



**DUNDALK**  
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA  
**DHÚN DEALGAN**



# **DKIT STRATEGIC PLAN 2017 - 2019**

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# GLOSSARY

AIRO	All-Island Research Observatory	KPI	Key Performance Indicator
ATP	Access, Transfer and Progression	LEO	Local Enterprise Office
Athena Swan	Recognising advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all	MEND	Midlands East North Dublin
CAO	Central Applications Office	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
CELT	Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching	NE	New Entrants
CPD	Continuous Professional Development	NEFHEA	North-East Further and Higher Education Alliance
CSO	Central Statistics Office	NERSF	North-East Regional Skills Forum
DCU	Dublin City University	NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
DkIT	Dundalk Institute of Technology	OECD	Organisation for Economic and Co-operation and Development
DSP	Department of Social Protection	QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
EC	European Commission	RDC	Regional Development Centre
EI	Enterprise Ireland	SLDC	Student Learning and Development Centre
ETB	Education and Training Boards	SRS	Student Record System
EU	European Union	STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
FE	Further Education	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
F/T	Full-time	The Region	Counties Louth, Monaghan, Cavan, Meath and North Dublin
GVA	Gross Value Added	TTO	Technology Transfer Office
HE	Higher Education	TTSI	Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative
HEA	Higher Education Authority	TU	Technological University
HEI	Higher Education Institute	UK	United Kingdom
H2020	Horizon 2020	WTE	Whole Time Equivalent
IDA	Industrial Development Authority		
IoT	Institute of Technology		
ISSE	Irish Survey of Student Engagement		



## FOREWORD

Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) faced significant challenges during the lifetime of the last Strategic Plan (2011-2016). The national priorities articulated in the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 were ambitious and plotted a new direction for the development of a coherent and collaborative higher education system through regional clusters and technological universities. Greater emphasis was placed on the multiple roles of higher education in learning and teaching, research and engagement with demands to engage more significantly in delivering on its remit regionally, nationally and internationally. This responsibility and accountability was further embedded in the strategic dialogue process linked to a performance funding model and the development of Institutional Mission-based Performance Compacts. Throughout this time, higher education in general, and DkIT in particular, faced sustained and severe funding cuts and reduced resources in staffing, capital and infrastructure. Nonetheless, the Institute strove to meet the ambitions set out in its Strategic Plan and succeeded in achieving its core strategic goals and objectives.

DkIT has proven itself to be adaptive and resilient in addressing difficult challenges and managing change while excelling in learning and teaching, research and engagement. The Institute was cited by the OECD in 2016 as a best practice exemplar in Europe for embedding entrepreneurship education and was also honoured with the prestigious HR Excellence in Research Award by the European Commission. Such honours recognise the achievements of Institute staff in delivering high quality education underpinned by research and engagement for the benefit of our learners and the region we serve.

DkIT will retain its position within the higher education landscape nationally and will further enhance its relationship with strategic partners. Where appropriate, the Institute will seek to develop new alliances to cement future development. DkIT will continue to place a strategic focus on its internationalisation agenda and maintain its position as one of the top performers in this area. The Institute will engage with all areas of its region in delivering educational, economic, social and cultural opportunities.

Central to the theme of this Strategy is the connected community served by the Institute - its internal community of learners and staff and external community stakeholders, including employers, enterprise, community organisations and others. DkIT's primary focus as a higher education provider is on its region. The Institute will aim to address the needs of all learners and learner groups in a responsive and flexible manner. Additionally the Institute will seek to meet the needs of employers through a collaborative engagement framework.

As one of three higher education Institutes located along the border with Northern Ireland, the recent Brexit decision impacts on DkIT with its attendant challenges and opportunities. The Institute commits to ongoing collaboration with colleagues and strategic partners in Northern Ireland to secure the joint future of the cross-border region.

This Strategy sets out a new ambition for DkIT which is mindful of continuing financial constraints. The Institute will continue to build on its successes, and with renewed determination, will continue to serve learners, employers, communities and the region.

DkIT's Strategic Plan 2017-2019 plots a new trajectory for the Institute in securing and advancing its position within the higher education landscape. We have reflected on the achievements and challenges of the past and we now look forward to a brighter, **more connected future.**

**Ann Campbell**  
President



# CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT



On behalf of the Governing Body of Dundalk Institute of Technology, I am delighted to introduce the DkIT Strategic Plan 2017-2019.

I congratulate all staff on the achievement of the objectives and targets set out in the last Strategic Plan (2011-2016). DkIT is committed to the delivery of excellence in all its pursuits. At a time of great financial constraints, the Governing Body, the Executive Board and the staff

have worked to future-proof the Institute for the benefit of our learners and our community. The acquisition of new sporting and fitness facilities in 2014 is but one testimony to this commitment.

DkIT's Strategic Plan 2017-2019 sets out a mission and vision for DkIT to ensure it forges its place within the Irish Higher Education landscape. The strategic goals and objectives set out here are underpinned by national policy priorities. These goals and objectives also re-affirm and reinforce the Institute's regional remit, while remaining committed to the national agenda for higher education.

I would like to extend my warm thanks to my colleagues on Governing Body, to the Executive Board, to Institute staff and learners, to partners and stakeholders, to employers and the wider community for their contribution to the Institute. There is an exciting future for the Institute going forward and with the support and commitment of all our stakeholders, the implementation of our next three year strategy is guaranteed.

I am confident that DkIT will continue to play a pivotal role in the educational, economic, social and cultural life of the region we serve.

**Clifford Kelly**  
**Chairman of Governing Body**





## SECTION ONE

# INTRODUCTION

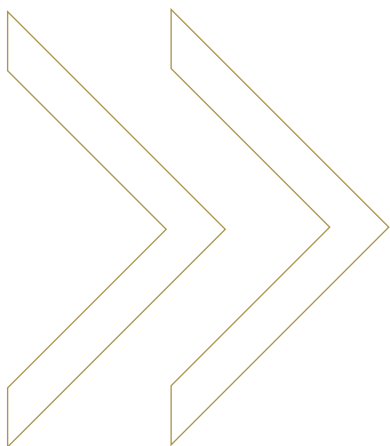
Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) has earned its reputation as the leading higher education provider in the North-East region attracting learners nationally and internationally. The Strategic Plan 2017- 2019 builds on the achievements of previous plans and sets out the Institute's mission and vision for the next three years. This new plan has been developed in the wake of the recent global recession and at a time of great uncertainty, particularly as a consequence of the recent decision by the United Kingdom (UK) to exit the European Union (EU) (Brexit). In addition to the increasingly complex and multifaceted role played by the Irish higher education sector in general, Brexit presents further challenges and opportunities. For an Institute of Technology situated beside the UK's only land border with the EU, this is of particular relevance. DkIT's new Strategic Plan is therefore set firmly against this backdrop. The Plan articulates the Institute's strategic direction towards 2020 and commits to a renewed sense of purpose to contribute to the North-East region, the cross-border region and to relevant national policies.

This Strategic Plan 2017-2019 was developed between July and December 2016 and spans three years. This timeframe was agreed in the context of a number of key considerations, pertaining at the time of writing. These include:

- 1 Significant senior appointments anticipated in 2017;
- 2 On-going commitments under DkIT's Financial Plan 2015–2018, as adopted by the DkIT Governing Body and approved by the HEA in January 2015;
- 3 A new cycle of HEA Mission-Based Performance Compacts post 2016.



The Institute adopted an inclusive and highly consultative three phased strategic planning process. This ensured that the strategic goals and objectives outlined in the Plan are aligned with national policy priorities for higher education in Ireland and that the Institute is positioning itself effectively to meet the needs of learners, staff, employers and stakeholders in the North-East region.



## PHASE 1 REVIEW OF KEY POLICY DOCUMENTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

A review of the key policy documents and sector reports was carried out to provide a contextual background for the development of the new Strategic Plan and to inform the process. This assisted in identifying and scoping the external factors and macro-environment within which the Institute would plan its future strategic trajectory. In addition, a range of data sources was collated and reviewed to inform the overall process. These included *inter alia*:

- a** Key statistical data from multiple sources including SOLAS, the HEA, Government Departments, CSO and AIRO;
- b** Skills needs' reports and industry profile reports for the region;
- c** External factors, which influence or impinge upon Irish higher education;
- d** National and international trends in higher education;
- e** The best practice in higher education delivery at national and international level.





## PHASE 2

### ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL FACTORS AND FUTURE NEEDS

Following the review of the external environment the internal factors, which may impact on the strategic direction of the Institute, were considered. This involved an analysis of the Institute's current position. Much of this work had already been completed when preparing the Institute's Financial Plan 2015 - 2018 and is also included in the latest Progress Report to the HEA on the Mission-based Performance Compact. Due consideration was given to the following:

- a** Internal data and statistics showing trends in key metrics to include: learner numbers; internationalisation; research funding; enterprise data and engagement;
- b** A review of the current Strategic Plan, including a review of sub-strategies;
- c** An analysis of the Institute's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as a mechanism to identify its key differentiating factors vis-à-vis the rest of the HEI Sector in Ireland;
- d** The identification or need for sub-strategies and plans for the new Strategic Plan;
- e** The HEA's next stage Mission-based Performance Compacts. This was complemented by a series of extensive consultations with a wide range of external and internal stakeholders to assess current and future needs. These included consultations with staff at School and Functional level, with learners, the Executive Board, the Governing Body as well as external groups and organisations to include DCU, NEFHEA, ETBs, EI, IDA, LEO's, DSP, Skills Forum, County Councils and industry and the community stakeholders.

## PHASE 3

### ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION OF STRATEGIC OPTIONS

Following the completion of Phases 1 and 2, Phase 3 considered the strategic routes open to the Institute and the subsequent prioritisation and selection of key strategic goals and objectives designed to meet the overall ambition of the Institute for the coming years. This was followed by the identification of key performance indicators for each objective so as to allow the tracking of progress. Due consideration was given to ensure that the strategy aligns with the HEA's Mission-based Performance Compacts. The Strategic Plan is therefore structured across eight key areas to include:

- 1** Regional Clusters;
- 2** Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning;
- 3** Excellent Learning and Teaching and Quality of the Learner Experience;
- 4** High Quality Internationally Competitive Research and Innovation;
- 5** Enhanced Engagement with Enterprise and the Community and Embedded Knowledge Exchange;
- 6** Enhanced Internationalisation;
- 7** Institutional Consolidation;
- 8** Implementing Change.

The Strategic Plan 2017-2019 is underpinned by the Institute's financial and resource considerations.



## SECTION TWO

# CONTEXT, BACKGROUND AND PROFILE

## 2.1 CONTEXT

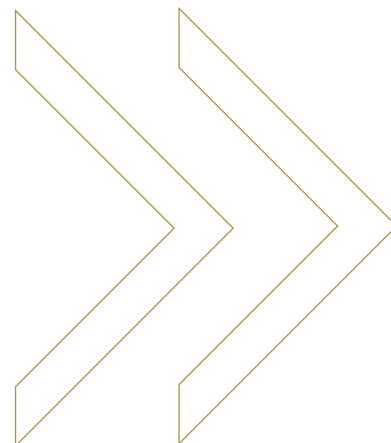
DkIT's Strategic Plan 2017-2019 is developed in the context of an ever-challenging and changing higher education landscape environment. As Ireland emerges from economic recession, the country's higher education institutions struggle to meet the demands associated with the provision of quality higher education with limited and depleting resources – human, physical and financial. Arising from the public sector finance crisis in 2007, DkIT has seen its state funding cut while its learner numbers have increased. During this time, there have been a number of major changes to higher education policy to include:

- 1 A strategy for system level restructuring and reform through the process of establishing Technological Universities and clusters of HEIs within the region. (*National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, Programme for Partnership in Government, Towards a Future for Higher Education 2012*);
- 2 HEIs have become more accountable for their performance through the formation of service level agreements with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) as set out in the Mission-based Performance Compacts with a proportion of funding now contingent on performance. (*National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, Programme for Partnership in Government, The Higher Education System Performance Framework 2014–16, Scanning the Higher Education Landscape*);
- 3 The importance of lifelong learning and flexible educational provision has been underscored. (*National Skills Strategy to 2025, Unbundling of Higher Education 2016, Reports from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*);
- 4 A clear focus on access and participation requires HEIs to be more innovative and adaptable in engaging and supporting targeted groups such as the mature learner, minority groups and learners with disabilities. (*National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015–2020, Action Plan for Education 2016-2019, Programme for Partnership in Government, Supporting Progression from FET to HE – Making it Happen, 2016*);





- 5 An increased focus on STEM provision. (*HEA: Financial Review of the Institutes of Technology, 2016*);
- 6 The sector is tasked with becoming more responsive to employer needs and providing learners with work-ready skills. (*Action Plan for Education 2016-2019, Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland 2013*);
- 7 HEI's contribution to the delivery of the cross-disciplinary research, innovation and enterprise development targets. (*Border Regional Action Plan for Jobs, Enterprise 2025, Innovation 2020*);
- 8 An increased focus on the internationalisation agenda. (*National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*);
- 9 An emphasis on diversity and equality with a particular strategic focus on gender equality within higher education institutions. (*HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions 2016*).



The above is set against the background of an evolving industrial relations context (*Lansdowne Road Agreements, Cush Report*) and an extremely challenging funding environment. (*Scanning the Higher Education Landscape, Expert Group on Future Funding for Higher Education (Cassells Report, 2016)*).

Such policy positions, many of which are now linked to funding, place greater challenges on an already struggling higher education system. Higher education in Ireland is required to be ever more agile and responsive to a changing and dynamic national and global environment, which includes Brexit.

It is within these contexts that DkIT has based its strategic mission and vision for the next three years.



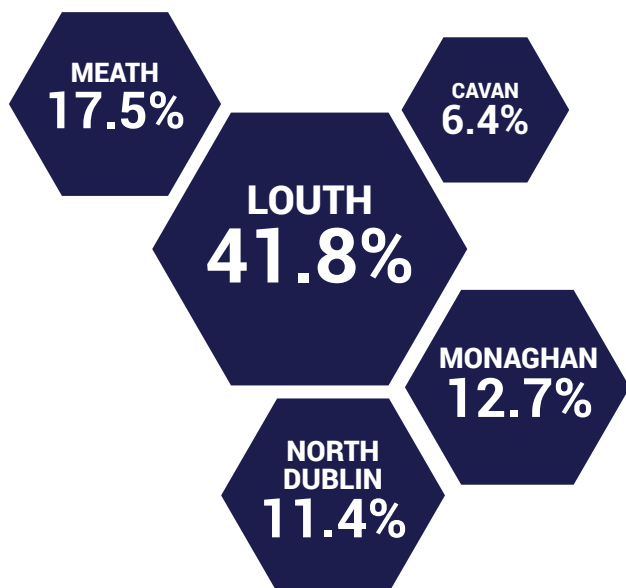
## 2.2 BACKGROUND AND CURRENT PROFILE

DkIT is strategically positioned mid-way along the Dublin-Belfast Corridor, on the border with Northern Ireland. Within a 90 minute drive time from the campus there resides an estimated population of 3.29 million, which in 2011, accounted for approximately 52% of the population of the entire island (*A socio-economic profile of the DkIT catchment, AIRO, 2012*). This presents unique challenges and opportunities for the Institute economically, socially and culturally.

The demographic profile of DkIT's regional catchment area shows educational attainment to degree level among the population in a number of counties to be at low levels when compared to the State average of 16.4% (*A socio-economic profile of the DkIT catchment, AIRO, 2012*). While unemployment in the region has decreased, the labour force participation rate for the Border region is the lowest in Ireland at 56.5% (*Regional Skills Bulletin, 2016*). Deprivation indices indicate some of the most disadvantaged areas in Ireland are located in this region. Additionally, the region encompasses rural and urban communities.

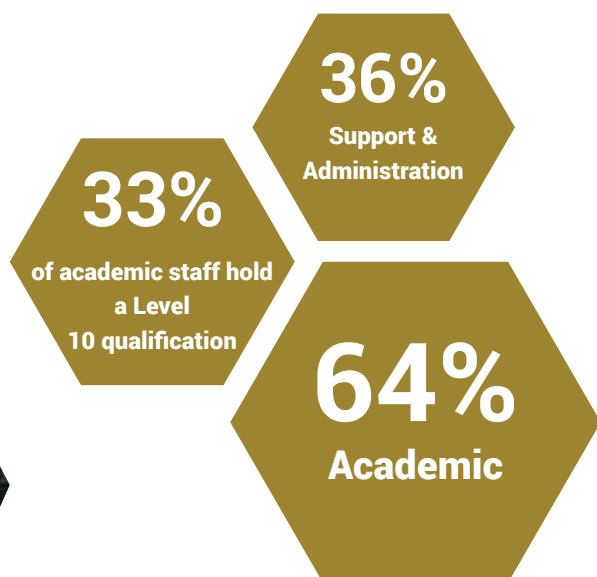
DkIT was founded in 1970 and recruits 89% of its learners from the region. As the leading Higher Education Institution in the North-East, DkIT is a major contributor to the educational, economic, social, and cultural development of the region. With circa 5,200 learners, 500 staff and an impressive 90 acre campus and the recent addition of state-of-the-art sports facilities, the Institute is a vibrant learning community. Through its excellence in learning and teaching, research and engagement, the Institute continues to be a transformational force.





### Learners

DkIT's learners come mainly from Louth (41.8% of the total) followed by Meath (17.5%), Monaghan (12.7%), Cavan (6.4%) and North Dublin (11.4%). (HEA SIDF MEND Cluster - Multi-component: Teaching & Learning, Access & Transition, Final Report 2015). DkIT therefore caters for a geographically distinctive segment of the Institute of Technology (IoT) sector and has a total learner population of 5,200 of which 98% are undergraduates and 2% postgraduates. Flexible learners account for 6% of total enrolments and 2% are participating in labour market activation programmes. Mature learners account for 16% of full-time undergraduate entrants with 25% of learners coming from targeted socio-economic groups. DkIT has the largest number of international learners in the IoT sector, standing at 9% of total full-time enrolments. (SRS March 2016 Return).



### Staff

DkIT employs circa 500 staff of whom 64% are academic staff and 36% are support and administrative staff. Of the academic staff 33% hold a Level 10 qualification. There is 60% female representation on the Executive Board and 41% female representation on the Governing Body. DkIT is fully committed to the Continued Professional Development (CPD) of its staff, supported through the work of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).

The Institute has differentiated itself as an entrepreneurial Institute providing high quality work-ready graduates. It has excelled in a number of key areas within learning and teaching, research and engagement as outlined below:

### Regional Clusters

- DkIT is one of four HEIs actively engaged in the very successful Dublin/Leinster 2 (MEND Cluster);
- The strategic alliance with DCU represents an important partnership for DkIT. The DCU-DkIT Graduate School is a flagship development. DkIT and DCU are also important contributors to the economic development of the Belfast-Dublin economic corridor;
- The alliance with NEFHEA is a vital partnership to enhance transition from FE-HE.

### Learning and Teaching

- DkIT offers a broad range of programmes in Business, Humanities, Engineering, Informatics, Creative Arts, Health and Science, providing Awards from Level 6 to Level 10 on the NFQ;
- DkIT's range of programmes offers a distinctive discipline mix focused on delivering highly skilled creative graduates who contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of the region;
- DkIT is recognised as an entrepreneurial Institute having incorporated entrepreneurial learning outcomes across all its programmes and is currently the subject of a best practice OECD case study on embedding entrepreneurship on a campus-wide basis;
- DkIT has a strong record of commitment to continuing professional development of staff, particularly in relation to learning and teaching. This latter has had a demonstrable impact on the learner experience.





### Learner Experience

- DkIT is committed to delivering a quality learner experience within an inclusive learning environment and through the provision of a range of learning support services through the work of Student Services, the Student Learning and Development Centre (SLDC) and CELT;
- The Institute is learner-centred and offers diverse educational provision, which is responsive to stakeholder needs.

### Access and Participation

- DkIT has an established track record in participation and access from targeted socio-economic groups;
- 89% of new entrants to DkIT come from schools within the North-East region.

### Research and Innovation

- DkIT is the leading IoT in its prioritised areas of research (ICT, Health and Ageing; Energy and the Environment and Creative Arts) through which it holds an international reputation;
- DkIT provides research-informed learning and teaching;
- DkIT is among the top three IoTs in terms of the ratio of research income to academic staff members, and ranks third in the sector in terms of securing Horizon 2020 (H2020) funding;
- DkIT is ranked fifth in the IoT sector in terms of citations attained and fourth for published peer reviewed research;
- DkIT received the HR Excellence in Research Award by the European Commission (EC).





## Engagement

- DkIT has a strong record in regional engagement with industry through the work of the Regional Development Centre (RDC), established in 1989 to act as the commercial interface between the Institute and the wider business community. Since then it has supported more than 1,220 entrepreneurs, incubated 170 knowledge based start-up enterprises and conducted 280 applied research projects;
- Through the work of the Careers and Placement Services, DkIT has a strong record in supporting and securing learner work placements with employers. Work placement is embedded in circa 50% of undergraduate programmes;
- DkIT is a key player in the social, cultural and community life of the region. It has spearheaded social innovation as exemplified in its work in ageing.

## Internationalisation

- Internationalisation has been embedded in all Institute programmes since the 2012-2013 Programmatic Review Cycle.
- DkIT has a number of key partnerships with international HE institutions;
- DkIT is one of the top performing IoTs in relation to attracting international learners.

Over the years DkIT has grown its education, research, training and enterprise provision within budget and delivered good value for money (*Socio-Economic Impact Study of Dundalk Institute of Technology, 2013, showing that for every €1 DkIT received in state funding, it generated €7.57 in economic impact*). However, arising from the public finance crisis in Ireland in 2007, DkIT (like all State-funded HEIs) suffered substantial cuts in funding, resulting in a deficit since 2013. To address this, a financial plan for the period September 2015-2018 was agreed with the HEA in January 2015 with the aim of returning DkIT to a break-even financial position by year ended 31 August 2018. This commitment agreed in the Financial Plan 2015-2018 underpins the new Strategic Plan 2017-2019.

## SECTION THREE

# DKIT'S FUTURE TRAJECTORY, MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

## 3.1 FUTURE TRAJECTORY

DKIT is a quality provider of HE that meets the needs of its many regional stakeholders – learners, staff, employers and the community – educationally, economically, socially and culturally. This Strategic Plan focuses on building on the Institute's existing strengths and addressing any challenges that may hinder the ambitions set out in the Plan.

The development and implementation of this new Strategic Plan will ensure that the Institute continues to differentiate itself within the sector in a sustainable manner by:

- 1 Strategically positioning itself within the national HE landscape;
- 2 Placing the learner at the centre of its strategy with a particular focus on flexible and lifelong learning provision, while continuing to deliver on its existing provision across all disciplines;
- 3 Growing STEM provision;
- 4 Enhancing the regional agenda and becoming the first port of call for employers and the community to support regional development with accredited and higher level CPD and training;
- 5 Branding and marketing itself as an agile, innovative and responsive Institute.

### Strategic Positioning

DKIT aims to continue to be a transformational player in the North-East and cross-border region by maintaining and enhancing its profile and position in learning and teaching, research, innovation, enterprise development and internationalisation. The Institute aims to enhance its place in HE through its collaborations with partners and through a possible re-designation as a TU if such becomes appropriate.



## Learning and Teaching

The Institute will seek Delegated Authority to make awards at Level 9 and 10 in its prioritised areas of research. It will seek to increase flexible and lifelong learning provision to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners and the stakeholders in the region. It will build on existing achievements and provide staff with the professional development opportunities in learning and teaching to support these objectives.

## Learner-Centred Environment

At the heart of the Strategic Plan is a core focus on learners. DkIT will continue to facilitate meaningful learner engagement and work with learners as partners. DkIT will provide learners with both discipline-specific and employability skills required for the working world. In particular the Institute will have a clear focus on attracting and supporting a more diverse range of learners. This will require on-going innovation in curriculum development, delivery and assessment. This will be reflected, for example, in the development of common entry level programmes to support the transitions agenda from Further Education (FE) to HE. It therefore requires a holistic and integrated approach to learning and teaching, research and engagement within a flexible, adaptive and responsive organisational structure.

## Employability

DkIT will place a determined emphasis on meeting the needs of employers and the community in the region. The Careers' Office and the Placement Office, in working more closely together and in tandem with Schools, the RDC and the North-East Regional Skills Forum (NERSF), will respond to the needs of regional employers and the wider community.

## Engagement

DkIT will continue to play a key role in the economic, social, cultural and community life of the North-East region. The Institute will also continue to work collaboratively with cross-border partners, particularly in the wake of Brexit.

## Building Brand Identity

The Institute will develop and implement its marketing and communications plan aimed at building and raising the profile and brand identity of the Institute.

## Equality Agenda

DkIT is committing to promoting diversity and equality and will work towards securing Athena Swan Accreditation.





### 3.2 MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

# OUR MISSION

DkIT provides learner-centred higher education dedicated to serving the needs of its learners and empowers its staff to deliver high quality learning and teaching, research and engagement to support the economic, social and cultural development of the region and beyond.

# OUR VISION

DkIT will be the Higher Education Institute of choice for learners, employers and the community in the North-East region.



# OUR VALUES

1

## ACCOUNTABILITY

The Institute is committed to the efficient and effective management of human and financial resources to maintain public trust and ensure a fiscally responsible and sustainable future.

2

## COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

Continuous evaluation of goals and objectives is ensured in order to address the needs of the present and to prepare for the challenges of the future.

3

## LEARNER-CENTRED LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

The academic and personal success of learners lies at the centre of all Institute activity. DkIT strongly believes in the empowerment of the individual learner and in affording every learner the opportunity to learn, succeed and meet their full potential academically, in the workplace and in the community.

4

## EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING AND TEACHING AND RESEARCH

The Institute is committed to excellence in learning, teaching and research and will actively support staff to upskill, reach personal goals and continue to operate at levels of professional excellence.

5

## CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Institute is committed to serving the economic, social and cultural needs of the community and region and is supported in this endeavour through its strategic partnerships and alliances at regional, national and international levels.

6

## QUALITY OF WORK ENVIRONMENT

Each member of the Institute community is valued. The Institute fosters respect, trust and support among staff and learners through shared governance and within a dynamic learning environment.

7

## INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

DkIT is committed to accessible higher education for all learners and to the delivery of education and support services which will enable learners to achieve their individual educational goals. A diverse learner body will be supported through equal access opportunities and the delivery of educational and support services designed to enhance learning and personal development.

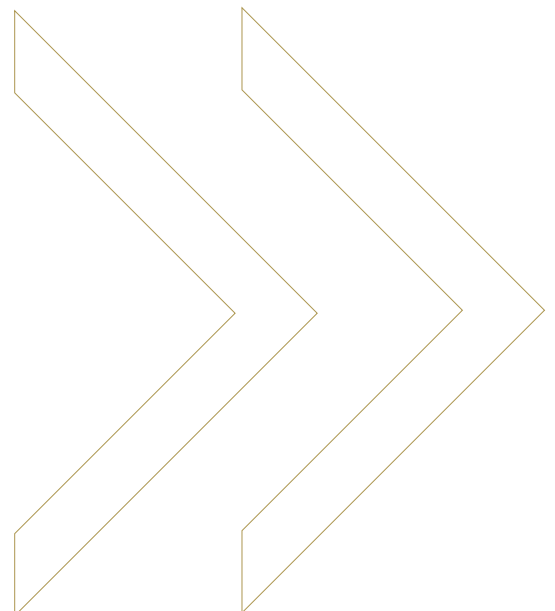
## SECTION FOUR

# DKIT'S STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2017-2019

DKIT's Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Goals set out its ambition for the period 2017-2019. The Strategic Goals and Objectives for the Institute are aligned with the broader national higher education agenda as published in a number of key policy documents and reports to include, but not restricted to: the National Strategy for Higher Education 2030, National Skills Strategy to 2025 and the National Plan for Equity for Access to Higher Education 2105-2019 and also papers published by the HEA on the future landscape of higher education in Ireland (Appendix 1).

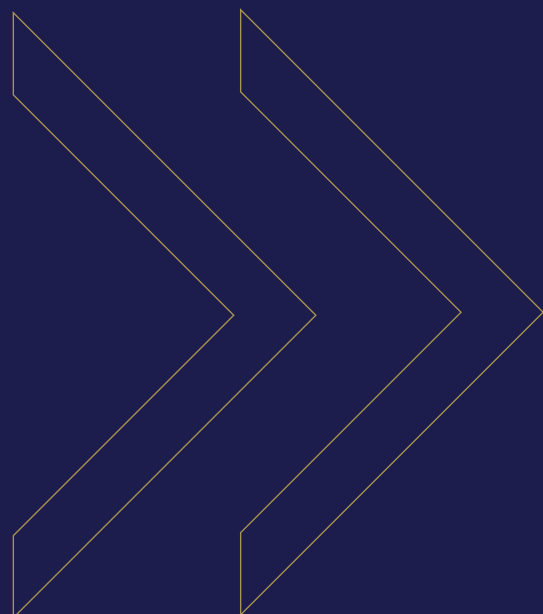
The Strategic Goals are aligned to the strategic areas identified in the HEA's Mission-based Performance Compacts and reflect the ambitions of the Institute across eight key areas as determined by the needs of the learners, staff and the region. DKIT's aim is to achieve significant objectives in the areas of:

- STRATEGIC GOAL 1:** Regional Clusters
- STRATEGIC GOAL 2:** Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning
- STRATEGIC GOAL 3:** Excellent Learning and Teaching and Quality of Learner Experience
- STRATEGIC GOAL 4:** High Quality, Internationally Competitive Research and Innovation
- STRATEGIC GOAL 5:** Enhanced Engagement with Enterprise and the Community and Embedded Knowledge Exchange
- STRATEGIC GOAL 6:** Internationalisation
- STRATEGIC GOAL 7:** Institutional Consolidation
- STRATEGIC GOAL 8:** Implementing Change.





## 4.1 STRATEGIC GOALS, OBJECTIVES, KPIs AND TARGETS



# GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The strategic goals are aligned to the strategic areas identified in the HEA's Mission-based Performance Compacts and reflect the ambitions of the Institute across eight key areas as determined by the needs of the learners, staff and the region. Each goal has a series of associated objectives that will allow us to measure the progress towards the achievement of our mission.

# STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Regional Clusters



## STRATEGIC GOAL 1 | REGIONAL CLUSTERS

DkIT remains fully committed to its on-going strategic alliances.

There continues to be close synergies between DkIT and DCU. Both institutions have a common presence in, and focus on, Ireland's Eastern Corridor. Both contribute to the economic development of a shared region and hold a common view of the importance of cross-border collaboration. Both are active and supportive members of the MEND Cluster. DkIT and DCU confirm their ongoing commitment to the Strategic Alliance established in 2012 and seek to continue existing collaborative activities to include the DCU-DkIT Graduate School.

The Dublin/Leinster 2 Cluster (Midlands, East and North Dublin - MEND Cluster) involving DkIT, Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT), DCU and Maynooth University (MU), will continue to progress the overall aims and objectives of the Cluster in terms of academic planning and development and enterprise engagement.

The development and further enhancement of the North-East Further and Higher Education Alliance (NEFHEA) continues to be of strategic importance. This serves not only to improve participation and access rates but more importantly provides opportunities for learners to access higher education options regionally in transitioning from FE to HE.

Opportunities for further collaboration include:

- Taught post-graduate programmes;
- Articulation arrangements;
- Research and innovation;
- Regional development initiatives.

### Strategic Objective 1 Continued commitment to strategic alliances with DCU, the MEND Cluster and NEFHEA.

#### KPIs

- i. Annual identification of access, transfer and progression from FE to HE;
- ii. To support high-quality achievement in the DCU-DkIT Graduate School;
- iii. To continue to actively participate in the Dublin/Leinster 2 (MEND) Cluster.

#### Targets

##### By 2019, DkIT will:

- i. Increase in the number of registered learners from FE across all the programmes by 5%;
- ii. Grow registration levels in the DCU-DkIT Graduate School.



# STRATEGIC GOAL 2

## Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning

DkIT will prioritise its strategic focus on increasing its participation and access rates. This requires a prioritised focus on increasing flexible and lifelong learning provision. This reflects the strategic intent of the Institute to provide programmes relevant to the needs and abilities of learners and to meet the needs of employers in the region. To support this strategic goal, the Institute will develop access and progression routes for diverse learner cohorts. This will include a broad relevant programme offering with a renewed emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) provision and flexible delivery options.

As discussed above, DkIT will work closely with the NEFHEA partners to ensure greater access from targeted under-represented groups. In addition, the Institute will explore options for common entry level programmes to enhance learner options with a view to lowering non-completion rates across programmes.



## STRATEGIC GOAL 2 | PARTICIPATION, EQUAL ACCESS AND LIFELONG LEARNING

The Institute will continue to support apprenticeships. The new apprenticeship model offers increased opportunities in enterprise-education collaborations and provides an alternative educational path for learners in the region. It also has potential to further differentiate the Institute within the higher education sector in terms of its learning and teaching provision.

Brexit has the potential to impact on cross-border learner mobility and recruitment. As one of three HEIs situated on the border with Northern Ireland, the Institute remains committed to its role in cross-border educational and economic development and will continue to promote itself to potential cross-border learners.

### Strategic Objective 1 To increase the level and range of flexible and lifelong learning provision.

#### KPI

#### i. Increase

- Overall Learner numbers (WTE);
- Number of flexible learners (WTE);
- Number of apprentice blocks;
- Number of new apprenticeship programmes;
- Number of accredited and higher level CPD offerings to employers.

### Strategic Objective 2 Widen participation from targeted under-represented groups:

#### KPI

- i. % participation from targeted under-represented groups.

#### Targets

#### By 2019, DkIT will:

- i. Increase the overall learner numbers (WTE) by 3% through increased retention and recruitment;
- ii. Increase the % of flexible learners (WTE) by 3%;
- iii. Increase Phase 4/6 apprentice numbers by 20%;
- iv. Develop two new apprenticeship programmes;
- v. Double the number of accredited and higher level CPD programmes;
- vi. Meet the % national norms set for targeted under-represented groups.



# STRATEGIC GOAL 3

## Excellent Learning and Teaching and Quality of Learner Experience

DkIT will continue to provide higher education programmes from Levels 6-10 across its disciplines in Business, Humanities, Informatics, Creative Arts, Health, Science and Engineering. Given the demographic profile of the region, DkIT will place a particular focus on six key areas as follows:

- 1** Employability skills: The Institute is committed to continually embedding employability skills across the curriculum to include oral and written communication, team-working, problem solving, professionalism and career development;
- 2** New modes of delivery: DkIT will respond to employer and industry needs through the provision of focussed accredited training and upskilling programmes delivered through flexible and lifelong learning provision. The Institute will provide CPD as appropriate to staff to facilitate the development and implementation of these modes of delivery;
- 3** Through Programmatic and Institutional Review: DkIT will address the educational needs of the full-time and flexible learners in the choice of programmes from Levels 6-10;
- 4** Continue to deliver on its core programmes across all disciplines while exploring opportunities for inter-disciplinary STEAM programme development and delivery;
- 5** Increase STEM provision;
- 6** Graduate Education: DkIT will further develop its range of programmes offered at Level 9 and 10 to (a) meet educational needs within the region for high-tech companies in such sectors as pharma, ICT, engineering, fintech and food and to (b) move towards the attainment of TU metrics in a bid to future-proof DkIT's position within the higher education landscape.



## STRATEGIC GOAL 3 | EXCELLENT LEARNING AND TEACHING AND QUALITY OF LEARNER EXPERIENCE

The Institute is committed to ensuring that all learners are work-ready and have the necessary employability skills as well as discipline-specific skills to meet the requirements of employers and industry. This will be addressed by embedding entrepreneurial learning outcomes, learner projects, learner internship and work placement in programmes. Inter-disciplinary programme development will feature as a key strategic priority in delivering (1) employer-led and employer-informed flexible programmes and in (2) ensuring learners have acquired the discipline-specific and employability skills they need. This will be achieved by ensuring greater coherence and integration of activities in the Careers and Placement Office working closely with the RDC (incubation, enterprise and technology transfer office) and in conjunction with the NERSF.

In respect of the quality of the learner experience, the Institute will continue to place learners at the heart of its strategy in terms of academic and student support provision.

**Strategic Objective 1** To provide effective learner-centred supports.

**KPI**

- i. Participation in ISSE Survey and response to feedback.

**Strategic Objective 2** To enhance learner retention and completion rates.

**KPIs**

- i. Number of common entry level options;
- ii. Learner retention rates and completion rates.

**Strategic Objective 3** To respond to stakeholder needs through the development and delivery of employer relevant programmes which include employability skills.

**KPIs**

- i. Number of STEM learners (WTE);
- ii. Number of inter-disciplinary programmes.

**Targets**

**By 2019, DkIT will:**

- i. Increase participation in ISSE Survey and demonstrate action taken as a response to feedback;
- ii. Provide two additional common entry level programmes;
- iii. Proactively support learner retention and completion through implementation of effective policy;
- iv. Increase the number of STEM learners (WTE) by 5%;
- v. Provide two additional inter-disciplinary programmes.

A pipette is shown dispensing a purple liquid into a rack of test tubes. The test tubes are arranged in a white plastic rack. The liquid in the test tubes is a vibrant purple color. The background is slightly blurred, showing other test tubes with different colored liquids (green, yellow, orange).

# STRATEGIC GOAL 4

## High Quality, Internationally Competitive Research and Innovation

The Institute will strive to maintain its position among the top three performing IoTs within the sector in terms of research funding. It is as a direct result of this funding that the Institute can successfully deliver its strategic research objectives aimed at meeting its three year vision. The Institute currently has strong research collaborations with its counterparts in Northern Ireland and Scotland through its engagement in the EU INTERREG Programmes.

There are implications arising from Brexit which may impact on future research opportunities and collaborations with UK partners.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 4 | HIGH QUALITY, INTERNATIONALLY COMPETITIVE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

DkIT is committed to driving research excellence in a number of prioritised areas to include Health, Ageing and ICT, Energy and the Environment and the Creative Arts. A crucial strategic objective is to ensure that learning and teaching remain research informed. This aligns with the overall vision of preparing learners for the working environment whereby learners are informed of the latest thinking and innovation within their discipline area and its application to the real world. To achieve this, DkIT must encourage and empower its staff to excel in their discipline area through engaging in research. In this way staff are not only engaged in new discovery but also work directly with industry in applying new technologies and innovations with real world impact. In addition, the Institute will seek to increase the number of staff with PhDs through its learning and teaching supports and its recruitment strategy.

**Strategic Objective 1** Continue to focus and drive research excellence in prioritised research areas which are internationally competitive and have societal and economic impact.

**KPIs**

- i. Level of exchequer and non-exchequer research income leveraged by researchers including cross-border funding;
- ii. Number of Level 9 and 10 researchers.

**Strategic Objective 2** To engage and support all researchers in an enabling environment.

**KPI**

- i. Number of postgraduate research supervisors.

**Strategic Objective 3** To ensure learning and teaching remain research informed.

**KPIs**

- i. The number of peer-reviewed research articles and citations;
- ii. The number of summer undergraduate research programmes.

**Targets**

**By 2019, DkIT will:**

- i. Maintain the level of exchequer and non-exchequer research income leveraged by researchers at €4m per year;
- ii. Achieve sixty registered postgraduates (Level 9 and 10);
- iii. Ensure that the number of research supervisors > 50;
- iv. Have published research articles >110 and citations >1,600;
- v. Host three Research Summer schools supporting thirty learners.



# STRATEGIC GOAL 5

Enhanced Engagement with Enterprise and the Community and Embedded Knowledge Exchange

## STRATEGIC GOAL 5 | ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT WITH ENTERPRISE AND THE COMMUNITY AND EMBEDDED KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

DkIT's role in the development and enhancement of the economic, social and cultural life of the region is at the centre of DkIT's Strategy. The Institute is committed to its engagement with regional enterprise, communities, state and semi-state bodies, educational providers and other key stakeholders for the benefit of the region. The Institute will ensure greater coherence to drive and deliver on this agenda. This will involve greater collaboration between functional units within the Institute bringing together the Careers and Placement Offices into one overarching employability centre and working closely with the RDC and the NERSEF.

**Strategic Objective 1** To continue to ensure learners are work-ready through enhanced engagement with employers.

**KPIs**

- i. Number of learner work placements;
- ii. Number of learner projects with industry/community/cultural organisations.

**Strategic Objective 2** Support economic, social, cultural and community development within the region and on a cross-border basis.

**KPIs**

- i. Number of entrepreneurs/start-ups supported;
- ii. Occupancy rates in incubation facilities;
- iii. Number of research/innovation projects with industry/community and cultural organisations;
- iv. Number and breadth of intellectual property outputs.

**Targets**

- By 2019, DkIT will:**
- i. Increase the number of learner work placements by 3% annually;
  - ii. Increase the number of learner projects with industry/ community/ cultural organisations by 10% per annum;
  - iii. Increase the number of entrepreneurs/ start-ups supported by 5% per annum;
  - iv. Have maintained occupancy rates at RDC at 85% and above;
  - v. Increase the number of research/innovation projects with industry/community/ cultural organisations by 10% per annum;
  - vi. Meet the commercialisation of intellectual property targets as outlined in TTSI3.

# STRATEGIC GOAL 6

## Enhanced Internationalisation

Internationalisation remains a key priority for the Institute, which aspires to continue to be one of the top performing IoTs in terms of attracting overseas learners. As a result of the recent Brexit decision, Ireland will be the largest English speaking country in Europe. This may present opportunities for Ireland and the Institute in further attracting international learners.

To produce graduates who are work-ready, internationally engaged and inter-culturally aware, internationalisation has already been embedded in the curriculum. Learning and teaching strategies are employed in the classroom to ensure Irish and international learners collaborate, thus enhancing their inter-cultural competencies. The Institute remains committed to the maintenance and promotion of international exchange activities and will continue to raise awareness among staff and learners of the importance of overseas exchanges.

**Strategic Objective 1** To widen learner experience and global awareness by sustained efforts in international markets.

### KPIs

- i. Incoming number of international learners;
- ii. Number of learners, staff and research collaborations with partner colleges.

### Targets

**By 2019, DkIT will:**

- i. Sustain its position as the leading IoT for international learners;
- ii. Increase the number of learners, staff and research collaborations with partner colleges by 3%.



# STRATEGIC GOAL 7

## Institutional Consolidation

In looking to its long-term future, DkIT will evaluate its position within the HE landscape in terms of its strategic positioning and its strategic alliances. In doing so, consideration will be given to potential TU status. Options open to the Institute in this respect will be critically evaluated and assessed to ensure optimum designation for the Institute going forward.

**Strategic Objective 1** To enhance the Institute's regional, cross-border, national and international positioning through appropriate designations and collaborations.

### KPI

- i. Collaborations with partners and a possible re-designation as a TU, if such becomes appropriate.

**Strategic Objective 2** To seek Delegated Authority at Level 9 and 10 in areas of research strength.

### KPI

- i. Submission to QQI for Delegated Authority to make research awards at Levels 9 and 10.

### Targets

#### By 2019, DkIT will:

- i. Have identified future strategic alliances and partnership model;
- ii. Have secured Delegated Authority at Levels 9 & 10.

# STRATEGIC GOAL 8

## Implementing Change

DkIT aims to deliver on our promise to learners, to the community and to the region. Staff will be empowered through effective communication and staff training and development.

**Physical Environment and IT Infrastructure:** The Institute's Campus Development Plan 2011-2021 sets out the Institute's capital development priorities. While this Campus Development Plan suggests a prioritisation and phased approach, the lack of capital investment for higher education since the recession has resulted in the need for a re-prioritisation of capital developments based on (1) deteriorating facilities and (2) learner demands. The Campus Development Plan will be updated to reflect the current capital requirements. These include (1) a requirement to modernise and upgrade the original 1970s building stock and (2) the need to provide state of the art laboratories and equipment as funding becomes available. The Institute will update its current IT Plan to ensure that the Institute is best placed to meet the requirements set out in this strategy.

**Financial Sustainability:** A fundamental principle within the strategy is to ensure the longer term financial sustainability of the Institute. This overall strategic aim is reflected within the strategic goals set out across the eight areas identified. All future resource planning will be aligned to the overall mission and vision and strategic objectives of the Institute and will be underpinned by pertaining financial considerations.



## STRATEGIC GOAL 8 | IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

A number of additional organisational objectives will ensure the future development of the Institute as per its Mission and Vision. These include the Institute's on-going commitment:

- 1 To building brand awareness;
- 2 To the promotion of the Irish Language;
- 3 To the promotion of equality and the protection of human rights within the context of the Public Sector Duty.

**Strategic Objective 1** To ensure long term financial sustainability of the Institute.

**KPI**

- i. Implementation of organisational structures, systems and processes to deliver effectively on the Institute's strategic goals and objectives within budget.

**Strategic Objective 2** Build brand awareness of the Institute regionally, nationally and internationally.

**KPI**

- i. Adoption of traditional, digital and social media marketing tools to promote the Institute.

**Strategic Objective 3** To enhance the Institute's reputation as an Institute committed to its staff and to ensure equality for all learners and staff.

**KPIs**

- i. Work to achieve Athena Swan Accreditation;
- ii. Work towards the compliance of the Public Sector Duty;
- iii. Develop and implement the third Irish Language Scheme.

**Strategic Objective 4** To enhance the Institute's physical environment and IT infrastructure.

**KPIs**

- i. Update current Campus Development Plan 2011-2021;
- ii. Update IT Plan.

**Targets**

**By 2019, DkIT will:**

- i. Demonstrate breakeven financial position year on year;
- ii. Demonstrate increased market awareness through media analytics;
- iii. Work towards achieving the Athena Swan Accreditation;
- iv. Work towards the compliance of the Public Sector Duty;
- v. Meet targets set out in the Irish Language Scheme;
- vi. Work towards securing capital funding.



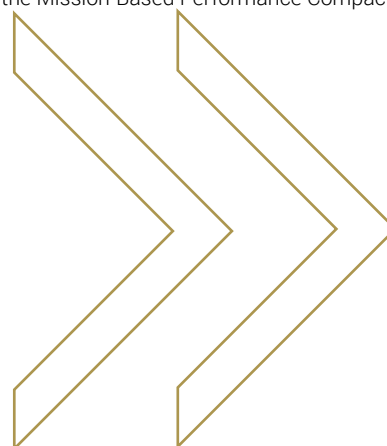
## 4.2 IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING ON PROGRESS

The DkIT Strategic Plan 2017-2019 sets out the high-level top priorities and goals which will serve as a basis for the future decision-making process within the Institute. The management, review and reporting on the implementation of the Strategic Plan is the responsibility of the President and the Executive Board, guided by the Office of the Vice President Strategic Planning, Communications and Development. The roles and responsibilities for the delivery on each of the strategic goals are set out in Appendix 1.

As part of the implementation process, detailed plans will be developed to deliver on the strategic objectives set out in Appendix 1. These plans will detail how the strategic goals will be achieved; the detailed strategic and SMART (specific, measurable achievable, realistic and timely) objectives; key performance indicators and targets. The executive responsibility for each strategic goal will engage with Schools, Departments and Functional Areas and develop the plan within the first three months of the adoption of the Strategic Plan.

Within these detailed plans, a number of additional areas will be explored and documented. In line with best practice, each strategic goal will identify its risk profile and risk mitigation options so as to feed into the risk management process of the Institute. With the assistance of Office of the Vice President of Strategic Planning, Communications and Development, each area will identify benchmarking criteria. External and internal factors which may impact on the achievement of the overall strategic objectives and key performance indicators will be identified and subsequent contingency options scoped. A framework for assessing the overall impact of the attainment of each strategic goal will be developed. This framework will then be adopted in assessing the economic and social impact of the Institute across its strategic goals.

The Executive Board will review, monitor and report on progress on a quarterly basis. This will also form the basis for the Annual Report which will be presented to the Governing Body for review and adoption. It will also form the basis for the Annual Report to the HEA on the Mission-Based Performance Compact.



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- Unbundling of Higher Education, 2016

# APPENDIX 1

## EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

STRATEGIC GOAL	EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITY	ASSOCIATED ACTION PLAN
Strategic Goal 1: Regional Clusters	President and VP Academic Affairs and Registrar	MEND Cluster Workplan 2017-2019 (if applicable)
Strategic Goal 2: Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning	VP Academic Affairs and Registrar and VP Strategic Planning, Communications and Development and Heads of School	Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning Action Plan 2017-2019
Strategic Goal 3: Excellent Learning and Teaching and Quality of Learner Experience	Heads of School with the Head of Learning and Teaching	Learning and Teaching Action Plan 2017-2019
Strategic Goal 4: High Quality, Internationally Competitive Research and Innovation	VP Academic Affairs and Registrar with the Head of Research	Research Action Plan 2017-2019
Strategic Goal 5: Enhanced Engagement with Enterprise and the Community and Embedded Knowledge Exchange	VP Strategic Planning, Communications and Development and VP Academic Affairs and Registrar	Engagement Action Plan 2017-2019
Strategic Goal 6: Internationalisation	VP Academic Affairs and Registrar	Internationalisation Action Plan 2017-2019
Strategic Goal 7: Institutional Consolidation	President and VP Strategic Planning, Communications and Development  VP Academic Affairs and Registrar	As required  Delegated Authority at Levels 9 and 10
Strategic Goal 8: Implementing Change	VP for Finance and Corporate Affairs  VP Strategic Planning, Communications and Development	Financial Plan 2015-2018 IT Plan 2017-2019 Athena Swan  Campus Development Plan to 2021  Marketing and Communications Plan 2017-2019  Third Irish Language Scheme





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