**Examples of Quality Enhancements in the Research Area**

**Research Accreditation/Validation**

May 2015: AIT was awarded Delegated Authority by QQI for Level 10 in ‘Information and Communication Technology’, following an external panel visit, appointed by QQI on 13th March, 2015.

**Research Symposium**

AIT has held a research symposium with International partners since 2011.  The symposium, an annual event, hosts keynote address, guest speakers and postgraduate student presentations.

The event also hosts a poster festival for best poster with prizes for first, second and third place.

The event has also been held outside of AIT in Malaysia with UniMap [University of Malaysia, Perlis].

**Environ Conference**

In 2017, AIT host the national ‘Environ Conference’.   The ENVIRON colloquium is the longest running and largest national gathering of environmental researchers in Ireland, with over 300 delegates attending each year.   This will be yet another opportunity for AIT postgraduates and researchers to network and present their work on a national stage.

**The Human Resource Strategy for Researchers [HRS4R]**

AIT was the recipient of the very prestigious HR Excellence in Research from the EU Commission in July 2015.  The award of HR Excellence in Research is an endorsement from the European Commission recognizing AIT’s commitment to achieve fair and transparent recruitment and appraisal procedures. It reflects the institute’s commitment to continuously improve its human resource policies in line with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.  The achievement of this prestigious European Logo will support our researchers in their research proposals to attract international funding, especially Horizon 2020. Such an award will also increase the international profile of AIT in attracting academics and researchers, since it will signal the institute as a progressive education and research organization.  AIT undergo a self-review / audit at 24 months and an external audit by the commission at 48 months to maintain the HR logo from the EU Commission.

**Postgraduate Lunchtime Presentations**

AIT hold a seminar series for postgraduates each academic year.   This is part of the professional development of each postgraduate to present their research work to peers and staff in AIT.

Presentations are scheduled and held at lunchtime in the Institute, offering staff and students the opportunity to organise their work for presentation and challenge their thinking to field a Q&A session at the end of their presentation.  Each postgraduate student is given a time to present each year as part of their programme of study.

**Training**

AIT offer postgraduate students and researchers the opportunity to take training modules every year in areas of Ethics, Intellectual Property, Statistics, Research Data Management, Communication Skills, Research Career Planning, Project Management, and Academic Writing among others.  AIT see that the professional development of staff and students is essential to the development of the career and profile of the postgraduate and researcher.

**Research Ethics Committee in AIT**

The Research Ethics Committee established in AIT since 2011 meets on a monthly basis.  The committee reports to the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Sub-Committee of the institute’s academic council and assists in the realisation of it responsibilities for ethics in research carried out within the Institute.   The committee assesses any ethical issues reported in a Research Proposal and makes recommendations to AIT regarding ethical issues and possible risks to the Institute pertaining to the research applications received.  The Ethics Committee also provide ethical education to staff and students of the Institute through their annual conference held in May each year.  This conference is also open to the general public**.**

**Memberships**

AIT has membership of **EARMA** ARMA represents the community of Research Managers and Administrators (RM&As) in Europe.  EARMA provides a networking forum, a learning platform, and a place to share experiences and best practice among RM&As throughout EARMA and in the wider RM&A community.

AIT is also a member of **VITAE**.  Vitae is the global leader in supporting the professional development of researchers, they have experience in working with institutions as they strive for research excellence, innovation and impact. Vitae are a non-profit programme, with over 45 years’ experience in enhancing the skills and careers of researchers. Vitae provide Institutional support for the professional development of their researchers.

**External Review**

AIT work with a panel of external reviewers from national and international universities and Institutes of Technology to review our research proposals each year.  Each proposal submitted to the Office of research is reviewed by a panel of two to three external independent reviewers.  Each reviewer supplies a reviewers report with comments and suggestions of the proposal under review.  This review is presented to our internal postgraduate review committee as part of ratification of postgraduate application to AIT.  Each reviewer signs a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement as part of the process.

**Stage 1 - Internal Review**

All postgraduate research candidates must comply with this Stage 1 procedure in order to progress with their studies. Postgraduate candidates are expected to make a presentation before a panel of independent assessors. A Stage 1 Progression Report, ranging between 6000-14000 words must be available to the panel prior to the presentation. The purpose of the exercise is to enable postgraduate candidates to demonstrate that they have made sufficient progress to-date and have the potential to continue. It is an opportunity for serious reflective progress but should not require a long period of absence from lab work/data collection to write the report.

This review is undertaken after approximately the first 12 month study period.  An Independent Panel of Assessors will be organised by the Director of Postgraduate Studies.

**Conferring List October 2015**

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| **Name** | **Award** | **Discipline** | **Title of thesis** | **Supervisors** | **Extern Examiner** |
| Teresa Watkins | MSc | Nursing and Health Science | A Study to Explore the Impact of a Prostate Cancer Diagnosis on Men’s Quality of Life | Dr Des Cawley, Mr. John Larkin | Dr Michael Connolly. UCD. |
| Theresa O'Connor | MSc | Nursing and Health Science | To examine the challenges facing public health nurses in child protection and welfare. | Dr Mary McDonnell/Naughton, Dr. Myra O'Regan, TCD, Ms. Maria Larkin, Children and Family Services, Midlands Region | Prof Jonathan Drennan, University of Southampton |
| James (Shay) O'Toole | MSc | Nursing and Health Science | A mixed methods study to explore the effectiveness of an exercise referral scheme as a health promotion intervention for Irish male prisoners with mental health problems. | Mr Jim Maguire, Dr Pearse Murphy | Prof Denis Ryan, Irish College of Humanities & Applied Sciences, Limerick |
| Kenneth Murphy | MSc | Nursing and Health Science | The role of psychiatric staff nurses working in the community mental health settings in the Dublin Mid-Leinster region. | Mr Tommy Healy, Dr Desmond Cawley | Dr Vidar Melby, UU |
| Geraldine Kiveney (QQI Approval) | MA | Humanities | Hearing the voice of the social care agency. An exploration of social care agencies’ perspectives of effective practice placement. A grounded theory study using AIT as a case study site. | Dr Ashling Jackson, Ms Teresa Brown | Mr Joseph Collins, IT Carlow |
| Claire Leyden | MSc | Toxicology | An Investigation into the Developmental Toxicity of Psychoactive Drugs of Abuse in Larval Zebrafish | Dr Therese Montgomery, Dr Noreen Morris | Dr Maura Grealy, NUIG |
| Zhizhong Ma | MSc | Software Engineering | Mobile Device Attitude Estimation via Multimodal Sensor Fusion. | Dr Yuansong Qiao, Dr Brian Lee, Dr Enda Fallon | Dr Edward Jones, NUI Galway |
| Sean Hayes | MSc | Software Engineering | An Analysis of the Effects of Environmental Variables on Wireless Network Performance and Handover Management. | Dr Enda Fallon, Dr Ronan Flynn, Dr Niall Murray | Dr Hugh Melvin, NUI Galway |
| Mikel Zuzuarregui | MSc | Software Engineering | The Application of Machine Learning to Enable Telecommunications Network Self Organisation. | Dr Enda Fallon, Dr Paul Jacob | Dr Kevin Curran, UU |
| Saul Gill | MSc | Software Engineering | Context Aware Cleaning of Data using the Distributed Cleaning Systems. | Dr. Brian Lee, Dr. Yuansong Qiao | Prof Heather Ruskin, DCU |
| Eloy Martinez | MSc | Software Engineering | A Performance analysis of Big Data Processing and Data Mining Algorithms in a Telecommunications Environment. | Dr Enda Fallon, Dr. Yuansong Qiao, Dr Sheila Fallon | Dr Markus Hofmann, IT Blanchardstown |
| Rosemary Salaja | MSc | Software | Automatic Speech Recognition Using Artificial Life. | Dr. Ronan Flynn, Mr. Michael Russell | Dr Edward Jones, NUI Galway |
| Niall Maher | MSc | Software Engineering | Exploiting the Predictability of Movement to Optimise Handover in Heterogeneous Networks | Mr. Shane Banks, Dr. Enda Fallon | Dr. Gabriel-Miro Muntean, DCU |
| Derek Macken | MSc | Polymer | Development of novel drug polymer system | Dr. Michael Nugent, Dr. Declan Devine | Dr Lidia Tajber, Trinity College. |
| Eilish Hoctor | MSc | Polymer | The Preparation of Multifunctional Composite Scaffolds for use in Bone Tissue Engineering | Dr Declan Devine, Dr Luke Geever, Prof Clem Higginbotham | Dr Daniel Boyd, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada |
| Cormac O'Keeffe | MSc | Polymer | Development and Characterisation of Novel Metal Oxide Composite Systems for Photochromic Applications. | Dr James Kennedy, Dr. Joseph Farrell | Dr P Ramesh Babu, Trinity College |
| Luke Molloy | MSc | Polymer/ Materials | Preferential Orientation of Bentonite Platelet Structure. | Dr Michael McLoughlin, Dr Clem Higginbotham | Dr Brian McCabe, NUI Galway |
| Malgorzata Poplawska | MSc | Polymer | Development of novel antimicrobial mediating hydrogel scaffolds for bone regeneration. | Prof Clem Higginbotham, Dr Damien Brady, Dr Carmel Kealy | Dr Dearbhaile Morris NUIG |
| Patrick Doran | MSc | Polymer Engineering | Polymer nanocomposite packaging materials for the future | Prof Clem Higginbotham, Dr. Luke Geever, Dr Declan Devine, | Mr. Gerry McNally, Northern Ireland Polymer Association, Titanic Quarter, Belfast |
| Iska Schimpf | MSc | Polymer Engineering | Development and Toxicity Testing of PEDGMA Based Biomaterials | Prof Clem Higginbotham and Dr Anne Mulvihill | Dr. Niall Barron, DCU |
| **Noel Gately** | **PhD** | Polymer | The development of a polymeric colon targeted therapeutic delivery device to aid in the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome. | Dr James Kennedy, Dr. Paul Tomkins | Prof Gavin Walker, UL |
| **Elaine Kenny** | **PhD** | Polymer | Processing, characterization and optimization of polymers for bone tissue engineering | Dr Luke Geever, Dr Declan Devine, Prof Clem Higginbotham | Dr Daniel Kelly, TCD |

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| **Athlone Institute of Technology** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Figures for Postgraduate Research Students** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Summer 2015** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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|  | **MASTERS** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **School of Business** | | **School of Humanities** | | | | **School of Engineering** | | | | **School of Science** | |  |
|  | **Business** | **Accountancy** | **Social Care** | **Hotel & Cat** | **Languages** | **Art & Design** | **Software** | **Mechanical** | **Plastics/ Polymer** | **Civil** | **Life & Physical** | **Nursing** | **Total** |
| **Total** | 1 |  | 3 |  |  |  | 17 |  | 32 |  | 6 | 11 | **70** |
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|  | **PhD** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **School of Business** | | **School of Humanities** | | | | **School of Engineering** | | | | **School of Science** | |  |
|  | **Business** | **Accountancy** | **Social Care** | **Hotel & Cat** | **Languages** | **Art & Design** | **Software** | **Mechanical** | **Plastics/ Polymer** | **Civil** | **Life & Physical** | **Nursing** | **Total** |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  |  |  | 2 |  | 11 |  | 4 |  | **17** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Total number of Research Students - June 2015 = 87 | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |