

Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB)

Strategic Dialogue Cycle 2 Reflections on Performance

Overview

ITB has made a lot of progress with its partners towards a TU, the level of cooperation and collaboration is to be commended.

The introduction to the ITB Progress Report to the HEA (June 2015) states that it has taken a shared approach with DIT and ITTD under domains 1, 4 & 7

Throughout the ITB progress report, the institution does not provide enough elaboration on its initiatives and achievements.



In the light of delays in implementing TU designation legislation, the consortium should consider the implications of non-enactment of the legislation. TU4D members have clarified that it is the goal of TU4Dublin Alliance to achieve technological university designation and that the merger is a step on this journey. It was further confirmed that neither TU designation, nor indeed the merger, is possible without the Technological Universities legislation which is currently being developed.

Research performance and activity – the number of Masters Research students is static, a big increase is anticipated between 2014/15 and 2016/17 (102 > 253). Similarly, in PhD students (303 > 640). Is this realisable?

On internationalisation – student numbers are growing but does this represent a risk? (i.e. over reliance on income, mission drift).

Self-evaluation report - domain level review

1. Regional clusters:

One objective is identified in the ITB Compact and the June 2015 progress report addresses this objective.

The objective is listed as achieved. ITB has benefited from its relationship with DIT and ITTD. A steering group established in Jan 2014 has made significant progress in working towards TU4Dublin. Successful integration of key services (HR Finance, Library) has been achieved. A graduate research school has been established along with a structured PhD programme.

A mechanism is in place to develop common academic calendars, policies and procedures and a pilot initiative has been launched. While these achievements are commendable and further information is given in Appendix 1, they are not listed as interim targets under this domain.

ITB's KPI is 'active collaborative initiatives' namely the DRHEA, Greenway Initiative, The Global City Innovation Initiative and the Creative Dublin Alliance with an interim target to maintain current engagements. Further elaboration on the types of engagement with DCC under the Creative Dublin Alliance & the Global City Innovation Initiative would be useful.

2. Participation, equal access and lifelong learning

Four objectives are identified in the ITB Compact and the June 2015 progress report addresses these four objectives.

Two objectives are marked in green:

ITB exceeded its target of having at least one module supported by Moodle on 60% of programmes. It is not stated by how much this target was exceeded.

The student retention rate target of 65% was also met. A particular achievement within this domain is the piloting of a peer mentoring programme which is being rolled out across all programmes in 2015. This programme, presented in Bergen, Norway, is a first in the Irish context to have been assessed quantitatively.

Two objectives are marked as yellow:

The student intake target was missed by 58 students. Taking into account the projected international student intake, consideration should be given as to whether the ambitious targets set for 2015 & 2016 should be revised downward.

ITB have noted in their compact they will maintain their strategic intent to admit non-standard students by offering existing programmes and "developing new ones". Further clarification on this could be provided. The target for students with disabilities is required. ITB have made advances in this area by partnering with Centre of Excellence in Universal Design and by increasing their use of 'flexible modes of delivery'.

It is unclear if three pilot programmes were selected for systematic analysis results and change implementation. The progress report states that the boards were asked

to consider the results when redesigning programmes which is similar to the baseline. Further clarification is required on the work being done to achieve this objective.

ITB has no targets on increasing access by target groups, other than by increasing enrolments overall. It does, however, perform quite well in enrolling target groups and undertakes good outreach activity in its local area, none of which is reflected in the compact.

A discussion would be useful on how ITB's new initiatives are effecting its high non-progression rates.

3. Excellent teaching and learning and quality of student experience:

Five objectives are identified in the ITB Compact and the June 2015 progress report addresses these five objectives.

Five objectives are marked in green:

ITB exceeded its target of having at least one module supported by Moodle on 60% of programmes. It is not stated by how much this target was exceeded.

Student feedback mechanism is marked as achieved however the interim targets have not been met and should be reclassified to yellow. It is unclear if three pilot programmes were selected for systematic analysis results and change implementation. The progress report states that the boards were asked to consider the results when redesigning programmes which is similar to the baseline. Further clarification is required on the work being done to achieve this objective.

Development of the teaching profession through dissemination requires further elaboration and could be reclassified to yellow. The 2013 Teaching and Learning Innovations report is available on the ITB website <https://www.itb.ie/AboutITB/QualityAssuranceReports/qar.asp> – the progress report should include the link. While the ITB website is updated, further consideration/information should be given/provided as to whether additional platforms for dissemination of good practice have been utilised.

There is no interim target for 2014 for benchmarking.

4. High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation:

One objective is identified in the ITB Compact with five performance indicators. All five KPI's are addressed in the Progress Report and 3/5 are marked as achieved/green. ITB's target for postgraduate research students has been exceeded for 2014; it would be helpful to discuss with the institute whether they plan to increase it in future years.

Knowledge transfer and commercialisation are part of ITB's strategic plan and the other KPI's relate to innovation, technology and support & engagement with enterprise.

ITB has not achieved its target for innovation vouchers awarded – out of a target of 10, four were carried out. The additional explanation provided is not clear and further information should be provided. The targets provided for 2015 and 2016 could be revised downwards.

The target for invention disclosures was not met and ITB stated the targets for 2014-2016 were over optimistic.

ITB has achieved its 2014 target for companies supported through New Frontiers, 22 of the 50 companies are supported by ITT/ITB programme.

ITB's engagement with companies through LINC has exceeded the 2014 interim target by 35 companies. This is a significant increase and should be acknowledged. However further information should be sought on the companies & the levels of support provided.

5. Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange:

Three objectives are identified in the ITB Compact and the June 2015 progress report addresses these three objectives. The objectives are listed as achieved. The KPI for the second objective 'develop diverse range of civic engagement partners' states the number of community partners involved is 20. Significant progress has been made, in particular, with civic engagement – 60 partners have been identified. Further clarification is required on the number of partners 'involved' versus partners 'identified'. It is not clear from the report or the appendix what ITB activities occurred beyond the three examples provided.

ITB has exceeded the target for developing capacity for community based research by identifying 4 staff and increasing the number of student modules provided. The 2015 & 2016 targets could be revised upwards.

Assess feedback from employers at the course boards is marked as achieved, however the interim targets have not been met and should be reclassified to yellow. Further clarification is required on the work being done to achieve this objective.

6. Enhanced internationalisation:

One objective is identified in the ITB Compact and the June 2015 progress report addresses this objective. ITB has met its targets in this regard which is a substantial achievement from a low base. However due to the development of a joint marketing approach with ITT & DIT the 2015-16 targets may not be met and further clarification on why this is should be sought.

7. Institutional consolidation:

One objective is identified in the June 2015 progress report that differs from the ITB Compact, although the KPI and the 16 interim targets remain the same. 15 are listed as achieved with one listed as not met.

Presidents and senior colleagues have established a steering committee meet weekly and communication with all staff/students and their representatives is encouraged and facilitated by meetings, newsletters and social media. A joint prospectus has not been published, replaced instead by a communication in each of the prospectuses.

Amalgamation of the three partners is not achieved due to the delay of legislation.

8. Additional Notes:

- Domain 2. The student intake target was missed by 58 students. While taking into account the projected international student intake, consideration should be given as to whether the ambitious targets set for 2015 & 2016 should be revised downward.
- Domain 2. ITB have noted in their compact they will maintain their strategic intent to admit non-standard students by offering existing programmes and “developing new ones”. Further clarification on this could be provided.
- Domain 2 & 3. The progress report states that the boards were asked to consider the results when redesigning programmes which is similar to the baseline. Further clarification is required on the work being done to achieve this objective.
- Domain 5. Progress has been made, in particular, with civic engagement – 60 partners have been identified. However it is not clear from the report or the appendix what ITB activities occurred beyond the three examples provided.
- Domain 5- feedback from employers was not assessed at the course boards – reclassified to yellow
- Domain 7. 1 objective is identified in the June 2015 progress report that differs from the ITB Compact.

From Compact: Complete HEA process (i.e. Stages 1-3) for designation as a TU in partnership with DIT and IT Tallaght.

From Progress Report: Enhance ITB's and its partners national and international positioning through appropriate designation, merges and collaborations.