

## **Institute of Technology Sligo Agreed Minute**

The HEA acknowledges and appreciates the work undertaken by IT Sligo 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 IT Sligo. 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, the 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 IT Sligo 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 IT Sligo within the system. This agreement takes full cognisance of the written responses to HEA feedback and of the strategic dialogue meeting which took place on 14th January 2014. **The following issues are taken from the Strategic Dialogue Meeting held on 14th January 2014. It is recognised that this does not represent a full minute of the meeting but focuses on issues of particular importance.**

### **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. IT Sligo noted their very extensive role in meeting human capital needs, in terms of close relationships with regional industry, bespoke education and training programmes, and ongoing engagement with industry in the delivery of all education programmes.

### **Regional Cluster**

HEA notes that the three Connaught Ulster alliance partners have moved to align their strategic planning periods. The HEA notes the potential role of online provision in relation to the future development of the cluster particularly in regard to meeting the demand for up-skilling within the region and the interest of IT Sligo in developing this aspect of the alliance.

IT Sligo's stated ambition with partner institutes in the Connacht Ulster Alliance is to become a Technological University. IT Sligo consider that an institutional merger and application for TU status go hand in hand and that the latter will be sought when it is satisfied that it is on a clear trajectory to achieve the relevant criteria.

### **Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning**

HEA noted concerns expressed by Sligo in the ability to forecast access group enrolment (socio-economic) due to being based on survey return and HEA will consider further. However it was noted by the HEA that this approach has been agreed nationally as being the best approach available at present and it is being operated by all publicly-funded higher education institutions. Exploration of other datasets and methodologies to monitor access by socio-economic groups is planned as part of the next National Access Plan. The HEA notes the potential of IT Sligo's use of the MOOC in supporting and encouraging entry by target groups.

**Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience**

Further discussions in relation to retention have been arranged. HEA noted IT Sligo's approach to the use of supervised student project teams working on real world business problems and case studies of enterprise partners in a virtual setting on-campus as an adjunct to in-company work placements which are constrained.

**High Quality, Internationally Competitive Research and Innovation**

HEA notes that the target for research income refers to funding secured from competitive awards and subject to further clarification, will be a stretch target.

HEA notes that IT Sligo will consider on an ongoing basis how the compact can better capture the extent and the benefit of its enterprise engagement activity in terms of outcomes related to human capital development within its region.