rates for Level 8 programmes as concerning and discussed possible causes impacting on non-progression.
 - iv. **External Examiner Report** – The Committee reviewed the External Examiner Summary Report for the 2024/25 academic year. 263 External Examiner reports were reviewed and included in the summary report. The Committee noted that overall, the feedback provided in External Examiner reports was generally positive and the gender balanced nature of the University's External Examiners which is 49% female and 51% male. The Committee also noted that only 12% of External Examiners are international. Further discussions related to the University's External Examining processes, the collection and reporting on data, and closing the feedback loop.
 - v. **Research Students** – The Committee considered data on the University's research degree outcomes, including data relating to average completion times, average retention, completion rates, and the number of research students per active supervisor. It also considered the factors impacting students completion of research degree including, the availability and level of funding and time management. In consideration of the supervision load, the

Committee noted the high dependency on some supervisors and discussed the actions and targets being undertaken to address it.

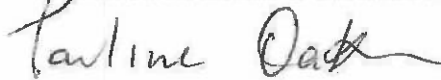
8. Ongoing updates on the University's Academic Integration Project.

- The Committee were provided with two updates on the Academic Integration Project which included an overview of the eight portfolio design principles which will guide the creation of the University's academic portfolio. In its consideration, the Committee advised of the importance in having a coherent University Academic Portfolio of Approved Programmes which has regional relevance and which attracts additional students.

9. Consideration of the Complaints Resolution Officers Report Summary.

- The Committee considered the first report of the University's acting Complaints Resolution Officer. The Complaints Resolution Office (CRO) was established in September 2024. In the 18 months since its establishment, the CRO has considered 61 cases. The majority of cases related to academic misconduct and expected behaviours. Of the 61 cases, 41 complaints were filed by staff, 12 by students, and 8 by members of the public. The medium response time to complaints was 6 days. The Committee noted the importance of the establishment of the CRO to the University.

Presented on behalf of the Joint Quality Committee:



Pauline Oakes

Chairperson of SETU Joint Quality Committee

26 May 2026

Appendix 1



Joint Quality Committee

DRAFT Work Plan 2025-26

	JQC Quality Review Review Policies and Procedures	JQC Data Review Quality Data Reporting	JQC Risk Review Quality Risk Register	JQC Reviews 2025/26 Academic Year			
				Academic Unit Review	Thematic Area Review	Professional Service Unit Review	Third Party Arrangements Review
September 2025			Ongoing review of Academic Risk Register		Thematic review on retention progress update		
December 2025			Ongoing review of Academic Risk Register	Approval of schedule for Academic Unit Reviews	Approval of terms of reference & panel for thematic review on retention	Approval of schedule for Professional Service Unit Reviews	
February 2026		Presentation of student progression data analyses	Ongoing review of Academic Risk Register	Approval of terms of reference & panel for academic unit review(s)	Thematic review on retention progress update	Approval of terms of reference & panel for professional service unit review(s)	
May 2026	Approval of third- party arrangements review policy	Presentation of external examining data analyses	Ongoing review of Academic Risk Register	Approval of terms of reference & panel for academic unit review(s)	Approval of thematic review on retention panel report, response & quality enhancement plan	Approval of terms of reference & panel for professional service unit review(s)	

		Presentation of research students data analyses Presentation of student voice data analyses		Progress Update to JQC		Progress Update to JQC	
September 2026		Presentation of programme board reporting data analyses	Ongoing review of Academic Risk Register	Approval of terms of reference & panel for academic unit review(s) Progress Update to JQC	Ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the thematic review on retention quality enhancement plan	Approval of terms of reference & panel for professional service unit review(s) Progress Update to JQC	
December 2026		Presentation of annual faculty reporting data analyses Presentation of grade distribution/award classification data analyses Presentation of professional service unit/ academic unit review data analyses	Ongoing review of Academic Risk Register	Approval of terms of reference & panel for academic unit review(s) Approval of panel report, academic unit response & quality enhancement plan Progress Update to JQC	Ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the thematic review on retention quality enhancement plan	Approval of terms of reference & panel for professional service unit review(s) Presentation of panel report, professional service unit response & quality enhancement plan Progress Update to JQC	

Appendix 2

Professional Service Unit Review Schedule

Academic Year	Professional Service Unit	SVP/VP/AVP	Quarter 3			Quarter 4			Quarter 1			Quarter 2		
			Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
2026/27	Library	David Denieffe												
	Sustainability	Dr David Ryan												
	Governance	Elaine Sheridan												
	Institutional Planning	Dr Richard Hayes												
2027/28	Estates & Facilities	David Denieffe												
	Centre for Academic Practice	David Denieffe												
	Sport	David Denieffe												
	Finance	Cormac O'Toole												
	Workforce Planning & Analytics, & Operational Optimisation	Shauna Whyte												
2028/29	Student Services	David Denieffe												
	Global Partnerships	David Denieffe												
	Graduate Studies Office	Professor Marie Claire Van Hout												
	Department of Research	Professor Marie Claire Van Hout												
2029/30	Registry (Administrative)	Dr Derek O'Byrne												
	External Affairs	Kathryn Kiely												

