

Dublin Institute of Technology Agreed Minute

The HEA acknowledges and appreciates the work undertaken by DIT in preparing the Compact Documentation submission in the context of this the first cycle of Strategic Dialogue. Documented feedback on the draft compact has been conveyed to DIT. This feedback has been informed by an extensive HEA exercise of evaluation of the submission, including analysis by an external panel set up to provide an independent assessment of the overall performance of the institution, against the backdrop of its mission.

HEA recognises that this is the first year of strategic dialogue and this is a developmental process. In year 2, HEA will have regard to the agreed outcomes of the dialogue process this year including, not only specific objectives and indicators proposed, but also any feedback to institutions regarding the overall composition of the compact. Institutions are expected to have regard to this feedback and to demonstrate that they have incorporated it into their processes for next year's cycle.

Subject to the above, the HEA and DIT agree that the mission, planned profile and targets, as now set out in the accompanying Compact, are consistent with the national objectives set for the higher education system and are appropriate to the place of DIT in the system. This agreement takes full cognisance of the written responses to HEA feedback and of the strategic dialogue meeting which took place on 17th January 2014. **The following issues are taken from the Strategic Dialogue Meeting held on 17th January 2014. It is recognised that this does not represent a full minute of the meeting but focuses on issues of particular importance.**

Strategic Priorities

HEA noted that the three key strategic priorities of DIT over the period of the compact are to complete the consolidation of DIT, to complete the first and second phases of the Grangegorman project and to complete the second and third stages of the TU designation process which will involve institutional consolidation with IT Tallaght and IT Blanchardstown. The core purpose of all of these projects is to further enhance outcomes in the areas of Access and Participation, Teaching and Learning and the Quality of the Student Experience, Research and Innovation, Engagement, and Internationalisation.

DIT presented a number of examples of the ways in which these projects contribute to improved outcomes – the relationship of the Grangegorman project to improved access and community engagement, the relationship of shared academic planning, redesigned curricula and programme offerings to improved quality of the student experience, particularly in terms of the first year experience and distinctive graduate attributes; the improved consolidation, collaboration, coherence and impact in research through focusing on better prioritised areas in a joint graduate school; improved enterprise engagement and knowledge through shared services and the relocation of the incubation centre.

HEA noted that this focus would be very helpful in framing the compact from the outset and the subsequent objectives in particular areas.

HEA noted the enormous scale of these difficult and challenging projects and the importance of clear governance and risk management. DIT indicated that a dedicated full-time post has been assigned to risk management of the projects and that risk management is integral to their overall management. Strong project management teams have been put in place, to which senior management have been seconded full-time from throughout DIT and from Tallaght and Blanchardstown. A detailed project plan framework has been prepared by consultants (for implementation by DIT and partner institutes). There is an emphasis on ensuring continuity of quality assurance during this transition

and of keeping it central to strategic planning; a report had been made to QQI related to this. Ongoing institute business continues to be managed and governed in accordance with the priorities set out in its formal strategic plan on which performance is monitored by the Governing Authority. Effective approaches to implementation have included identifying synergies and to re-purpose common processes – for example using normal programmatic review in the context of curriculum redesign. HEA noted the importance of using the compact to further enhance confidence in the progress being made and the process underpinning that progress.

Meeting Ireland's Human Capital Needs

The HEA noted the central importance of job creation for the Government and the important role Higher Education plays in that domain. DIT agreed and noted the range of efforts underway to support this objective. DIT has directly created 1,300 jobs from its activities in knowledge transfer and enterprise support and has a strong track record of performance in enterprise engagement and enterprise support which it is planning to improve even further over the period of the compact. It has already moved to establish a shared technology transfer office to improve the services offered by the three partner institutes and IADT. Its incubation centre will locate to new improved facilities on the Grangegorman site at an early stage. Again the compact could usefully integrate the strategy in this space with institutional consolidation and the development of the proposed TU.

Profile

DIT is planning to increase its proportion of provision at level 6/7 and to reduce provision at Level 8 as well as some other changes.

Finance

DIT noted that they are addressing a challenging financial environment and also noted that despite major financial cutbacks they have consistently delivered balanced budgets as required by HEA.

Regional Cluster

In line with government policy, DIT is concentrating initially on working with its DTU partners on shared academic planning but it has nevertheless had preliminary meetings with the broader cluster and these links will become more significant over time. There are areas where good working collaborations already exist and operate effectively – a number of joint academic and research programmes with TCD and the Greenway with DCU.

Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning

HEA requested and DIT agreed that the objectives and targets in this section could more comprehensively reflect the work underway in this core area.

Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience

HEA noted the integration into the overarching priorities of DIT's Teaching and Learning strategy and of its associated outcomes-focused objectives in the presentation. HEA asked in particular whether the plans in this area could be integrated to the major priorities identified above e.g. the reform of academic programmes to meet the vision of the TU and the Transitions Reform agenda.

High Quality, Internationally Competitive Research and Innovation

DIT is using the proposed TU as a driver to further consolidate its research efforts around a small number of research themes which will become the pillars for the new institution and to establish a single graduate school for the three institutions with the scale to improve research support functions to all. Again the compact could usefully integrate the strategy in this space with institutional consolidation and the development of the proposed TU.