Higher Education Authority

Completing the Landscape Process for Irish Higher Education

Background

In February 2012, as part of the implementation of the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*, the HEA published its document -*Towards a future higher education landscape* -and invited higher education institutions to engage with the HEA in respect of the future position of each institution in the higher education landscape. The HEA intends to provide advice to the Minister for Education and Skills in March on its view of a future configuration of the Irish higher education system. Prior to reaching conclusions further consultations will be held with the higher education institutions in February.

It is intended that those consultations will be informed by this document, which draws together the various inputs, expert analysis and submissions to date and provides an outline structure and potential reconfiguration options for the future higher education system in Ireland.

At present there are 39 higher education institutions in receipt of over 1 billion annually in core grant and grant in lieu of fees, serving around 170,000 students. System reconfiguration is aimed at creating a reduced number of higher education institutions of more significant scale and critical mass in the best interests of students. A key objective is to protect the distinctive roles and mission of universities and technological institutes within the Irish system while delivering the quality outcomes in teaching, research and engagement for students and stakeholders envisaged in the National Strategy.

High level outcomes

In the Landscape document, the HEA identified two key drivers for the future system - the need to improve quality, having regard to international benchmarks and standards, and the need to increase capacity having regard to increased future demand for higher education places in Ireland. An overarching consideration also has to be the extent to which the system of institutions, however configured, is resourced on a sustainable basis.

The Landscape document also identified key outcomes for Irish HE, specifically-

- Improve student experience; both to provide more opportunities for all those who can benefit from HE to access HE, and to ensure that their time in HE allows for the full development of their capacities and potential.
- Improve impact on society and economy; specifically to ensure that the outputs of HE in terms of skilled graduates, application of existing knowledge and development of new knowledge are available to the wider society and the economy to improve quality of life and economic development.

- Improve international recognition of the quality of Irish HE outcomes; to ensure that Irish HE is highly regarded internationally, and enabled to compete for students, staff and financial resources on an international stage.

Underpinning principles

In preparing advice to the Minister on an appropriate configuration of the higher education system, the HEA will have regard to the following principles that are informed by, *inter alia*, the National Strategy and the Landscape document -
- Coherence of approach so that funding, regulatory and other policy instruments, support the development of complementary institutional strategies to meet national policy goals.
- Distinctiveness and diversity of mission within the system so that it is comprehensive in meeting the diversity of needs within society, while also ensuring that individual providers strive for highest quality within their distinct mission.
- Specialisation, as HEIs identify where their strengths lie and where they can make most impact.
- Supporting and driving increased collaboration, and in some cases consolidation, so as to better improve the quality of teaching, research and engagement within and between institutions.
- A particular focus on regional collaboration, to enable specific forms of collaboration within a region, including but not limited to
  - student pathways into and through HEIs in regional clusters and better opportunities for pathways and linkages between further and higher education,
  - joint academic planning,

- o Coordinated research programmes and shared technology and knowledge transfer services within a region to meet the needs of that region.
  - o Better co-operation and linkages with cross border higher education institutions.
- Respect for institutional autonomy while ensuring that the sector as a whole meets national objectives.
- Cost effectiveness so that desired outcomes are achieved through efficient organisation and operation.
- Responsiveness so that institutions can react to changing student, labour market and other trends and adjust provision accordingly.

Applying these principles and having regard to national policy, to the submissions made by HEIs and to external advice to the HEA, an initial system configuration is presented in the Appendices. **This does not represent, at this point, the considered conclusions of the HEA -** the aim is to assist in the consultation process with the HEIs in February by providing a focus for discussion. Following that consultation, the HEA will provide the Minister with our definitive advice in March.

Appendix A sets out the initial emerging institutional configuration and detailed data on the size of any new institutions, and an overview of the the potential clusters. The institutional configuration set out in this memo is drawn from the submissions of the institutions themselves; is in some cases based on existing relationships; applies the recommendations of the international review of initial teacher education; applies the principles of approach set out in the "Landscape" document and is consistent with the National Strategy for Higher Education.

Appendix B sets out possible regional clusters of institutions

Thematic reviews
A feature of a reformed higher education landscape will be the extent to which institutions collaborate and how national activity is harnessed across regional clusters or other formal relationships in respect of particular disciplines.

Major progress has already been achieved in respect of Initial Teacher Education and those findings have been incorporated in the configuration attached. A review of Creative Arts in the Dublin region is to be circulated very shortly and will also serve to inform the institutional meetings in February and final advice to the Minister.

It is proposed to continue to conduct a rolling programme of thematic reviews with further areas such as Engineering, Nursing, and Medicine to be reviewed.

Institutional submissions vs. national objectives

The gap analysis conducted by the HEA has signalled areas of attention for future system development. These include -

- Maintenance of L6/7 provision
- Excessive/unfocussed increases in post graduate provision and research
- Testing the validity of international student numbers
- Monitor the increased focus on life long and flexible learning to ensure that it continues to expand in line with objectives.

It is proposed to address all of these areas in strategic dialogue with the institutions and to agree mission relevant targets with the institutions, the achievement of which will inform the allocation of funding.

Governance

Achieving the objectives of the proposed co-ordinated and consolidated higher education system poses challenges for governance in four respects – at the level of the individual institution; at the level of consolidated HEIs; at the level of regional clusters and at system level. The process of strategic dialogue will be central to the governance process in general.

A new configuration for the higher education system is likely to involve a significant programme of mergers. These will require careful planning and monitoring. The HEA has previously published guidelines on the subject of mergers. These will be reviewed, and revised if necessary, in the context of the detailed implementation planning that will be required.

The development of regional clusters will require the creation of new forms of governance and accountability mechanisms. At the level of principle, these must recognise the autonomy and distinctiveness of mission of each HEI (and others) in the cluster while at the same time in a meaningful way pooling their sovereignty (to borrow a phrase common in the EU) so as to be effective in meeting performance criteria agreed with the HEA. Bearing in mind that the purpose of such clusters is building regions of knowledge. Areas where outcomes will be sought in particular include progression pathways,

programme development, provision and rationalisation, shared services and procurement.

Implementation issues

This memo does not address the funding, pension, HR and legislative issues which will need to be considered as a necessary part of implementation.

<u>Appendix A</u>

Institutional Configuration

The University Sector

No formal mergers between the seven existing universities is proposed. Significant structural change is envisaged as the Review of the Structure of Initial Teacher Education (Initial Teacher Education Review) is implemented across the sector as well as strengthened collaboration through regional clusters and systematic rationalisation of provision on a thematic basis. Overall, the universities will be required to contribute fully to, and operate within, the overall coherent system of higher education.

1. UCD
   a. In the interests of enhancing the outcomes from investment in research, it is proposed that the existing Innovation Alliance with TCD be broadened and deepened. The HEA will, in consultation with UCD and TCD, commission a review of the Alliance in 2013.
   b. UCD will, as indicated by the University, participate fully in the formation of the Institute of Education as recommended by the Initial Teacher Education Review together with TCD, Marino Institute of Education and NCAD.
   c. A formal proposal to merge UCD and NCAD has been submitted. The wider strategic context of creative arts provision in Dublin is currently under review.

2. TCD
   a. The proposals above in respect of UCD relating to the Innovation Alliance and the initial teacher education will also apply in the case of TCD.
   b. TCD will, as indicated by the University, participate fully in the formation of the Institute of Education as recommended by the Initial Teacher Education Review together with UCD, Marino Institute of Education and NCAD.

3. UCC
   Teacher education, currently provided at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT),to integrate with UCC based on the recommendations for art

teacher education set out in the Review of the Structure of Initial Teacher Education (the teacher education review).

4. NUIG/St. Angela's/Shannon College.

(a) St. Angela's College, Sligo to merge with NUIG on foot of the Initial Teacher Education Review. It will become a fully integrated College of the University and rationalisation of provision will be examined in this context.
(b) Shannon College will become a College of NUIG.
(c) Arising from the Initial Teacher Education Review the position of teacher education provision conducted in GMIT at Letterfrack is the subject of discussions between NUIG and GMIT with the aim of developing proposals that will meet the general objectives of the review. These proposals will be considered as part of the imminent consultation process.

5. UL/MIC.

The Initial Teacher Education Review recommended that the two institutions should form one integrated centre for teacher education and become a centre of excellence supporting aspects of teacher education and CPD in both NUIG and UCC. Discussions to-date in respect of a full merger of UL and MIC have proved inconclusive and will require some more time to develop an approach that can meet the objectives of the teacher education review. In the meantime, the institutions will enter into a process to fully rationalise provision in the liberal arts/humanities over a period of time, to be agreed with the HEA.

6. DCU/ St.Patrick's College Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute of Education.

a) Integration of these colleges with DCU to form a new Institute of Education.
b) Programmes not related to teacher education to be subject to review and rationalisation.

In addition -
(a) DCU and Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) have recently signed a MOU outlining the framework for a Strategic Alliance to facilitate a coherent and efficient approach to fulfilling the education, research and innovation requirements of the "Eastern

Corridor". This alliance should be progressed in a manner that will benefit the development of both institutions and their complementary but distinctive missions.

(b) Following on the Review of Initial Teacher Education, the Governors of the Church of Ireland College of Education have agreed to pursue formal discussions relating to structure and governance with DCU and these are advancing.

7. NUIM

   a) Froebel College to be fully integrated with NUIM.
   b) NUIM and Athlone IT to formalise a partnership relationship between the university and Athlone Institute of Technology, similar to the relationship between Dundalk IT and DCU.

Technological Sector

Significant consolidation within the institute of technology sector is envisaged. This is aimed at protecting and enhancing its distinctive mission while increasing the strength and scale of its constituent institutions. The ultimate objective is to create a strong and distinct career and enterprise focussed technological sector that will comprise of a smaller number of strengthened institutes of technology, some of whom following formal merger will seek designation as Technological Universities according to the process and criteria published alongside the Landscape document.

Technological University Proposals

Three formal expressions of interest have been received by the HEA under the process for application for TU as follows:
1. DIT, ITTallaght and IT Blanchardstown.
2. CIT, LIT and ITTralee[1].
3. WIT and IT Carlow.

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[1] It should be noted that the institutional submissions received in July indicated that Limerick IT would also be part of this group but the institute has subsequently communicated its intention to pause its involvement with a view to remaining as an IoT.

DIT, IT Tallaght and IT Blanchardstown.
This proposal for TU designation will be considered in accordance with the process for designation as a TU previously set out by the HEA in "Process and Criteria for Designation as a Technological University".

CIT, LIT and IT Tralee
Subsequent to the making of expressions of interest, LIT communicated its intention to pause its involvement with the Munster TU expression of interest with a view to remaining as an IoT. An alternative submission from the remaining institutes, CIT and IT Tralee, has not been received.

WIT and IT Carlow

This proposal for TU designation will be considered in accordance with the process for designation as a TU previously set out by the HEA in "Process and Criteria for Designation as a Technological University".

Institutes of technology

Consolidated Institutes
GMIT, IT Sligo, and Letterkenny IT.
Their strategic alliance agreement signed in July 2012 commits the partners to develop significant and meaningful collaboration on a comprehensive range of activities.   There are clear benefits for the West/North west region if these three institutes of technology merge to form a stronger institute of technology with greater scale. The alliance has indicated that its longer term ambition is to apply for designation as a Technological University.

Stand-alone institutes of technology
Limerick IT, Athlone IT and Dundalk IT will remain as separate institutes of technology, with close links in their regional clusters (see below) and specified universities.

IADT has also expressed its intention of remaining a stand-alone institute of technology. The wider strategic context of creative arts provision in the Dublin region is currently under review.

In relation to institutes of technology, these will continue to have a strong and purposeful role complementary to future technological universities and distinct from classical universities. Funding and other policy instruments will

be employed to support this objective and the enhancement of diversity in the system overall.

Provision of creative arts programmes in the Dublin region
A review by international experts is nearing completion and will shortly be circulated to HEIs. This review will inform the consultations with institutions in February.

Other Colleges and Institutions

Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, Dublin Dental University Hospital, the Royal College of Surgeons, the National College of Ireland, St. Patrick's College, Thurles, St. Patrick's College Maynooth, St. Patrick's College Carlow, All Hallows College.

There are a number of other institutions, some of which receive partial funding directly from DES at present. The national strategy had proposed that future funding of such institutions would be on the basis of either stand-alone niche provision or incorporated into a larger institution. Further discussion with these institutions is required. In discussions with the institutions their proposals should become clearer and where appropriate will be considered against the criteria set out in the national strategy for continuation of public funding.

Appendix B   Regional Clusters[2]

The following clusters are identified as the basis for discussion with institutions. All of the clusters set out below are based on existing relationships between the institutions and take account of the institutional configuration described above.

1. South/south east – UCC, CIT, IT Tralee, Waterford IT and Carlow IT
2. Mid-West –UL, MIC, Limerick IT
3. West – Connacht Ulster Alliance and NUIG (St. Angela's/Shannon College incorporated into NUIG)[3]
4. UCD/TCD/National College of Art and Design/Marino College of Education/IADT
5. DIT/IT Tallaght/ IT Blanchardstown/NUIM/Athlone IT /DCU/Dundalk IT/RCSI/NCI (St. Patricks Drumcondra, All Hallows Mater Dei and Church of Ireland College of Education incorporated into DCU.)

In relation to clusters 4 and 5 above, the Dublin Regional Higher Education Alliance is a pre-existing cluster which needs to be considered in the context of finalising the most appropriate arrangements for the clusters in the Greater Dublin region.

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[2] The HEA has previously set out guidelines on the development of regional clusters (February 2012 http://www.hea.ie/files/TowardsaFutureHigherEducationLandscape.pdf)
[3] It is also recognised that NUIG and UL have committed to a partnership of collaboration which represents a regional cluster. Further discussions will focus on how this can work within and enhance the clusters identified above.

	Current List of Institutions		Indicative list of new institutions
1	UCD	1	UCD Marino Institute of Education
2	TCD	2	TCD, Marino Institute of Education, RIAM
3	UCC	3	UCC
4	NUIG	4	NUIG, Shannon College, St Angela's College
5	NUIM	5	NUIM, Froebel College of Education
6	UL	6	UL, MIC See Discussion in document
			DCU, St. Patrick's College Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute of Education, Church of Ireland College of Education, See
7	DCU	7	discussion in document
8	Athlone Institute of Technology		
9	Institute of Technology Blanchardstown		
10	Institute of Technology Carlow		
11	Cork Institute of Technology	8	Dublin Alliance IOTs (DIT, ITB, IT Tallaght)
12	Dublin Institute of Technology	9	Munster IOTs (CIT, IT Tralee)*
13	Dun Laoghaire IADT	10	South East IOTs (Waterford IT, IT Carlow)
14	Dundalk Institute of Technology	11	Connaught Ulster Alliance IOTs
15	Galway Mayo Institute of Technology		(GMIT, Letterkenny IT, IT Sligo)
16	Letterkenny Institute of Technology	12	Athlone IT
17	Limerick Institute of Technology	13	Dundalk IT
18	Institute of Technology Sligo	14	Limerick IT
19	Institute of Technology Tralee	15	RCSI
20	Institute of Technology Tallaght Dublin		**Further discussions required**
21	Waterford Institute of Technology	16	National College of Ireland
		17	Dublin Dental University Hospital
22	Mary Immaculate College	18	Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies
23	St. Patrick's College Drumcondra	19	NCAD
24	Mater Dei Institute	20	IADT
25	St. Angela's College Sligo	21	St. Patrick's College Carlow
26	National College of Art And Design	22	St. Patrick's College Thurles
		23	All Hallows College
27	Marino Institute of Education	24	St. Patrick's College Maynooth
28	Church of Ireland College of Education		
29	Froebel College of Education		
30	National College of Ireland		
31	St. Patrick's College Carlow		
32	St. Patrick's College Thurles		
33	All Hallows College		
34	St. Patrick's College Maynooth		
35	Dublin Dental University Hospital		* This assumes that CIT and IT Tralee decide to merge
36	Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies		
37	Shannon College of Hotel Management		
38	Royal Irish Academy of Music		
39	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland		