

DCU-HEA Mission Based Performance Compact: Self-Reflection Statement on Progress and Impact of Progress

The DCU Strategic Plan 2012-2017, *Transforming Lives and Societies*, outlined a vision for the University to continue to make a distinctive and positive contribution to the lives of our students and graduates, and in the effective conversion of knowledge from research into societal and economic benefits. The development of institutional objectives and performance targets under the Mission Based Compact Agreement in 2013 enabled the university to align its own strategic goals with those of the nationally identified domains of the Compact Agreement.

The University has welcomed the opportunity to discuss our progress in relation to our goals on an annual basis through the strategic dialogue process with the HEA, and the opportunity that this dialogue has afforded DCU to highlight its progress in delivering on objectives aligned to national priorities for higher education in Ireland. DCU also considers that this process has also provided the sector as a whole the opportunity to outline the considerable achievements made within the sector during a period of considerable funding constraints.

Self-Evaluation on Overall Progress

DCU is pleased with its overall progress in relation to goals established for the Compact. We believe there is clear evidence of considerable achievement under all seven identified domains. Where individual performance targets were exceeded in a number of areas of the original Agreement, DCU identified, and committed to, additional stretch targets in a number of areas, e.g.

Domain	Indicator	Initial Target 2016	Stretch Target 2016
Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning	% of undergraduates entering degree programmes through HEAR and DCU Access routes	10%	12%
Enhanced Engagement with Enterprise and the Community and Embedded Knowledge Exchange	Number of companies and employees located at the DCU Innovation Campus	10 companies, 200 staff	35 companies, 350 staff, 2 active collaborations between companies and DCU academics

DCU also appreciates the flexibility of the HEA in the revision of the performance targets in relation to a number of indicators, which reflected a change or evolution of an approach to progress under specific areas, e.g.

Domain	Indicator	Initial Target 2016	Revised Target 2016
Excellent teaching and learning and quality of the student experience	Student engagement with graduate attributes using ePortfolios among 1 st year undergraduate students	75% of first year entrants using e-portfolios	Roll-out of implementation projects on embedding graduate attributes within the curriculum
Enhanced Internationalisation	Number of active strategic partnerships with international universities	3	2

DCU consider that this approach has enabled the University to refine targets where our own implementation and priorities facilitated additional growth, or when changes in emphasis on implementation of our strategic goals, required a refocus of effort between particular domain activities.

Self-Evaluation of Progress within Each Domain

Regional Clusters

DCU notes the considerable commitment by all institutions within the MEND cluster on shared objectives outlined within the Compact Agreement. Considerable progress was made during the period on shared goals, particularly in relation to a regional plan for higher education provision. DCU considers that the work to date provides a valuable foundation for further progress in relation to FET and HE provision planning within the region. We further consider that the positive regional collaboration within the cluster will facilitate enhanced access, transfer and progression paths for students between FET and HE providers in the future.

Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning

DCU is proud of its national leadership in responding to under-representation in higher education from socio-economically disadvantaged families and communities. Over the period of the Compact, DCU has increased the number of HEAR and DCU 1st year enrolments to undergraduate programmes by 80%. Part of DCU's commitment to our Access programme has been a focus on encouraging HEAR and DCU Access applicants to our teacher education programmes. In 2016/17, the DCU Institute of Education welcomed the largest number of HEAR and DCU Access students of any DCU faculty.

Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience

DCU's objectives under this domain of the Compact Agreement focused on the ongoing assessment of the quality of our programmatic offerings, a commitment to the continued professional development of our academic staff, developments in relation to blended learning, and the embedding of the DCU Graduate Attributes as a key element of the transformational student journey at DCU.

The period of the Compact has seen over 423 participants in accredited modules in

pedagogy, including one module which focused on the application of developing skills in online and blended learning. Despite initial delays (due to external factors) in the technical development of our ePortfolio tool to support the embedding of our graduate attributes, the DCU online portfolio (Reflect) is now regularly being used by our student body to record and reflect on their personal development. In addition, 17 projects focused on utilizing the Reflect Portfolio to embed the DCU graduate attributes within the curriculum are currently underway across all five faculties.

High Quality, Internationally Competitive Research and Innovation

The DCU strategic plan, *Transforming Lives and Societies*, outlined ambitious plans to increase both levels of research activity, and improve the quality of our research outputs. Over the period of the Compact Agreement, DCU has made considerable progress in relation to increasing the proportion of our staff who are defined as 'research active', and the proportion of our research output that are independently reported as being published in the top quartile of journals within their academic field. DCU is continuing to make progress in relation to building our research profile across all academic disciplines at DCU, particularly in light of our expanded disciplinary profile, as a result of Incorporation.

Enhanced Engagement with Enterprise and the Community and Embedded Knowledge Exchange

Clearly positioning DCU's as Ireland's *University of Enterprise* was a key goal of the 2012-2017 Strategic Plan. Our commitment to meaningful engagement and collaboration with enterprise was a particularly important aspect of our Compact Agreement. The University established ambitious targets for itself in relation to the growth of our innovation campus, DCU Alpha, and the growth of knowledge transfer activities, led by DCU Invent. DCU is pleased with progress in relation to this domain, particularly in relation to the continuing strong performance of DCU Alpha in attracting companies and staff to locate at the campus. DCU looks forward to continuing to develop our reputation for enterprise engagement and collaboration, leveraging the capacity of our enterprise focused units including DCU Alpha, DCU Invent, DCU Ryan Academic for Entrepreneurship and DCU Business School among others, to further enhance our reputation as the nationally leading university for enterprise collaboration and engagement.

Enhanced Internationalisation

During the period of the HEA Compact, DCU has made considerable progress in relation to its internationalization agenda. Of particular note during the life of the current Compact Agreement is the development of DCU's relationship with Princess Nora Bint Abdulrahman University (PNU) in Saudi Arabia. From an initial partnership which saw DCU delivering and accrediting two undergraduate Business programmes at PNU, DCU@PNU will, in 2017/18, deliver and accredit 2 undergraduate, and 4 postgraduate programmes, a partnership spanning three DCU faculties. In 2016/17, over 550 students are registered on DCU@PNU programmes.

Institutional Consolidation

On 30th September, 2016 DCU, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute and Church of Ireland College of Education signed all legal documents enabling the completion of the legal phase of the Incorporation Programme, seeing the creation of the first faculty of

education in an Irish university, the DCU Institute of Education, and the considerable expansion of the DCU Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The achievement of all institutions involved in the Incorporation Programme in delivering on the goals of a single university entity is considerable in the context of higher education. As DCU enters its next phase of strategic planning, harnessing opportunities presented as a result of this enhanced scale and scope will be central to the future development of the university, and higher education in Ireland.

DCU Case Studies/ Exemplars

DCU is happy to suggest a number of potential case studies, reflecting the University's commitment to the achievement of goals under the HEA Mission Based Compact. In particular, we would be happy to present our progress under the following domains:

Participation, Equal Access, Life Long Learning

- DCU's national leadership in addressing socio-economic disadvantage in higher education, in particular growth in the numbers, and disciplinary breadth of students entering DCU via HEAR and DCU Access routes.

Excellent Teaching, Learning and Quality of the Student Experience

- Progress made in relation to the embedding of DCU Graduate Attributes, in particular, the development of the DCU digital learning portfolio, Reflect, and projects to embed the development of DCU graduate attributes within the DCU programme curricula.

Engagement with Enterprise, the Community, and Embedded Knowledge Exchange

- A case study on the development of DCU Alpha, as an innovation campus that promotes the growth of research-intensive businesses and enhances university engagement with enterprise.

Institutional Consolidation

- An overview of the Incorporation Programme, which saw St Patrick's College Drumcondra, Mater Dei Institute of Education and Church of Ireland College of Education integrated into the university.