QUALITY MANUAL

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
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9. APPROVALS AND REVISION HISTORY ................................................................... 20
The Office of the President provides management and administrative support to the President in the undertaking of his/her University executive duties. The Office of the President encompasses the President’s Office, Office of the Vice President Academic and Registrar (VPA&R), Corporate Secretary’s Office, Corporate Affairs Division and Quality Support Unit (QSU). The Office of the President also provides management and administrative support to the University’s Governing Authority.

The University of Limerick organisation charts detail the reporting relationships to the President and VPA&R. Figure 1 outlines the direct composition of the Office of the President.

1.1 PURPOSE & SCOPE

The purpose of this quality manual is to outline how the Office of the President meets the criteria for Quality Management as outlined in the Quality Management Systems for Support Departments. The manual gives a brief introduction to the Office of the President and outlines our commitment to quality as documented in our Quality Policy. It then gives an evidence-based overview of the seven key principles of Quality Management for University of Limerick Support Departments.

The scope of our Quality Management System (QMS) is as follows:
- Quality Manual
- Quality Policy
- Customer Charter
- QMS Objectives
- Key Business Processes
- QMS Processes
- Quality Improvement Plan.

1.2 BRIEF OUTLINE OF OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Details of the main areas of responsibilities of the Office of the President are contained on the Office of the President website.

1. Governing Authority

The University of Limerick operates under the aegis of the Universities Act, 1997. Overall authority for the affairs of the University is vested by the State in the Governing Authority of the University of Limerick. The Governing Authority, a 35-member body, is appointed in accordance with the Universities Act 1997.

The Governing Authority meets on average, once per month excluding July and August. For planning and operation of the Governing Authority refer to the Corporate Secretary’s Office Key Business Process.
Figure 1: Office of the President QMS Organisational Chart

President

Vice President
Academic & Registrar

Director of Quality
Administrative Staff (2.5)

Associate Vice President Academic
Programme Manager (Strategic Projects)

Associate Registrar
Institutional Research Officer

Manager President’s Office
Administrative Staff (7.5)

Director of Corporate Affairs
Administrative Staff (1)

Corporate Secretary
Administrative Staff (5)

Quality Support Unit
President’s Office
Corporate Secretary’s Office
The functions carried out by the Governing Authority include:

- Approval of the University's Strategic Plan;
- Approval of all policy matters relating to the University of Limerick;
- The control and administration of land and other properties of the University;
- Approval and establishment of statutes and regulations in compliance with the Universities Act,1997;
- Appointment of Chief Officer and employees of the University;
- Approval of the University budget on an annual basis;
- Approval of the numbers, composition, selection, appointment and terms of office of members of the Academic Council;
- Approval of the composition of the incoming Governing Authority.

2. President’s Office

President
The President is the Chief Officer of the University, reporting to the Governing Authority. The President is responsible for the management and direction of the University in its academic, administrative, financial, personnel and other activities. The President is Chair of the most senior committees in the University including Executive Committee, Academic Council and Management Council. The President reports to the Governing Authority for the efficient and effective management of the university. Direct reports to the President include: the Faculty Executive Deans (Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Faculty of Business; Faculty of Education and Health Science and Faculty of Science & Engineering); Vice President Academic & Registrar; Vice President Research, Director of Finance and Director of Human Resources (see University of Limerick Administrative Organisational Chart).

Vice President Academic and Registrar (VPA&R)
The Vice President Academic and Registrar (VPA&R) is the senior academic officer and Deputy President and reports to the President. He/she has overall responsibility for the academic activities of the University and for the support services that underpin those activities.

The following areas report directly to the VPA&R:

- Student Affairs Division
- Library and Information Services Division
- Information Technology Division
- International Education Division
- Co-operative Education and Careers Division
- Department of Continuing Professional Education (CPE)*
- Irish World Academy of Music and Dance (IWAMD)
- Marketing & Communications Division.*

All support services have quality management systems in line with the University framework. New divisions identified with an * above, will be subject to future reviews.

In addition, the following senior officers within the President’s Office report to the VPA&R:
**Associate Vice President Academic**
The Associate Vice President Academic has overall responsibility for developing strategy, formulating policy and conducting research in relation to delivering innovation in teaching excellence and student participation in learning; development of teaching technology and pedagogy and general enhancement of the student experience. This includes programme and curriculum reform, resources to improve students’ skills in learning, development of new forms of learning and maximising the contribution of the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

**Associate Registrar**
The **Associate Registrar** is responsible for continuous development of academic systems, policy and procedures. This includes oversight of programme development and approval processes, academic regulation, student disciplinary processes, external examining and representation of the University of Limerick externally at relevant bodies such as Irish Universities Association (IUA), Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

**Director of Corporate Affairs**
The Director of Corporate Affairs has functional responsibility for aspects of the management and support of the President’s extensive Communications, Public Relations, External Relations and Special Projects functions. He works with other members of the President’s Office and colleagues across the University and the University’s external networks to assist the President in fulfilling these obligations.

**Institutional Research Officer**
Main responsibilities involve ensuring compliance with statutory reporting requirements (HEA returns), contributing to Compact Agreement and data profiles nationally and contribution of data to the RGAM and RAM budget models. In addition the IR Officer provides student listings for the ISSE National survey, student data for external ranking agencies and Athena Swan related data.

The IR Officer also prepares internal reports relating to student and graduate statistics, responds to requests and possible modifications in specifications for HEA and other bodies, liaises internally to ensure technical requirements can be met and completes internal data gathering and verification. Responsible for annual uploads to HEA and other bodies and for publishing internally on SharePoint.

**3. Corporate Secretary**
Reporting to the President the **Corporate Secretary** has responsibility for a number of areas including governance function, corporate legal affairs, risk management, internal audit, legislative compliance and the management and care of the University’s Visual Arts Collections.

**4. Quality Support Unit (QSU)**
Led by the Director of Quality and reporting to the VPA&R, the **Quality Support Unit** ensures that statutory and regulatory requirements are met by the University. The unit manages the quality review process, supports the development of quality management systems and conducts student surveys and student progression analysis.

### 1.3 OUR COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

The Office of the President is committed to embedding continual improvement in its activities and has developed its QMS as part of the UL quality process which conforms to the principles set out in the **Quality Management Systems for Support Departments**.

This Quality Manual demonstrates the commitment of the Office of the President to maintaining a
high level of quality and strong customer focus, while striving to continually improve the level and quality of service we provide to our customers. Quality is an integral part of our entire business operation.

Changes to any processes outlined in this manual, and to our key business processes, are controlled using the Office of the President Documentation Control Procedure.

### 1.4 QUALITY POLICY

The Office of the President provides leadership that supports the implementation of the University’s mission to be a distinctive, pioneering and connected university that shapes the future through educating and empowering people to meet the real challenges of tomorrow. We are committed to fostering an institution-wide commitment to quality thereby strengthening a quality culture in UL.

By adopting a strategic approach to quality, we aim to continually improve our quality management system and the services provided to our customers and stakeholders.

### 2. CUSTOMER FOCUS

The Office of the President continually seeks to ensure that customer relations are well maintained and nurtured and that customer requirements are determined and met (see 2.2 below). The Office of the President is involved in meeting the needs of a broad base of internal and external customers and aims to provide efficient and effective services to all customers.

Our customers include: all University of Limerick students; Governing Authority; academic and administrative staff; partner higher education institutions, both national and international; industry partners; Government and State Agencies; local, national and international media; graduate employers; the wider Midwest community; prospective students; alumni; parents/families/guardians; philanthropists and supporters.

#### 2.1 CUSTOMER CHARTER

The Office of the President provides leadership to the entire University of Limerick, its’ affiliate and partner organisations. The customer base is spread across a wide range of internal and external customers and the Office of the President seeks to ensure that customer requirements are determined and met by delivering effective and efficient services. Our [Customer Charter](#) is published on the web.

#### 2.2 APPROACH TO CUSTOMER FOCUS

With a focus on continual improvement, customer feedback (requests, queries, complaints, commendations, suggestions and points of information) is monitored on an on-going basis. Each unit within the Office of the President has a generic email account where customers can send queries or requests to be acted upon by that unit. This feedback is monitored and reported at least once a month at unit-level meetings. Customer feedback is used as a key input to continual improvement with the Office of the President. For details refer to the [complaints regarding students procedure](#).

The requirements of our customers are identified via a number of Institutional surveys including, but not limited to: the Student Exit Survey; the HR Wellbeing Survey; Student Evaluation of Teaching
(SET) Survey and the Module Satisfaction Survey (MSS). Each unit within the Office of the President maintains strong communications links with their individual customer bases facilitating both formal and informal consultations with them to seek their feedback and ideas on services offered. Ongoing feedback is sought through the use of individual unit-level email surveys. All key feedback (both positive and negative) is recorded by each unit under the Quality Improvement Action Plan. These are discussed at monthly quality meetings. Overall trends are reported at the annual management review.

2.3 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Each unit handles complaints made to their individual unit. Actions to address the complaint are recorded by the unit and full details of the complaint are entered into the Quality Improvement Action Plan. Details of any such complaints are discussed at the monthly quality meeting and reported to the management team at the annual quality review.

In addition, complaints regarding students to the Office of the President are received by the relevant unit either by telephone, email, in person or via Security Incident Reports. All complaints received are logged on Complaints Log. Contact is made with relevant person(s) with details of complaint for action, e.g. Limerick County Council, UL Advocate or the Gardaí.

Full details of the University’s complaints regarding student procedures are available on the University website.

3. LEADERSHIP

The President, as the Chief Officer of the University of Limerick, has overall responsibility for the executive and financial management of the University and for all of the support services that underpin those activities. Overall management of the University’s affairs is the responsibility of the Executive Committee of the University.

The President is Chair of Executive Committee and each member of the Executive Committee reports directly to him/her. In addition to weekly meetings of Executive Committee the President meets individually, on a regular basis, with each member of Executive Committee. The President is also Chair of Academic Council and Management Council. The President reports to the University’s Governing Authority on behalf of the University.

The Office of the President Quality Management Team consists of:

- President
- Vice President Academic & Registrar
- Corporate Secretary
- Director of Quality

Members of the Quality Team are:

- Office Manager, President’s Office (Team Leader)
- PA to President, President’s Office
- PA to Vice President, Academic & Registrar
- Programme Manager, Academic & Registrar’s Office
- Risk Management Officer, Corporate Secretary’s Office
- Quality Officer, Quality Support Unit
The Quality Team is appointed and reviewed on an ongoing basis by the President.

In maintaining and changing the Quality Management System, the regulatory and statutory requirements, such as University’s Act, Purchasing, Finance and HR policies, are communicated and accommodated within the system.

### 3.1 PLANNING

Planning within the Office of the President is guided by the University’s Strategic Plan, which is updated every four/five years. Planning is done in an appropriate manner for each service provided by the Office of the President. In all cases, the Quality Management Team ensures that the correct resource level and experience are in place to support any of these planning structures.

The University of Limerick Strategic Plan represents the overall business plan for the University, inclusive of the Office of the President. Individual units within the Office of the President have their own Key Business Processes to achieve the requirements of the Strategic Plan.

### 3.2 STRATEGIC PLAN

The objectives of the University of Limerick Strategic Plan are to outline a step by step process with definite objectives and targets that can be implemented and evaluated, usually over a four/five year cycle. Responsibility for the production of the plan rests with the President, supported by VPA&R and Programme Manager. The Strategic Plan encompasses key areas of University planning and action particularly in terms of the University’s core mission in teaching and research as well as its broader engagement with communities and stakeholders, nationally and internationally. The Strategic Plan provides an opportunity to help define the overall mission of the organization and its key objectives; to outline the future goals; and to provide a sense of direction, continuity, and effective staffing and leadership while setting standards of accountability for people, programmes and allocated resources across all areas of university business.

It is a key institutional planning process for planning into the future based on current trends and influencing the forces that will affect strategic changes and institutional priorities in the University over a medium term horizon. An additional aid to implementing the University’s Strategic Plan is an integrated system by which the Strategic Plan becomes the benchmark for progress in our University. It then becomes an overarching system of accountability over its lifetime.

The Strategic Plan is produced through the following process. Firstly, the President leads an initial consultation phase with all members of the campus community whereby key goals and themes are agreed. The Executive Committee then agree on key actions for inclusion under goals and themes. Following this, the VPA&R/Programme Manager prepare an initial draft for review by the Executive Committee and a further consultation with all staff and student representatives on the working draft. This ‘first draft’ Plan is then reviewed and approved by the Governing Authority Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance Committee for further feedback. Following further refinement (including professional proof-reading/editing) a final draft is submitted to the Governing Authority for their approval and sign-off. Once approved, the document is then professionally produced for publication and formally launched with high-level event and media exposure. This entire process is undertaken over a six to nine month period. All drafts (English and Irish) and final print version retained by VPA&R office and posted online.
Overall the responsibility for the implementation of this Strategic Plan rests with the President & the Executive Committee. Progress on implementation is monitored on an on-going basis by the Executive Committee. The President presents biannual update to the Governing Authority Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance Committee and annual update to the University’s Governing Authority. Further communication of the annual review is done through Management Council.

3.3 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES

Quality objectives are set for the Office of the President at the regular Quality Team meetings or arising from the annual Management Team meetings.

The Quality Team meets monthly, or as required, to review progress on rolling out and monitoring the Office of the President Quality Management System. The team leader sets the agenda based on the team’s discussions from the previous meeting. Minutes and actions agreed are recorded by the Quality Team recording secretary and actions are reviewed subsequently at each meeting. Topics discussed include the Quality Manual, Quality Policy, Key Business Processes, Quality Objectives, as well as preparation for any forthcoming quality reviews.

For unit-specific services, planning is done by the Unit Head on an annual basis and based on an annual budget allocation. Unit plans, resources and services are regularly reviewed at unit level throughout the year. These plans will include quality improvement objectives for the coming year.

3.4 QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REVIEW PROCESS

While units within the Office of the President are conscious of the development of the Quality Management System on an ongoing basis, the Management Team reviews the Quality Management System on an annual basis to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. This review includes assessing opportunities for improvement and the need for changes to the Quality Management System, including the quality policy and quality objectives.

The following aspects of the Office of the President Quality Management System are reviewed at this meeting:

- Changes that could affect the Quality Management System (Quality Policy, Quality Manual, Customer Charter);
- Follow up actions from previous review meetings;
- Results and analysis of quality audits;
- Review of customer feedback;
- Process Review;
- Review of Quality Improvement Action Plan/recommendations for improvement;
- Progress on quality objectives;
- Preparation for any forthcoming quality reviews.
4. **ENGAGEMENT OF PEOPLE**

The Office of the President is governed by University policies and procedures for the selection, recruitment, promotion and development of staff. A full list of procedures is available on the Human Resources website.

There is an inclusive approach to quality within the Office of the President. All staff are encouraged to be involved in and to promote quality by reviewing unit key business processes and operating procedures, by continually looking for ways to improve services and by seeking and acting on customer feedback. There are a number of staff from the different units who are trained quality auditors who conduct cross-unit audits. They also participate in the audits of other support divisions within the University.

### 4.1 COMMUNICATION

The Office of the President is committed to ensuring that all staff are given the opportunity to understand and contribute to the activities of the Office of the President. The Communications Process forms an integral part of this commitment. Within the Office of the President a range of meetings occur at regular intervals. These include:

- **President’s Team Briefing:** Following the monthly meeting of Governing Authority the President holds a team briefing meeting with all of his direct reports in accordance with the Team Briefing Guidelines adopted by the University. The briefing informs the campus on recent achievements, new developments, announcements and decisions reached by the Executive Committee and by the Governing Authority. The report cascade downwards through the organisation hierarchy, firstly to the Executive Committee, then to the Divisional heads \ Department heads and from there to individual team groups.

- **President’s Summary Report to Governing Authority:** Each month the President prepares a report for presentation to Governing Authority to update members on recent developments. Following this monthly meeting the President circulates a summary copy of the report presented to all staff of the University. All staff members are encouraged to make relevant contributions to their Dean/Director for inclusion in this report.

- **Management Meetings:** Overall management of the University’s affairs is the responsibility of the Executive Committee of the University. The President is Chair of Executive Committee and each member reports directly to him/her.

- **Quality Team Meetings:** The Quality team meets once a month to oversee the development and implementation of the Office of the President Quality Management System. Each unit is represented at this meeting and feedback is given by team members on their individual units. All documentation relating to the Quality Management System is available on SharePoint Portal (the University’s document management system). The key components of the Quality Management System are published on the web.

- **Quality Management Review Meeting:** Management review the Quality Management System at planned intervals to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. This review includes assessing opportunities for improvement and the need for changes to the Quality Management System, including the quality policy and quality objectives.

- **Unit Team Meetings:** Meetings are held amongst staff within each unit on a regular basis to discuss operational issues, unit specific priorities, requirements and information exchange.
4.2 RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

The main roles and responsibilities for units of the Office of the President are outlined on the individual unit websites. The UL Academic & Administrative Organisational Chart outlines the hierarchical structure. These charts are maintained by the President’s Office.

4.3 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Office of the President adheres to the University’s ‘Performance and Development Review System’, details of which are available on the Human Resource Division’s website: HR - PDR System and under the Training and Development Procedure. The Performance and Development Review System (PDRS) encompasses the identification of training and development needs for individual staff. A training record is maintained for each individual staff member. Staff are encouraged to undertake courses outside of their day-to-day work where appropriate and within available resources. For further information, refer to the Office of the President Training and Development Procedure.

4.4 WORK ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

All units of the Office of the President are located in either Plassey House or the main building (phases 1A and 1B). Facility maintenance is the responsibility of the Buildings Department and requests for action are processed by contacting them directly using a dedicated email account.
5. PROCESS APPROACH

The Office of the President consists of three units with considerable diversity of functions. Clear process mapping ensures consistency of service to our customers. Each unit within the Office of the President has documented their Key Business Processes with supporting operational procedures. Each documented Key Business Processes outlines the services provided by that unit with respect to purpose, responsibility, procedure, documentation, records and process verification. Key Business Processes and Quality Management System processes are published on the Web. Operational procedures are stored on SharePoint. The Quality Management System processes are shared by all units.

The Office of the President continually assesses the effectiveness of its Key Business Processes and the many operational procedures that underpin them. Effectiveness is determined through customer feedback, staff input, analysis of management information and process audits.

5.1 QMS PROCESSES

- **Training & Development**: Ensures that an effective process is in place for the identification and provision of training requirements for each member of staff. The requirements identified for each individual are based on the individual’s competence, qualifications and experience. This process incorporates the University Performance and Development Review System (PDRS).
- **Documentation Control**: Ensures that the correct version of documentation is available at all times. The procedure covers the review and control of all documentation in the Quality Management System.
- **Communications**: Ensures that there is effective, succinct and clear communication throughout the Office of the President, both internally and externally.
- **Internal Audit / Self-Assessment**: Ensures that the Quality Management System is audited on an on-going basis to ensure it is effectively implemented, maintained and improved.
- **Continual Improvement**: Ensures that an effective process is in place to ensure the continuing development and improvement of all aspects of our Quality Management System.

5.2 KEY BUSINESS PROCESSES

The following Key Business Processes are documented and published for the various sections/units of the President’s Office:

- **President’s Office**
  - Strategic Planning;
  - Tendering & Project Management
  - Committee Support;
  - PA support to the President and VPAR;
  - External Examiners;
  - Student Discipline, Garda Vetting, Community Relations;
  - Ceremonies;
• **Corporate Secretary**
  - University Governance;
  - Legislative Compliance;
  - Management of the University’s corporate legal affairs;
  - Responsibility for University Internal Control Processes;
  - Management of the University’s Visual Artworks.

• **Quality Support Unit**
  - Institutional contact point for Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI);
  - Co-ordinating Institutional Quality Reviews;
  - Managing the quality reviews of academic departments;
  - Managing the quality reviews of support departments;
  - Supporting the development of quality management systems;
  - Conducting surveys;
  - Management reporting service.

### 5.3 A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT

The following outlines our systematic approach to management. Figure 2 explains the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle. Figure 3 outlines the main processes/activities integral to our Quality Management System and how they interact. Figure 4 outlines the various documented elements of the Quality Management System and how they relate to the different units within the Office of the President.

Planning for services is undertaken at management group meetings, which have a strategic focus. Planning for the ongoing development of the Quality Management System is done through the fortnightly quality meetings.

The Plan – Do – Check – Act (PDCA) cycle ensures the development, continuous improvement and control of the quality management system.

- **Plan** relates to the management responsibility to develop the strategy, process criteria, customer focus and resources to deliver the Quality Management System;
- **Do** relates to the implementation and use of the Quality Management System by all sections/units;
- **Check** reviews the results of customer feedback, audits, process reviews;
- **Act** relates to the continual improvement of the Quality Management System through the ongoing monitoring and review of our Quality Improvement Action Plan.
Figure 2: Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle

- Business planning to develop strategy
- Implementation and use of QMS by all
- Monitoring and review of QMS for continual improvement
- Audits, assessments and metrics
Figure 3: Systematic Approach to Management

**PLAN**
- Quality Policy
- Customer Charter
- Quality Manual
- Quality Objectives

**DO**
- QMS Processes
  - Communications
  - Documentation Control
  - Internal Audit / Self-Assessment
  - Training & Development
  - Continual Improvement

**CHECK**
- Key Business Areas
  - President's Office
  - Corporate Secretary
  - Quality Support Unit

**ACT**
- Outputs
  - Customer Satisfaction
  - Quality & Service Performance
  - Process improvements
  - Student Experience
  - Student Engagement
  - Performance Funding

**INPUTS**
- Customer Requirements
- Audits & Assessments
- Strategic Plan
- Statutory & Regulatory Requirements
- Mission-Based Performance Compacts (HEA)
- Civic Engagement

**OUTPUTS**
- Customer Satisfaction
- Quality & Service Performance
- Process improvements
- Student Experience
- Student Engagement
- Performance Funding

Office of the President Quality Manual
Figure 4: Overview of President’s Office QMS Documentation

Office of the President Quality Management System Overview

- Quality Manual
- Quality Policy / Customer Charter / Quality Objectives
- QMS Processes (requirements of relevant frameworks)
  - Training & Development Process
  - Documentation Control Process
  - Communications Process
  - Internal Audit / Self-assessment Process
  - Continual Improvement Process

Key Business Processes (KBP)

- President’s Office
- Corporate Secretary’s Office
- Quality Support Unit

Section level operational procedures (working guidelines)

- President’s
  - Corporate
  - Quality Support

Quality Improvement Action Plan

Division level documents
Unit level documents

All Division level documents published on Web
All KBPs published on Web

One high-level process required for each area within the President’s Office outlining the key services provided

Held by individual units on SharePoint (linked to Key Business Processes)
6. CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

The Office of the President recognises that the process of achieving ‘Quality’ is a continual process and regularly seeks opportunities to make improvements in services provided (refer to Continual Improvement Process). All staff within the Office of the President are responsible for effective continual improvement to our services. Each unit is responsible for informing their customer base of any enhancements or changes to their service or of any deadlines to meet etc. General Service announcements are circulated by email/letter to all internal and external customers as required by each unit. If process improvements or business developments are identified these are fed into the Quality Improvement Action Plan. Corrective actions or preventative actions are the responsibility of each unit within the Office. Each unit meets regularly where customer feedback and issues are discussed and plans are put in place to perform correction actions to ensure the issue is resolved in a timely manner. An overview of any such actions is discussed by the Quality Team at the monthly team meeting.

The Internal Audit/Self-Assessment process ensures continual implementation, maintenance and improvement of our quality management system and the services provided to our customers. There is an annual audit schedule which is published and a team of trained Quality Management System auditors who conduct regular audits of all aspects of the Quality Management System Follow-up actions from internal audits are tracked by the Quality Team and the overall audit findings are discussed at the annual management review of the Quality Management System.

6.1 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES

The Quality Improvement objectives are aimed at developing and improving the Office of the President’s Quality Management System. Quality objectives are identified by the Quality Team and are published on SharePoint. Progress is monitored at quality meetings. The Management Team review the objectives at the annual Quality Management System review meeting.

6.2 CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Our continual improvement framework incorporates both co-ordinated, central Office-level processes that span all three units and local-level initiatives tailored by the units to best suit their local needs. The Office’s approach to continual improvement is based on four principles:

1. **Personal Responsibility**: Fostering among staff a culture that promotes personal responsibility for quality improvement. Staff engagement is promoted through overt support and commitment from senior management; clear communication channels with staff; closing the feedback loop and highlighting the tangible benefits that arise from implementing the quality improvement plan (QIP).

2. **Capturing Enhancement Proposals**: Enhancement proposals are captured through various means, including staff suggestions for improvement, customer feedback and focus groups, QMS audit findings and capturing feedback from quality review activities. All enhancement proposals are recorded in the QIP.

3. **Implementing Enhancements**: Regular review and monitoring of QIP is undertaken by the quality team. Unit-specific actions are reviewed at unit level. Each activity has an assigned owner and timeline. Completed actions are reviewed by the quality team and moved to a separate section of the QIP.

4. **Disseminating Good Practice**: Trend data is analysed annually at the management review meeting.
Positive feedback is also captured. Expertise is shared across units through our QMS audit process which ensures that QMS auditors do not audit their own procedures. Office staff members also act as auditors for other UL support units. This allows for a cross-fertilisation of ideas and the dissemination of best practice.

Figure 6.1: Continual improvement framework
7. EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

Evidence-based decision-making is integral to the management and operation of the Office of the President. All committee information is accessible to relevant staff as required. SharePoint is utilised for the management of committee documentation, minutes and agreed action items with access managed by support staff in the Office of the President.

7.1 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is used by the Office of the President to record and monitor all quality-related improvement suggestions. The Action Plan contains details of all quality-related improvement suggestions. The following are used to identify the different sources of improvement suggestions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COM</td>
<td>Complaint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COR</td>
<td>Corrective Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>Gap Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>Process Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>Positive Customer Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QA</td>
<td>QMS Audit (Inter-Dept.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QR</td>
<td>Quality Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Self-Audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Staff Suggestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUR</td>
<td>Survey Feedback</td>
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The Action Plan is updated by the Quality Team to document newly identified activities and to update progress on all activities recorded. The QIP is divided into 4 sections: ‘QI Actions’, ‘Completed Actions’, ‘On-Hold’ and ‘Not Pursued’. The plan is reviewed monthly by the Quality Team. Trend data is presented to the management team at the annual review of the Quality Management System. Refer to the Continual Improvement Process for further details.

7.2 LEVELS OF DECISION-MAKING

The Office of the President recognises that some decisions are more strategic in nature than those related to day-to-day office operational matters, both in terms of their immediate impact and/or long-term significance. As a means of understanding the significance of a particular decision, the Office has identified two distinct levels of decision-making as follows:

- **strategic**, at a University-wide level
- **operational**, which ultimately supports the functioning of the Office of President and the strategic decision-making process undertaken by the University’s leadership on a day-to-day basis.

The Office of the President uses a Balanced Scorecard as a performance measurement and continual improvement tool. The scorecard has four key principles: Stewardship, Customer/Stakeholder, Internal Processes and Learning & Growth. Each principle has a number of associated objectives. Each objective has a defined metric.
Office of the President Balanced Scorecard

**MISSION:** The Office of the President provides leadership that supports the implementation of the University’s mission to be a distinctive, pioneering and connected University that shapes the future through educating and empowering people to meet the real challenges of tomorrow. We are committed to fostering an institution-wide commitment to quality thereby strengthening a quality culture in UL.

**VISION:** By adopting a strategic approach to quality, we aim to continually improve our quality management system and the services provided to our customers and stakeholders.

**VALUES:** A performance-driven, quality-improvement ethos underpinned by strong academic and organisational governance and demanding standards of performance.
Key high-level (strategic) decisions as agreed by the University’s Governing Authority, Executive Committee and other Divisions/Academic units are now formally communicated to staff on a monthly basis. A formal monthly communication from the President is structured as follows: 1) Governing Authority matters; 2) Executive Committee matters and 3) Other News and this is disseminated using a cascading information flow from senior management meetings/committees down to all staff in order to inform all operational units on an ongoing basis.

In terms of high-level performance indicators, the Office of the President high-level indicators are measured and monitored through the University Strategic Plan’s Implementation, Monitoring and Review Cycle as follows:

**Implementation** - Overall responsibility for the implementation of this Strategic Plan rests with the Executive Committee of the University, comprising the President (Chair), the Vice President Academic & Registrar, the Vice President Research, the four Faculty Deans, Director of Finance and Director of Human Resources. In addition to the implementation of the devolved planning process described above, task-specific sub-groups of Management Council are also charged with devising implementation plans to realise particular strategic goals under the direction of the President and VPA&R.

**Monitoring** - The Strategic Plan contains a broad range of actions and targets, requiring a broad range of monitoring methods. Quantitative actions with target dates for completion require monitoring based on the assessment of progress towards completion of the action by the target date. Non-measurable qualitative actions require a different form of monitoring that is based on an evaluation of the University’s commitment to the achievement of the particular objective. Where relevant, baseline year benchmarks are used, against which progress towards achieving targets is evaluated.

**Review** - Progress on the Strategic Plan implementation is monitored on an on-going basis by Executive Committee. The President presents a bi-annual update to the Governing Authority Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance Committee and an annual update to the Governing Authority. This review cycle will examine the current list of aims, outputs and outcomes in terms of their relevance and their achievability in the context pertaining at that time.
8. RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

8.1 SUPPLIERS

Any supplier used by the Office of the President is bound by the policies, procedures and guidelines of the UL Procurement Office. This ensures the University complies with national guidelines whilst achieving maximum value for money. A full list of both contracted and approved suppliers, by commodity, is available on the Procurement Office website. For goods or services for which there is no specific contracted or approved supplier, the supplier for that good or service may be listed on the University’s supplier list (i.e. may already have a supplier ID) for account payment purposes. If not, the requestor may organise for the supplier to be added by the Procurement Office by following the University’s supplier set-up procedure guidelines.

8.2 PARTNERS

The University’s Strategic Plan demonstrates the University’s commitment to the development of both local and global partnerships. Collaboration is recognised as a fundamental aspect of working within the University across disciplines, departments and faculty’s as well as collaboration externally - both nationally and internationally. Key collaborations with other Irish universities have also been advanced through membership of the Irish Universities Association, research alliances through exchequer-funded (HEA, Science Foundation Ireland, Enterprise Ireland) initiatives and international funding programmes such as Horizon 2020. With more than 400 partner institutions in 38 countries, the University of Limerick is Ireland’s leading Erasmus University. The University of Limerick will continue to promote collaboration between our researchers and the global research community by aligning new international networks to our existing, emerging and niche areas of strength and also through the expansion of our international networks of external examiners, adjuncts, research co-supervisors and industry partners.

Through our work with the Shannon Consortium and the Mid-West Regional Cluster, the University is committed to achieving shared national objectives for the development of higher education across the mid-west in line with government policy. We also work closely with the University of Limerick Hospitals Group through the development of the Clinical Education and Research Centre on the campus of University Hospital Limerick.

As designated awarding body, the University is responsible for the identification of arrangements for the quality assurance of linked providers (e.g. Mary Immaculate College, St. Patrick College, Thurles and the Garda Training College, Templemore) as per statutory requirements. The University has formal relationships with all of its linked providers. The University accredits the degree programmes of the linked colleges and their graduates hold their awards from the University of Limerick. The institutions are, however, independent and have their own governing structures and budgets. The relationships between the University of Limerick and the linked colleges are regulated by separate Memoranda of Understanding).
8.3 COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The University of Limerick’s commitment to working with its local community includes working with industry to promote job creation and economic development, improving the level of interaction between its students and community groups, developing a culture of lifelong learning in our communities, and extending the presence of the University in Limerick City.

Under the new Strategic Plan, Broadening Horizons, particular emphasis will be placed on (i) supporting Limerick’s development plan as articulated in Limerick 2030; (ii) championing civic engagement by embedding it across our curricula and developing an institution-wide civic engagement strategy; (iii) reaffirming our commitment to Co-operative Education and graduate employability in response to industry needs; and (iv) widening the diversity of the student population by ensuring that our offerings are equally accessible to all.

8.4 COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The Office of the President uses a wide variety of methods to communicate with stakeholders.

1. Email issued through PO Notices. This is an email listing of all University Faculty & Staff and is used solely by President’s Office to notify the campus community on a wide variety of issues;
2. University of Limerick website and Share Portal;
3. Monthly Team Briefing meetings;
4. Circulation of President’s Report to Governing Authority;
5. Summary President’s Report to Campus;
6. Strategic Plan consultation sessions;
7. UL Links magazine is produced twice a year by UL’s Marketing & Communications Office. It is distributed to UL’s external stakeholders and internally to the UL Campus Community. Other UL promotional brochures and miscellaneous publications are also distributed both externally and internally.

Feedback is gathered, both formally and informally, through customer/stakeholder surveys and by other means (e.g. comment boxes, focus groups, informal consultation etc.) as appropriate for individual units within the Office of the President. Feedback is used to improve services provided to, and engagement with the units within the Office of the President.

9. APPROVALS AND REVISION HISTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Approved by</th>
<th>Details of Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nov ‘15</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Initial Release</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>May ‘16</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Inclusion of balanced scorecard, updated organisational chart and minor changes following QMS audit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>June ‘16</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Amended Director of Corporate Affairs responsibilities and duties.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Sept ‘16</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Updated balanced scorecard and organisational chart. Included details of new layout of QIP. Included the CI Framework. Re-ordered key business processes of the President’s Office.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Sept ‘16</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Updated revised organizational chart.</td>
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