

# Higher Education Authority

## Eligibility Criteria Sample Process Review

### - TU4Dublin



**Deloitte Ireland LLP**  
Deloitte & Touche House  
Charlotte Quay  
Limerick

[www.deloitte.com/ie](http://www.deloitte.com/ie)

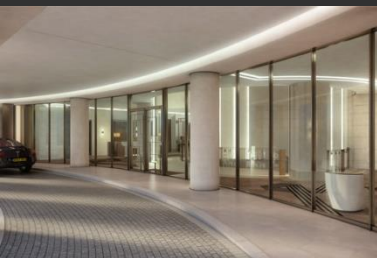

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**Report owners:** Mr Tim Conlon, Higher Education Authority

# Contents


	Page
<b>1. Executive summary</b>	3
<b>2. Student Profile Criteria</b>	9
<b>3. Staff Profile Criteria</b>	15
<b>4. Research Activity Criteria</b>	22
<b>Appendices</b>	
1. Statement of responsibility	27
2. Technological Universities Act 2018 Extract	28
3. Schedule of Meetings	30


Executive summary




Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices



Key dates:	
Date of fieldwork:	10 - 24 May 2018
Date of draft report:	25 May 2018
Date of final report:	6 June 2018

This report has been prepared on the basis of the limitations set out in Appendix 1.

This report and the work connected herewith are subject to the Terms and Conditions of the contract dated 31 January 2018 between the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Deloitte. This report has been commissioned by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the HEA is our client. We have provided consent to the HEA for the report to be published, however, we do not accept responsibility to any third party as the report has not been prepared, and is not intended to be relied on by any third parties.

# 1. Executive summary

## 1.1 Introduction

Chapter 9 of the Technological Universities Act 2018 (the "Act") sets out the application process for applicant institutes to become a technological university. Under this process, the Technological University for Dublin Alliance (hereinafter TU4Dublin) submitted their *Application for designation as a technological university* (the "Application") to the Department of Education & Skills on 27 April 2018.

Section 28 of the Act sets out a number of eligibility criteria that needs to be met and the TU4Dublin have set out in Section 4 of their Application how they meet each of the criteria for designation.

Deloitte were engaged by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to assist the advisory panel in respect of the eligibility criteria.

### 1.1.1 Scope and approach

The HEA requested an independent external audit to review the following:

- A sample audit of the process used by the applicant institutes to verify relevant staff numbers, qualifications and/ or equivalence, for the purposes of an application under the Act;
- A sample audit of the process used by the applicant institutes to verify student categorisation, along with participation and registration on the named programme for the purposes of an application under the Act;
- A sample audit of the process used by the applicant institutes to verify programme type (research/ part-time/ remote/ online) and programme co-design for the purposes of an application under the Act.

The eligibility criteria requested to be reviewed is set out in **Appendix 2**. Our review focussed on the processes applied to identify the metrics referenced in Section 4 of the Application to meet the eligibility criteria in the Act.

Our approach to this review was to:

- Through discussion with key staff, establish the processes applied to identify the metrics quoted in the Application for each of the eligibility criteria to be reviewed;
- Evaluate the process applied by checking sample data.

It should be noted that Deloitte did not undertake testing of full data population. As part of our review we selected a small sample of each relevant data population in order to evaluate the process undertaken by TU4Dublin. The sample sizes was agreed with the HEA in advance of our review. Refer to each section for further details of the evaluation undertaken. Our work was conducted in accordance with the limitations set out in Appendix 1.



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices



# 1. Executive summary

## 1.2 Summary of findings

We set out below a high level outcome of our review by eligibility criteria.

Legislative criteria	(Extract from Application) How TU4Dublin meets the criteria	Outcome of Deloitte review
<p>S. 28 (1) (a) of the students of the applicant institutes registered on a programme that leads to an award to at least honours bachelors degree level:</p> <p>(i) at least 4 per cent are research students registered on a programme which leads to an award to at least masters degree level, and</p>	<p>The total number of students is 17,284 of whom 727, <b>4.2 per cent</b> are research students.</p>	<p>The base data used for the analysis was the collated Student Records System (SRS) March 2018 returns to the HEA. These returns are audited by the HEA and once all issues resolved they are signed off by the applicant institute Registrar to confirm their accuracy. The HEA audit process has not occurred as yet on these returns. Deloitte carried out testing to ascertain the accuracy of the students for a sample of programmes and no issues were identified.</p> <p>No issues have come to our attention to indicate that the process to collate the student numbers applied by the TU4Dublin was unsatisfactory. Please refer to sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.</p>
<p>(ii) at least 30 per cent fall within one or more than one of the following classes of students:</p>	<p>The <b>30 per cent</b> threshold is exceeded for sections (II) and (III).</p>	<p>TU4Dublin is only required to meet one condition on this criteria. While condition (I) was not achieved the other conditions (II and III) were attained. The results of evaluation for condition II and III are as follows:</p>
<p>(I) students who are registered on a programme that is provided on a flexible basis, such as by means of part-time, online or distance learning;</p>	<p>The total number of students is 17,284 of whom 3,042, <b>18 per cent</b> are registered part-time, distance education or e-learning programmes.</p>	<p>As the results were not qualifying in this section, it was not included in our review.</p>
<p>(II) students who are registered on a programme that has been designed, and is being delivered, with the involvement (which shall be construed in accordance with subsection (2)(b)), of business, enterprise, the professions, the community, local interests and other related stakeholders in the region in which the campuses of the applicant institutes are located;</p>	<p>The total number of students is 17,284 of whom 6,132, <b>36 per cent</b> are registered on programmes so defined.</p>	<p>TU4Dublin have interpreted this condition as, students enrolled in a programme that is accredited by a professional body and we accept that this was a reasonable approach to take. We reviewed a sample of 20 programmes and identified whether these were accredited by a professional body. Our review identified a weakness in the process applied by TU4Dublin as 50% of the programmes selected are not currently accredited by a professional body, however, nine are in the process of being re-accredited. Refer to section 2.1.4 for further details.</p>
<p>(III) students who are not less than 23 years of age.</p>	<p>The total number of students is 17,284 of whom 5,446, <b>32 per cent</b> are not less than 23 years of age.</p>	<p>The approach undertaken by TU4Dublin in determining the mature students that would satisfy the legislative criteria is satisfactory.</p> <p>Our review identified a discrepancy of one student who should have been included in the calculation.</p> <p>This marginal difference does not impact on TU4Dublin meeting the 30% minimum threshold and it would still remain at 31.5%. Refer to section 2.1.4 for further details.</p>



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices



# 1. Executive summary

## 1.2 Summary of findings



Legislative criteria	(Extract from Application) How TU4Dublin meets the criteria	Outcome of Deloitte review
<p>S. 28 (1) (c) of the full-time academic staff of the applicant institutes engaged in the provision of a programme that leads to an award to at least honours bachelor degree level—</p> <p>(i) at least 90 per cent hold a masters degree or doctoral degree,</p>	<p>Currently, <b>90 per cent</b> of staff hold a masters or a doctoral degree.</p>	<p>We carried out a review of the processes applied by the TU4Dublin team to collate the data to meet the eligibility criteria set out in the Act, and the process applied was evaluated as reasonable.</p> <p>From the data made available, we identified some variances (additional staff) and these were explained by the TU4Dublin team. Our review did not identify anything to indicate that the process applied was unsatisfactory.</p> <p>It should be noted that for the purpose of this review a small sample was selected in order to evaluate the process. Full datasets were not reviewed.</p> <p>Please refer to report point 3.1.1 for further details.</p>
<p>(ii) at least 45 per cent hold—</p> <p>(I) a doctoral degree, or</p> <p>(II) subject to subparagraph (iii), a terminal degree, as well as sufficient practical experience gained in the practice of a profession to which the programme relates, such that the degree and experience together can reasonably be viewed by the advisory panel as equivalent to a doctoral degree, and</p>	<p>Currently, <b>45 per cent</b> of staff hold a doctoral degree or equivalent.</p>	<p>We carried out a review of the processes applied by the TU4Dublin team to collate the data to meet the eligibility criteria set out in the Act, and the process applied was evaluated as reasonable.</p> <p>We selected a small sample of staff to determine that a doctoral degree was in existence. We did not check full data population. Please refer to report point 3.1.2 for further details.</p>
<p>(III) not more than 10 per cent hold only the qualifications referred to in subparagraph (ii)(II);</p>	<p>Currently <b>1 per cent</b> hold only the qualifications so described.</p>	<p>For the purpose of the application the TU4Dublin team explained that they identified one type of terminal degree, those who hold a membership with the Royal Institute of Architects Ireland (MRIAI). TU4Dublin counted six staff who hold the MRIAI qualification. Deloitte ascertained that these six were listed on the staff spreadsheets provided.</p> <p>Per the spreadsheets provided by the applicant institutions, Deloitte ascertained that six or <b>0.48 per cent</b> of full-time academic staff per the spreadsheet provided hold a terminal degree.</p> <p>Please refer to report point 3.1.2 for further details.</p>

Executive summary

Specific findings – Student profile criteria

Specific findings – Staff profile criteria

Specific findings – Research activity criteria

Appendices



# 1. Executive summary

## 1.2 Summary of findings



Legislative criteria	(Extract from Application) How TU4Dublin meets the criteria	Outcome of Deloitte review
<p>S. 28 (1) (e) of the full-time academic staff of the applicant institutes engaged in both of the following, at least 80 per cent hold a doctoral degree—</p> <p>(i) the provision of a programme that leads to an award at doctoral degree level, and</p>	<p>Currently, <b>95 per cent</b> of such full-time academic staff hold a doctoral degree.</p>	<p>The approach undertaken by TU4Dublin in determining full-time academic staff engaged in the provision of a programme leading to an award at doctoral degree would satisfy the legislative criteria appears satisfactory.</p>
<p>(ii) the conduct of research;</p>	<p>Currently, <b>95 per cent</b> of such full-time academic staff hold a doctoral degree.</p>	<p>Using the Graduate Research School database, the base number reported of full-time academic staff engaged in the provision of a programme that leads to an award at doctoral degree level by TU4Dublin is 258. However, from our review of the database we calculated 256. The discrepancies identified are attributable to the duplication of entries for two staff.</p> <p>Our review identified that of the 256, 243 or <b>94.92 per cent</b> full-time academic staff hold a doctoral degree and are research active. The discrepancy does not impact the achievement of the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>We reviewed a sample of 20 full-time academic staff engaged in the provision of a programme leading to an award at doctoral degree and no issues were identified.</p> <p>Please refer to report point 3.1.3 for further details.</p>



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices





# 1. Executive summary


## 1.2 Summary of findings





Legislative criteria	(Extract from Application) How TU4Dublin meets the criteria	Outcome of Deloitte review
<p>S. 28 (1) (f) each of the full-time academic staff of the applicant institutes engaged in the supervision of students registered on a programme that leads to an award to doctoral degree level—</p> <p>(i) holds—</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(I) a doctoral degree, or</p>	<p>Currently, <b>96 per cent</b> of such full time academic staff hold a doctoral degree.</p>	<p>The approach undertaken by TU4Dublin in determining supervisors would satisfy the legislative criteria is satisfactory. TU4Dublin have identified 237 as the base number of full-time academic staff who are engaged in the supervision of a programme that leads to an award at doctoral degree level.</p> <p>Our review of the database identified two discrepancies which are attributable to duplication of entries. Of the 237, 226 or <b>95.78 per cent</b> were identified per the database as holding a doctoral degree.</p> <p>We selected a random sample of 14 full-time academic staff from this database to ascertain their qualifications. From our review of qualifications no discrepancies were noted in reference to their qualification recorded.</p> <p>Please refer to report point 3.1.4 for further details.</p>
<p>(II) a terminal degree, as well as sufficient practical experience gained in the practice of a profession to which the programme relates, such that the degree and experience together can reasonably be viewed by the advisory panel as equivalent to a doctoral degree,</p>	<p>Currently, <b>4 per cent</b> of such full time academic staff hold a terminal degree, as well as sufficient practical experience gained in the practice of a profession to which the programme relates.</p>	<p>TU4Dublin have interpreted this condition as <i>“these lecturers are a long standing and expertise in DIT and are all secondary supervisors”</i>. TU4Dublin have identified 10 full-time academic staff under this interpretation, representing 4.2 per cent.</p> <p>However, from our review of the Graduate Research School database we <b>identified 11 full-time</b> academic staff that supervise students and do not hold a doctoral degree, representing <b>4.6 per cent</b>. We were informed that these 11 supervisors are <i>“of long standing and expertise in DIT and are all secondary supervisors”</i>. We are not be in a position to evaluate that the 11 supervisors meet the criteria and would defer this criteria be assessed by the Advisory Panel.</p> <p>Please refer to report point 3.1.4 for further details.</p>
<p>(ii) has a record of continued conduct of research in an area relevant to the programme;</p>	<p>Currently <b>100 per cent</b> of such full time academic staff have such a record.</p>	<p>As outlined previously, TU4Dublin have interpreted the condition of “research active” as an academic staff having at least one of the following: recent publications; live project or supervising a student.</p> <p>The base number reported of full-time academic staff engaged in the supervision of a programme that leads to an award at doctoral degree level by TU4Dublin is 237, of which <b>100 per cent</b> are active in research. No variances were noted in our review of this criteria.</p> <p>Please refer to report point 3.1.5 for further details.</p>

 Executive summary

 Specific findings – Student profile criteria

 Specific findings – Staff profile criteria

 Specific findings – Research activity criteria

 Appendices



# 1. Executive summary

## 1.2 Summary of findings



Legislative criteria	(Extract from Application) How TU4Dublin meets the criteria	Outcome of Deloitte review
<p>S.28 (1) (g) in respect of not less than 3 fields of education—</p> <p>(i) the applicant institutes provide programmes that lead to awards to doctoral degree level, and</p>	<p>Programmes leading to doctoral degree level are provided in the following 6 fields, in all of which academic staff and students conduct research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts and Humanities</li> <li>• Social Sciences, Journalism and Information</li> <li>• Business, Administration and Law</li> </ul>	<p>No issues have come to our attention to indicate that the process applied by the TU4Dublin was unsatisfactory. Please refer to sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2</p>
<p>(ii) the academic staff and students of the applicant institutes conduct research;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics</li> <li>• Information and Communication Technologies</li> <li>• Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction.</li> </ul>	



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices



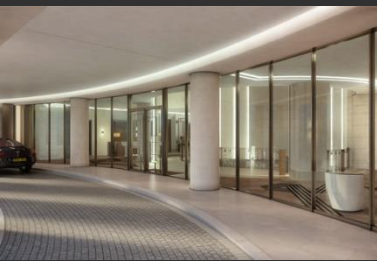


## 2. Specific Findings – Student Profile Criteria



# 2. Student Profile Criteria

An overview of the process to collate student profile information applied by TU4Dublin together with details of the independent outcome of the review is outlined below.



## 2.1 Overview - Student Profile Criteria

### 2.1.1. Overview:

In making their submission to meet the student profile criteria, TU4Dublin relied on the data returned as part of the Student Records System (SRS) return for 2018 submitted to the Higher Education Authority (HEA). We were informed by the TU4Dublin team that it was agreed with the HEA that the data from March 2018 SRS return of the three institutions Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB) and Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITT) could be used to determine if they have achieved the Eligibility Criteria set-out on Section 28 of the Technological Universities Act 2018.

Note that the HEA is currently in the process of auditing the SRS returns submitted by these three institutions and once they are satisfied, the Registrar of the applicant institutes will be asked to sign off the data confirming its accuracy. The HEA audit process has not occurred to date on the March 2018 SRS return. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the limitations associated with using this data.

The SRS return is submitted annually by each institute, to the HEA, on the 31st March 2018. There are two streams to the data submitted:

- Data for current students
- Data for graduates - those who have successfully completed a course/research for an award in the preceding academic year.

The upload to the SRS consists of three files: the programme file, the course file, and the student survey file.


- **Programme file** – contains information on the general area of study that a course belongs to e.g. Bachelor of Engineering, Bachelor of Arts, Diploma in Business Studies. The programme file contains descriptors such as programme name, faculty, and programme type (i.e. Undergraduate Degree).
- **Course file** – a course is a denominated area of study within a programme, for instance, Bachelor of Engineering in Electronic & Electrical Engineering. The student has enrolled on the programme Bachelor of Engineering but is pursuing a more specific area of study. The course file contains descriptors such as course name, course code, awarding body etc.  
  
Note that in the case of TU4Dublin, the programme and course is the same.
- **Student survey** - contains the individual student or graduate records. A broad range of data is collected: student details such as age; gender; country of origin; course details such as course being pursued; mode of study (full-time/part-time); and subject data (where further breakdown is required e.g. BA Arts, BSc Science).


In compiling the data for the TU4Dublin submission, the Institutional Data Analyst, DIT was responsible for collating the SRS data for all three institutes (DIT, ITB and ITT). The Institutional Data Analyst is responsible for compiling the data required for the SRS returns. Three files were received from each institute (programme file, course file and student survey). For purposes of confidentiality the identifiable student data from each of the three student survey files was altered as follows:


- The address field was altered to just include street name;
- The date of birth (DOB) field was altered to just include year of birth (YOB); and
- The student number was replaced with a unique and sequential number.


An overall spreadsheet, containing the SRS data from all three institutes was developed by the Institutional Data Analyst. This spreadsheet was used by the TU4Dublin project team to complete calculations in order to determine if they met the criteria as set out below in the Technological Universities Act 2018.

 Executive summary

 Specific findings – Student profile criteria

 Specific findings – Staff profile criteria

 Specific findings – Research activity criteria

 Appendices





## Overview - Student Profile Criteria

### 2.1.2. Student Numbers:

Eligibility Criteria (legislative criteria)

*S.28 (1) (a) of the students of the applicant institutes registered on a programme that leads to an award to at least honours bachelor degree level.*

The combined total of students coming from the SRS returns of the applicant institutions (DIT, ITB and ITT) is 36,913, to determine the appropriate sub set of data or population to be evaluated against the legislative criteria. The process applied by TU4Dublin took into account two considerations:

#### I. Types of Students

- Enrolment status – All students that were considered as “Graduates” who completed the program on the previous academic year (2016/2017) and “Apprentice” were to be excluded.
- Non Standard Attendance (Overseas) – these were overseas students enrolled in a programme developed by the three institutions (DIT, ITT, and ITB) and being sold to other institutions in different countries (e.g. China) and were therefore excluded.
- Exchange Students - The incoming exchange (e.g. from France to Ireland) student were excluded and the outgoing exchange student (e.g. from Ireland to France) were included.

#### II. Programmes that leads to an award to at least honours bachelor degree level

The Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) provides guidelines as to what level of qualification would merit at least an honours bachelor’s degree. The required level of qualification is level 8 to 10.

The collated SRS data provides information of NFQ levels and programme types. The programme types that would fall under the NFQ level 8 to 10 are as follows:

Figure 1.0

NFQ	Programme Type	No. of Students
8	11	14,153
	29	103
	23	151
9	25	1,861
	26	150
	30	311
	27	555
10		
Grand Total		<b>17,284</b>

Figure 1.0 above illustrates the final number of students (17,284) who are registered in a programme that would lead to an award to at least honours bachelors degree level and used by TU4Dublin to evaluate against the legislative criteria. This figure includes students from DIT, ITB and ITT.

Executive summary

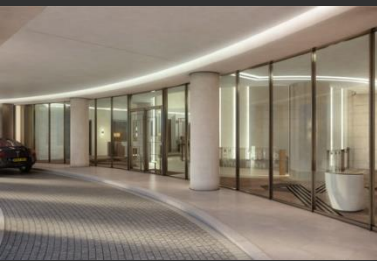
Specific findings – Student profile criteria

Specific findings – Staff profile criteria

Specific findings – Research activity criteria

Appendices





## Overview - Student Profile Criteria

**Deloitte Review:** We independently consolidated and reviewed the SRS data used to evaluate whether TU4Dublin would meet the legislative criteria set by the Act. We have ascertained that the programmes considered by TU4Dublin would merit an award of at least honours bachelors degree level as set out in the NFQ. Out of the 36,913 students on the SRS of the three institutions, filters were applied to determine the students that would be considered under these programmes. As a result of the procedures we performed, we identified 17,284 students which matched what TU4Dublin reported.

Further, we selected a sample of 20 programmes with corresponding number of students (2,028 students) from the SRS returns and reviewed these against reports generated from the Banner system of each institution. As the data on the Banner system is live and continuous, we noted variances as we performed our checks. However, these variances were all accounted and explained by TU4Dublin. No issues have come to our attention to indicate that the process to collate the student numbers applied by the TU4Dublin was unsatisfactory.

### 2.1.3. Research Students:

Eligibility Criteria (legislative criteria)

(i) At least 4 per cent are research students registered on a programme, which leads to an award to at least master’s degree level.

Technological Universities Act 2018 provides a specific criteria in order for a student to be considered as a research student. Per the Act, “research student is a student who is registered on a programme of education and training where not less than 60% of the available credits are assigned in respect of a thesis or theses prepared by the student based on research conducted by him or her”.

TU4Dublin identified their programmes that would fall under NFQ level 9 (Master’s Degree and Post-Graduate Diploma) and 10 (Doctoral Degree and Higher Doctorate) that have research components as part of the required credits to be completed by a student. The reference to credits in the legislation is referring to European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) where it defines a research student on a programme where at least 60% of the programme results are attributable to research.

The programme types considered for this NFQ level are as follows:

Figure 1.1

Number:	Programme Type:
25	Masters Taught (Postgraduate)
26	Masters Research (Postgraduate)
27	PhD (Postgraduate)

Per TU4Dublin, while programme types 26 and 27 are programmes with significant research components as part of the credits to be completed, there are only specific types of programme in type 25 which has the research component accounting for 60% of the total credits.

Master’s Taught (Postgraduate) programmes are available at DIT and ITB. We were informed that the ITB Master’s Taught programmes are classified under programme type 26 as over 60% of the credits relate to research activities and therefore the students are classified as research students. ITT do not offer any Masters Taught (Postgraduate) 60/30 for this program type.

**Deloitte Review:** The programmes considered by TU4Dublin that would have the minimum research component as required by the Act are appropriate. In evaluating the process applied by TU4Dublin, we reviewed the nine programmes that were considered type 25 and 26. We identified that the research components for these programmes are 60% or over of the required ECTS.

Additionally, the number of students taking these programmes were reviewed. No variance was identified between the figures we calculated against what TU4Dublin reported which was 4.2% (727 over 17,284). No issue came to our attention to indicate that the process or the metrics referenced in this element of the eligibility criteria were flawed or incorrect.

Executive summary

Specific findings – Student profile criteria

Specific findings – Staff profile criteria

Specific findings – Research activity criteria

Appendices





### Overview - Student Profile Criteria

#### 2.1.4. Students on programmes delivered with involvement of business, enterprise / Student age:

Eligibility Criteria (legislative criteria)

S. 28 (1) (ii) at least 30 per cent fall within one or more than one of the following classes of students:

- (I) Students who are registered on a programme that is provided on a flexible basis, such as by means of part-time, online or distance learning
- (II) Students who are registered on a programme that has been designed, and is being delivered with the involvement (which will be construed in accordance with subsection (2)(b)), of business, enterprise, the professions, the community, local interests in the region in which the campuses of the applicant institutes are located;
- (III) Students who are not less than 23 years of age.

As per the legislation set out above, TU4Dublin were only required to meet 30% in one or more of (I), (II) and (III). As per their submission, TU4 achieved 30%+ in (II) and (III) and 18% in (I). Therefore, **(I)** was not in scope for our review, as it fell short of the threshold required.

**(II)** TU4Dublin have interpreted this condition as, students should be enrolled in a programme that is accredited by a professional body and we accept that this was a reasonable approach. The reported number per the Application on this condition was 6,132 students or 35.48% of 17,284 students.

**Deloitte Review:** The approach taken by TU4Dublin in reference to 28. (1) (ii) (II) above, using the accreditation of a professional body is appropriate. We ascertained that the programmes included in the Application have a corresponding professional body that provides accreditation, except for items raised below. The number of students reported in the Application was reviewed and we identified that it should be reduced to 6,017 students or 34.81% still within the qualifying criteria. The discrepancies identified are attributable to the following:

- 111 students that were registered under CPD Architectural Practice Diploma (DT119) should not be considered as this programme does not meet the first criteria of “at least honours bachelor degree level” which is a requirement that needs to be achieved first before evaluating whether the programme is accredited by a professional body.
- 4 students under Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Biomedical Design (TA\_EBIOM\_B) should not be considered. This programme is new and has not been accredited to date.

We also reviewed a sample of 20 programmes (leading to at least honours bachelor degree level) to identify if they are accredited by a professional body. Of the 20 engineering programmes reviewed for accreditation with Engineers Ireland, we identified that accreditation for nine programmes had expired DIT (4), ITB (2), ITT (3) and one programme in ITT was in its first year of delivery and therefore not accredited by a professional body. Management of each institution have indicated that accreditation is currently being renewed with the professional body. We have sighted emails to indicate that submissions have been made to Engineers Ireland for renewal of the accreditation on their programmes. We also sighted an email from the Registrar of Engineer’s Ireland which indicated that Engineer’s Ireland are currently in the process of reviewing the programmes offered by ITT for renewal of their accreditation. It is expected that the Accreditation Board will review the reports of the panel for these programmes in June 2018 following which a decision will be made.

Our review identified a weakness in the process applied by TU4Dublin as 50% of the programmes selected are not currently accredited by a professional body.



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices





## Overview - Student Profile Criteria

**(III)** The Date of Birth (truncated to Year) and the course year were considered by TU4Dublin when performing this analysis.

Figure 1.2

Year of study:	YOB:
1 <sup>st</sup>	1994
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1993
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1992
4 <sup>th</sup>	1991
5 <sup>th</sup>	1990
6 <sup>th</sup>	1989
7 <sup>th</sup>	1988
8 <sup>th</sup>	1987
9 <sup>th</sup>	1986

**Deloitte Review:** The approach undertaken by TU4Dublin in determining the mature students that would satisfy the legislative criteria is reasonable. As part of our check, we developed an independent function to take into consideration the Date of Birth of the student (truncated to Year) and the course year to develop a base year that would be our basis for maturity analysis.

Our review identified one student with a date of birth of 1962 and currently in the 8th year of their programme was not considered by TU4Dublin on this criteria. This variance would increase the number of students to be reported from 5,446 to 5,447.

This marginal difference does not impact on TU4Dublin meeting the 30% minimum threshold and it would still remain at 31.5%.



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices

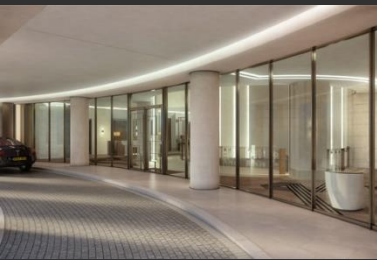


# 3. Specific Findings – Staff Profile Criteria



# 3. Staff Profile Criteria

An overview of the process to collate staff profile information applied by TU4Dublin together with details of the independent outcome of the review is outlined below.



## Overview - Staff Profile Criteria

### **3.1. Overview:**

The TU4Dublin team informed us of the process they applied in respect of the Staff Profile Criteria which we set out below. In making their submission to meet the staff profile criteria, the TU4Dublin used the data returned as part of the Employment Control Framework (ECF) return for 31 March 2018 submitted to the Higher Education Authority (HEA). These returns provide a breakdown of the categories (e.g. academic / non-academic, full-time/part-time) of staff according to their post.

The ECF return is submitted by each institute on a quarterly basis to the HEA. The framework encompasses categories of post, defined according to their nature and their source of funding.

In compiling the data for the TU4Dublin application, the Data Reporting Officer, DIT was responsible for collating the ECF data for all three institutes (DIT, ITB and ITT). One file was received from each institute (containing a staff identifier and employment status). For the purposes of confidentiality the staff identifier for each of the three staff files was altered to include a TU4Dublin identification number.

An overall spreadsheet, containing the collated ECF data from all three institutes was developed by the Data Reporting Officer in conjunction with the human resource department of each applicant institute.

Over the past five years, a harmonisation project across the applicant institutes has been undertaken in order to ensure the consistency of the data being held. This is to facilitate the collation of data into one database for use going forward. In order to prepare for this, the human resource departments of each applicant institute have been working together to validate the information recorded on each personnel file. Part of the project was to populate the spreadsheet with the qualifications of each academic staff.

This spreadsheet was used by the TU4Dublin project team to complete calculations in order to determine if they met the eligibility criteria as set out in the Technological Universities Act 2018.



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices





## Overview – Staff Profile Criteria

### 3.1.1 full-time academic staff holding a masters or doctoral degree:

Eligibility Criteria (legislative criteria)

*S. 28 (1) (c) of the full-time academic staff of the applicant institutes engaged in the provision of a programme that leads to an award to at least honours bachelor degree level—*

*(i) at least 90 per cent hold a masters degree or doctoral degree,*

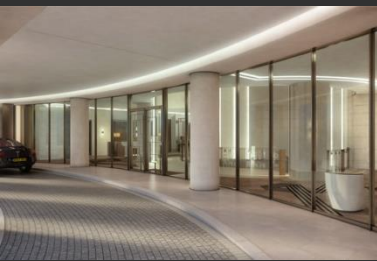
In collating the staff information, each staff member was assigned a category to identify their status (e.g. full-time). The TU4Dublin team developed the series of categories:

- Category A: whole time academic staff; research staff; president; registrar; and college director etc.
- Category B: defines normally whole time academic staff member, on a temporary reduced hours due to parental leave / personal arrangement.
- Category C: defines permanent whole time academic staff on a temporary career break or president / registrar / college director / head of school seconded to other role.
- Excluded for consideration: includes library manager, access managers and enterprise managers as these full-time academic staff are not engaged in the delivery of higher education programmes.

TU4Dublin have interpreted “a programme that leads to an award to at least honours bachelor degree level” as any programme from Level 6 that has a pathway to progress to a Level 8. Using CMIS (the timetable system), TU4Dublin identified 39 academic staff that were exclusively timetabled for Level 6 / Level 7 / Foundation / Junior Music / Trade Apprenticeships. The 39 academic staff and those in the excluded category above were excluded from the overall staff count. From this process, the list of full-time academic staff “engaged in the provision of a programme that leads to an award to at least honours bachelor degree level” is 1,242. The TU4Dublin applied filters on this dataset to identify the full-time academic staff base staff “engaged in the provision of a programme that leads to an award to at least honours bachelor degree level” holding a masters or doctoral degree is **1,118 or 90 per cent**. The process applied by the TU4Dublin to calculate the staff profile criteria figures appears reasonable.

**Deloitte Review:** The applicant institutes were concerned about confidentiality and would not provide their staff datasets in softcopy format. They did however provide hardcopies of the staff spreadsheets (March 2018) with the exclusions referred to above removed.

From the spreadsheets provided, we carried out a manual count of staff numbers by qualification level per the hardcopy dataset provided. As a result of the procedures we performed, we identified a total staff count of 1,242 full-time academic staff delivering programmes leading to a masters or doctoral degree which matches the TU4Dublin figure. From this listing, we identified some variances (29 additional staff) and these were all explained by the TU4Dublin team. Our review did not identify anything to indicate that the process applied or the numbers recorded were unsatisfactory.



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices



## Overview – Staff Profile Criteria

### 3.1.2 full-time academic staff holding a doctoral degree or terminal degree:

Eligibility Criteria (legislative criteria)

- S. 28 (1) (c) of the full-time academic staff of the applicant institutes engaged in the provision of a programme that leads to an award to at least honours bachelor degree level—
- (ii) at least 45 per cent hold—
    - (I) a doctoral degree, or
    - (II) subject to subparagraph (iii), a terminal degree, as well as sufficient practical experience gained in the practice of a profession to which the programme relates, such that the degree and experience together can reasonably be viewed by the advisory panel as equivalent to a doctoral degree, and

The Act defined a terminal degree and additionally, the HEA guidelines (*Technological Universities – Proposed process in respect of an application to become Technological University, 2018*) provide guidance for the application of a 'terminal degree'. TU4Dublin explained that for the purpose of their Application, they included one type of terminal degree, membership of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland. The collated staff datasets used by TU4Dublin identified 6 full-time academic staff "engaged in the provision of a programme that leads to an award to at least honours bachelor degree level" holding a level 10 equivalent.

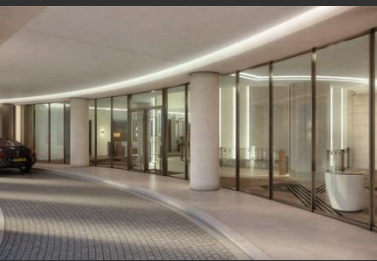
The TU4Dublin took the base figure of 1,242 full-time academic staff and applied filters to identify 557 or 45% staff hold a doctoral degree and/or terminal degree.

**Deloitte Review:** In order to evaluate the process used by TU4Dublin in their submission, Deloitte selected a random sample of 26 academic staff over the three applicant institutions to ascertain that they held the qualification per the staff dataset provided. We requested copies of the employee contract, evidence of qualifications (transcript / parchment) and screenshots of the employee details and qualifications as entered on the Core HR system. No issues were identified arising from this review.


We also manually counted the number of full-time academic staff who held a doctoral degree (555 staff) or terminal degree (six staff) per the hardcopy spreadsheets provided and calculated it as a percentage of the total staff. Our calculations identified that **45 per cent** of full-time academic staff hold a level 10 or terminal degree. Per the spreadsheets provided by the applicant institutions, a terminal degree is held by **0.48 per cent** of full-time academic staff. It was not feasible in the course of this review to ascertain the nature or the length of experience gained by the six individual members since the award of their terminal degree.


	Full-time Academic Staff No.		
	Total	Level 9 and 10	Level 10 or equivalent
DIT	871	817	449
ITT	214	189	66
ITB	169	141	46
<b>Total #</b>	<b>1254</b>	<b>1147</b>	<b>561</b>
Total %	100%	91%	45%


No issue came to our attention to indicate that the process applied by TU4Dublin was inappropriate.




 Executive summary

 Specific findings – Student profile criteria

 Specific findings – Staff profile criteria

 Specific findings – Research activity criteria

 Appendices



## Overview – Staff Profile Criteria

### 3.1.3 Full-time academic staff engaged in the provision of a programme leading to a doctoral degree and the conduct of research:

Eligibility Criteria (legislative criteria)

*S. 28 (1) (e) of the full-time academic staff of the applicant institutes engaged in both of the following, at least 80 per cent hold a doctoral degree—*

- (i) the provision of a programme that leads to an award at doctoral degree level, and*
- (ii) the conduct of research;*

TU4Dublin informed Deloitte that they interpreted the “*full-time academic staff of the applicant institutes engaged in . . . . the provision of a programme that leads to an award at doctoral degree level, and the conduct of research*” as full-time academic staff who are supervising a student or delivering on a programme that leads to an award of a doctoral degree and who are research active.

TU4Dublin have defined “*research active*” as an academic staff having at least one of the following: recent publications (2012 – 2016); a live research project or supervising a research student. The Graduate Research School manages a database that records details of all full-time academic staff involved in the delivery of programmes leading to an award at doctorate degree level. This database holds the following information on those staff:

- i. the International Standard Classification of Education Descriptors (ISCED) field;
- ii. whole-time status;
- iii. qualification, publications (2012 – 2016);
- iv. has external funding (2014 – 2017); and
- v. if they are supervising PhD students.

Using this database, the TU4Dublin identified 258 full-time academic staff are either involved in the provision of a programme leading to a doctoral degree level, or are research active.

- Of the 258, 245 or **94.96 per cent** hold a doctoral degree;
- Of the 258, 250 are involved in the provision of a programme leading to an award at doctoral degree level;
- Of the 250, 237 or **94.80 per cent** hold a doctoral degree;
- Of the 258, all are research active and of that 245 hold or **94.96 per cent** a doctoral degree;
- Of the staff who are research active and involved in the provision of a programme leading to an award at doctoral degree, 237 or **94.80 per cent** hold a doctoral degree.

**Deloitte Review:** Deloitte were provided with the dataset collated by the Graduate Research School. We reviewed the TU4Dublin calculations and identified the total population to be 256 full-time academic staff are either involved in the provision of a programme leading to a doctoral degree level, or are research active, a discrepancy of two staff. The discrepancy relates to two staff who were duplicated on the Graduate Research School database. Our review identified that of the 256, 243 or **94.92 per cent** full-time academic staff hold a doctoral degree and are research active. The discrepancy does not impact the achievement of the eligibility criteria.

From the 256 academic staff, we selected a random sample of 20 staff for testing:

- We were able to ascertain that they are full-time academic staff members, from a review of their employment contracts;
- We were able to ascertain that the qualification per the database matched the transcript/parchment held on their staff file;
- We identified that they are involved in the delivery of a programme leading to a doctoral degree from review of the student registration form which records the name of the research supervisor;
- We were able to identify that they are research active by searching research publication websites (Arrow.DIT.ie, Scopus and Google Scholar) and locating their publications.

The process applied by TU4Dublin did not check for the duplication of staff on the database. Apart from this, no other issue came to our attention to indicate that the process applied by TU4Dublin was inappropriate.



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices



## Overview – Staff Profile Criteria

### 3.1.4 Supervision of students registered on programmes leading to an award to doctoral degree:

Eligibility Criteria (legislative criteria)

S. 28 (1) (f) *each of the full-time academic staff of the applicant institutes engaged in the supervision of students registered on a programme that leads to an award to doctoral degree level—*

(i) *holds—*

(I) *a doctoral degree, or*

(II) *a terminal degree, as well as sufficient practical experience gained in the practice of a profession to which the programme relates, such that the degree and experience together can reasonably be viewed by the advisory panel as equivalent to a doctoral degree,*

The TU4Dublin used the database referenced in 3.1.3 to identify those full-time academic staff who are engaged in the supervision of students registered on a programme that leads to an award to doctoral degree level. TU4Dublin identified 237 full-time academic staff supervising students registered on a programme leading to a doctoral degree. Of the 237, they identified 228 or **96.20%** of those staff holding a doctoral degree and **4%** hold a terminal degree, as well as sufficient practical experience gained in the practice of a profession to which the programme relates. The HEA guidance has indicated that "*applicant institutes are invited to their consideration of terminal degree and practical experience on an individual / CV-based approach.*"

**Deloitte Review:** In order to evaluate the process used by TU4Dublin in their Application, Deloitte carried out the following testing:

Taking the database referenced in 3.1.3 and using filters, we identified 237 full-time academic staff are engaged in the supervision of students registered on a programme that leads to an award to doctoral degree level. Of the 237, 226 or **95.78 per cent** were identified per the database as holding a doctoral degree. We were informed that the remaining 11 supervisors or **4.64 per cent** are "*of long standing and expertise in DIT and are all secondary supervisors*". We are not be in a position to evaluate that the 11 supervisors meet the criteria and suggest that this is evaluated by the panel.

From the 226 supervisors holding a doctoral degree, Deloitte selected a random sample of 10 to determine that they are supervising students registered on a programme leading to a doctoral degree and that they hold a doctoral degree. From the sample selected we identified that each of the supervisors have:

- at least one research student who is registered on a programme leading to a doctoral degree from reference to the research student's application for Registration of a Research Degree Programme and an extract of the Banner System (student records system); and
- a doctoral degree.



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices



## Overview – Staff Profile Criteria

### 3.1.5 Supervisors have a record of continued conduct of research:

Eligibility Criteria (legislative criteria)

*S. 28 (1) (f) each of the full-time academic staff of the applicant institutes engaged in the supervision of students registered on a programme that leads to an award to doctoral degree level—*

*(ii) has a record of continued conduct of research in an area relevant to the programme;*

The database collated by the Graduate Research School also holds the information on supervisors that record if they have a record of continued conduct of research in an area relevant to the programme. TU4Dublin defined 'research active' as having a live research project or supervising a research student. From this database, the TU4Dublin have identified that 237 or **100 per cent** of their supervisors have a record of continued conduct of research.

**Deloitte Review:** Deloitte carried out the following to evaluate the process applied:

Deloitte selected a random sample of 10 supervisors and identified in section 3.1.4 that they were all supervising students who were registered on a programme leading to a doctoral degree. We also identified that nine of the 10 supervisors are published.

No issue came to our attention to indicate that the process applied by TU4Dublin was inappropriate.



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices



# 3. Specific Findings – Research Activity Criteria



# 4. Research Activity Criteria

An overview of the process to collate research activity criteria information applied by TU4Dublin together with details of the independent outcome of the review is outlined below.



## Overview – Research Activity Criteria

### 4.1. Overview:

The TU4Dublin in their application to meet the research criteria as outlined in the Technological Universities Act 2018, categorised fields of education in line with the latest version (F2013) of the International Standard Classification of Education Descriptors (ISCED).

The TU4Dublin explained that the data used to identify the ISCED involved a number of steps.

The Graduate Research School database records the research supervisors and their ISCED.

TU4Dublin indicated that they identified the research supervisors (primary, secondary and tertiary, where applicable) in each applicant institute from the research student spreadsheet which was taken from the SRS return. This was done individually in each applicant institute by the research offices and it was submitted to the TU4Dublin office. The data was then collated centrally by the Head of Research, DIT on behalf of TU4Dublin, this database is called the Graduate Research School Database. The Graduate Research School Database is maintained detailing the following:

- Supervisor names and staff numbers;
- Supervisors ISCED (Deloitte were informed that every PhD student is assigned to a particular ISCED, based on their application to the research department in their institute. The supervisor was assigned an ISCED based on the ISCED assigned to the student’s research programme);
- PhD students - the question asked was whether the supervisor was supervising a student or not;
- Award data any external funding received by the supervisor for work on research projects between 2013 to 2017, for example, funding from Enterprise Ireland. The funding is recorded in the research excel spreadsheet as to the amount of times the supervisor received funding;
- Publications – the number of publications made by the supervisor between 2012 to 2016. The TU4Dublin deemed publications to be relevant from 2012 to 2016 to deem someone research active as PhD research is ongoing and it can last for up to five years; and
- Commercialisation Output – these figures were taken from the Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) survey and the Dublin Research Innovation Cluster (DRIC) Consortium and the information noted include:
  - Number of assignments (i.e. a registered idea);
  - Number of patents;
  - Number of options;
  - Number of licences; and
  - Number of spin-outs.

Note: KTI (Knowledge Transfer Ireland) is the means through which companies, entrepreneurs and other organisations access and share resources such as skills, knowledge, intellectual property and technologies with universities, institutes of technology and other publicly funded research institutes. It takes place through various means such as licensing and the spin out of companies.

DRIC (Dublin Research Innovation Cluster) Consortium promotes the latest technologies and research capabilities being developed in various HEI’s, including Dublin Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Tallaght and Institute of Technology Blanchardstown to further industry-academic research and development collaboration and technology transfer.

Executive summary

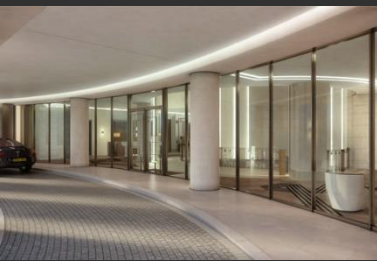
Specific findings – Student profile criteria

Specific findings – Staff profile criteria

Specific findings – Research activity criteria

Appendices





## Overview – Research Activity Criteria

### 4.1.1. Fields of Education leading to awards to doctoral degree:

Eligibility Criteria (legislative criteria)

*S. 28 (1) (g) in respect of not less than 3 fields of education—*

*(i) the applicant institutes provide programmes that lead to awards to doctoral degree level, and*

TU4Dublin identified in their submission that programmes leading to an award at doctoral degree level are provided in six fields of education.

Upon initial registration for their doctoral degree programme, each student is categorised into the relevant ISCED, based on their research programme. The students’ supervisors, and their supervisors’ activities are mapped against this ISCED. Each ISCED that had a programme leading to an award at doctoral degree level categorised within it was included in the submission made by TU4Dublin. The table below identified the ISCEDs of the supervisors.

ISCED
Arts and Humanities
Social Sciences, Journalism and Information
Business, Administration and Law
Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics
Information and Communication Technologies
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction

### Deloitte Review:

Deloitte carried out testing of both the research staff and students and their respective fields of education in order to evaluate the process used by TU4Dublin in their submission.

- We selected a sample of 10 supervisors and requested details of their assigned students. From this list, we selected 20 research students from across each of the 6 ISCED’s and covering each of the three applicant institutes to determine that each research student was registered and there was a record that their fees had been paid in the Banner system:
  - All students in our sample were registered on the Banner System for the referenced ISCED and this was checked against the student registration form for doctoral degree;
  - The research student’s application form had recorded the supervisor;
  - Four students in the sample had received additional funding – three students from DIT and one student from the Science Foundation Ireland. This funding is not evidenced in Banner. The only record of this funding provided to Deloitte was in the Graduate Research School Registration Form for each of these students;
  - Two students were in receipt of funding from ITT through Institute staff development. Deloitte observed no entries on Banner to reflect this funding;
  - One student in PG Write-up stage of the research programme has made no payments to date. Deloitte were advised that all payments must be made before graduation.

Executive summary

Specific findings – Student profile criteria

Specific findings – Staff profile criteria

Specific findings – Research activity criteria

Appendices







## Overview – Research Activity Criteria

### 4.1.2 Academic staff and students conduct of research:

Eligibility Criteria (legislative criteria)

*S. 28 (1) (g) in respect of not less than 3 fields of education—*

*(ii) the academic staff and students of the applicant institutes conduct research;*

The process undertaken by TU4Dublin in order to deem fields of education research active was based on an ISCED score. TU4Dublin outlined three criteria that need to be considered when identifying staff as active in research. They must be supervising a research student, have recent publications (2012 - 2016) or have a live research project.

The ISCED score was determined against four indicators:

- the number of supervisors in the particular ISCED;
- the number of supervisors who had published in that ISCED area;
- the number of people who had competitively obtained funding and mapped against the ISCED; and
- the number of commercialisation outputs mapped against the ISCED.

The total value of each indicator per ISCED was summed into a grand total and ISCED's were ranked on the total value of each ISCED. Therefore, the total of each score represents a measure of research activity within that ISCED. In order for an ISCED to be included in the submission, it must satisfy both S. 28 (1) (g) (i) and (ii). TU4Dublin identified the following ISCED "scores":

ISCED	SCORE
Arts and Humanities	706
Social Sciences, Journalism and Information	514
Business, Administration and Law	278
Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics	228
Information and Communication Technologies	166
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	54

#### Deloitte Review:

Only one activity under each ISCED is required to meet this criteria and the sample selected for review in 4.1.1 indicates that staff and students are active under each of the ISCEDs identified in the TU4Dublin Application.

Executive summary

Specific findings – Student profile criteria

Specific findings – Staff profile criteria

Specific findings – Research activity criteria

Appendices



# Appendices



WE HEREBY TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS REPORT WHICH IS PREPARED ON THE BASIS OF THE LIMITATIONS SET OUT BELOW.



Deloitte Ireland LLP  
Deloitte & Touche House  
Charlotte Quay  
Limerick

Date: 6 June 2018

### Contact persons:

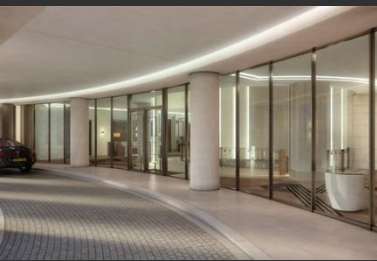
Eileen Healy, Partner

Mary Rose Cremin, Director

This engagement was not an attest engagement, and was conducted on a sample testing basis as agreed with the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Deloitte used the SRS return to perform our sample selection, however, we do note that the SRS return had not been at the time of our work audited by the HEA. The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all weaknesses that exist, or of all improvements that might be made. Should further work have been performed over the course of this engagement, other issues may have come to our attention. The summary of our findings should be evaluated by the HEA for their full implications.

We have relied on information provided by the applicant institutes (TU4Dublin Consortium), we do not accept responsibility for such information and have not performed any substantiation or external confirmation procedures to establish its accuracy.

This report has been commissioned by the HEA and the HEA is our client. We have provided consent to the HEA for the report to be published, however, we do not accept responsibility to any third party as the report has not been prepared, and is not intended to be relied on by any third parties.



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices



## Extracts from section 28 of the Act

## Eligibility criteria

- 28.** (1) The applicant institutes concerned shall, in relation to an application for an order under *section 36*, jointly comply with the following criteria (in this chapter referred to as “eligibility criteria”):
- (a) of the students of the applicant institutes registered on a programme that leads to an award to at least honours bachelor degree level—
    - (i) at least 4 per cent are research students registered on a programme which leads to an award to at least masters degree level, and
    - (ii) at least 30 per cent fall within one or more than one of the following classes of students:
      - (I) students who are registered on a programme that is provided on a flexible basis, such as by means of part-time, online or distance learning;
      - (II) students who are registered on a programme that has been designed, and is being delivered, with the involvement (which shall be construed in accordance with *subsection (2)(b)*), of business, enterprise, the professions, the community, local interests and other related stakeholders in the region in which the campuses of the applicant institutes are located;
      - (III) students who are not less than 23 years of age;
  - (c) of the full-time academic staff of the applicant institutes engaged in the provision of a programme that leads to an award to at least honours bachelor degree level—
    - (i) at least 90 per cent hold a masters degree or doctoral degree,
    - (ii) at least 45 per cent hold—
      - (I) a doctoral degree, or
      - (II) subject to subparagraph (iii), a terminal degree, as well as sufficient practical experience gained in the practice of a profession to which the programme relates, such that the degree and experience together can reasonably be viewed by the advisory panel as equivalent to a doctoral degree,
    - and
    - (iii) not more than 10 per cent hold only the qualifications referred to in subparagraph (ii)(II);
  - (e) of the full-time academic staff of the applicant institutes engaged in both of the following, at least 80 per cent hold a doctoral degree
    - (i) the provision of a programme that leads to an award at doctoral degree level, and
    - (ii) the conduct of research;



Executive summary

Specific findings –  
Student profile criteriaSpecific findings –  
Staff profile criteriaSpecific findings –  
Research activity criteria

Appendices

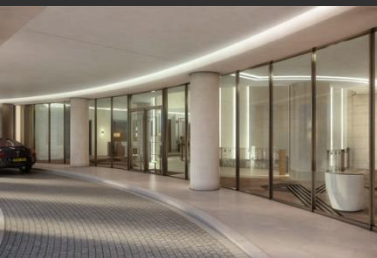


## Extracts from section 28 of the Act

### Eligibility criteria

#### 28. (1) .../Continued

- (f) each of the full-time academic staff of the applicant institutes engaged in the supervision of students registered on a programme that leads to an award to doctoral degree level—
  - (i) holds—
    - (I) a doctoral degree, or
    - (II) a terminal degree, as well as sufficient practical experience gained in the practice of a profession to which the programme relates, such that the degree and experience together can reasonably be viewed by the advisory panel as equivalent to a doctoral degree,
 and
  - (ii) has a record of continued conduct of research in an area relevant to the programme;
- (g) in respect of not less than 3 fields of education—
  - (i) the applicant institutes provide programmes that lead to awards to doctoral degree level, and
  - (ii) the academic staff and students of the applicant institutes conduct research;



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



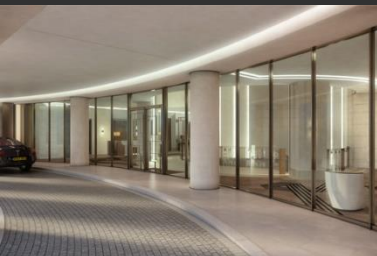
Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices



## Schedule of meetings



Name & Title	Date of meeting*
Dr. Mary Meaney – Team Lead, TU4Dublin	10 May 2018
Dr. John Donovan – Head of Research, Dublin Institute of Technology	10 May 2018
Dr. David Irwin – Programme Manager, TU4Dublin	10 May 2018
Ms. Aideen Gurrin – HR Development Manager, TU4Dublin	10 May 2018
Ms. Ayesha O’Reilly – Data Reporting Officer, DIT	10 May 2018
Mr. Mark Russell - Institutional Research Analyst, Dublin Institute of Technology	11 May 2018
Ms. Jennifer Farrell – Project Facilitator, TU4Dubin Project Team	11 May 2018
Dr. Philip Owende – Academic Quality Manager, TU4Dublin Team	11 May 2018



Executive summary



Specific findings –  
Student profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Staff profile criteria



Specific findings –  
Research activity criteria



Appendices



\* This date represents the date of first meeting. Subsequent meetings were held and/or follow up communications performed as required.



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