National Student Engagement Programme
Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta na Mac Léinn

aMLÉ
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

National Postgraduate Engagement Network

Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and Qualifications Ireland

HEA | An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas
The Higher Education Authority
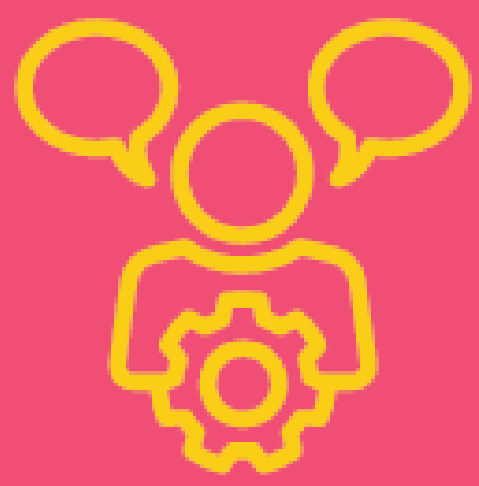
Background to the Network

Recommendation from the EUA
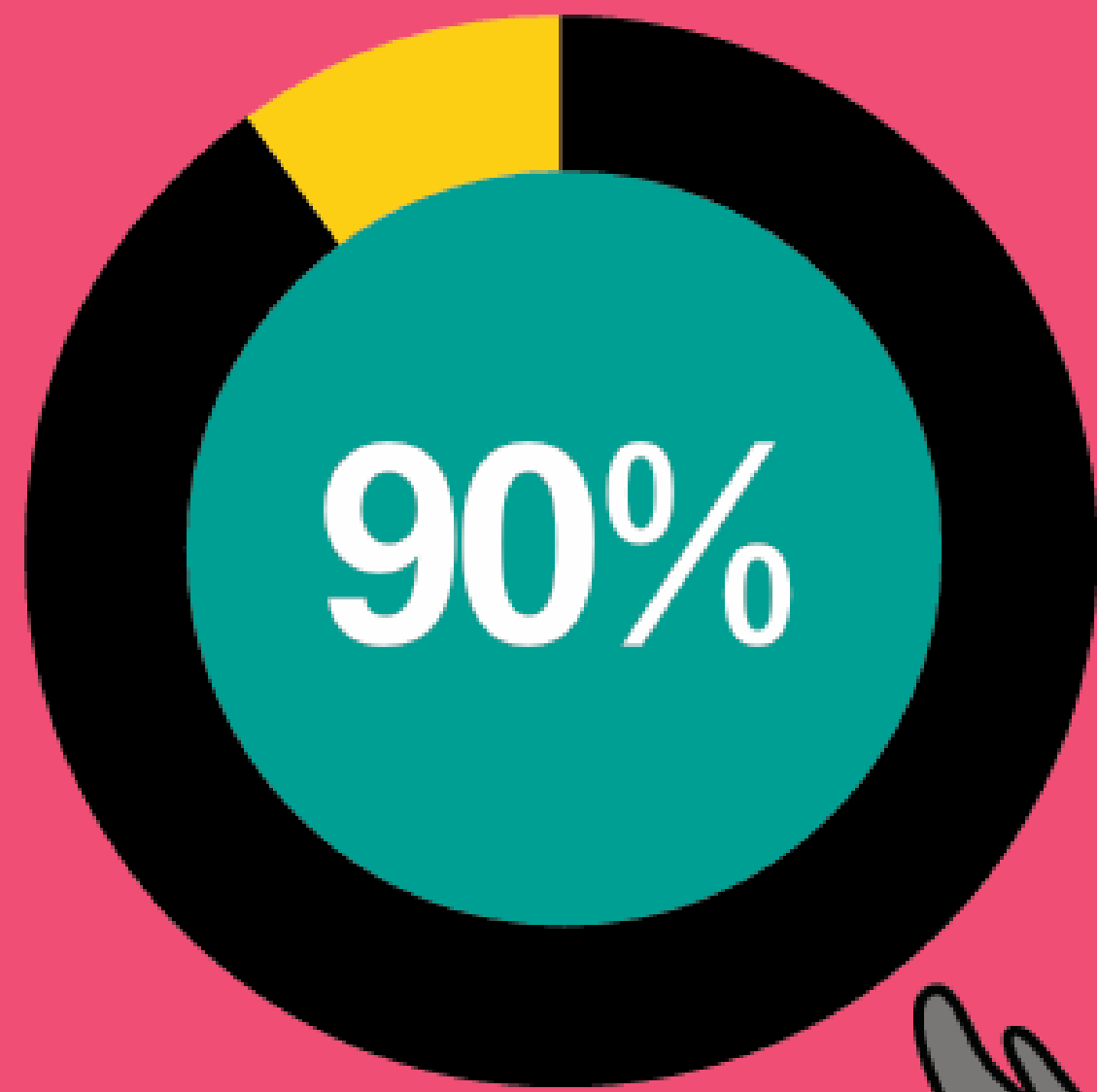
The purpose of this Framework is to;

- Facilitate consistent excellence in the quality of postgraduate education and training, including research undertaken at masters and doctoral levels;

- Enable and encourage higher education institutions to work more closely in the delivery of an improved learner-experience and outcome;

- Maximise the employability of doctoral graduates across a broad range of employment sectors by ensuring that the acquisition of discipline-specific knowledge is complemented by the development of transferable skills;

- Underpin the international standing of the Irish doctoral award.

⇒ *Building on ongoing efforts such as by the* *National Student Engagement Programme*,[5] *a clear vision of PGR student representation and their involvement in governance should be developed across all institutions to optimise their impact on quality.*

Responsibilities and supports

Overall, 90% of respondents understood their responsibilities as a research degree student.

90%

Concerningly, and though showing a 3% rise from 2019, fewer than half (46%) of respondents felt that their institution values and responds to feedback from research degree students. This suggests that insights from feedback focus groups and surveys like PGR StudentSurvey.ie may not be consistently translated into action on the ground or communicated effectively to students.

Current Areas of Best Practice

RCSI PG SU

RCSI has a PGSU whose aims include the protection and promotion of the interests of all full-time Postgrad Researchers in the university. The PGSU is represented also on the university-wide Student Engagement & Partnership (StEP) Committee. RCSI has a formal, funded StEP programme that empowers staff and students to work with and learn from each other. Postgraduate students are key partners in this programme ensuring that PGR students have the opportunity to co-create enhancements to the PGR experience.

MU PG Feedback Council

Maynooth University has a Postgraduate Feedback Council, which is the primary mechanism by which taught and research postgraduate students can advise on the enhancement of their experience in Maynooth University.

SETU GSO

In South East Technological University (SETU), the development of a Graduate Studies Office (GSO) Staff- Student liaison group has been effective in offering PGR students a route to provide feedback directly to staff members who are not directly involved in making decisions related to academic progression, examination or any other career impacting decisions. This has provided a neutral space in which PGR students can discuss issues with peers and staff providing agency to the PGR representatives.

TUS NTUTORR

The Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) in collaboration with the N-TUTORR4 project is in the process of building an online PGR community. The online community will serve as an example for engaging postgraduate students in governance and management while addressing student representation, quality assurance, and enhancement within the framework of neoliberalism.

Areas for Exploration

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Utilise the Postgraduate Student Engagement Network as a platform for sharing best practice.

1. The relationships and interactions between postgrads and the Students' Union.

2. Governance and Management Committees Structure Involving postgrads.

3. Enhancing postgrad engagement through capacity building.

4. Staff training and opportunities for capacity building

5. Improved anonymous feedback mechanisms for postgrads

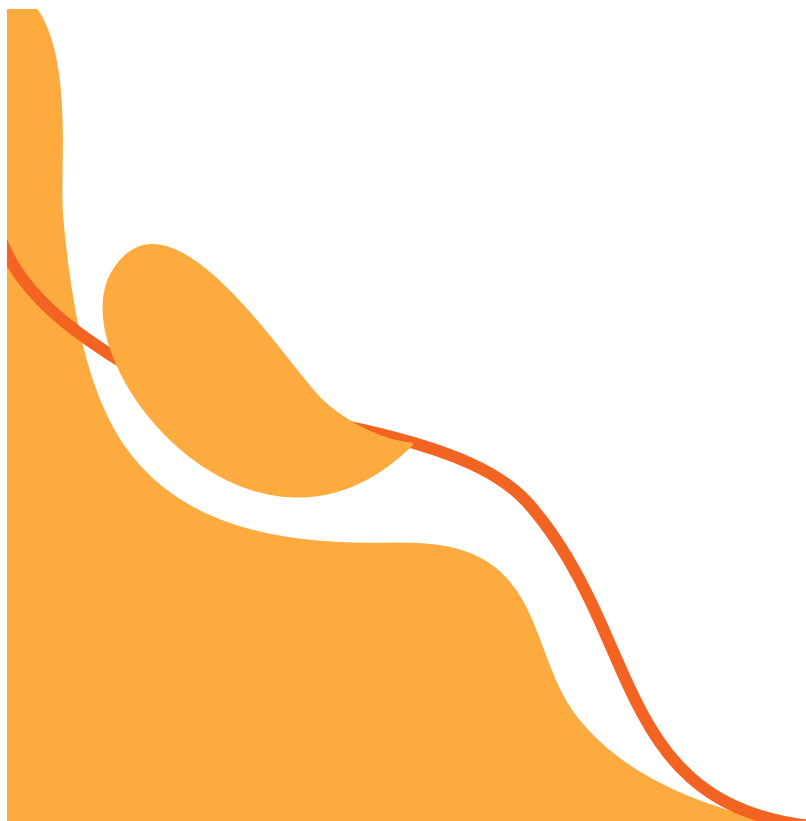# Structure of the Network

Chaired by AMLÉ and NStEP

The AMLÉ VP for Postgraduate Affairs chairs the Network in conjunction with NStEP, with support from the QQI and HEA

Open to all

Postgraduate students, researchers and staff members are all welcome to join the Network, participation in meetings is voluntary and free-form

Colloborative Structure

Any member of the Network can propose new ideas at any time, the Networks first task will be to develop a representative framework (see next slide)
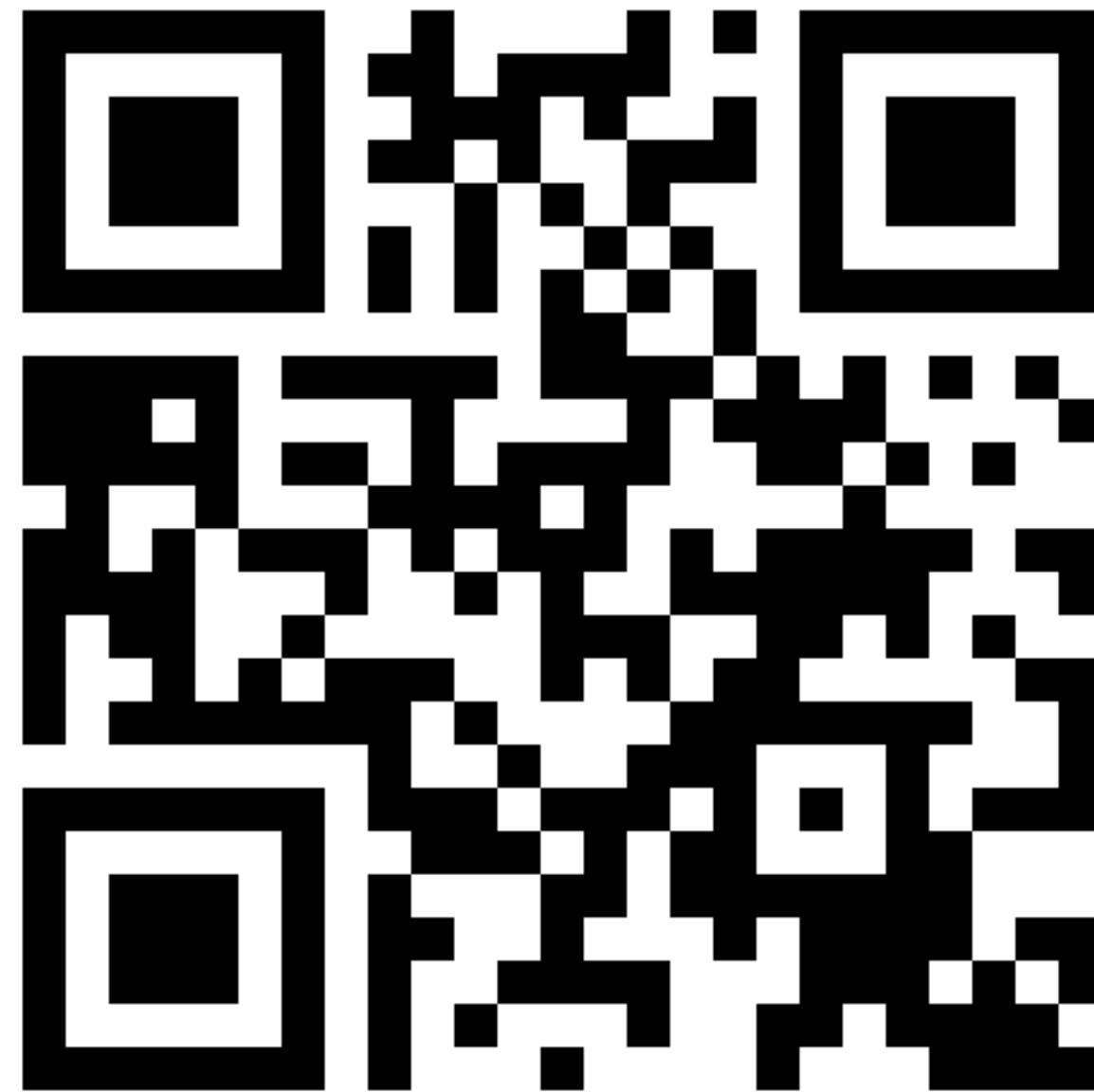
Network Goals 25/26

1 Develop a representative framework for both student unions and HEIs to use when it comes to implementing democratic structures for representation and feedback delivery

2 Develop a training resource with NStEP to allow student unions to deliver effective, specific training to postgraduate student and researcher representatives.

Join the Network!

Any questions?