

INQAAHE, Tokyo 2025

ようこそ (yōkoso)

Céad míle fáilte

Welcome



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

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Exploring GenAI – The next frontier in external quality



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Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

Independent state agency

External quality assurance, review and monitoring of public and private providers in the tertiary education system

Validation of programmes for private and independent providers

Awarding body – levels 1-9 on NFQ

Maintaining the National Framework of Qualifications

Awarding the International Education Mark - TrustE

QQI functions



**QUALITY
ASSURANCE**



**PROGRAMME
VALIDATION**



CERTIFICATION



**MONITORING &
REVIEW**



**RESEARCH ,
INNOVATION,
ENGAGEMENT**



**TRUSTED
IRELAND**



**NATIONAL
FRAMEWORK OF
QUALIFICATIONS
(NFQ)**



**IRISH REGISTER OF
QUALIFICATIONS
(IRQ)**



**NATIONAL ACADEMIC
RECOGNITION
INFORMATION CENTRE
(NARIC)**



QUALIFAX



**EUROPASS
OFFICE**



**NATIONAL ACADEMIC
INTEGRITY NETWORK
(NAIN)**

- ✓ Provider QA approval
- ✓ Provider internal monitoring
- ✓ Statistical monitoring- infographics
- ✓ Causes for concern, complaints
- ✓ Programme review and revalidation (private HEIs)
- ✓ Annual quality reports
- ✓ Institutional review
- ✓ Focused review

Thematic
Analysis



MONITORING & REVIEW



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What do we mean by thematic analysis?

Thematic Analysis - Standard 3.4

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015)

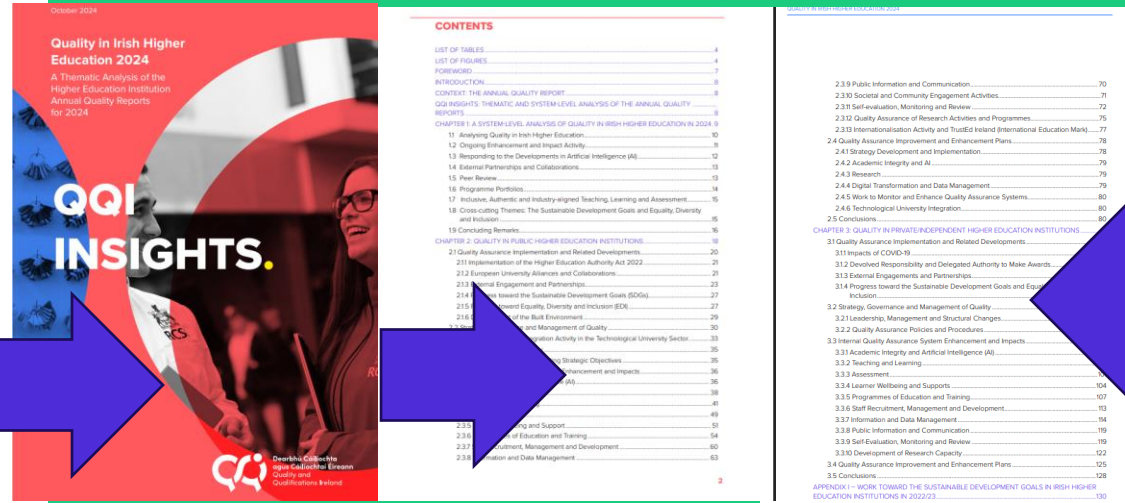
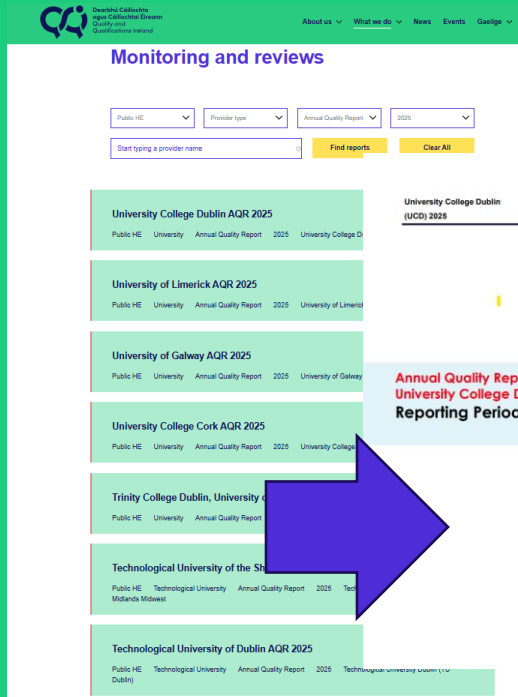
Analysis of the outputs (reports) of EQA processes, such as external quality review reports

Every year we analyse the annual quality reports submitted by the higher education institutions, for trends in the HE landscape, new activities and developments etc.

We publish a report every year on quality across the system –

‘Quality in Irish Higher Education’

Thematic Analysis of Annual Quality Reports



[quality-in-irish-higher-education-2024.pdf](#)

- 19 AQRs (60/90 pages each)
- Conducted annually
- Resource intensive (*Both inhouse and externally contracted*)
- Need for efficiencies
- Digital enhancements
- Exploring GenAI

Non-Technical Team!

What tools?

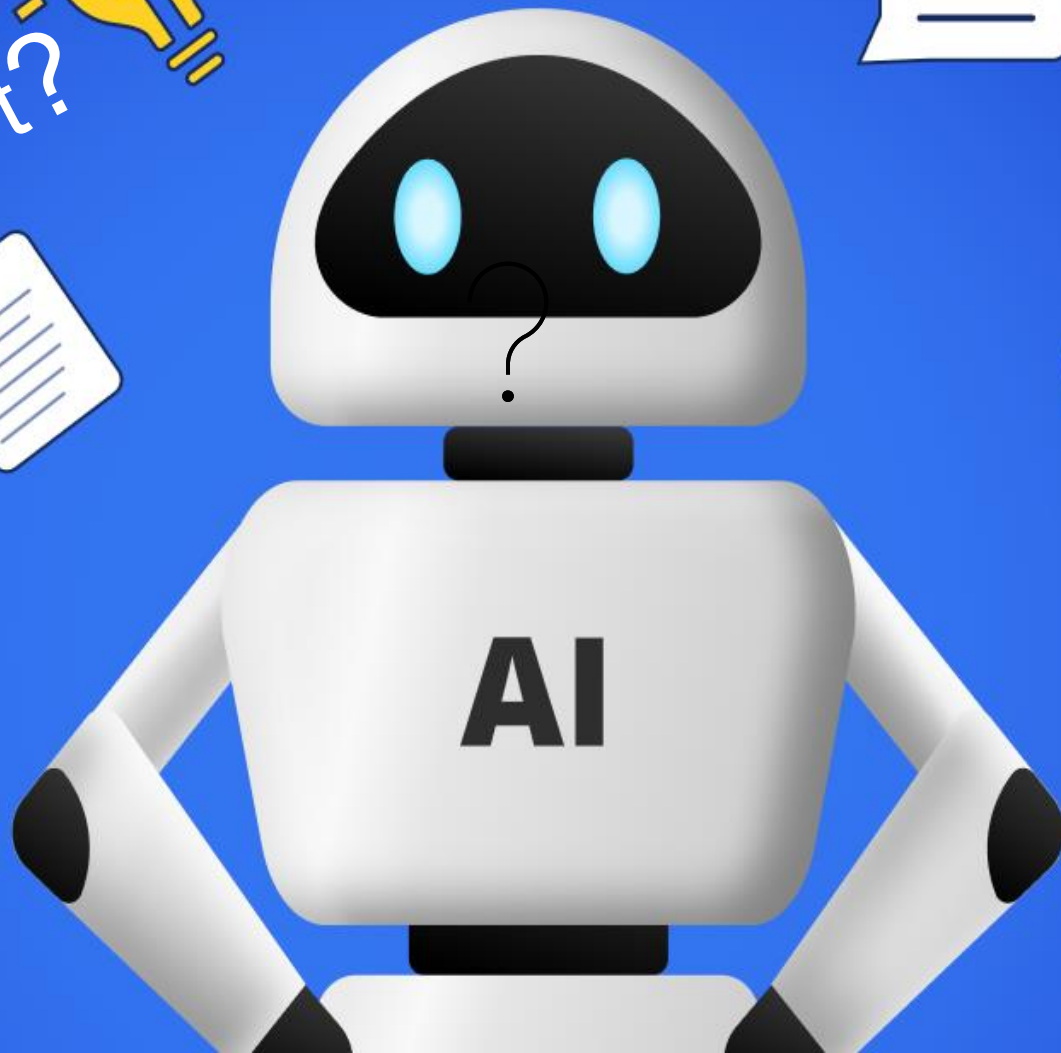
Existing Practice?

Case studies?

Guidelines?

Could GenAI help?

Where do we start?





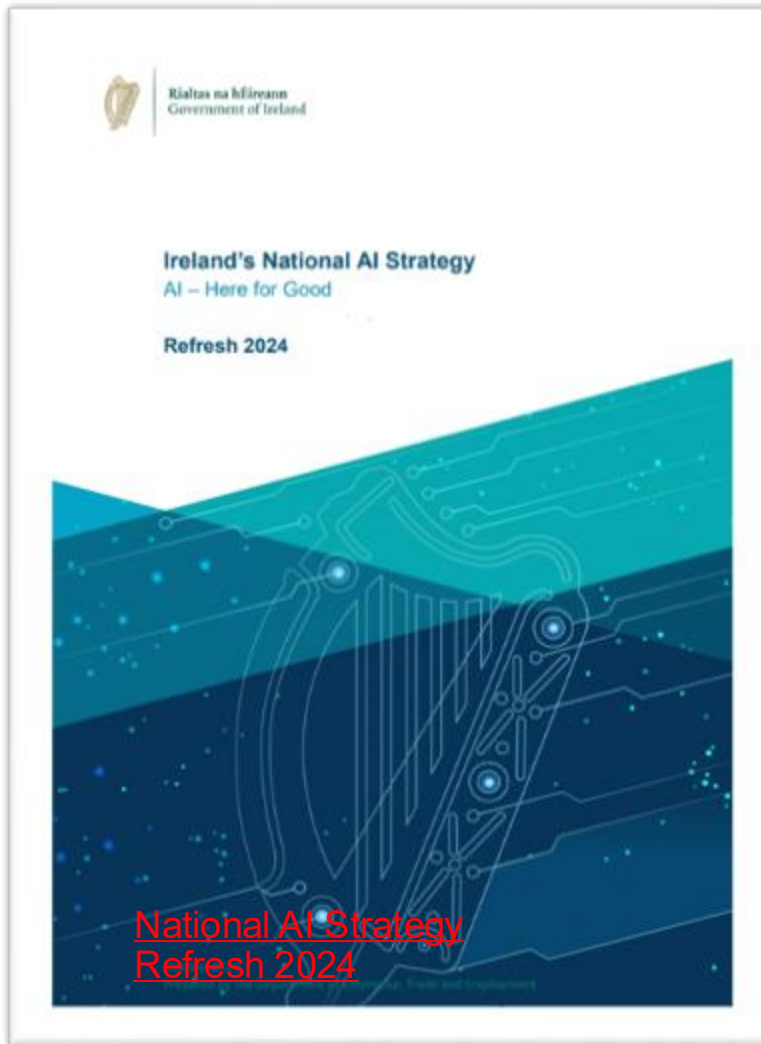
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European GenAI Guidelines



This slide and diagram was generated use GenAI tool
[Napkin AI - The visual AI for business storytelling](#)

Ireland - National Strategy



“Narrow” AI applications are being used in many areas of the public service...’

Update to Ireland's National AI Strategy
AI – Here for Good Refresh 2024

To ensure our public servants have the appropriate skills to use AI, targeted learning and development initiatives have been offered to approximately 500 public servants to date. Programmes include an AI Masterclass programme targeting senior leaders in the public and civil service and an AI Essentials programme targeting senior managers. This initiative will continue to be scaled and delivered across all grades in the public and civil service, to ensure public servants are knowledgeable about AI, and its safe and ethical use in the Public Service.

“Narrow” AI applications are being used in many areas of the public service, for example weather forecasting, prediction of disease outbreaks in animal herds, and in smart automated document handling. The emerging suite of generative AI tools have significant potential to augment the work of public servants in areas such as policy research, service delivery and administration. A number of central pilot projects to test proofs of concept and use cases are currently underway.

Strategic Actions

4A: Publish guidelines for the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence in the Irish Public Service. (DPENDR)

4B: Investigate use of AI for Public Service delivery, including via pilot AI projects. (DPENDPR, all Public Service Bodies)

4C: Create a safe space where civil and public servants are encouraged to experiment with AI tools. (DPENDR, Public Service Bodies)

4D: Identify and share examples of AI projects, learnings, and best practice in the Public Service. (DPENDR, Public Service Bodies)

4E: Raise awareness in the Public Service of supports to assist with AI adoption, for example, the European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH) in CeADAR, and the Research Ireland Public Service Fellowship programme. (DPENDR, DETE)

4F: Ensure the Public Service has access to skilled AI professionals through recruitment, and provide reskilling and upskilling opportunities on AI to Public Service staff. (DPENDR, Institute of Public Administration (IPA), Public Service Bodies)

Publish guidelines for the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence in the Irish Public Service.

Investigate use of AI for Public Service delivery, including via pilot AI projects

Identify and share examples of AI projects, learnings, and best practice in the Public Service.

Lots of Articles



Related to use of GenAI in context of Academic Integrity

Ethics of using GenAI

Use of GenAI in qualitative analysis (quite technical)

Useful insights into prompts, & developing discipline specific practice



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Diverse Applications of Generative AI

Image Creation

Producing realistic and artistic images, including deepfakes



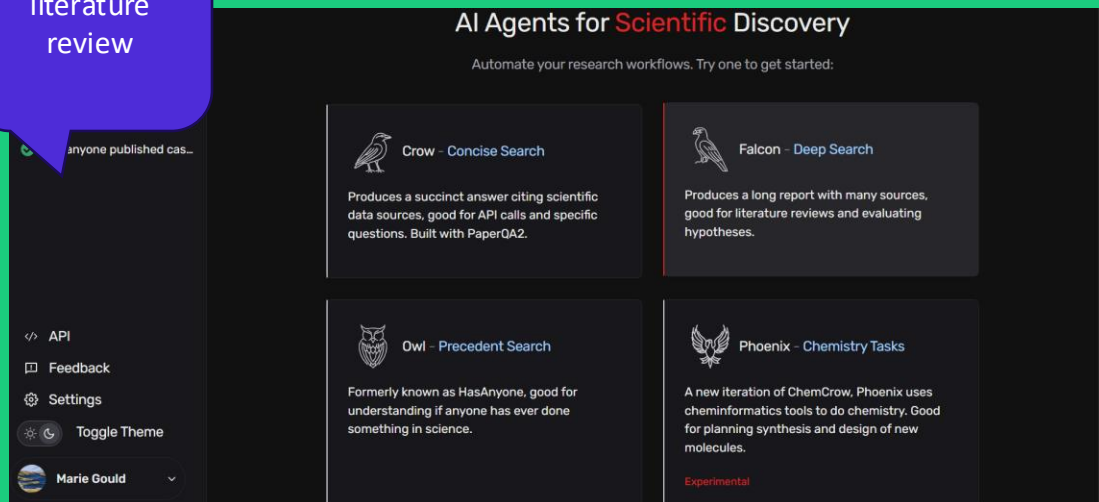
Music Composition

Generating original music pieces and melodies

Text Generation

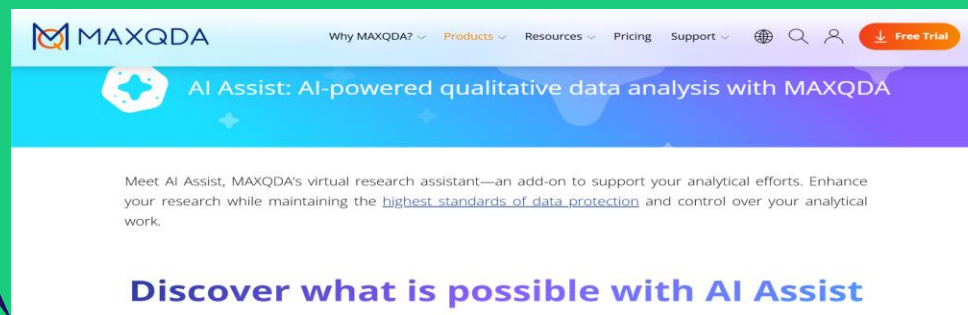
Creating human-like text for and content creation

Research and
literature
review



FutureHouse Platform

Qualitative
Analysis –
Planned
future testing
over summer



AI Assist for qualitative data analysis - MAXQDA

Get visuals from your text

Napkin turns your text into visuals so
sharing your ideas is quick and
effective.

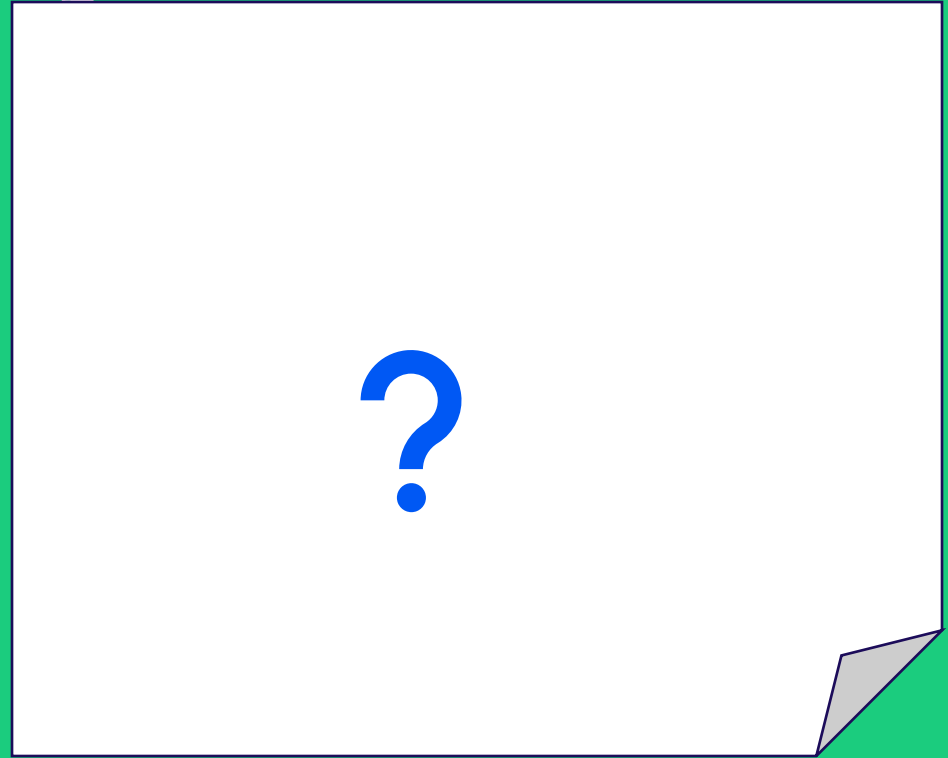


Generating
visuals from
text

Napkin AI - The visual AI for business storytelling

GenAI in External Quality Assurance

What did we find?



A blank page!



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Two (small scale) pilot projects

Internal approval- licenced version of Microsoft Copilot: Your AI companion

(i) Supporting the QA evaluation process within the European Approach

(ii) Using GenAI to support the process of thematic analysis

Aligns with QQI's commitment to employing AI for system-level analysis in annual monitoring and evaluation of providers, as stated in the QQI Statement of Strategy 2025-2027



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Supporting QA evaluation process – the European Approach



Pilot (i)

- Single process
- Low risk
- Microsoft Copilot
- First attempt – ‘dipping our toes in’

Pilot process

Document summaries

Copilot prompted to create summaries of 17 appendices

Criteria for prompt based on procedures for European Approach

Focus on student mobility



Indicative Questions

Copilot prompted to create a list of indicative questions for the panel sessions during site visit

+additional indicative questions with a focus on student experience

Criteria for prompt based on procedures



Panel briefing material

Copilot prompted to create a powerpoint presentation, asked to consider:

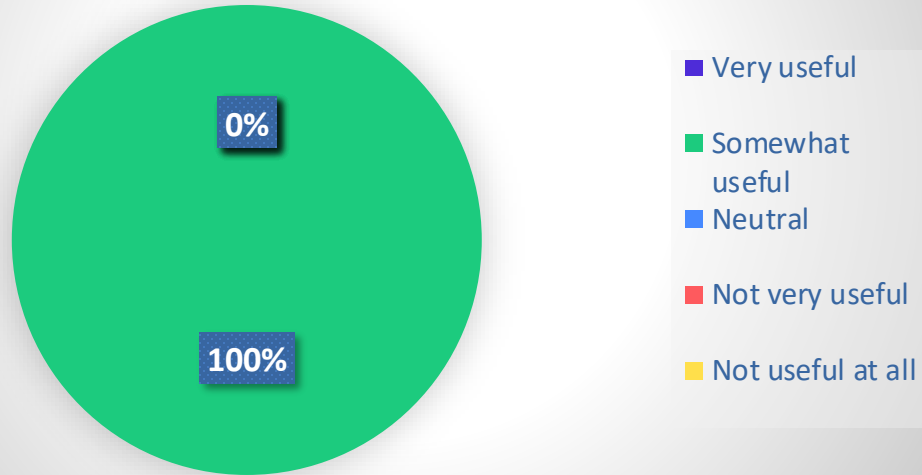
- QQI presentations used for similar panel briefings
- procedures for the European Approach
- role of panel members
- the outputs of the process

Prompted to create social media posts

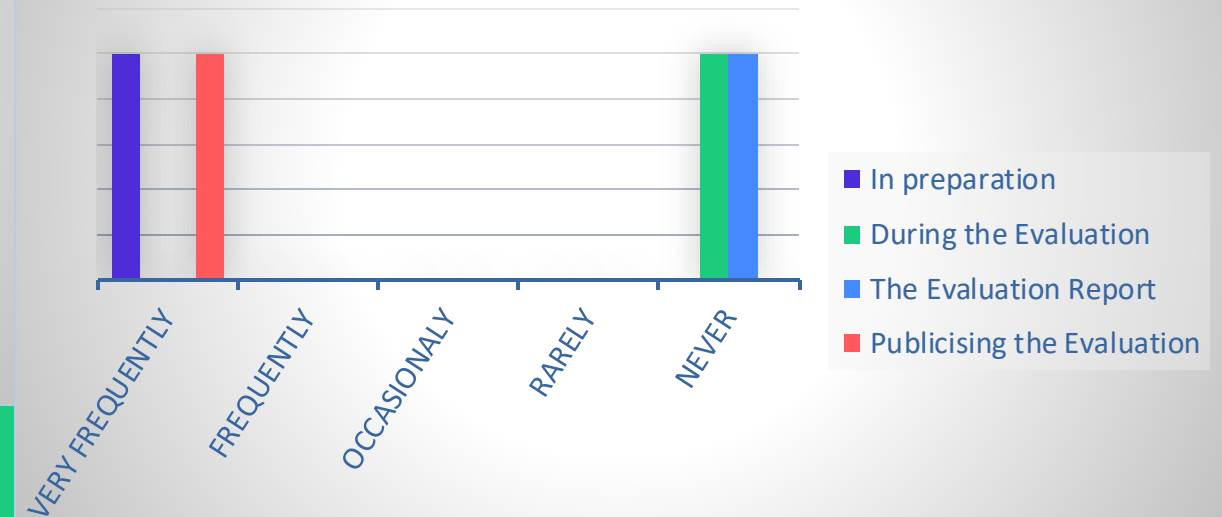


The panel experience

How useful are AI generated documents?



How frequently did you use AI to generate material?



The panel experience

- Panel did not fully access the summary appendices documentation
- Panel used the suggested indicative questions
- Panel preferred to rely on own judgment for summarising documentation; they found the indicative questions helpful for identifying discussion themes.
- Concerns about the reliability of AI-generated content the main factor in reluctance to use

The agency staff experience

“CoPilot was very useful when generating documents based on very specific information and for a very focused purpose, such as press releases, social media updates and presentations”.

“The generated document, however, was generally a first draft that required some editing.”



Summary

Panel report

QA of Joint Programme based on the European Approach

Name of programme:

Pathfinder – Joint International BA in film

Name of coordinating institution:

Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology

Name of cooperating institutions:

Lusófona University, Lisbon

LUCA School of Arts, Brussels

National Academy for Theatre & Film



- Very small scale
- Single review panel and process - on-site visit
- Useful tool
- Assisted in devising content for panel briefing
- Indicative questions for panel sessions - helpful
- Summarised documentation for panel!
- Assistance for international members in translation

Could be a valuable tool
for transcription of
meetings in hybrid process

Lack of trust from panel

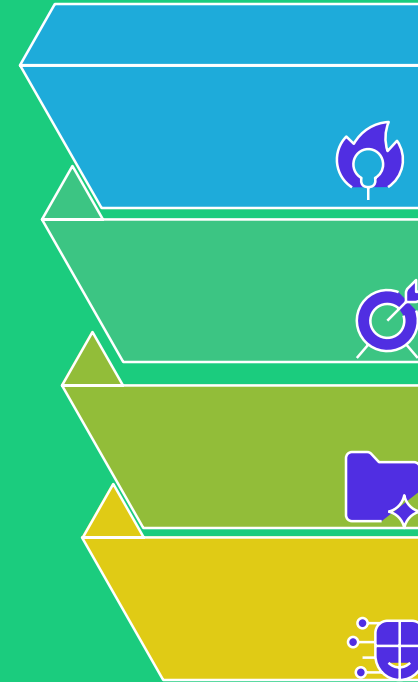
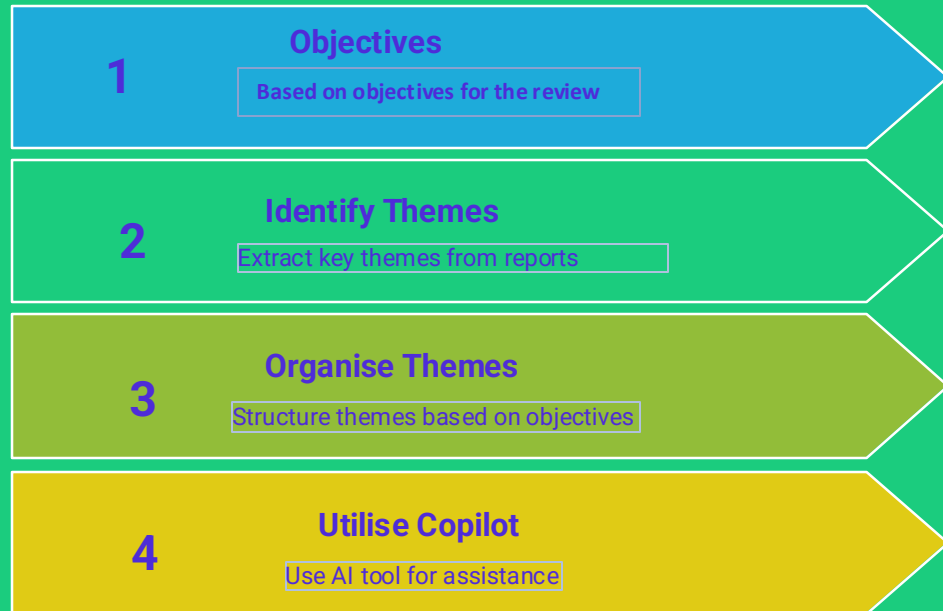
Thematic Analysis of Institutional Review Reports - GenAI



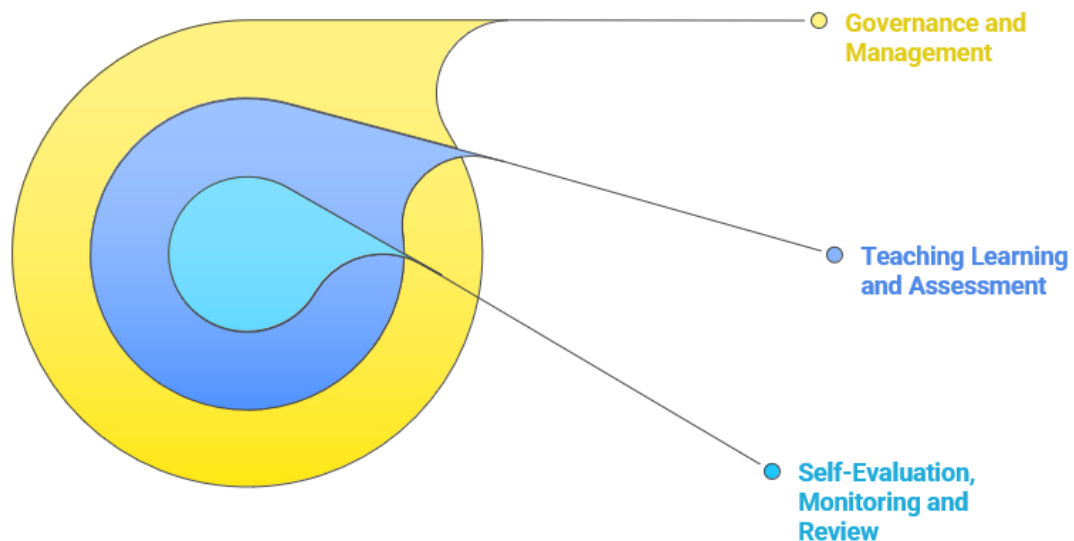
Pilot (ii)

- Small number of external review reports
- Low risk
- Review reports – published
- Determine methodology

Thematic Analysis Process



Core objectives of the reviews



to review the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the governance and management of quality throughout the organisation.

to evaluate the arrangements to ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within the provider and a high-quality learning experience for all learners.

to evaluate the arrangements for the monitoring, review and evaluation of, and reporting on, the provider's education, training and related services (including through third-party arrangements) and the quality assurance system and procedures underpinning them

Thematic analysis:

- i. What are the key themes and topics addressed in the review reports?
- ii. What are the key findings presented in the review reports?

■ Initial Objective

- Conduct thematic analysis using two distinct methods: AI and manual human-led approach
- Compare the results of both methods to identify strengths and weaknesses
- Publish traditional human-led report only

■ Revised Objective

- Focus on the learning of using GenAI for the process
- Utilise the GenAI process to conduct a comprehensive thematic analysis of the review reports
- Publish single report, citing the methodology

■ Rationale for Change

- Comparison between AI and manual approaches was found to be less beneficial than anticipated
- GenAI-assisted process demonstrated potential for efficiency
- Concentrating on the AI approach allows us to gain more meaningful insights and learning

■ Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced understanding of the capabilities and limitations of GenAI in thematic analysis
- Improved efficiency and consistency in analysing review reports

Approach

- A single thematic analysis combined GenAI with traditional manual review of the reports*
- Using a licensed version of Microsoft 365 Copilot, one QQI executive conducted a desk review of four review reports, using Copilot to assist in extracting key themes
- Another QQI executive manually documented the themes without prior communication on findings
- After individual analyses, the themes were compared and discussed, leading to final identification of themes for the report
- Challenge – how do we present this in the report? How do we ensure transparency?

* This integrated methodology was adapted from the case study [The use of Generative AI in qualitative analysis: Inductive thematic analysis with ChatGPT | Journal of Applied Learning and Teaching](#)

This approach is categorised as level 3 in the five-tier assistance model of GenAI.

Level	Prompt example
(1) Basic editing, such as checking spelling and grammar or suggesting synonyms.	'Check the spelling and grammar in this paragraph and suggest synonyms for repetitive words.'
(1) Structural editing, such as paraphrasing, translating or improving the structure of the text in its flow or coherence.	'Paraphrase this lengthy sentence to improve clarity and flow.'
(1) Creating derivative content, such as summarising, creating titles and abstracts, rewriting or generating analogies.	'Taking the role of research assistant, summarise the findings of the review team under the topic of 'Governance and Management of Quality' for the review report of [X] institution'. 'As a research assistant, consider the review report for [X] institution and summarise findings of the review team on Academic Integrity'.
(1) Creating new content, such as completing, continuing or expanding text or brainstorming ideas.	'Continue the text to explain the key question being addressed. Show why it is important, drawing parallels or analogies where you see fit'.
(1) Evaluation or feedback, such as assessing the quality of the writing or finding weaknesses in it.	'Review the introduction and highlight logical gaps or areas that need further development'.

Based on the case study Techniques for supercharging academic writing with generative AI (Lin, Zhiceng, 2024).

How we outline the methodology in the final report

Introduction

The thematic analysis presented in this report identifies the key themes and topics arising within the CINTE institutional review reports of the four private and independent higher education institutions (HEIs), the reviews of which were conducted in 2024, namely,

- (i) Dublin Business School (DBS)
- (ii) Hibernia College
- (iii) Griffith College (GC)
- (iv) National College of Ireland (NCI)

The CINTE cycle of reviews conducted by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), is an element of the broader quality framework for institutions composed of Quality Assurance Guidelines, each institution's internal quality assurance system, submission of Annual Quality Reports (AQRs), and biennial quality dialogue meetings. This analysis seeks to provide insights into the effectiveness of quality assurance processes and within these institutions arising from the findings of the CINTE review process and review team reports.

Methodology

The methodology for the thematic analysis is structured using the objectives for the review as the framework. This framework also guided the prompts for Microsoft Copilot which was used to assist in identifying the key themes, see below. The analysis and themes arising are organised under the headings of the key objectives for the reviews as outlined in [Terms of Reference](#):

- 1. Governance and Management** – to review the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the governance and management of quality throughout the organisation.
- 2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment** – to evaluate the arrangements to ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within the provider and a high-quality learning experience for all learners.
- 3. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review** – to evaluate the arrangements for the monitoring, review and evaluation of, and reporting on, the provider's education, training and related services (including through third-party arrangements) and the quality assurance system and procedures underpinning them.

The thematic analysis generally focuses on the following questions:

- What are the key themes and topics addressed in the review reports?
- What are the key findings presented in the review reports?

Approach

This thematic analysis was conducted combining both GenAI and traditional manual analysis of the review reports¹. Using the licensed version of [Microsoft 365 Copilot](#), a browser-based AI tool,² a desk review was undertaken by one QQI executive on each of the four reports, with Copilot being assigned the role of a research assistant, extracting and synthesising the key themes within the core headings of the framework. In parallel a separate desk analysis was undertaken by another QQI executive manually extracting and documenting the key themes. Both executives did not communicate on the findings from the data until the individual analysis was complete. Following this, the themes and insights were compared; through discussion and collaboration the final set of themes were identified.³ In considering the five levels or tiers of assistance by GenAI⁴, for the purpose of this thematic analysis, it is categorised as level 3.

Level	Prompt example
(1) Basic editing, such as checking spelling and grammar or suggesting synonyms.	'Check the spelling and grammar in this paragraph and suggest synonyms for repetitive words.'
(2) Structural editing, such as paraphrasing, translating or improving the structure of the text in its flow or coherence.	'Paraphrase this lengthy sentence to improve clarity and flow.'
(3) Creating derivative content, such as summarising, creating titles and abstracts, rewriting or generating analogies.	'Taking the role of research assistant, summarise the findings of the review team under the topic of 'Governance and Management of Quality' for the review report of [X] institution'. 'As a research assistant, consider the review report for [X] institution and summarise findings of the review team on Academic Integrity'.
(4) Creating new content, such as completing, continuing or expanding text or brainstorming ideas.	'Continue the text to explain the key question being addressed. Show why it is important, drawing parallels or analogies where you see fit.'
(5) Evaluation or feedback, such as assessing the quality of the writing or finding weaknesses in it.	'Review the introduction and highlight logical gaps or areas that need further development'.

¹ This aligns to QQI strategic commitment to 'publish system-level analysis of our annual monitoring and period evaluation of providers, using artificial intelligence where appropriate'. [QQI Statement of Strategy 2025-2027](#)

² This forms part of a pilot within QQI in testing GenAI in external QA processes.

³ This integrated methodology was adapted from the case study [The use of Generative AI in qualitative analysis: Inductive thematic analysis with ChatGPT](#) | [Journal of Applied Learning and Teaching](#)

⁴ Adapted from Table 1, [Techniques for supercharging academic writing with generative AI](#) (Lin, Zhicong 2024)





*It is not about
automating processes
or replacing people – it
is about enhancing
capacities and
efficiencies*

Importance of GenAI instructions or prompts –
'prompt engineering'

Give GenAI a role i.e. 'You are a research assistant'
'Your role is to assist in conducting thematic analysis'

Efficacy hinges on the quality of the instructions or prompts
(We provided a structured framework for the analysis)

GenAI is prone to 'hallucinations', it can make things up, and get it wrong,
need to validate and check!

It (Copilot) is descriptive, not analytical

Need to maintain human oversight and validation – manual review and analysis



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Gaps and Limitations

Currently, no internal organisational guidelines

Limited to Copilot (QQI licence) – not optimum for thematic analysis

No international practices/case studies to draw on

Nothing found in the literature on GenAI from EQA agency perspective

Lack of knowledge of potential GenAI tools which could assist in EQA

Limited to Copilot (QQI licenced for security)

Lack of trust, suspicion in GenAI

Working in a bit of a vacuum



Next Steps

**Pilot thematic analysis using
licenced version of
MAXQDA AI Tool – Tailwind**

**(Thematic analysis of 19
Annual Quality Reports)**



Useful References

1. Alkaissi H., McFarlane S., (February, 2023). Artificial Hallucinations in ChatGPT: Implications in Scientific Writing in Cureus 15(2): e35179. doi:10.7759/cureus.35179. Retrieved 2 May 2015.
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3. Faber S. (Feb 2025) Enhancing Academic Decision-Making: A Pilot Study of AI-Supported Journal Selection in Higher Education, Retrieved 11 April 2025 from Innov Hig Educ <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-025-09791-3>
3. Furze, L., Perkins, M., Roe, J. and MacVaugh, J. (2024) .. The AI Assessment Scale (AIAS) in action: A pilot implementation of GenAI-supported assessment, Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, Melbourne, Australia, 40(4), pp. 38–55. Retrieved 11 April 2025
4. Lin Z. (March 2024). Techniques for supercharging academic writing with generative AI, Retrieved 10 April from Nature Biomedical Engineering 9, 426–431 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41551-024-01185-8>.
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6. Strivastrava, A. & Thomson, S.B. (2009). Framework Analysis: A Qualitative Methodology for Applied Policy Research. Journal of Administration and Governance, Vol. 4. No. 2. Retrieved 10 April 2025 from [RN](#)
7. STM, Generative AI in Scholarly Communications, Ethical and Practical Guidelines for the Use of Generative AI in the Publication Process (Dec 2023). Retrieve 11 April 2025 from [Home - STM Association](#)

Workshop



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(i)SLIDO

1. Have you used GenAI in IQA or EQA processes? (yes/no)
2. What benefits do you perceive in using GenAI in EQA processes?
3. What challenges do you see in using GenAI in EQA processes?
4. Can you give an example of where GenAI could be used to improve efficiency in EQA processes?
5. Suggestions on how some of the challenges can be overcome.

SLIDO

Scan QR Code

Or go to

www.slido.com

Access Code: 3245744



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Discussion Questions

1. What potential benefits do you see in interagency collaborations on GenAI for EQA?
2. What are the outputs you would like to see from interagency collaboration?
3. What opportunities are there for interagency collaborations? Suggest some practical ways in which EQA agencies could collaborate.
4. How could associations such as INQAAHE, ENQA, facilitate GenAI collaborations among EQA agencies?

Wrap-up and Q & A

INQAAHE, Tokyo 2025

Arigatō gozaimasu" (ありがとうございます)

Go raibh maith agat!

Thank you!



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