

St. Angela's College (STAC)

Strategic Dialogue Cycle 2 Reflections on performance

Overview

It should be noted at the outset that the St. Angela's College compact contains a total of 51 objectives, the highest number of all institutions. A significant number of these objectives contain targets on specific programmes or activities.

St. Angela's College appear to have met the majority of their 2014 interim targets as outlined in the published compact. However, some issues are noted as outlined in the coming sections.

It should be noted that where targets have not been met, some additional information has been provided in appendices (as described above) and in the performance reflection document.

Self-evaluation report - domain level review

1. Regional clusters:

The high-level cluster structures have been put in place and several management groups have functioned over the course of 2014. Two programme managers have been appointed to coordinate cluster work.

Significant work has been completed in the mapping of UG and LLL programmes and research activity in the cluster area, although some gaps remain which are being addressed. Collaboration between cluster institutions (NUIG/ITS and NUIG/LYIT) to offer taught postgraduate programmes has begun, and NUIG is to facilitate IoT staff in pursuing structured PhDs.

However, several targets, mainly relating to engagement with the FE sector and the ETBs, were missed. No reason has been given for the lack of engagement with the FE sector/ETBs (part of Regional Clusters objective 1). In terms of the Regional Clusters objective 3, pathways for student transfer and progression between the cluster institutes have been devised, but there appears to be no work done on pathways from the FE sector or with regard to RPL policy. The other cluster institutions also report no real progress on engagement with the FE sector, except LYIT, which has made good progress in this regard.

All institutions in the North-West cluster submitted a self-evaluation report under the heading of "Regional clusters". The objectives, targets and progress reported by the institutions was generally consistent across the cluster (see note below). Some institutions also submitted other regional cluster objectives, targets and progress relating to activity outside the North-West cluster.

Joint objectives in the case of the institutions included the establishment of a regional cluster (targets: cluster defined, governance agreed, agreement of cluster objectives, engagement with FE sector); co-ordinated academic planning (targets: mapping of programmes, research activity and civic engagement activities); and development of regional learning pathways (targets: development of a matrix of course provision, review of policies, scheme for progression, regional targets agreed).

St. Angela's reported progress in relation to regional clusters related mainly to incorporation with NUIG (marked green).

2. Participation, equal access and lifelong learning:

Overall, many positive improvements can be noted. There are, however, a few objectives that appear not to have been fully met.

Objective 1: 'Expand participation in the Access Programme' to 30 students. It is noted that 33 commenced the programme while only 22 completed it. STAC note that the Access Programme Office conducted a report to understand the difficulties and better understand student needs. The performance reflection document states 'The College still maintains that with 33 starting this programme that the expansion of programme has demonstrated success. In light of the report by the Access Office, the College aims to improve the situation, where possible to ensure those that start the programme are retained, complete the programme and progress to third level education. This will be discussed at the upcoming meeting.

Objective 5: 'Establish the DARE programme and complementary support/policies on campus', St Angela's did not meet their interim target of 8 (6 DARE students started). Furthermore, St Angela's are requesting to reduce their interim target, end 2015 to 2 students and the final target, end 2016 to 2 students.

The performance reflection document states The Self-Evaluation submission applied the old targets for the DARE programme. It was determined in late spring 2014 that indeed the College would be in a position to participate in the DARE programme from 2014-15, therefore the DARE targets were altered to the figures in the signed Compact. The College notes that 6 students participated in the 2014-15 year and anticipated participation of 2 participants in the upcoming 2015-16 year, below target. Therefore the College wishes to have these targets revised for 2015 and 2016 to the original levels (2 for 2015 and 2 for 2016) as noted in the Compact initially submitted in February 2014.

Objective 8: 'Deliver the inaugural offering of the Cert in Life skills...'

While St Angela's have exceeded their target (by 7 students, i.e. 17 in total), the future targets are considerably lower (interim target, end 2015 is 9). The performance reflection document states that 'despite overachieving on this target, the College wishes to remain prudent on these figures'. This will be discussed at the upcoming meeting.

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

Overall, there is progress against 2014 targets.

Objective 10: Increase the role of the Student-Staff forum...': While the key actions have progressed, this issue was raised during the strategic dialogue meeting in February 2015. It was noted that progress had not been made and the aim was to reinvigorate the staff-student forum. The performance reflection document (September, 2015) states that the new SU and the College Management Team are committed to returning the Student-Staff Forum to its original form. A schedule of

meetings has now been included in the College Calendar for 2015-2016 with the first meeting on October 6th 2015.

4. High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation:

A self-reported red was given for one objective (Objective 2: 'Expand master by research students' with a reported progress of 7 students). It should be noted that HEA statistics show that there were no such students in 2014/15. However, Appendix B offers reasons as to why the expansion in masters by research students is given as 7 (and not 10 as predicted). In addition, St Angela's offer an explanation for the inconsistencies between their reporting and the HEA SRS figures, in their performance reflection document (September, 2015). The M.Litt students at the college were included in error as part of the taught postgraduate studies returns.

St. Angela's state that the research activity of staff has increased to 45%. Moreover, the 50% target for 2016 was omitted in the final compact document but has now been added to the self-evaluation document.

It is noted that none of the 3 applicants to the bursary met the criteria of the scheme. It would be useful to understand why the applicants did not meet the criteria.

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

Overall, the majority of targets have been met.

Objective 2: 'increase student participation in the ALIVE programme' – target was not met (27 students received certificate compared to a target of 30) and the reasons for this were outlined in Appendix C (changes in personnel and numbers are set to increase in 2015).

Objective 3: 'Widen the number of industry/organisations available for UG work placements'. The final target (end, 2016) states 15%. If growth is expected from a baseline of 308 to 408, this would represent a 32% increase. St Angela's performance reflection document (September, 2015) states 'that this was an error and is corrected on the revised self-evaluation'. However the revised self-evaluation document does not appear to have been modified in this way.

6. Enhanced internationalisation:

Overall, most targets have been met.

Objective 2: 'Strategically build Erasmus mobility for students'. St. Angela's did not meet the target of 2 students (only 1). However, as outlined in the strategic dialogue meeting in February 2015, these issues are being addressed. For example, there are issues with offering teacher training placements abroad in terms of compliance with

the Irish curriculum. St. Angela's performance reflection document (September 2015) states that the possibility of offering student placements is being addressed in view of meeting the figures in 2015 and 2016'.

7. Institutional consolidation:

The sole objective to 'continue to participate in the joint Working Group with NUIG to complete an integration strategy and timescale for implementation' has progressed. However, there are outstanding issues highlighted in Appendix E. For example, preparations to enable STAC students to register as NUIG students in September 2016 are underway, but it is noted that significant IS/IT investment needed for system alignment.

8. Additional Notes:

St. Angela's have made amendments to their 2016/17 student numbers.

Further clarification is required to explain inconsistencies between 'proposed student numbers, 2015-2017' and the 'Profile 2016/17'.