

National University of Ireland Maynooth Agreed Minute

The HEA acknowledges and appreciates the work undertaken by NUIM in preparing the Compact Documentation submission in the context of this the first cycle of Strategic Dialogue. The HEA commends the quality of the submission. Documented feedback on the draft compact has been conveyed to NUIM. This feedback has been informed by an extensive HEA exercise of evaluation of the submission, including analysis by an external panel set up to provide an independent assessment of the overall performance of the institution, against the backdrop of its mission.

HEA recognises that this is the first year of strategic dialogue and this is a developmental process. In year 2, the HEA will have regard to the agreed outcomes of the dialogue process this year, including not only specific objectives and indicators proposed, but also any feedback to institutions regarding the overall composition of the compact. Institutions are expected to have regard to this feedback and to demonstrate that they have incorporated it into their processes for next year's process.

Subject to the above, the HEA and NUIM agree that the mission, planned profile and targets, as now set out in the accompanying Compact, are consistent with the national objectives set for the higher education system and are appropriate to the place of NUIM within the system. This agreement takes full cognisance of the written responses to HEA feedback and of the strategic dialogue meeting which took place on 20th January 2014. **The following issues are taken from the Strategic Dialogue Meeting held on the 20th January 2014. It is recognised that this does not represent a full minute of the meeting but focuses on issues of particular importance.**

General

In relation to the university's vision and mission, the HEA will amend the feedback note to reflect the mission of the university as set out in the university's strategy.

Meeting Ireland's Human Capital Needs

The HEA noted the central importance of job creation for the Government and the important role Higher Education plays in that domain. In the context of NUIM, a broad enhancement of graduate employability is achieved through fundamental curriculum reform which centrally emphasises the building of broad-based intellectual competences and skills such as analysis, including analysis of information from disparate sources, of incomplete data, critique, agency, logic, discrimination, flexibility, creativity. Such competences form an integral part of programmes across disciplines in NUIM. A focus on developing short term vocational skills which can deteriorate quickly – and may be over-emphasised nationally in response to specific skills gaps - will be balanced by a broader integrated approach to the development of competences and skills for employability, for citizenship and for a rich intellectual life, which are actually the attributes favoured by large scale employers as part of a highly educated workforce. NUIM outlined some of its links with industry, including the growing success of Maynooth Connect Programme, its technology transfer success rate and plans to share services and collaborate with cluster partners in this area.

Profile

The importance of funding assumptions (no further cuts beyond those announced) to the delivery of institution and system objectives for growth and quality and the sensitivity of institution and system sustainability to changes in funding rates, such as student contribution rate, was set out by NUIM. An analysis of differential regional population growth rates was presented, indicating high ongoing growth in demand for the coming decades in the NUIM catchment area.

The importance of the transparency and objectivity of performance funding allocations to the success of strategic dialogue process was also stressed.

Benchmarking

HEA notes the process of benchmarking being used by NUIM and looks forward to seeing how this will inform future compact submissions, and notes that whole-of-institution benchmarking is only a small part of benchmarking and that improved data on national profiling of institutions plays an important role.

Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning

NUIM is aiming to grow numbers in the target groups to keep pace with overall projected growth. Student support constraints to further increasing part-time/flexible and mature proportions were noted.

Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience

NUIM outlined its plans for curriculum reform. It is progressing the transitions agenda and expects to be able to condense the number of undergraduate programme offerings. The importance of a sectoral co-ordinated approach was noted.

High Quality, Internationally Competitive Research and Innovation

NUIM will review the compact to better reflect the distinctive prioritised nature of its research offering. The potentially significant opportunities in AHSS, in collaboration with HEI partners, in relation to Horizon2020 were discussed.

NUIM stated that HEA profile data on research need to be developed to include indicators that do not distort against AHSS performance.

Institutional Consolidation

Work has been completed on the Froebel College integration, incurring significant unfunded costs. The college is situated alongside the NUIM Education Department but integration of programmes will continue to be developed over time. NUIM is in ongoing discussion with St Patrick's College, Maynooth and intends to collaborate further on internationalisation.

International targets in the compact include EU mobility targets. Regional cluster objectives have been agreed with cluster partners and are progressing well.