
Dublin Institute of Technology

Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 Reflections on Performance

Institution overview:

DIT has undergone a large change over the duration of the compact, with the relocation to the Grangegorman campus and the continued work, with TU4DUBLINDublin partners, to meet the criteria to achieve technological university designation. It's appreciated that the delay in enacting TU legislation is one of the factors inhibiting institutions progressing towards TU designation, however, the joint reporting under the domain 'Consolidation' is welcomed and demonstrates greater levels of reflection and cooperation between the TU4DUBLINDublin partners.

DIT has demonstrated strong performance in the area of regional and enterprise engagement and has exceeded its targets for growing its international student numbers. DIT has rapidly increased its research student numbers but the HEA would have ongoing concerns around maintaining quality and provision on foot of dwindling research income levels.

DIT states that there is no evidence to suggest that there has been a diminution of quality in any way. DIT emphasizes that it has appropriate organisational structures and a robust quality assurance system in place for all graduate education and believes that the institute has the capacity and the capability, based on its previous track record and current resourcing, to deliver this. See Appendix 2, for DIT's response to this in Cycle 3. DIT wishes to underline the existence of very robust quality assurance system in place at DIT for all aspects of graduate research education.

Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) provided the HEA with a detailed self - evaluation report (SER) which is very comprehensive and generally clearly written. In some cases, the data provided refers to DIT only, while in other cases the data presented reflects the collective performance for the TU4DUBLIND partners (DIT, ITB and ITTD).

According to their overarching statement, DIT performed very well over the period in many aspects. They consider that the vast majority of the targets have not only been achieved, but even surpassed, particularly in terms of the increase in overall student numbers with reference to the institute's international and research student numbers.

The significant progress achieved by DIT over the course of the current compact is recognised against the backdrop of the delivery of two large projects: TU4DUBLINDublin and the Grangegorman campus.

The SER highlights that 10 Objectives and 46 performance indicators have been specified; 4 are marked by the Institution as green and been successfully achieved or even exceeded. However, on the basis of the evidence provided, some targets were not achieved, and it would appear more appropriate to have recorded these as yellow. DIT feels that while the targets may not have been achieved in the strict sense of measurement, their achievements and overall performance within those particular targets was far closer to the green zone rather than yellow.

Internationally, DIT's performance has been recognised in the recent outcomes of the 2017 U-Multirank process (1,500 international colleges participated). DIT notes that they achieved the highest performance amongst Irish HEIs. When all 39 of the indicators of the U-Multirank are looked at, DIT is tied with UCC having received 13 'A's out of all of the indicators in the scheme, representing the highest performance of Irish HEIs that participated. (See Appendix 3)

Self-evaluation report - domain level reviews

1. Regional clusters:

(One objective / one factor / target achieved)

Initial commentary:

DIT has established strong relationships and collaborations not only within the TU4DUBLINDublin, but the institute also participates in wider groupings such as the DRHEA (The Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance consortium – (TCD, UCD, DCU, NUIM and IADT, ITB and ITT Dublin). In relation to the data for TU4DUBLIND, it would be beneficial if this was presented for each partner institution separately in order to reflect their individual contributions (for example *TU4DUBLIND Graduates by Discipline*). A significant cohort of DIT's 'new entrant' student numbers are from non-manual, semi-skilled and unskilled socio-economic backgrounds. The most recent data for regional intake and for new entrants from non-manual, semi-skilled and unskilled groups refers to 2013/14. It would appear this data (new entrants, graduate and student numbers) would be better reported under the domain heading 'participation, equal access and lifelong learning'.

DIT highlighted it has three well established incubators providing practical assistance to new ventures and early stage companies: Hothouse (DIT), Synergy Centre (ITTD) and LINC (ITB).

One institution objective identified – be an active participant in the Dublin / Leinster Pillar II cluster. This engagement is to enhance DIT's contribution to Dublin's regional development (this was also reported by DIT under Strategic Dialogue Cycle 3)

Baseline: four initiatives - DRHEA; the Green Way; the Global City Innovation Initiative; the Creative Dublin Alliance); *no time as a baseline used in this section.*

Summary in the self – evaluation: marked green; target for 2016 achieved – further implementation of TU4DUBLINDublin and the Grangegorman campus development.

National Policy Context:

Although the TU4DUBLIND partners are awaiting the enactment of the TU legislation, the consortium partners are considered to be major contributors to the Irish higher education landscape. This is reflected in the significant number of new entrants who are enrolled within the three institutions (12% or 6,742 students).

Equally, in the Dublin region 25% of all students and 25% of all new entrants are enrolled within these institutions.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

Initiative examples included under baseline (4); against the two initiatives (TU4DUBLINDublin and the Grangegorman Campus). Collaboration between DIT, HSE and GDA (Grangegorman Development Agency).

If additional information was provided by DIT it would help support the impact of completing some of its targets for the institution. For example, the percentage of the 180 start-up firms which are supported by or within the DIT's Hothouse or how many of the 23 products or services launched in the last three years were based on DIT's initiatives. Equally, some of the data refers to the 2013/14 academic year. DIT has stated that they consider that there is a reasonable amount of information available in the SER on both TU4DUBLINDublin and Grangegorman, but they will consider reporting more details in the future.

2. Participation, equal access and lifelong learning:

(2 objectives / 5 & 4 performance indicators respectively); targets achieved in the self – evaluation; one performance indicator slightly below the agreed target

Initial commentary:

Objective 1: To be the HEI of choice in arts, tourism, business, engineering, built environment, science & health for career-focused education (to be reflected by numbers of students recruited under selected categories)

Indicators:

1. Number of new full-time undergraduate entrants (target of 3,700 for 2016/17 vs 3,748 number achieved); target slightly exceeded,
2. Number of full-time undergrad: target of 12,750 vs 12,914 achieved,
3. Number of all part-time undergrad students: target of 3,500 vs 3,856 achieved,
4. Number of postgrad students (FTE): target of 2,000 vs 1,967 achieved; target slightly below the agreed level,
5. Number of postgraduate research students (FTE): target of estimated 650 or 4% research student enrolment for TU; vs 491 achieved – not achieved.

Some indicators refer to DIT only, while others incorporate the TU4Dublin consortium. For consistency purposes and ease of reference, it would have been beneficial if DIT provided two sets of data, (1) which refers to DIT only and (2) data which refers to the TU4Dublin consortium should include a separate entry of DIT's contribution to this overall figure. Equally, the explanation provided for some of the aforementioned indicators is not clear. For example, under indicator 5, the estimated target of 650 for postgraduate research students has been marked green by DIT, but in fact the achieved level is 491 against the agreed target of 650 (p. 10). It would be helpful if additional commentary was provided how the 491 FTE has been converted from headcount.

DIT has clarified that the FTE conversion from headcount was based on ECTS credits. All DIT PhD students graduate with 360 credits. All fulltime research students are awarded 90 credits per annum (FTE = 0.5), whilst students on the structured PhD programme attract 45 credits per annum, (FTE= 0.667).

There is a lack of consistency with some of the data provided. For example, different time-frames have been applied for comparative purposes (2010/11 & 2015-16 or 2008/09 & 2015/16). DIT has stated that different time frames were used because different aspects of the strategy were developed and started at different times, some before the start of the

compact. It is anticipated that there will be greater consistency in timeframes for future compacts and reporting.

In certain instances, DIT refers generally to HEA statistics. A direct reference to the supporting material or the year the data is sourced from would be helpful.

Objective 2: To provide professional, career-focused learning and discovery for a diverse range of students – to be reflected by diversity of the student population as indicated by percentage of new entrants' from traditionally under-represented groups, as set out in the National Access Plan.

Performance indicators:

1. Mature students as percentage of new entrants: target of 13% vs 12% achieved (*numbers should also be provided*); lack of consistency in the text – the percentage is used, while in chart (Figure 14 / p. 14) numbers are applied.
2. Students with disability as percentage of new entrants: target of 9% vs 10% achieved
3. Young students (under 25) from socio-economic disadvantage (SED) backgrounds as percentage of new entrants: target of 8% vs 9% achieved. Actual numbers to assist with illustrative purposes would be helpful.

Travellers as a percentage of new entrants: baseline as <1%, while actually it was 0%. There is a lack of consistency-in the self-evaluation (p. 13) it states, "in the period, no students self-identified to the Access service as Travellers" and the target stated is very general <1%. This wasn't achieved but the indicator was marked green. Once again, more information for this section would be helpful (for example, was the Pavee Point or Irish Travellers Movement contacted in this regard as only general information is provided - "*DIT Access Service did some outreach work focused on the Travelling Community in the past*"). What was undertaken and what was achieved? How does DIT compare to other HEIs in this regard.

Objective 2: reflected by flexibility of accessing provision as indicated by the percentage of part-time, distance and e-learning students: target of 30% vs 31% achieved.

A different baseline academic year has been used (2010/11 for objective 1 and 2012/13 for objective no.2). In some cases, especially for objective 1, the targets were generally presented in a numerical format, while for objective 2 targets are presented as percentage. For all of the above performance indicators it would be helpful to provide this info in tabular format – how many applications were processed via HEAR or DARE respectively. Conversely, DIT highlights that it annually supports the processing of circa 4,000

applications, under the two listed entry routes, for the 2015/16 academic year 1000 Access & 1,300 students with disabilities were also supported by institute.

DIT listed some of its positive collaborations (for example, DIT undertakes blended learning with IBEC on its Global Graduates programme).

National Policy Context:

DIT appreciates the importance and benefits which participation in higher education has on Irish society. This is highlighted with the strong collaboration the institute has with industry and community groups (Irish Software Association, Engineers Ireland, Simon Communities to name a few). In order to ensure equal access for those from disadvantaged groups, DIT proposed several initiatives particularly in the area of life-long learning.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

DIT mentions in its overarching statement for this section that through ACE (Access and Civic Engagement Office) it works with 29 DEIS schools (Provided - appendix 1). Furthermore; under the Grangegorman Area Based Childhood (ABC) programme, DIT collaborates with 29 organisations in the locality (Provided - appendix 1).

DIT should be commended for its efforts to increase its provision and offerings to students from all social backgrounds. Furthermore, DIT is the largest provider of part-time courses in the State. Since the 2010/11 academic year, the majority of HEIs have achieved a steady decline in their part-time provision while conversely, DIT has recorded a 33% increase (2016/17 latest data).

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

(1 objective; 6 performance indicators); 5 targets achieved / 1 not

Initial commentary:

Concurrently with the agreed compact, DIT also updated its strategy for teaching, learning and assessment in order to improve the overall student experience. This strategy has been successfully implemented, reflected in 10 deliverables (Development of “General Entry” programmer addressing the First Year Transitions agenda, work on the First Year Framework for Success; First Year Experience projects). Separately, DIT assessment practices have been revised. DIT presents a complex and comprehensive approach towards this domain encompassing feedback received from students and staff results. DIT’s ISSE’s survey reflect progress made across 9 considered aspects (grouped under 4 themes). However, DIT performed equally or below the average when compared to national averages under these themes. Only in relation to the “Learning with peers” theme (indicated by collaborative learning) did DIT perform above the national level.

DIT is currently involved with an on-going process of programme validation and review, but the institute did not specify how often or when these reviews are undertaken. Graduate attributes (set of 6) are requested to be incorporated into programme handbooks and related material. DIT established the LTTC (Learning, Teaching & Technology Centre) to provide support and assistance in this area.

DIT outlined the following objectives under this domain:

1. To continuously improve the learning experience so that all students acquire skills and develop as independent learners / specified by 6 Performance indicators (qualitative and quantitative):
 - a) All programmes provide students with the opportunity to develop key employability skills or graduate attributes as set out in the approved policy document – target achieved.
 - b) Percentage of programmes with work placement / internship element – initially the agreed target was set at 25%, but this was revised upwards to 50% (what was the reason for this amendment?). DIT achieved an outcome of 45% and therefore the target was not achieved. In this case it should have been marked yellow, not green (as set out in the in SER). DIT states this result is lower than the previous but it did not provide the previous percentage - this would have been helpful. To enhance the analysis, it would have been beneficial to have received this information in numerical format also. DIT states that this query was addressed in the Cycle 3 SER and provided a copy in the appendix).

- c) Percentage of programmes with “Students Learning with Communities (SLWC)” element – initial agreed target of 25% was revised, DIT stated the original target was 20% and following review the target was increased to provide greater levels of stretch.

The new target has been exceeded – with the achieved level of 30%. This result reflects the effort made by DIT in increasing and successfully maintaining its local and regional collaborations.

- d) Percentage of programmes with a formal entrepreneurship element; target of 30% vs 32% achieved. It is also a significant increase compared to the 10% baseline set (2012/13). For the 2016/17 academic year a new initiative “Student Entrepreneur Academy” was launched. This additional programme component enables DIT students to acquire and apply new skills during their programme of study.
- e) Non-presence rates of undergraduate full-time new entrants: target not expressed in percentage rates or numerical formats although the illustrating chart (Fig 18) presents the results as percentages. This chart shows that the non-presence rates, by NFQ level, have decreased (apart from Level 6) between the period 2013/14 and 2016/17. An accompanying narrative or benchmarking data against non-presence rates, both nationally and for the IoT sector, would have been helpful. DIT states they provided this under Cycle 3, see Appendix 5).
- f) Delivery of the actions contained in the Quality Enhancement Plan (Jan 2012); two actions identified; target achieved; the Quality Enhancement Issues Log’ – developed; further actions required (log records, responses and updates).

National Policy Context: It's commendable that DIT achieved significant progress under this domain, although some targets were not met as planned. DIT is also in the process of improving their teaching and learning provision and enhancing the quality of their student experience. Based on internal student performance statistics, the institute's Academic Quality Assurance Committee is able to identify problems and provide recommendations for development and improvement. Additionally, DIT also draws on sources such as the results of ISSE to assist with improving their performance and applied additional resources to improve their response rates. Although all nine single engagement indicators show internal increases from the previous year, there are still four factors with values below the national level.

It has been stated in the SER that the “Campus Environment” has emerged as an issue and the reason provided is due to the ongoing relocation of services and consolidation process.

This clearly affects the general perception of the campus environment (particularly the supportive environment). DIT specified those factors, as key priorities for its further development, especially the progress on the development of the new campus and maintenance of existing facilities.

Critical evaluation and feedback: DIT has made substantial progress under this domain. However, when compared to DIT's Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy 2011-2014 the strategy set out in the SER (updated in 2014), includes less factors (6 vs 5). Furthermore, the factors used in the original version presented a wider spectrum; and the areas of focus and indicators provided are more comprehensive and specified clearly. It has been strongly emphasised by DIT that improving retention rate is a priority area and the institute has a Retention Officer in place in order to drive key initiatives to continue to support their students throughout their programme of study. In this regard, the institute has put great emphasis on improving its first-year experience and first year transitions agenda (specified by the development of "General Entry" programmes). However, as part of DIT's cycle 4 submission, the institute makes no reference to this key position.

4. High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation:

(1 objective specified by 6 indicators; 4 targets achieved, and 2 targets not met)

Initial commentary:

Objective specified:

1. To be an important source of research and discovery and underpin DIT's education programmes and its contribution to the economy and society:
 - a) Academic Staff with a PhD – the institute had set a target of 46% from a baseline of 39% (2012/13 academic year). The institute achieved an outcome of 45%. Although slightly under its target of 46%, the institute has marked this as achieved. This clearly demonstrates that the number of DIT academic staff completing their doctoral studies is increasing and provides evidence the institute is supportive to its academic staff with undertaking these pursuits. Research Students (FTE): the TU4Dublin consortium target for the end of 2015/16 was set at c. 650 (FTE); the result achieved was 491 (FTE), and the target was not achieved but DIT marked this as green and achieved. There is however very comprehensive information included under this key performance indicator. If the baseline of 300 (FTE) (2012/13) is applied, DIT and its TU4Dublin partners have made significant progress. External Research Award Value (instead of the original KPI: Research income); amendment made in Cycle 3 and this revision was agreed with the HEA. The target of €5.75m has been surpassed by c. €25k.
 - b) Value of external research awarded at c.€5.78m. This figure is also higher than the amount set in the baseline of €5m for 2014. DIT has introduced good practice with monitoring its research provision – on a monthly basis, DIT monitors its research award pipeline and expenditure to ensure any anomalies can identified and actions put in place.
 - c) Publications per year: DIT set a target of 1000 publications but achieved an outcome of 906 (2016). If the baseline of 588 in 2012/13 is taken into account, a very significant increase can be noticed. In this case details on the number of publications submitted and / or accepted would be helpful.

National Policy Context: In the broader context, DIT and its partners such as the HSE and DCC (intersectoral integrity) with the support of PRTL (Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions) cycle four have successfully inaugurated the Environmental Sustainability and Health Institute (ESHI) on the Grangegorman Campus. Aside from its

higher education linkages, DIT has established strong links with partners from different sectors (community, health, industry, primary education, NGO). Furthermore, DIT's research activities span the quantum of its provision (both STEM and AHSS) coupled with its impressive network in international research collaborations. It would be beneficial if the map illustrating DIT's international collaborations (pg 26) listed the collaborating institutions. From the information provided it would appear DIT has strong international research collaborations with institutions in North America, Australia and Asia. Over the four cycles of the Compact, DIT has secured and invested over €80m in its research activity. On average throughout the duration of the compact, DIT annually awarded 100 research degrees.

Critical evaluation and feedback: DIT provided no commentary in their overarching statement regarding the research aims they have set out in their 'Research Action Plan'. The one research objective includes 6 indicators, and all have been marked green though DIT did not achieve one of its agreed targets– the percentage number research students (measured as FTE) (KPI2).

DIT has responded that they set out their principal aims in the original compact and subsequent SERs. DIT provided more information and commentary in the response on their 'Research Action Plan' aims and core objectives in Appendix B.

In case of KPI2, the presented target refers to the TU4Dublin consortium and there is lack of a separate target for DIT. Therefore, based on the data in the SER it cannot be verified. We can presume, that the planned contribution provided by DIT would be the highest within this group, taking into account the scale of the Institution.

DIT has responded that with the full implementation of their graduate research school in January 2016, all graduate education planning has been undertaken on a joint basis and that the 4% target was a common goal. DIT affirm they have taken on the biggest share of research enrolment of the partners. Since it is a common goal, they believe it is logical to present total enrolment figures on a combined basis.

Based on award values, the baseline for the compact period therefore reads as follows:

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
HEA Target	€4,443,600	€4,830,000	€5,250,000	€5,750,000	€6,210,000	€6,706,800
DIT Performance (External Awards)	€12,821,407	€4,097,517	€3,792,445	€5,878,587	€4,000,074	€0
Delta	€8,377,807	-€732,483	-€1,457,555	€128,587	-€2,209,926	-€6,706,800

DIT points out that in the baseline year for 2013, the performance figure included significant PRTL funding which had the effect of distorting subsequent years' performance and hence the decision to recalibrate targets based on actual awards on an annual cycle with a projected year on year increase. As such funding performance was below target in 2014 and 2015. This has been turned around in 2016 following interventions under the Research Action Plan. DIT has now met and slightly exceeded the target. Projecting into the future, DIT feels it is on track to comfortably meet its targets.

The last indicator under this domain KPI4 is based on the number of publications per annum. The result for the final year is slightly below the proposed target (906 published vs 1000 planned). Conversely, there is a significant increase in publications from 588 given in the baseline. It's not entirely clear what timeframe should be taken into account here; the academic year as in baseline 2012/13 and the target for 2016/17 or the calendar year. In the SER it has been stated that this number of 906 publications is a total count in 2016 (p. 29 / SER). As the figure of 906 is based on 2016 data, this figure may have increased with activity undertaken between January – May 2017 when DIT submitted their publication. This should be confirmed with the institute.

DIT states that data is collected on a calendar year basis and uses Scopus, Web of Science, and other databases to collect annual publication and citation figures. Therefore, data should be read in terms of the baseline in the calendar year of 2013 and subsequent years.

Last year, the HEA drew attention to the research ambitions of DIT. The institute was forecasting a large growth with its PhD numbers on the back of reduced research funding levels. For this iteration of reporting, DIT has reduced their ambitions but the issue is worth reiterating to establish where the institution now positions its research strategy, in the context of the criteria for TU designation whereby 4% of students must be engaged in research; and the onus for TU4Dublin consortium achieving this target falls primarily with DIT.

DIT clarifies its research strategy in the context of the criteria for TU designation and offers the following:

DIT with its partners remains committed to meeting the criteria for TU designation, including the 4% research student enrolment. Over the course of the compact it has developed strategies to meet that goal, adjusting to the challenging national environment and seeking to diversify its funding base. The partners have increased supports for research development from alternative sources including philanthropy, self-generated income and industry funding. Going forward, they will build on this research strategy and continue to deploy a targeted approach towards a) consolidating and concentrating research activity, b) grow and diversify the research funding base, c) develop new capacity through staff recruitment and development policies as well as researcher career supports.

The core objectives outlined in their Strategic Plan and further developed in the Research Action Plan can be found in Appendix B.

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

(1 objective / 3 performance indicators (one of them specified in more details by additional 8 KPI; all targets marked as achieved in the SER))

Initial commentary: DIT has performed strongly under this domain which was recognised nationally by Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) 2016 for the institution's performance at commercialising its research. DIT via the Hothouse enterprise programmes, contributed significantly in creating over 200 new ventures and 1,600 jobs. Additionally, DIT is the leader of the Dublin Region Innovation Consortium (DRIC). DIT presents a very wide spectrum of activities pertaining to community engagement, whereby the institute plays an important role in the north inner city, often considered as a disadvantaged area. The following one Institutional objective has been agreed:

1. to be valued by academic, industry, community and other partners, nationally and internationally, for the transfer of knowledge and skills relevant to sustainable development performance indicator: Level of technology transfer and enterprise support activity under selected metrics (8):

- KPI1 Spin outs – target of 4 per year vs 4 established in 2016; particularly the previous year 2015 was good in this regard with 6 spin-outs. A DIT spin out company, Kastus Technologies won the KTI 2016 Spin-out of the year Award.

- KPI2 Licenses / Options / Assignments: target – 10 LOAs vs 11 LOAs achieved per year as a final target, the same as in baseline for 2012/13 and also in accordance with the Compact; target was exceeded. This is a quarter of all LOAs in the technological sector in Ireland. The number of completed license deals DIT completed during the span of the compact was 23; but how many of this were completed last year? 11 of these were completed last year.

- KPI3 Research Agreements with industry: a target of 5 agreements vs 5 agreements signed (specific research contracts). Target achieved, and different types of agreements are described, research agreement & Innovation Vouchers (IVs). A Development Manager has been appointed to streamline the process of delivering IVs.

- KPI4 Invention Disclosures – target of 30 invention disclosures set out in DIT's SER, but target of 32 was agreed in the Compact, however, 38 were achieved in 2016 (the same as in the baseline year of 2012/13). The target (both versions) was surpassed. There was no reason provided for the variances with the targets provided.

DIT has responded that technology transfer metrics are agreed with Enterprise Ireland as part of the Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative and would have changed during the period.

- KPI5 Priority Patent Applications: final target of 12 vs 10 filed initial patent applications, target not achieved in 2016, therefore, it should have been returned yellow. The table refers to the final targets vs the most recent results for the final year, not to the overall period. DIT should be commended for its strong performance in 2015, filing 15 patent applications.

- KPI6 PCT Patent Applications: target of 6 vs 5 PCT applications filed. Albeit, DIT missed their target by one, as the target has not been met, this should have been returned yellow.

DIT disagree that the target should have been marked as yellow as their performance over the period of the compact was quite strong. They state in the uncertain area of commercialisation of research, missing a target by one patent is not material and that on a practical basis the timing of applications and licensing is fluid and some years may surpass while other may be slightly below, but overall performance is strong.

- KPI7 No. Hothouse New Frontiers programmes: the target of 2 programmes to be offered refers to 2015 (as per SER), while the Compact refers to 2016/17 as the final year as, however the target is the still the same in both documents: 2 programmes. The commentary states two programmes were completed in 2016 but there is a lack of clarity – offered programmes are a different metric than completed programmes; equally which year is taken into consideration? This is a typo on the part of DIT and the year that was meant to be referenced is 2016. DIT has also clarified that where it was stated the programs were offered it was meant to have been the programs were completed.

- KPI8 No Participants Hothouse New Frontiers Programme: the target of 30 set in the SER is higher than the target agreed in the Compact (26 is referenced on p. 38, but 30 is referenced on p. 35; two different values in the same document? As the SER states that 30 participants completed the New Frontiers Programme in 2016 which is the same figure provided as the baseline 2012/13 – does this mean all participants completed the programme? (Equally, the Compact refers to the 2016/17 academic year, while the commentary, included with the SER refers to the calendar year 2016.

DIT states the change was due to additional funding being available through Enterprise Ireland and that when they state the programmes were offered, they mean they were completed. There was no clarification on the dates.

Objective 1; Performance indicator 2: Active participation in regional / civic networks – this a qualitative indicator. Targets are marked as achieved. 5 goals / target were identified spanning a wide spectrum of activities, and completed in collaboration with other HEIs and

stakeholders. The construction of the Grangegorman campus is a strategic objective for the city within the Dublin City Development Plan.

Objective 1; Performance indicator 3: Active Participation in community-related initiatives: two targets: 1) 25% of programmes with SLWC element (ref. to section 3) and 2) Active participation in Grangegorman Labour & Learning Forum - GLLF (on at least 3 initiatives). The commentary does not provide the percentage of the programmes with an SLWC element, but it does provide a brief overview and justification of embedding SLWC activity within DIT's mainstream programme provision. In relation to the second target under this indicator; DIT is a co-founder of the GLLF. A very complex and comprehensive approach has been presented in terms of supporting the local community. Prioritising the benefit and improvement of the quality life for local people and communities was stated as the main objective of the GLLF. In addition, the Grangegorman Employment Charter is monitored by GLLF in order to ensure that the prospective work on the campus construction site will be assigned to local industry.

National Policy Context: As the institute has developed strong collaborations across different sectors, DIT can be considered as a model institution in its approach towards local integration. The institute endeavours to engage with local suppliers and employment with the functioning of its Grangegorman campus. The Campus has attracted major interest from Dublin City Council, Dublin Chamber of Commerce, IBEC, CDET, NTA, HSE, Intreo. The institute has continued its involvement in the Living Knowledge Network, particularly via EnRRICH project (link attached in the SER).

Critical evaluation and feedback: DIT is involved in a very broad spectrum of activities, which encompasses collaborations with different stakeholders, local communities and industry representatives sectors, It would be helpful if the Government agencies and community related groups, who have a vested interest in the Grangegorman Campus, could be listed additionally, as part of DIT's 'Grangegorman Employment Charter', the institute, in the first instance, tries to employ people who are considered 'long-term job seekers'. This is a positive step taken by the institute to address the socio-economic inequalities within surrounding communities of the Grangegorman Campus. Based on the results presented by DIT, it is very clear the institute is committed to its wider community.

6. Enhanced internationalisation:

1 objective & 1 complex indicator (replacing the initial expressed by number of international student enrolments); partly not achieved; in terms of the international student enrolment

Initial commentary: During the earlier rounds of strategic dialogue, DIT mainly measured internationalisation in terms of the recruitment of international students. However, the TU4Dublin consortium agreed that internationalisation should include all Institute activities. As a response to this new approach, an international strategy for all partners was developed in 2016. The strategy identifies 8 key aims; international staff and student body, to become an international university, ensure that internationalism is embedded into all core activities; to name a few. This strategy is currently being implemented by DIT. There is only one objective under this domain: to ensure a sustainable position for DIT as an international higher education provider. Under strategic dialogue cycle 3, the performance indicator was replaced by a more complex index which includes measuring the number of international students enrolled, and the participation of staff internationally. The agreed target for 2016/17 was 1,025 students (there is no specification if this refers to Non-EU students, as indicated in the commentary). This target however was not met; therefore, it should have been returned yellow; target of 1,025 vs 877 enrolled (number consisting of 775 Non-EU and 102 Full-time EU students). Furthermore, a lower final target was set out in the Compact; 995.

National Policy Context: The international strategy between all partners of TU4Dublin has been approved and three main goals were specified: Operational Areas, Research and Internationalisation of the Curriculum. DIT emphasises its current status as an 'institute of technology' is negatively impacting on their ability to attract and recruit international students' and academics.

The Compact refers to the development and adoption of quality assurance systems to comply with the Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN) and future Q-Mark legislation but there is no reference to this within DIT's SER.

Critical evaluation and feedback: The attached chart (Fig 20) presents the International students enrolment for all institutes of technology but there is no separate data for DIT or accompanying commentary. Based on additional HEA data, DIT accounted for nearly one third of all full-time Non-EU students enrolled in the IoT sector for the 2016/17 academic year.

DIT states that over 35 Irish business students will study with its various 19 international partner institutions. It would have been helpful if DIT could have clarified if all 35 students undertook their placement.

The information provided by DIT under this domain is quite general – for example, the SER states that DIT participated in over 20 global business competitions. Accompanying information on these competitions would have useful for context. DIT has attached additional information giving an example of one of the global business competitions – see appendix 6.

One of the targets of the compact was to establish an International Office Advisory Board but there is no reference to this target in DIT's SER.

DIT would like to clarify that the only target agreed upon was that of international enrolment and that an International Office Advisory Board is part of the TU4Dublin strategy and this may be included as a target in the future

7. Institutional consolidation:

3 objectives defined respectively by 19 very detailed indicators referring to the main performance indicator (establishment of a Dublin Technological University with formal designation, with consortium partners, ITB and ITTD); objective 2 & 3 are specified by the same performance indicator: programmes as set out are completed

Initial commentary:

It is noteworthy, as an indicator of consolidation, that ITTD, ITB and DIT have submitted the same information in their SERs under this domain.

In a general introductory statement, DIT notes that, as expected, the main aim in this domain is to implement the Dublin Technological Alliance (DTUA) project plan. In so doing, an objective was to establish a curriculum commission to identify opportunities for collaborative provision and pathways. It is noted that a Programme Management Office (PMO) has been set up and has undertaken 50+ projects to achieve TU designation. Subject to enactment of legislation, it is stated that TU status will be achieved in 2018. The two main objectives are as follows:

Under the objective of implementing the DTUA project plan, 16 Priority Actions are described in detail. With the exception of 3 actions marked in yellow, all others are given green ratings. Progress has been made in relation to:

1. Development of the curriculum framework for TU4Dublin (green), including review and standardisation of academic policies and collaborative work on 'TU4Dublin Programmes of the Future'.
2. Development and implementation of 1st Year Experience Strategy (green), spanning a number of projects.
3. Establishment of a joint Graduate Research School (green), which provides a common support service to all members across TU4Dublin.
4. Development of Structured PhD Programme (green), which has been fully implemented since September 2016.
5. Delivery of joint technology transfer measures (green), an area in which DTT has excelled through its involvement in DRIC.
6. Development of student services transition plan (yellow), with 25 related projects underway to be delivered by September 2018.
7. Development of strategy for embedding engagement in TU4Dublin (green), which has resulted in the 2016 report *Creating an Engaged University*.

8. Joint prospectus and entry in CAO (green), on which progress has been made subject to confirmation of merger date.
9. Joint marketing to international student markets (yellow), for which a strategy is being implemented.
10. Development of a position on skills and apprenticeship (yellow), for which a draft position paper has been developed.
11. Progress in organisation design of academic and service functions (green), with phased delivery to occur in September 2018.
12. Development of digital campus (green), during which IBM Ireland was selected to provide external support and workshops. An implementation plan is in development.
13. Development of a financial model (green), with a discussion paper having been prepared and financial modelling now taking place.
14. Continuation of work to agree key actions to achieve a 'Workplace of the Future' (yellow), subject to the lifting of the TUI embargo.
15. Implement a framework for engagement with the TU4Dublin student body (green).

Amalgamation within a suitable legal vehicle in preparation for application (green) though, as this is no longer envisaged as necessary, it is proposed that merger and TU designation will take place simultaneously.

National Policy Context: Targets in relation to institutional consolidation were necessarily revised to allow for delays in the relevant legislation. It is unclear why some objectives were marked as green and others as yellow (e.g. joint entry in CAO versus joint international marketing), when such projects could not be fully implemented due to these external circumstances. The SER notes that the alliance is on target to achieve TU status and that substantial work has been carried out in preparation for application. Many of the metrics listed here are inherently qualitative and are not clearly quantitative. The overall impression created is that, while significant tasks remain uncompleted, a great deal of work has been done towards achieving TU designation.

In addition to legislative issues, the TUI embargo has resulted in delays in a number of areas. Over 4,000 TUI members in the sector have not cooperated with any merger activities related to the proposed technological universities since April 2016. This followed a national ballot in which members voted by a margin of 85% to 15% to take industrial action, up to and including strike action, on concerns related to proposed mergers of Institutes of Technology (source: TUI website). Nonetheless, the SER observes that IMPACT has

continued with the ongoing development work of TU4Dublin. Agreement has recently been reached such that the TUI is balloting members to suspend industrial action.

Notably, the Structured PhD programme, on which all new research students at DIT, ITTD and ITB are registered, is aligned with the *National Framework for Doctoral Education*.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

Despite external obstacles faced, it is evident that DIT and its partners have made significant strides in preparation for TU status.

Delays with legislation have not been the only challenge faced. Notably, in a pilot phase in the development of the curriculum framework that focused on Engineering courses, it was intended that existing Level 6 to 8 programmes would be aligned to the TU4Dublin Curriculum. Work in this regard was paused due to TUI embargo. However, it is hoped that these circumstances may soon change such that the project might be further developed.

Progress in relation to the Graduate Research School appears particularly strong as it encompasses approximately 600 research students across the various institutions and diverse disciplines. This has the potential to result in interdisciplinary approaches to research problem-solving. A welcome related development is the annual Graduate Research School Symposium.

The SER quotes a KTI 2015 review, which highlights DRIC's success in the areas of licensing new technologies and supporting spin-out companies. A specific focus on the SME sector is being developed by TU4Dublin, which is especially in keeping with their regional mission.

More information could have been provided in relation to TU4Dublin's international strategy. Impressively, however, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with some Canadian institutions to form the *Canada-Ireland Centre for Higher Education Research, Policy and Practice* (CHERPP). It would be interesting to discover the alliance's plans for exploiting this partnership in the future.

8. Additional Notes:

DIT forecasted a balanced budget for 2016 based on income of €153.915 million and expenditure of €153.699 million with a projected surplus of €216,000. Income and expenditure were both higher than budgeted. Income was budgeted at €153.915 million and expenditure at €153.699 million, however, the outturn for income was €159.85 and expenditure was €159.78 million with a resulting surplus of €52,000.