

Trinity College Dublin Agreed Minute

The HEA acknowledges and appreciates the work undertaken by TCD 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 TCD. 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 TCD 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 TCD 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 13th January 2014. **The following issues are taken from the Strategic Dialogue Meeting held on 13th January 2014. It is recognised that this does not represent a full minute of the meeting but focuses on issues of particular importance.**

Strategic Planning & Benchmarking

HEA notes that TCD is in the process of formulating a new strategic plan and that as part of the planning process, TCD is gathering relevant international benchmark data to inform and refine its targets and key performance indicators related to its strategic objectives. Within the context of this planning process, TCD is considering its student profile. HEA advocates a robust outcomes-oriented strategy based on a realistic approval of TCD's strengths and weaknesses.

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. TCD agreed and outlined how it is contributing to job creation, skills, job support and graduate employability.

Regional Cluster

HEA noted the original intention of the Innovation Alliance to significantly improve the research and innovation outcomes of UCD and TCD with major economic and other benefits for the system. HEA suggested that this alliance should be developed further to form the bedrock of the Dublin I cluster, which would allow for the engagement of IADT, NCAD and MIE in their particular areas. TCD posed that the new regional cluster supersedes and encompasses the work of the Innovation Alliance in that it extends beyond collaboration in innovation to potentially all academic activities. Therefore institutional focus should be on development and embedding of the regional cluster. It is intended to carry out a review of operation and potential future development of the alliance to ensure that the investment to date continues to deliver impact and that a balance between competition and collaboration is struck between TCD and UCD which delivers greatest systemic benefit. The importance of having all of the members of the cluster at the meeting was noted.

Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning

HEA notes the work being done by TCD to significantly reduce the number of CAO undergraduate programme offer/entry points in line with the Transitions agenda and looks forward to further developments in this space.

TCD noted that targets in the Compact were those agreed as part of the current Strategic Plan. Review of these targets will be part of the development of the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan and TCD continues to be actively engaged with national commitments in the context of its mission.

The HEA noted the interesting feasibility study being led by TCD on an alternative admissions process, and looks forward to hearing the outcomes from the study.

Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience

TCD presented their plans in relation to MOOCs and expansion of online learning. The former is very specifically targeted at positioning TCD internationally. In relation to the latter, while TCD do intend to expand provision, it will also be on a very targeted basis.

High Quality, Internationally Competitive Research and Innovation

HEA noted the strength of the TCD objectives for research. TCD noted that barriers to achievement of research targets include the need for sustained investment in research infrastructure to address gaps and to maintain existing infrastructure; the lack of HR tools to deploy resources, and to attract academic staff with international credibility and capable of leading international consortia; the need to ensure that the entire spectrum of research from fundamental to applied is supported through ensuring that the roles of HEA, SFI, and IRC in particular are complementary; and the need to ensure that prioritised and focused endeavour is balanced by broad based support across the range of disciplines.

Institutional Consolidation

HEA notes the work underway to develop a new centre for teacher education including Marino, UCD, TCD and NCAD and will continue to engage with the institutions as this develops further. HEA acknowledged the difficulties being encountered by all institutions in delivering this major reform given that there is a separate but urgent requirement from the Teaching Council to rework all post-graduate teacher education programmes.