
Dún Laoghaire DLIADT

Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 Reflections on Performance

Self-evaluation report – institution overview

Institution overview:

Of the 30 objectives that are reported on, 28 of these are indicated to be green (target achieved). Just two KPIs are reported as yellow (number of Innovation Vouchers and Springboard completion rates).

A final section with a statistical profile for 2016/17 is also provided.

In its overview of institutional progress, DLIADT considers that it has realised many aspects of its ambition over the period of the compact, with reference to student number growth, teaching and learning, improvement in benchmarking, improved performance in RDI and internationalisation. DLIADT makes specific reference to its commitment to access and community engagement, and to gender equality. The institute gives consideration to its future status within the higher education system, and how its thinking has evolved over the compact period.

Overall, DLIADT has demonstrated very good progress against mission-coherent objectives through an analytical and probing self-evaluation report. The institute is commended for its continued use and development of benchmarking. However, DLIADT should give consideration to more consistent reporting of its benchmarked performance against other HEIs, the IoT sector, and the Irish higher education system as a whole. The institute should ensure that robust benchmarking is taking place, rather than a process where the most flattering indicator is chosen to demonstrate the institute's performance.

It is clear that DLIADT gives priority to improving access and has prioritised resources here. It has engaged in significant linkages with further education institutions, both in its immediate environs and further afield. As in previous cycles of the compact process, the HEA considers that this work could serve as a model in the regional cluster. DLIADT is also committed to a high quality learning experience for its students; and to engagement with community and enterprise. These areas are evident strengths in the institute's performance.

Over the period of the compact, DLIADT has successfully improved its performance in the area of RDI and internationalisation. As the institute continues to improve and expand in these areas, the HEA would welcome a greater reference to alignment with national policies. The HEA would also welcome a discussion on the future trajectory of DLIADT in these emerging and expanding areas.

The HEA welcomes the reporting on gender equality within the compact and the institute is to be commended on its initiatives in this area.

Reporting is outcomes-based and DLIADT in general gives good detail on the underlying processes that have brought about the performance achieved – the quality of reporting in general is high. However, there are a small number of objectives where reporting does not entirely address the achievement of the target or is vague (Regional Clusters objectives 1

and 2, Teaching and Learning objectives 4 and 5, Engagement objective 3), and others where HEA figures are at odds with the DLADIAT reporting (Participation objective 3, Research objective 1, Internationalisation objective 1). There are also objectives where a revision of targets might have been appropriate given the level of performance during 2014 and 2015 (Engagement objective 4, Internationalisation objectives 1 and 2). The HEA would welcome a discussion with the institute as to how it considers it has appropriately set its levels of ambition of the entire compact period (2014-2016).

As with the Cycle 3 evaluation (2015), the submission would have benefitted from reference to collaborations with other partners, both within and external to, the cluster e.g. GradCAM. DLADIAT note that GradCAM does not exist in the way it was originally envisaged. It continues to engage with GradCAM in terms of student access to research seminars and supports etc., however since the removal of external funding for GradCAM, the majority of its work exists within DIT, which is in a separate cluster. DLADIAT would also add that that it sees a number of issues specific to the cluster that sometimes do not facilitate the smaller institutions. Notwithstanding this, DLADIAT has engaged positively and constructively in regional clusters and the creative arts cluster, and has set out clearly its position in relation to its position in the higher education landscape.

Self-evaluation report - domain level reviews

1. Regional clusters:

Initial commentary:

DLIADT is part of the Dublin I cluster with UCD, TCD, NCAD and Marino. DLIADT notes a number of collaborations that have taken place between the institutions, and also notes a range of challenges, which included funding and staff constraints, the relative size of the cluster members, differing academic structures, and collaborations with institutions outside the Dublin I cluster.

DLIADT provides an overall commentary on performance and have marked all four targets as “achieved”.

- Development of cluster: target was a fully-functioning credit transfer system in place – DLIADT notes that progress has been made on progression from FE to HE in all institutions and lists a number of collaborations between the cluster partners. The HEA queries if this indicates that the target has been achieved.
- Development of a thematic cluster: target was development of creative Dublin alliance between HE/FE sector and creative and cultural industries – DLIADT consider that this target has been achieved. However, there is little reference to the FE sector in the reporting. The 2015 target of the development of a database of HE/FE programmes which was not reported on last year is not referenced in reporting here either, which is surprising.
- DRHEA widening participation proposal: target was 25% of new entrants from diverse groups – DLIADT indicate this target has been achieved.
- Extension and development of involvement in GradCAM: given the funding difficulties associated with GradCAM, the 2015 and 2016 targets were amended to the “strategic direction of GradCAM be finalised and a proposal for DLIADT’s future involvement agreed”. The institute marks the target as achieved, noting that this is the same target as that for 2015.

National Policy Context:

DLIADT references its membership of the Dublin I cluster. DLIADT notes that one of its partners in creative arts (DIT) sits within another cluster group; and that this has led to challenges in collaboration.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

It is clear that the Dublin I cluster has experienced a number of challenges over the period of the compact, and DLIADT have continued to engage proactively with the cluster institutions. However, the scope of the engagement is narrow in focus and collaborations with the Dublin I cluster institutions are not evidenced strongly in other parts of the

compact. DLADIAT has raised the difficulty for smaller specialist institutions to progress a meaningful agenda within the cluster due to the imbalance with the cluster

The HEA queries if the targets on credit transfer, and on the creative arts cluster have been met. The reporting does not adequately address the targets themselves, and are a more general discussion on collaborations across the Dublin and thematic clusters. Similarly, the target on GradCAM is the same as that of 2015; perhaps the entire objective should have been replaced given that DLADIAT makes reference in its reporting to the development of other types of research programmes.

2. Participation, equal access and lifelong learning:

Initial commentary:

DLADIADT provides an overall commentary on performance and have marked all four targets as “achieved”.

- Mature students as a % of new entrants across all programmes: target 13% - DLADIADT state that 17% are mature. These figures are not comparable with HEA statistics which consider full-time year 1 new entrants only (figure is 9% for 2016/17).

DLADIADT has clarified that its figure is based on mature students as a % of new entrants across all programmes and all stages in order to understand the complete picture of our student body.

- Disabled students as a % of new entrants across all programmes: target 11% - DLADIADT state that figure is “estimated” at 11%. DLADIADT note the difference in methodology between the HEA and DLADIADT for calculation of this figure.

DLADIADT has clarified that the HEA figure is ‘estimated’, DLADIADT records the actual figure. Its understanding is that the HEA take an estimate of the number of disabled students from equal access survey. In contrast, DLADIADT records the number of students declaring a disability to our Disability Service of the Institute.

- DRHEA widening participation proposal: target 90% retention at level 8 and 69% at level 7 – DLADIADT state that performance is 89% and 79% respectively. HEA figures show 85% and 72% respectively.

DLADIADT has clarified that 89% and 79% are correct in terms of recording the retention of students and are based on students present on census day, and state that the figures quoted by the HEA of 85% and 72% are progression rates.

- FE – HE linkages: target 6 linkages – DLADIADT has clarified that there are 5 MoUs in place and one pending

Reporting comes with a commentary on initiatives undertaken and on methodology.

National Policy Context:

DLADIADT makes reference to the “national education agenda” and its promotion of access for disadvantaged groups and the development of non-traditional entry routes.

DLADIADT makes specific reference to improvements in retention rates and notes that according to the HEA’s national progression data, that DLADIADT has the best retention rates in the IoT sector. This statement is correct when all levels and all fields of study are taken into account, but when data is considered in more detail, this is not the case. It should be noted that all levels of study include level 6 programmes that are not provided by DLADIADT, and programmes with typically lower progression rates (such as Engineering and Construction) which reduce the sectoral average for other institutes of technology.

DLADIADT also makes reference to gender equality in this section, noting a focus on gender equality in its programmes.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

DLADIADT makes a number of references to national trends and data, and gives good evidence of having benchmarked performance nationally. It notes that it revised some original targets for mature and disabled student to reflect changes in national trends. It also makes reference to national progression rates and how DLADIADT compares with those.

Data is available for DLADIADT in relation to non-progression as follows:

DLADIADT	Level 7	Level 8
Social Sciences, Business, Law, Arts and Humanities	29%	15%
Computer Science	26%	13%
Overall	28%	15%
IoTs overall		
Social Sciences, Business, Law, Arts and Humanities	30%	16%
Computer Science	31%	20%
Overall	27%	16%

Although the figures stand up well against the IoTs on average, there are a number of IoTs that perform better both overall in terms of retention rates and within subject specific categories, and this is noted in reference to DLADIADT's claim of having "the best retention rates in the IoT sector".

- At level 7 in the Social Sciences, Business, Law, Arts and Humanities, AIT (8%), DIT (14%), WIT (18%) and ITC (20%), DKIT (21%) have better non-progression rates than DLADIADT (29%); and in Computer Science, GMIT (22%) and AIT (25%) have better non-progression rates than DLADIADT (26%).
- At level 8 in the Social Sciences, Business, Law, Arts and Humanities, CIT (11%) and ITS (14%) have better non-progression rates than DLADIADT (15%); and in Computer Science, DIT (11%) and ITC (12%) have better non-progression rates than DLADIADT (13%).

DLADIADT might consider the most appropriate comparators within the system for retention. A simple comparison of overall retention across all levels and fields of study across the IoTs does not take into account provision at level 6 in other institutes of technology, or retention in subject areas not provided by DLADIADT. DLADIADT might also give consideration to any effect entry points have on retention rates within the institute, compared with other IoTs.

In response to the above, DLADIADT has stated that the profile of IADT differs from that of other IoTs, so meaningful comparison is difficult.

DLADIADT notes that it adjusted some targets to take account of national trends for % of mature students and students with a learning disability. DLADIADT notes that it is above the national average for attracting mature students (11%) and students with learning difficulties and disabilities (11%). For mature students, the national average is 10%, but the figure for institutes of technology is 14%. Again, the institute might give consideration to the most appropriate sectoral or national comparators. Is the most appropriate comparator the IoT sector (as it is given for progression) or the entire system (for mature students)? DLADIADT should be aware of making comparisons with national or sectoral data in a consistent manner (comparing with IoTs or with the whole system; or with comparable

activities within the IoT sector). It would also be valuable to see international comparisons with other art, design and technology providers.

Reporting is outcomes-based and DLADIAT gives good detail on the underlying processes that have brought about the performance achieved.

It is clear that DLADIAT places a priority on this area, noting that staffing resources were made available to access, particularly disability support. DLADIAT has taken account of national trends, and has revised its ambition accordingly. It is clear that this area is one of strength in the institution.

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

Initial commentary:

DLADIAT provides an overall commentary on performance and have marked all eight targets as “achieved”.

- Policy framework for T&L: target was policies embedded across the institute – DLADIAT state the target was achieved. The reporting on the achievement of this target is vague and more detail would be welcome from the institute.
- Curriculum development, with themes of Technology Employability and Entrepreneurship: target was to embed themes across programmes – DLADIAT state that the target was achieved with detail on placements and professional practice modules.
- Benchmarking criteria and framework: target was to mainstream benchmarking practices and make improvements in priority areas – DLADIAT state that the targets have been achieved with reference to external examiners, membership of review panels, external engagement, degree award classifications and showcases.
- Professional development for staff: targets related to staff participation in T&L courses, and participation in seminars, workshops and conferences – DLADIAT states that the targets have been achieved but it is not clear if the quantitative targets have been met (72 graduates of LIN APD programmes and 4 graduates of LIN PGDip).
- Improvements in retention and completion at level 7: target is an 8% increase in retention and success at level 7 – DLADIAT states that the target has been met. HEA figures show that non-progression at level 7 in DLADIAT stood at 32% in 2010/11, 25% in 2012/13 and 28% in 2013/14. DLADIAT should be aware of the recent disimprovement at level 7.

DLADIAT clarified that for the 2015/16 level 7 cohort the non-progression rate is 25%. Secondly, although the rate has improved to 25% it is important to note that for IADT the number of students at Level 7 is both small and diminishing. Currently just two Level 7 programmes are offered and in 2018/19 this will reduce to just a single course. In this situation, significant % changes in the non-progression can be determined by a single student.

- Review and development of programme assessment strategies: target is fair, consistent and fit for purpose assessment strategies – DLADIAT state that the target has been met.
- Support of student community and civic engagement: target is embedding across institute – DLADIAT stated that the target has been achieved with detail on projects undertaken in 2016.
- Identifying and managing at-risk students: target is integrated institute-wide approach – DLADIAT state that the target has been achieved with details of initiatives undertaken.

The 2016 targets for this section relate significantly to the embedding of policies and initiatives, developed over the last number of years, across the institute.

National Policy Context:

DLIADT makes reference to developments in the area of employability and entrepreneurship; student satisfaction rates; and non-progression rates.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

DLIADT makes significant reference to benchmarking in this area, noting that “benchmarking has been a major area of development for DLIADT over the life of the compact”. There is reference to successful benchmarking of DLIADT internationally and the creation of specific benchmarks for the institute. One of the institute’s targets in this area relates to the development of benchmarking criteria and frameworks.

HEA figures are given below in relation to retention rates at level 7. Although DLIADT has met its target in this area, it should note the most recent disimprovement in retention for Arts and Humanities programmes.

Level 7	2010/11	2012/13	2013/14
Social Science, Business, Law and Arts and Humanities	29%	25%	29%
Computer Science	41%	27%	26%
Overall	32%	25%	28%

DLIADT has clarified that it no longer offers programmes at Level 7 in the ‘Computer Science’ field. The latest non-progression rates (2015/16 cohort) stand at 25%. In this situation, significant % changes in the non-progression can be determined by a single student and so, reliance on same is not advised.

DLIADT makes reference in its overall commentary to strong student satisfaction rates, but without identification of any particular areas of strengths or weakness.

Reporting is outcomes-based and DLIADT gives good detail on the underlying processes that have brought about the performance achieved.

There is a good interaction between this area and that of the access area, with teaching and learning reflected in good retention and completion rates. There is no discussion of how this area interacts with the development of academic research within the institute however and as DLIADT develops its research capacity, the HEA would welcome a great discussion of the relationship between research and teaching and learning.

4. High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation:

Initial commentary:

DLADIADT notes that it started from a comparatively low base in the area of RDI at the start of the compact process; noting both weak performance and a lack of capacity for measuring outputs. The institute states that progress has been made in a number of areas, including research income and postgraduate research students. The institute also states that a research culture has developed, with greater involvement of staff in research publications and projects. DLADIADT references industry partnerships as one of the institute's strengths in this area.

DLADIADT provides an overall commentary on performance and have marked all four targets as "achieved".

- Academic staff engagement with RDI and enterprise: target was RDI funding of €9,090 per academic staff – DLADIADT states that the target has been achieved (€9,904), on the basis of income of €456k. HEA 2016 staffing figures show 121 academic staff which equates to €3,765 per academic staff. DLADIADT figures would suggest that 46 academic staff only are involved in the calculation of the metric. The institute might like to clarify the basis of the calculations; and if only a subset of staff are used for the calculation, how DLADIADT intend to compare their performance with other HEIs either nationally or internationally?
- Develop the level of RDI academic expertise: target was 60 academics, researchers and support staff – DLADIADT states that the target has been achieved with 52 staff involved in RDI.
- Develop the level of postgraduate research activity in collaboration with GradCAM: target was 17 PGR students – DLADIADT state that the target has been achieved with 19 PGR students. HEA figures for 2016/17 indicate 10 students.
- Enhance level of RDI collaboration with industry partners: target was 25 industry partnerships – DLADIADT state that 27 projects were undertaken in 2016 so the target has been achieved. DLADIADT has provided a list of these projects in its reporting.

National Policy Context:

The analysis would have benefitted from reference to wider national policy in this area including Innovation 2020, Enterprise 2025, or the regional skills fora, where appropriate. However, the institute is a specialist provider and is working to enhance its modest research performance, and therefore its contribution to wider national policy goals in this area is naturally restricted.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

DLADIADT is aware of its standing in the area of research, and notes that it is "still comparatively small" but considers that it is making steady progress; and this is borne out

in the compact and achievement of targets. It is clear that a research culture is in the process of being embedded within the institute, and the institute has carefully managed a measured and steady increase in its research activities.

It would be valuable to see how DLADIADT compares in terms of international comparison with other providers of creative and technological programmes.

The HEA questions the calculations behind the “funding per academic staff” indicator and would welcome the institution’s commentary on this, particularly in terms of comparison with other HEIs.

DLADIADT notes that advancement of the RDI area is “critical to the continued success of DLADIADT to inform our teaching...” and the institute notes that industry relationships have led to bespoke curriculum development and delivery. The HEA would welcome a discussion of the interaction between increased performance in research and consequent developments in teaching and learning.

It is clear that the institute has prioritised research in accordance with its modest standing over the period of the compact.

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

Initial commentary:

DLIADT sets out a wide range of engagements with the community and enterprise in its commentary: with initiatives in the creative and technological sectors; voluntary organisations; through innovation vouchers; Springboard; and student placements and internships.

DLIADT provides an overall commentary on performance and have marked two targets as “achieved” and two as “partially achieved”:

- Engagement with enterprise and community: target was to be a fully engaged campus – DLIADT mark this target as achieved and give a comprehensive listing of engagements.
- Innovation Vouchers: target was 25 innovation vouchers – DLIADT completed 16 innovation vouchers and marks the target as partially achieved, but note that this should be seen as “a development of expertise and more in-depth industry engagements formed”.
- Springboard: target was 1 programme, with a registration of 70 and completion of 90% - DLIADT’s performance is 3 programmes with 76 enrolments and a 79% completion rate and marks the target as partially achieved due to the lower than anticipated completion rate. The institute states that higher drop-out is due to students struggling to manage life and study. However, the HEA notes that DLIADT reported a 90% completion rate for both 2014 and 2015 and would welcome the institute’s commentary on this.

DLIADT has clarified that its completion rates are based on a cohort-plus-one-year. Students who graduated one year behind their cohort are counted in the completion figures. The more up to date figure is in fact 84%.

- Partnerships and collaborations: target was 80 student placements / internship agreements – DLIADT achieved 120 student placements and marks this target as achieved.

National Policy Context:

In this section, DLIADT makes reference to its provision of Springboard programmes – in 2016 it provided 3 programmes under the Springboard initiative:

- BBus in Entrepreneurship
- MA Public Cultures and Society
- PGDip in Cultural Event Management

There is no specific reference to the Action Plan for Jobs, National Skills Strategy or National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship; though it is clear that DLIADT are working successfully in these areas, with a Springboard programme in Entrepreneurship and

exceeding its target in relation to student placements. IADT confirmed it is acutely aware of the national labour market initiatives and developments but did not feel that this contextualisation was required

The institute also notes in its reporting that it has supported an initiative to encourage female school students to consider a career in film.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

In cycle 3 of strategic dialogue in 2015, DLIADT's target for student placements was 70, but 168 placements were achieved. DLIADT should comment on whether it considered revising its 2016 target of 80 student placements, given the surpassing of the target in 2015.

The HEA would also query the drop in completion rates on Springboard programmes since 2015, which the institute attributes to the difficulty in students managing work-life balance. This is not to say that a 79% completion rate is not commendable, but a reflection on the change compared with the previous two years would be welcome.

Reporting is outcomes-based and DLIADT gives good detail on the underlying processes that have brought about the performance achieved.

DLIADT note the link between this area and its Erasmus partnership network in Europe; and the involvement of enterprise and community partnerships in curriculum reform and programmatic reviews.

It is clear that DLIADT is committed to a wide range of community and enterprise engagements across the range of its provision.

6. Enhanced internationalisation:

Initial commentary:

DLIADT notes that it has very significantly increased its international student numbers over the period of the compact, and has developed academic linkages with overseas providers. It also notes that its staff make contributions to international organisation and serve as international quality reviewers and external examiners

DLIADT provides an overall commentary on performance and have marked all three targets as “achieved”.

- Increase overseas and EU student recruitment: target was 63 students – DLIADT states that it has significantly exceeded this target with 187 students. Note that HEA figures for 2016/17 indicate 37 full-time students. A reconciliation between HEA and DLIADT statistics would be welcome. Given the consistent surpassing of this target during the compact period, the HEA would welcome DLIADT’s commentary on whether it was considered to revise the target upwards at any point.
- Develop a network of international institutions: target was 20 formal links – DLIADT states that there is an excess of 40 formal links in place with details of the institutions provided. The HEA notes that DLIADT have consistently exceeded this target over the period of the compact and would welcome DLIADT’s commentary on whether it considered revising the target upwards at any point.
- Development of Faculty exchange programme: target was 30 students and 4 staff – DLIADT state that 42 students and 5 staff engaged in international exchange

Given that the Institute has so significantly exceeded its targets in this area in terms of international recruitment and the development of international linkages, it is disappointing to see a lack of reflection on the reasons for this.

National Policy Context:

The analysis would have benefitted from reference to national or international education policy in this area; however, DLIADT is working to increase its international student numbers, formal links with international HEIs and increase student and staff exchanges, all in line with national policy.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

It would be useful to see a reconciliation between HEA and DLIADT figures in relation to international students. The institute makes particular reference to the number of UK students, and the HEA would welcome more discussion on the significance of the recruitment of this particular cohort of students.

In cycle 3 in 2015, DLIADT set a target of 15 formal links with HEIs and achieved 30. DLIADT might comment on why the target of 20 was not revised upwards given that at least 30 would be in place in 2016.

The HEA would welcome more detail on the underlying processes that have brought about the performance achieved, particularly given that DLADIAT has indicated that it has exceeded a number of its targets in this area.

The institute has responded that they have over-achieved in this area, due to a recent reprioritisation of internationalisation. They have, however, been careful not to over-develop areas without the appropriate infrastructures being in place i.e. additions to campus buildings and ECF allocation.

The institute notes that overseas links have led to the formation of two new MA programmes, and a credit mobility project. The HEA would welcome a deeper discussion of the impact of increased internationalisation on teaching and learning practice, research and participation.

Reporting in this area is good, however, it would be useful to discuss with DLADIAT its ultimate goal in terms of the internationalisation of the DLADIAT campus and its programmes, in terms of student numbers and HEI linkages. Given that the institute has engaged in a period of expansion in this area, the HEA would welcome a discussion on the future trajectory of the institute. Reporting on this area is not as clear as others in terms of the weight the institute gives to this activity strategically and its relative prioritisation within the range of the institute's activities.

7. Institutional consolidation:

Initial commentary:

DLIADT states that it sees itself as an autonomous institute and in its report sets out the recent developments in relation to its status as an independent institution. The institute states that “we believe that consolidation proposals within the Creative realm continue to have merit”, particularly in relation to the establishment of a University of the Creative Arts.

DLIADT provides an overall commentary on performance and have marked all three targets as “achieved”, with two of these amended to reflect circumstances.

- Agree academic and research plan: Target was shared academic and research provision embedded across UCD and DLIADT, which was later amended to working in partnership with others – DLIADT state that this target has been achieved.
- Integration of academic provision: Target was shared modules delivered on a number of programmes with UCD – DLIADT state that a joint masters degree will be in place in 2018.
- Explore strategic relationship up to and including recognised college – original target was to implement changes to governance procedures, which was amended to working in partnership with others – DLIADT state that this target has been achieved.

National Policy Context:

DLIADT notes that it has responded to national policy in the area of regional clusters and the creative arts review; the publication of which is awaited. DLIADT also notes that due to the nature of its provision, that it sits somewhat separately to the rest of the IoT sector.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

The institute notes that its revised targets have been met and gives examples of collaboration with other HEIs in the creative arts cluster.

8. Additional Notes:

- There were no major strategic changes or targets or objectives added in or dropped in this cycle of the compact process.
- There is reference in the compact to gender equality.