

---

# National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG)

## Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 Reflections on Performance

---

### Self-evaluation report – institution overview

This is a carefully considered report that incorporates a critical and thoughtful assessment of NUIG's institutional performance. Across a range of domains, NUIG is performing strongly and the report is benchmarked well in terms of both national and international contexts. The relationship of each domain to the University's strategic plan, Vision 2020, is apparent throughout and at the close of this phase of Strategic Dialogue, NUIG should be commended for the breadth and the ambition of their vision and their impressive performance in relation to it. NUIG augmented their report with a detailed appendix on PhD completions at NUIG and a number of case studies that provide a compelling evidence base in support of their performance.

NUIG have made particular progress in the priority areas of:

- Development of international research profile in the five pillar priority areas with an increase in both research impact and citations per academic;
- Continued strong performance in relation to internationalisation, building on outcomes of 2015 by further increasing international undergraduate and postgraduate numbers;
- Enhancing graduate outcomes through teaching innovation and directly addressing the issue of graduate employability via student placements;
- Commercialisation of research through engagement with industry and the success of Blackstone LaunchPad.

The report also highlights areas that may warrant further discussion:

- While NUIG is performing strongly across most domains, there may be questions over the sustainability of this. By designating all 9 domains as priorities, some areas will by necessity suffer. There is the sense that the University may have set some conservative targets in order to allow a focus on areas that require greater effort and thereby ensure a success rate across the board. It is important for all institutions to set realistic and sustainable targets across all domains that can be altered in response to changing circumstances;

NUI Galway concurs with the view that some areas are of higher priority than others and while this may not be explicitly stated in the cCompact, it is implicit in the relative level of effort, investment and focus given to some areas over others.

NUIG states that over the course of the compact, and aligned to the *Vision 2020* Strategic Planning exercise, NUI Galway has particularly prioritised the development of its **research performance**, growing research income and building its research profile. As highlighted in three successive Strategic Dialogue reports, performance in this domain has been strong and significant progress has been made.

Additionally, NUIG states that further progress is required and this area will continue to be a subject of focus into the future. An external, independent, peer-review of research

performance in all Schools, the Institutional Review of Research Performance (2016-2018) is two-thirds complete and has provided some helpful insights into areas of further development including:

- The need to prioritise research themes further;
- The need to develop better School-level research strategies;
- Better training on Research Impact and how to communicate it.

NUI Galway also states that it has prioritised the development of the **internationalisation agenda** over the course of the Compact, with significant progress recognised in the Strategic Dialogue reports. The focus of much of its internationalisation activity has been on international student recruitment – driven by a strong reliance on non-EU fee income to offset funding challenges and a desire to grow its international profile. Investments have been made in staffing to support this area and as a result NUI Galway has seen significant growth in non-EU student numbers over the last year.

In the Teaching and Learning domain, NUI Galway has prioritised **programme innovation**, particularly in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences fields, and the development of **work-based learning** as key objectives. These priorities have emerged in response to market demand and in some cases reflect a need to reinvigorate its portfolio in order to maintain its relevance in a more challenging employability market.

- The report generally addressed the objectives of each domain comprehensively, but greater consideration could have been given to a holistic linkage of the objectives across discrete domains. The outcome of objectives in one domain has meaningful implications for another, and this could have been conveyed in more explicit terms;

NUI Galway acknowledges that greater links could have been made across domains where objectives overlap, particularly in the domains of Teaching and Learning; Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning, and Enhanced Engagement with Enterprise and the Community, and embedded knowledge exchange;

- The efforts of NUIG in respect of gender equality are respectfully acknowledged, and the university is working towards achieving the desired parity of opportunity;

NUI Galway contends that over the course of the compact it has made very significant progress in the domain of gender equality and that the targets set out in the compact and the performance outlined under this domain represent a small subset of the University's progress in this important area;

The University's Gender Equality Action Plan, developed in response to the Gender Equality Taskforce's report and recommendations, is a much more comprehensive report on NUI Galway's progress against those 24 Task Force recommendations. The appendix attached to this Reflections report sets out this area in greater detail. The Gender Equality Action Plan and the Equality Report have been included as Appendix Five and Six of this report;

- NUIG is commended for its leadership role in respect of regional clusters. However, there is no mention of the cluster in the institutional overview of NUIG. A collective approach to the cluster is lacking overall, particularly in terms of the

provision of programmes at undergraduate level. Yet, this may be explained by the challenge that the TU Agenda poses to the cluster.

NUIG states that, as the leading educational institution in the West and North-West, NUI Galway takes very seriously its role in driving the development of the region. As a strongly engaged University, NUI Galway has played a major role in the development of rich Medtech and ICT ecosystems in its region. By providing appropriately trained graduates, partnering on research and development, investing in facilities and infrastructure, NUI Galway has encouraged FDI, the development of indigenous industry and economic activity in the region. With the designation of Galway as the 2020 European Capital of Culture, the University is committed to developing a third pillar in the City and the wider region, the Creative Economy, and will also work with St Angela's College to create new opportunities for engagement with the food sector, with SMEs and the community care sector.

NUI Galway also notes that it has a special statutory obligation to provide Irish language education in the West of Ireland, discharged primarily through its Irish language unit, Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge. Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge has transformed the way it delivers Irish language education in the last five years by providing both full degree programmes for small groups of students on the Galway campus, and by offering large numbers of occasional students part time language immersion courses in its three Gaeltacht satellite centres. Over 3,000 students now engage with Irish language education annually through Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge. This diversification of student markets has enabled NUI Galway to deliver effectively on its statutory requirement towards bilingual education.

The University welcomes the opportunity to develop the region further through the Regional Cluster and considers that progress has been made in this regard through the Regional Skills Fora and, on a smaller scale, through joint programme development to serve the needs of local industry. The development of a new Masters programme in Regulatory Affairs for the Medtech sector, offered jointly by IT Sligo and NUI Galway, is one example of programme development in response to regional industry needs.

However, the University also contends that while progress has been made on coordinated academic planning – through mapping of provision and opening up of progression routes – making further meaningful progress in this area will be challenging in the context of a lack of clarity on the Technological Universities agenda. NUI Galway notes significant duplication of the university's provision by two regional IoTs over the course of the compact and regards this development as concerning in the context of challenging regional demographics. NUI Galway has raised these concerns with the HEA at all previous Strategic Dialogue meetings since 2015.)

## Self-evaluation report - domain level reviews

### 1. Regional clusters:

NUIG is part of a regional cluster with ITS, LYIT, STAC, and GMIT. As acknowledged in its self-evaluation report, NUIG is the dominant institution in the cluster and it recognises its leadership role accordingly.

The cluster is performing particularly well at the level of Teaching and Learning and NUIG is directly involved in four of the six joint cluster projects funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. The inter-institutional and multidisciplinary Wild Atlantic Way Research Grouping is a very positive development. The fact that ten IoT staff are registered for research degrees with NUIG is welcomed and further emphasises NUIG's leadership role within the cluster. NUIG has provided the following regional spread of staff involved.

The breakdown of the 10 staff is as follows:

IT Sligo	5
LYIT	3
GMIT	2

The cluster is also engaging strongly with regional stakeholders, and NUIG is at the centre of this collaborative process.

NUIG reports three of the five objectives as achieved, with one exceeded, and one partially achieved. NUIG's strong performance in this domain must be acknowledged. However, NUIG's perception of the performance of the cluster overall is undoubtedly coloured by its dominant role, and the absences/gaps in the self-evaluation report suggest that the cluster may be struggling in certain areas. While the cluster institutions engage consistently at meetings, the direct output of these is not always apparent.

#### National Policy Context:

NUIG acknowledges that the national policy context is unclear. It also states that the TU agenda poses a challenge to Phase 2 in respect of Regional Clusters and direction is requested from the HEA accordingly. This may help to explain why the 2016 target to review the objectives of the cluster is not apparent here.

NUIG responds that the cluster conducted an internal review of operations in 2016. As a result, the Cluster Operations Group has been streamlined to centre on the four Registrars of the participating institutions, rather than the wider group of eight prior to this. A broader review was planned but was put on hold pending the outcome of the wider HEA review of cluster activity, which is not yet completed. The review will primarily be influenced by the restated or new policy goals following the HEA review, particularly in the context of the proposed Technological University bid, and associated

funding to be made available for future cluster activities.

There is active engagement with the further education sector and Education Training Boards across the cluster and the proposed further development of NUIG strategy in line with the National Plan for Equity of Access in Higher Education 2015-2019 is welcomed.

Critical evaluation and feedback:

Coordinated academic planning (objective 2) is identified as a target achieved. However, this seems to be a somewhat problematic area with NUIG stating that the current competitive funding model poses a challenge to regional academic planning. NUIG states on two occasions in its report that the development of new Level 8 programmes in the IoTs presents a significant threat to a region with identified demographic challenges. They further point to the proposed introduction of 3 BA programmes in Arts in ITS as a particular example that “runs counter to the strategy for regional consolidation” that is centred on economy and efficiency in the provision of programmes. While NUIG highlights this proposal as adding to the existing challenge facing Arts provision nationally, it is indicative also of the potential for direct competition for students for a programme with one of the largest uptakes for NUIG.

NUI Galway acknowledges significant progress over the last three years on mapping of programme provision across the regional cluster and on opening up progression routes between institutions. A joint academic planning process also exists to enable information sharing on new programme development and on portfolio review.

The academic planning activity reflects the fact that the information is being shared, but ultimately the institutions are in competition for limited funding, based on student numbers and, as autonomous institutions, have been presented with no (financial or other) incentives to act collaboratively rather than individually.

The West/North-West region remains challenging in terms of student demographics. Data from the 2006, 2011 and 2016 Census all reveal a common pattern - a sharp downward trend in demographics for the Western region, relative to growth trends on the East coast. Recent demographic projections to 2031 from the Central Statistics Office indicate a continuation of this trend into the future with marked differences in the population trends for the East and West coast (see Appendix One for Demographic trends in the West of Ireland and their impact on the student population).

NUI Galway contends that in such a challenging demographic landscape, it is in the interests of all Cluster partners to ensure that coordinated academic planning moves on to a new phase of proactive, collaborative planning of provision, focusing on working together to draw students from outside the catchment area to the West/North-West region. Coordinated academic planning should facilitate the articulation of each cluster partner’s unique areas of strength, should provide clear differentiation of provision between institutions, identifying synergies and avoiding duplication and overlapping offerings. NUI Galway reiterates its concern, expressed in the last three compact submissions, about new programme development in partner Institutes of Technology which replicate provision at NUI Galway.

Objective three is reported as “partially achieved” due to the unmet targets surrounding the Institutional Articulation Agreement and the Collaborative Framework for

Postgraduate Supervision and Progression. Significantly, ITS is the absent party, but there is no commentary or explanation provided. NUIG states that has no further comment to make on this issue, other than that it is a question more appropriately asked of IT Sligo, who did not sign the Institutional Articulation Agreement.

The fourth objective is recorded as “exceeded” and NUIG is commended for this. However, this may be reason for concern in terms of the regional cluster as these collaborations are all tied to the NUIG/UL Alliance. This seems to counter NUIG’s claim that the cluster takes prominence.

NUIG responds that the objectives relating to the NUI Galway/UL Alliance are historical and date back to the establishment of the Alliance in 2010. When NUI Galway’s compact was drawn up in 2014 the Alliance with the University of Limerick was a significant strategic priority for both universities. Since that time, national strategy has set a different direction with Regional Clusters now taking priority over inter-university alliances.

The progress on compact targets for the NUI Galway/UL Alliance reflect a maintenance of activity that was already in train prior to 2014, rather than any significant new activity. In reality, while both NUI Galway and the University of Limerick are committed to maintaining existing levels of co-operation, the regional Cluster agenda has meant that the Alliance between the two universities has taken a back seat as institutional focus has shifted towards collaboration with regional IoTs.

NUI Galway would note that this is potentially a regrettable development as prior to 2014, the Alliance between NUI Galway and UL was delivering meaningful collaboration which had the potential to bring real benefits to the West and Mid-West regions. The opportunity for collaboration between NUI Galway and UL is great and potentially highly impactful for the wider West and Mid-West region, particularly in the area of research and innovation. The HEA’s longer term vision for collaboration between the West/North West and the Mid-West regional clusters may facilitate a realisation of this opportunity in the future.)

It is interesting that NUIG records objective five as “achieved” when the targets are in fact exceeded. Under this objective, NUIG points to limited core funding for research at partner institutions for limiting the research impact, and perhaps this accounts for their downgrading of the target to “achieved”.

## 2. Participation, equal access and lifelong learning:

### Initial commentary:

NUIG reports five targets achieved and one exceeded suggesting a consistent performance in this domain. NUIG has introduced a number of positive initiatives to boost access and retention, including a tuition fee discount and improvement in the tracking of students. The 100% increase in undergraduates from the further education sector in 2016 is commended and demonstrates the value of investment in this area. The increase in progression rates for students with disability is also strongly welcomed. However, the University is keen to highlight that additional targeted funding is required to meet the objectives as laid out in the National Access Plan.

### National Policy Context:

The performance of NUIG is nationally benchmarked and is responsive to the national policy context with reference to the National Skills Agenda, the Action Plan for Jobs, and the National Plan for Equity of Access.

NUIG references the national plan in the cluster context, noting that, 'the Cluster partners are committed to deepening collaboration on access and have made significant process in developing regional solutions to the objectives identified in the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019'. The Plan is also referenced in the main body of the NUIG self-evaluation report.

The self-evaluation would have benefitted from references to the Transitions Agenda.

NUI Galway notes that it submitted a detailed response to the Transitions Agenda as part of last year's Strategic Dialogue Cycle 3 process (September 2016 - see Appendix Two). In that response we set out the University's progress on rationalisation of entry routes at undergraduate level, set against the other Irish universities, and the wider HE sector, as well as providing an overview of the proportion of its students studying on general entry pathways versus denominated routes.

At this point, there is no additional information to add to this detailed response except to note that notwithstanding the university's commitment to the transitions agenda, NUI Galway will introduce 8 new undergraduate programmes in the Arts domain in 2018 in order to reinvigorate its Arts offering, This response is required urgently in order to meet market demand from students and to address significant concerns about declining numbers of students taking Arts programmes in its region over the last 5 years. In taking such a step, the University is mindful of the impact on the number of entry routes it offers and will look for opportunities to rationalise entry routes in other areas.)

### Critical evaluation and feedback:

The number of part-time enrolments has increased by 130 students (note HEA 2016/17 data indicates a decrease of 99 in the number of part-time enrolments) and it would be interesting to receive more detail as to the number of programmes to which this applies.

NUIG has confirmed that numbers reported for the purposes of the compact report relate

to the academic year Sept 2015 – June 2016 as Cycle 4 of the compact measures performance relating to 2016, not 2017. A full list of programmes and their numbers included in this report are included in Appendix 4.)

NUIG has also increased online/blended provision. The 2015/16 target of an 8% online and blended learning enrolments is conservative as explained in the original compact, but it is reasonable to project greater growth going forward.

NUIG responds that with an increasing requirement to up skill for workforce development and an increasing focus on professional development competencies, employees will seek further opportunities to retrain. With modules on offer on a standalone CPD basis to flexibility in the range of awards available (i.e. Certificate/Diploma/modular Degrees), further growth is envisaged for this area. Other support conditions must also apply such as financial aid for students who may require funding for tuition fees and ancillary expenses, while additional study skills supports must also be available for students unaccustomed to studying online in order to maintain student retention. compactNUI Galway has been actively developing a range of new online programmes in business, management, engineering and humanities and has also been working with academic staff in the area of educational technologies, providing up skilling opportunities for new course development to be delivered through online and blended learning. This activity will further increase the range of programmes on offer in future years. A CPD Strategy is also being developed by the University this year which will incorporate a significant component of online learning.

Objective three to maintain outreach is perhaps necessarily conservative in a fiscally constrained environment. However, an increased target in respect of mature students should be an obvious aspiration as an avenue to grow undergraduate numbers given the documented demographic challenges in the region.

NUI Galway states that it is proactively working to grow the mature student cohort and the appointment of a Marketing and Communications Officer to the Access Office will ensure the development and implementation of a dedicated student recruitment strategy for this target market, under the direction of the University's Student Recruitment and Outreach Manager. However, NUI Galway notes that the mature student market has been extremely challenging over the last five years, with the University experiencing a significant fall off in mature student applications since 2012. NUIG anticipates that it will see a recovery in the mature student numbers in the near future. Given the application pattern since 2012, NUI Galway contends that its aspirations for mature student numbers have been realistic over the course of the compact.

NUIG demonstrates a capacity for responsiveness to the current climate in revising targets upward in respect of participation at second level. Nevertheless, this growth does not reflect expansion to more schools, and the regional spread of the programme is unclear.

NUIG has provided the following clarifications:

The NUI Galway Access Programme supports widening access and participation for target groups (second-level) in its target region (BMW and Clare) in two main ways:

1. Working with DEIS primary and DEIS second level schools by working in the schools – at primary level the main focus is on the Uni4U programme which, due to its resource-intensive nature, is limited to three schools; at second level they work with 22 schools, most of which are in the Galway City and County region, stretching as far as



the Connemara Gaeltacht and the Aran Islands. They also work with a small number of schools in Mayo and Sligo.

2. The provision of access courses for school leavers (and mature students), whereby any individual in any school (DEIS and non-DEIS) can apply and can participate in the programme if they meet the eligibility criteria for same.

In the early 2000s, an Access Centre was established at St Angela's College, Sligo, supported financially by NUI Galway, to work on behalf of both institutions with DEIS schools (their figures are not included in the compact report to the HEA) in the North West region and to deliver an access course in Sligo.

In addition, an access course through the medium of Irish is delivered in collaboration with the University's Irish language unit, Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, Carraroe (in the Connemara Gaeltacht). Finally, NUI Galway also delivers an Access Programme in Ballinasloe, County Galway.)

In terms of objective five, NUIG reports this target as "achieved". The original mission compact highlights a combined communications strategy as a key objective. While NUIG has made considerable and significant progress, the position of Marketing and Communications Officer with direct responsibility for the implementation of this strategy has yet to be filled. The communications strategy is critical to broaden access and achieve the target of increased awareness of students of the supports available.

NUIG responds that the new Marketing post (Access Engagement Officer) has been advertised and recruitment will soon be complete. This will enable it to further progress a dedicated communications strategy. The Student Recruitment Manager has given considerable support to the Access Centre and substantial progress has been made, particularly with the FE sector resulting in a doubling of numbers in the last year.

This resource will focus on increasing access to higher education for students from under-represented groups. The groups include students from socio-economically disadvantaged schools/communities, students with a disability, mature students, lone parents and students in the Further Education sector. The Access Engagement Officer will lead in the development of marketing and outreach campaigns to enhance student recruitment activity, development of relationships with key partners such as the Education Training Boards and Department of Social Protection, Access Centre promotion, development of awareness of student supports and taking a leading role in the project management of key events.)

There is no discussion provided of the three-year report proposed under objective six.

NUIG has provided the following concerning the three-year report:

The numbers of NUI Galway Students with disabilities registered with the Disability Support Service (DSS) has grown consistently in the three years of this study; 339 in 2008, 379 in 2009 and 452 in 2010. The numbers of new SWD entrants during those years who graduated (within a six year period following the year of entry) is consistent with this growth. As expected, the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies had the highest numbers which were broadly maintained; however it was notable that the College of Science almost tripled its numbers of SWDs.

Numbers of SWDs who graduated from these new entrant cohorts averaged over 75%.

However there was a decline in percentages of SWDs graduating during this period – 2008 (78%), 2009 (74%), 2010 (75%). Overall progression for the same period was down slightly from 93% to 92%.

Analysis by college showed improvements in this period for new entrants graduating in Arts and in Business, Public Policy and Law. However the percentage of SWDs who graduated from the College of Science declined from 83% in 2008, to 65% (2009), and 72% (2010). The College of Engineering and Informatics also declined from a high of 92% in 2008, to 71% (2009), and 64% (2010).

The average age of SWD graduates is older than that of traditional NUI Galway undergraduate students. The SWD average age decreased over this period leading to the conclusion that we have a decline in mature SWDs and this situation needs to be addressed. There is a recommendation to conduct additional qualitative research to facilitate a better understanding of the data. Better alignment of supports for Science, and Engineering and Informatics students was also recommended.

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

#### Initial commentary:

Under this domain, NUIG is reporting 3 targets as achieved, 4 as exceeded and 1 as partially achieved. NUIG demonstrates a strong performance in the face of ambitious objectives and a clear commitment to instituting measures to quantify the quality of teaching and learning, and student experience. The manifold objectives include the development of an LTA strategy, curricula reform, academic simplification, building civic engagement, and increasing inclusion. The strong performance in respect of these objectives is despite resource constraints. NUIG emphasise that reduced staffing and demographic challenges act as a significant barrier to the ability to deliver on targets within the expected timeframes.

The University must be commended for its collaborative and holistic engagement with students and the recognition of their value as equal stakeholders. In particular, the efforts of NUIG to record and respond to feedback from students are notable, with the focus on the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) as a clear example of the University's student centred approach. The participation of NUIG in the National Student Engagement Programme pilot is commended.

NUIG has clearly focused much energy on the area of employability and graduate outcomes and these efforts must be acknowledged, particularly the creative response in a challenging economic environment.

The recognition of excellence in teaching in terms of promotion is equally noteworthy and the implementation of this in 2017 is welcomed.

#### National Policy Context:

NUIG has demonstrated engagement with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, Campus Engage (Carnegie Classification with the University of Massachusetts, Boston), and ISSE.

#### Critical evaluation and feedback:

NUIG has exceeded targets in respect of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning (objective 3) and civic engagement (objective 6). However, this is perhaps unsurprising given the conservative nature of the targets. Work based learning targets are exceeded by 3% and the positive feedback from partners (76% excellent or very good) suggests there is room for growth going forward.

NUI Galway acknowledges that the target for numbers of staff participating in the PG Cert programme in Teaching and Learning (and the subsequent PG Dip/MA options) is relatively conservative, but availability of places is limited by available capacity and resources. The programme is delivered by two staff members and is resource intensive to run in terms of mentoring, assessment and individual feedback, which are the key aspects

of this particular form of training.

Demand remains high for the programmes, and it is likely that changes to promotion criteria (including the advent of 'Lecturer (A)' grade) will lead to a further increase in applications. The roll-out of the Professional Development Framework devised by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning, will also have an impact, both in terms of levels of interest and the requirement for short, CPD offerings. These issues will be considered as part of the forthcoming Quality Review of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (scheduled for AY2017-2018).

NUI Galway contends that the award of 975 ALIVE certificates in recognition of student volunteering activity is an exceptional annual performance and indicative of NUI Galway's leadership position nationally in the area of Civic Engagement. Perhaps the conservatism identified by reviewers reflects the over-performance as against target which was set at 600 ALIVE certificates awarded by 2016? This may be the case, though in 2010/11 NUI Galway awarded only 500 ALIVE certificates so there has been very significant growth in numbers of students participating in volunteering activities, both for credit and non-credit bearing activities, over the period of the compact.

Given the economic situation that prevailed over the 3 years covered by the Strategic Dialogue exercise, and the need for students to earn while studying, NUI Galway contends that the original target of 600 ALIVE certificates awarded was reasonable due to the nature of volunteering and contribution of additional valuable student time.)

NUIG adds that the he transition towards the goal of 80% UG work based learning required new and improved programmes, systems and processes. All new undergraduate programmes have a work placement – this generally happens in the third year of the programme and it was logical to set relatively conservative targets for the earlier years. The following related resources have been appointed recently:

- Work Based Learning Manager – with overall responsibility for developing its WBL operations
- Placement Officer –with responsibility for developing WBL opportunities for programmes which do not have an integrated WBL opportunity
- Employability Project Officer – developing an Employability Award to record and acknowledge non programme integrated WBL.
- Careers Adviser – developing career development learning programmes to prepare students for placement and improve career readiness

We recognise that it will take time to have a formal accredited placement for 80% students. The introduction an Employability Award will facilitate those students who do not have a placement in their programme and enable them to have a work based learning experience that is supported, documented and endorsed by the University.

These combined initiatives will ensure a significant increase its WBL quality and quantity and enable us to meet the very ambitious 80% target. The model of enhanced and integrated career readiness and work placement will increase students' level of preparedness for placement. We anticipate that this will also improve the performance of students on placement. Increased engagement by academic staff with employers (as part of the placement process) will also contribute to positive feedback from partners.)

Youth Academy figures are extremely positive, but it is unclear whether the scholarships offered to DEIS students are linked to the schools engaged with under Domain 2 (Access).

NUIG states that there is some overlap between the DEIS Schools to which Youth Academy Scholarships are offered and the work with DEIS primary schools by the Access Office (under Domain 2). The Access Office works intensively with three DEIS primary schools in its region and these three Schools are included in the Youth Academy Scholarship programme. However, the reach of the Youth Academy in terms of DEIS schools is much wider, see details below:

- 170 scholarships received by Youth Academy pupils in 2016
- Coming from 84 schools
- 10 of these were DES schools, with 18 pupils securing a scholarship
- Of the 3 schools Access work with, 2 of them had children attend Youth Academy courses, taking 3 places
- Scholarships awarded on the basis of presenting a medical card

The NUI Galway Access Programme supports DEIS primary schools primarily through its Uni4U project, which involves NUI Galway students mentoring fourth, fifth and sixth class pupils through a series of fun learning activities. Due to the resource-intensive nature of this programme, it is limited to three participating DEIS schools.)

Although the targets surrounding inclusion and participation in orientation week (objective 7) were revised down from 95% to 90%, the student feedback from students was extremely positive.

It is worth noting that NUIG falls behind the average higher education Institution (HEI) score in the area of Student Faculty Interaction in the ISSE, and this warrants consideration in terms of the impact of wider institutional objectives on student experience.

(NUIG counter that although against the average score for all types of institutions its score is low, when benchmarked relative to the other 6 universities its score in Student Faculty Interaction is significantly higher than that of the 6 other universities.) See appendix A for details.

Objective two in respect of graduate attributes is reported as “partially achieved”. NUIG cite resource restraints as the reason that the target is still at 2015 levels. The creation of a new position to implement the attributes is expected to address this, which is important given that this is a key aspect of NUIG’s employability strategy.

Training provision for staff is diverse and this is commended, but detail of the uptake is not provided.

NUIG states that participants on formal PG Cert/Dip/Masters programmes in Teaching and Learning come from all schools across the University, and are at varying stages in their careers. Almost all are full-time academic staff, but some academic support staff from the Irish language unit, Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta, and a small number of post-docs (constrained by their need to be teaching for these courses, and the prioritisation of those with lectureship posts) also take part each year.

The GTA (Graduate Teaching Assistant) module is taken by most PhD students who are

involved in running tutorials, lab-demonstrating, etc. Annually between 70-80 students take this module, with maximum flexibility provided in terms of deadlines for coursework, etc.)

## 4. High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation:

### Initial commentary:

This is undoubtedly one of the strongest performing domains in NUIG, and one in which there is much critical reflection and responsive action. NUIG notes that three of the targets are achieved, two are exceeded, and one is substantially progressed.

In line with the implementation of Vision 2020, NUIG's strategic plan, the focus of the University has been on increasing the international recognition of its research. This is demonstrated in the increase in research impact from 5.2% to 7.9% in 2015, which exceeded the target of 7%. While NUIG has fallen short of the target regarding the diversification of funding sources, it has nonetheless increased EU funding from 11% to 19% in 2015/16.

Significantly, NUIG is adopting a proactive approach in this domain and have actively pursued steps to rectify identified issues in response to national policy and benchmarking. The degree of critical reflection here is notable and has evidentially proven its value.

### National Policy Context:

The National Framework for Doctoral Education appears to be at the centre of NUIG's standards and objectives in respect of doctoral programmes.

### Critical evaluation and feedback:

In terms of objective two, NUIG exceeded their target, but this is based on 2015 data and so perhaps growth can be regarded as relative.

Many of the objectives here relate to doctoral programmes and NUIG must be commended for exceeding its target with 94% of its doctoral candidates enrolled on structured programmes. The university also achieved its original and downwardly revised targets in respect of doctorate conferring.

In respect of objective five, the target is revised to an analysis of PhD completion rates and times. This analysis attempts to benchmark NUIG's performance both nationally and internationally, but the report points to the complexity of the measurement of this and the number of variables involved in existing data. The identification of the need for the university to track PhD progress and completion with greater rigour is strongly welcomed. The fact that 29% of the 2007/8 cohort completed within 4 years suggests that NUIG is performing close to its original target of 30%. In the supplemental analysis provided, NUIG discusses a number of initiatives that it has introduced to combat the fact that completion times at NUIG are longer than at other Irish universities. These initiatives, including the Graduate Research Committee and the level of internal oversight that affords, is strongly commended. However, care is needed so as not to exacerbate delays in completion times. By NUIG's own admission, one of the barriers to timely completion is the fact that doctoral students time is already oversubscribed with the demands of teaching and training. Feedback from doctoral students on these initiatives as they progress would be

beneficial in assessing this.

NUI Galway states that it proactively seeks feedback from PhD students on their experience, on a regular basis and through a series of structured surveys. NUI Galway does not concur with the reviewers' interpretation of the causes of delays to PhD completion times, as set out in the comment above. NUI Galway considers that time spent on teaching activity and training (through the structured PhD) is an extremely valuable part of the PhD programme. NUI Galway contends that all elements of structured PhD programmes, i.e. structured training, Graduate Research Committees and annual progress reviews, provide support for PhD students to complete on time. NUI Galway suggests instead that one of the factors which may delay completion time is a lack of time management skills. To address this issue, the university has put a number of supports in place for Structured PhD students including a training module called 'Managing Your Research Project'. In addition, an external trainer is brought in to deliver 2-3 hour workshops for PhD students focused on topics that aim to help students to plan their research projects more effectively.)

NUIG reports objective three as one under which substantial progress has been made. While NUIG has not reached the 22% target, significant progress is evident from the 2015 figure (16.0% to 19.7%). NUIG also notes that it has a higher success rate than other national universities for competitive funding (16.7% versus 13.4%), and this must be recognised. It is imagined that the appointment of a Head of International Research Programmes will further impact positively on this.



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

### Initial commentary:

Under this domain, NUIG reports on 4 targets achieved, 3 exceeded, and 1 substantially progressed. NUIG must be commended for its responsiveness to regional needs and in particular its collaborative engagement with the community and regional partners to embed knowledge transfer and improve graduate outcomes.

In terms of the priority area of An Ghaeilge, NUIG has achieved all targets.

It is significant that NUIG exceeded all targets surrounding work placements and graduate employability. The pragmatic and responsive approach of the university to improve graduate outcomes is commendable.

### National Policy Context:

There is no reference to the national policy context in this domain.

NUIG notes that through its provision of part-time education programmes, NUI Galway is actively contributing to the National Skills Strategy targets for 2020 in terms of providing progression opportunities for students to progress through the National Framework of Qualifications in developing their knowledge, skills and competencies in a range of work-related areas.

### Critical evaluation and feedback:

In relation to objective one, NUIG reports substantial progress in terms of its target. NUIG states that it is “making ground” since 2015 and is now “on a par with expectations”. However, no explanation or commentary is provided for falling short of projected licence and option agreements.

NUIG states that targets have been partially met in licensing due to a shortage of experienced staff in the Technology Transfer Office at NUI Galway. The Director of Technology Transfer role had been vacant for some time which prevented the Office from operating at full capacity. This situation has now been addressed with the filing on a permanent basis of the Directorship and the addition of a number of staff to the Technology Transfer team.

Under objective three, NUIG demonstrates that good progression to BA programmes is inbuilt in their community education provision. This is combined with the positive initiative to offer a 30% reduction in fees to those in receipt of welfare allowances and highlights the potential to build greater capacity within the community (118 people availed of the reduced tuition scheme in 2015/16). This is a logical avenue to counter the decline in mature student numbers that would help to alleviate the strain on undergraduate numbers caused by demographic challenges within the region.

NUIG adds that the adult education model uses a variety of award types (i.e. standalone modules, major and minor awards), in order to provide education and training opportunities for adult learners. Providing flexible, shorter-term programmes suits many

part-time students as this combines well with work and family obligations. This also matches with their ability to pay for course fees on a phased basis. A range of progression opportunities are offered in terms of follow-on awards and maximum usage is made of RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning), to encourage students to progress to degree and postgraduate level. Providing mature students with similar shorter-term award options from courses available through the day-time mode may encourage further uptake on programmes.

NUIG is performing well in relation to work placements, but it is unclear how the achieved work placement programme number of 15 relates to the overall strategic target to offer work based learning experience within 80% of all undergraduate programmes by 2020.

NUIG states that these are separate but interrelated targets. The compact target to expand the range of personal and professional development programmes which meet the specific needs of employers in the region, which has led to the development of 15 bespoke programmes, is aimed at the adult learning market. The focus is on up-skilling and re-skilling of adults already in employment, looking to find employment or change career direction.

The 80% work-based learning target relates to undergraduate programmes and is primarily aimed at traditional school leavers attending university for the first time. The aim of this target is to enhance the employability of NUIG graduates, by developing better work-based learning skills, and to ensure the relevance of its programmes to the work place.)

The incorporation of structured placements for level 8 and level 9 Media, AV and Creative Industries students is a welcome initiative. It will be interesting to map the impact of this and other such placements on graduate outcomes.

NUIG adds that the Work Placement Programme deals with specific sectoral development which is firmly located in a regional economic context, that of the Irish language audio-visual industry in the BMW area. The primary Irish language production bases of RTÉ, TG4 and independent media (e.g. Tuairisc.ie) are located within this catchment area. Undergraduate programming developed in response to industry demand (e.g. BA sa Chumarsáid agus Gaeilge).

Since commencement of *Vision 2020*, the development of all Irish language programmes has embedded graduate employability and industry placement as key attributes. The value of highlighting a select number of placements indicates a depth of engagement with industry partners in a specific thematic area, Irish language broadcasting and journalism, which has been informed by the overall university target of 80% of undergraduate programmes offering a work-based learning opportunity.

It is worth noting the HEA's own analysis of the limitations of cross-sectional fixed-time surveying:

*'While graduate surveys have many positive attributes, the limitations of cross-sectional (or one point in time) approaches have been heavily criticised (e.g. Unger and Raggautz, 2011). The move towards large-scale graduate studies (as conducted in the UK, Germany,*

*Canada, USA, New Zealand and Australia) recognise the importance of revisiting the same graduates over time.’ (13: 2016)<sup>1</sup>*

and the desideratum of a longitudinal approach as advocated by Frawley & Harvey:

*‘...an innovative and longitudinal approach to ascertaining graduate outcomes, both short-term and long-term. Amendments to the Irish survey’s design, methodology and database will borrow from the review of international practice and contribute to a holistic picture of graduates in offering an outcome orientated assessment of the value and experience of higher education.’ (95:2015)<sup>2</sup>*

Tracking outcomes amongst this cohort is desirable and will be completed for the graduating cohort of the revised BA sa Chumarsáid programme which will come to market in AY19/20.

---

<sup>1</sup> HEA (2016) *What Graduates Do? The Class of 2014. An Analysis of the First Destination of University and College of Education Graduates*, Dublin: HEA

<sup>2</sup> Denise Frawley & Valerie Harvey (2015) *Graduate Surveys: Review of International Practice*, Dublin: HEA

## 6. Enhanced internationalisation:

### Initial commentary:

NUIG claims that progress in this domain is “exemplary”, and the performance in the face of an ambitious strategy is noteworthy. NUIG has far exceeded its targets in terms of international student numbers and the number of countries engaged in mobility agreements. There is a strong evidence base to NUIG’s claim that the establishment of an international culture is central to its strategic plan.

NUIG notes that the percentage of full-time international students stands at an impressive 24.6% based on NUI Galway’s definition of ‘international students’ as ‘the enrolment of students ordinarily domiciled outside the Republic of Ireland to study on a full-time onshore (i.e. home campus) basis’ and includes both EU and non EU students from outside Ireland. 69.8% of these students originate from Non-EU countries. The postgraduate international figures are also exceeding targets considerably.

However, there is no commentary section provided here, which is surprising given NUIG’s recognition of this domain as such a key priority. In the overview section, it refers to the strategic introduction of new programmes that incorporate international mobility experience, but this is not mentioned in the material that follows.

NUIG notes that its’ Strategic Plan, Vision 2020, sets out two ambitious targets for student recruitment: that international students will comprise 25% of the student body, and that postgraduate students will comprise 30% of the student body by 2020. These targets are interrelated and the recruitment of non-EU postgraduate Masters students is a key priority for all of NUI Galway’s Colleges.

Over the last three years, significant new programme development has taken place at postgraduate taught level, with all five Colleges adding new programmes, many of them developed specifically to target the non-EU market. The University has made investments in international marketing and recruitment staff centrally and at College-level in order to target the postgraduate international market specifically, which it regards as both a critical source of fee income revenue and also essential to building the University’s international profile.

### National Policy Context:

The self-evaluation would have benefitted from reference to the wider national policy context, in particular how the institute is engaging with the Department of Education and Skills ‘An International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020.

(NUIG comments that it is fully engaged with the HE elements of the ‘International Education Strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020’, the most relevant aspects of which are addressed in the University’s own internationalisation strategy. NUI Galway also engages with national policy issues through the forum of the Irish Universities Association’s Internationalisation Group.)

Critical evaluation and feedback:

NUIG reports objective three as achieved. While the university exceeded its target in terms of outbound student mobility, these figures were capped at 2015 levels. Of concern, is the fact that the number of staff engaged in outbound mobility has fallen below the baseline target and considerably below the 2016 target. It is regrettable that no critical reflection is provided in relation to this, particularly in light of the fact that staff mobility targets were relatively conservative given the size of the institution. It is imagined that this downturn will have a significant negative impact on international research collaborations identified in domain four as being of critical importance.

NUIG adds that in its' submission, outbound mobility of staff refers exclusively to activity funded by Erasmus. NUI Galway acknowledges that staff travelling on Erasmus-sponsored exchanges has declined in the period and this is regrettable. In this regard, the State's reduction in support for Erasmus-exchange is unfortunate.

On the wider issue of outbound mobility of staff to facilitate international research collaboration, the university's experience is that Erasmus-sponsored exchanges have a limited impact on international research collaborations and are a very small subset of the international partnerships, networks and collaborations NUI Galway has established to develop its research output and profile. Aside from the Erasmus scheme, NUI Galway staff are extremely active in outbound mobility around the world, attending academic meetings, conferences, networking events, research symposia, and participating in research collaborations of various kinds. Going forward, the university will give some thought to how best to capture data to quantify this activity on an institution-wide basis.)

There is no reference to the International Development website under objective four so it is unclear if this target has been realised. (NUIG confirm that: due to staffing turnover issues, the International Development website project is still in progress and not yet completed. It is due for completion in academic year 2017-18.)

## 7. Institutional consolidation:

### Initial commentary:

There are two objectives in this domain, namely the integration of Shannon College and St Angela's College Sligo.

In respect of Shannon College, NUIG records the target as achieved. The focus for the university now is on a five-year strategic plan to develop the research capacity of the college.

NUIG claims that substantial progress has been made towards the target of the integration of STAC with a revised date for the signing of agreements. In its evaluation, NUIG emphasises the complexity of the negotiation process and the need for "significant support" to achieve the new deadline.

### Critical evaluation and feedback:

While the integration of STAC is presented as substantially progressed, there is little detail furnished in respect of the remaining challenges.

NUIG states that: NUI Galway is in regular correspondence with the HEA on outstanding challenges to the proposed integration of St Angela's College Sligo into NUI Galway, including most recently, a letter to the CEO of the HEA, dated July 19th, setting out a number of issues.

The three main challenges to progressing the integration of STAC can be summarized as follows:

- i. Financial challenges: A full 5-year financial plan has been submitted to the HEA outlining recurrent, capital and once-off strategic costs associated with the integration
- ii. Academic/contractual challenges: As part of the TUPE process, it has become clear that academic staff at STAC receive significant abatements for taking on positions of responsibility which are not aligned to the terms and conditions of academic staff at NUI Galway. To transfer such abatements into the University sector would be problematic from an academic management perspective.
- iii. Legal challenges: By far the most significant challenge arises from the legal due diligence completed by NUI Galway. This relates to open-ended rights of access to college facilities and property which have been accorded to private property owners, adjacent to the STAC campus. This issue has been the subject of ongoing litigation for many years and the path to a resolution is unclear. Legal Advisors for NUI Galway advise that such access rights will adversely affect NUI Galway's ability to use and develop the STAC campus. At present, this legal challenge renders the risk associated with integration of STAC significant.

NUI Galway remains committed to the integration of St Angela's College Sligo. We understand its importance to the College, the University and the wider West and North West of Ireland. We are actively and urgently exploring 'work-arounds' for these issues.)

## **8. Additional Notes:**

NUIG broke even in relation to its 2016 budget with no revision to its financial plan required.

## **ADDITIONAL DOMAIN 8: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION**

With the agreement of the HEA, NUI Galway added an additional domain in the area of Student Entrepreneurship and Innovation. NUIG reports on this domain as fully achieved in respect of embedding a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation among students. NUIG notes that it has exceeded its own expectations with participation in Blackstone LaunchPad at over 3,000 students. This impressive statistic highlights the interest and energy of students in this area.

The initiative is benchmarked against the New York model of entrepreneurship, but this is qualified as applying to structure and support rather than scale.

The attempt to address gender equality with the introduction of a series to support female entrepreneurs is noteworthy.

NUIG's vision in this domain must be commended, particularly in respect of the awareness of potential funding opportunities in a national and international context.

It is however regrettable that NUIG provide little critical commentary here, given that this is an emerging initiative. It would be useful to ascertain the demographics of student participation, for example the undergraduate and postgraduate constituent.

NUIG has provided the following note:

The Blackstone LaunchPad programme has been very successful at NUI Galway to date. Engagement levels are high amongst students, with almost 16% of students now participating in the programme (see Table 2 below for breakdown of demographics of participating students). In 2016, programme highlights included:

- Travelling with a student cohort to Boston Forbes 30U30;
- Having NUI Galway represented by students who pitched their business ideas to the Blackstone Charitable Foundation;
- Supporting student entrepreneur, Edel Browne, in raising over €20,000 to develop her business idea, Free Feet Medical;
- Embedding the new entrepreneurship programme at NUI Galway.

While the LaunchPad programme has exceeded all expectations in terms of performance, embedding it on campus has not been without its challenge. As the newcomer in the entrepreneurship space on campus, the programme needed to build its reputation from the ground up which involved educating staff and students on the programme and how it could be used to complement existing entrepreneurial supports and programmes. As is the case with many entrepreneurship ecosystems, entrepreneurship activity at NUI Galway is fragmented across units and disciplines so it has taken time to determine where the pockets of entrepreneurship occur and effort to bring cohesion to this area.

A further challenge has been ensuring that the programme is fit for purpose for students. The Blackstone LaunchPad programme provides funding and advice on the creation of the programme but leaves the content and delivery to the Launchpad site to determine. It was necessary to ensure that the programme represented students' specific needs and that NUIG maintained its duty of care to the students in terms of their academic studies. The programme design therefore needed to be very defined, time appropriate and also create opportunities for students to develop their ideas further, through internal competitions or



the alignment of the programme to external competitions from agencies such as Enterprise Ireland, NDRC and the Ireland Funds. It is hoped that this focus on programme delivery and funding pipelines for student entrepreneurship will generate positive outcomes for NUI Galway students in the entrepreneurship space.

Finally as the programme is funded by Blackstone for 3 years only, its on-going sustainability needs to be planned for. NUI Galway is currently exploring fundraising options to extend the programme through both grant income and private funding. To-date, Blackstone LaunchPad has made a significant contribution to the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the University and has great potential to contribute further to the areas of employability, innovation, entrepreneurship as a viable career path and graduate attributes and soft skills development for NUI Galway students.

<b>College</b>	
Business, Public Policy and Law	29%
Arts, Social Science and Celtic Studies	28%
Engineering and Informatics	19%
Science	17%
Medicine, Nursing and Health Science	7%
<b>Category of User</b>	
Undergraduate	70%
Postgraduate	20%
Alumni and Staff	10%
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	60%
Female	40%
Source - Ventureboard, October 2016	

**Table 2: Breakdown of participating students in Blackstone LaunchPad**

## **ADDITIONAL DOMAIN 9: GENDER EQUALITY**

With the agreement of the HEA, NUI Galway added an additional domain in the area of Gender Equality. NUIG states that the advancement of gender equality is a key priority and the institution is active in its pursuit of “equality of opportunity” for women and men. The aspiration for ATHENA Swan accreditation is a worthy ambition and the establishment of a Self-Assessment Team in this regard is a positive development.

NUIG reports that all targets have been achieved in full, yet cites one target as mostly achieved. However, the target that remains outstanding is perhaps one of the more significant, namely the failure to reach 40% with all decision-making committees, most notably Academic Council. While the progress of NUIG in this domain must be acknowledged, this is a critical exception. NUIG states that the necessary drafting of statute is the reason for the delay.

NUIG has provided the following response:

The target referred to by reviewers here is the target to have 40% gender balance on all key decision-making Committees by December 2016. NUI Galway has reported that all major Committees have achieved 40% gender balance, following radical changes to membership composition, except Academic Council, where both Academic Council and Governing Authority have agreed to a very significant change to Council membership to provide for the required gender balance. The required process of capturing this change in approved statutes is currently in train and is expected to be completed in Autumn 2017.

NUI Galway wishes to outline the process involved in changing the composition of Academic Council, for the benefit of reviewers, so that the complexity of this change is clear.

The existence of Academic Council as the primary body to oversee academic affairs in Irish universities is enshrined in legislation, in the 1997 Irish Universities Act. Section 27 of the Universities Act 1997 provides that ‘each University shall have an Academic Council (subject to financial constraints and review as determined by the Governing Authority), which shall control the academic affairs of the University, including the curriculum of, and instruction and education provided by, the University.’

Section 28 of the Irish Universities Act provides that the composition of Academic Council shall be members of the academic staff of the University and the numbers, composition, selection, appointment and terms of office of members shall be provided for in a statute, which statute shall contain provisions for the inclusion on the Academic Council of:

1. The senior member of staff having responsibility to the President for each academic discipline, school or department as the Governing Authority determines;
2. Members from what, in the opinion of the Governing Authority, is an appropriate range of levels of other academic staff from an appropriate range of academic disciplines;
3. An appropriate number of students;
4. The President and the Registrar shall be, ex officio, members of the Academic Council.

Section 29 of the Act provides that subject to the requirements of the Act and any directions of the Governing Authority, an Academic Council shall hold such meetings as it thinks necessary to perform its functions and may regulate its own procedure.

The relevant statute which provides for NUI Galway's Academic Council has, up to now, set out a membership composition which includes the President, Registrar, academic members of the University Management Team, Deans, Heads of School, the full Professoriate – all Established and Personal Professors, representatives from the Lecturers cohort, student representatives and academic support representatives. The automatic membership of all professors, given the low percentages of female professors, made it impossible to achieve 40% gender balance without a formal change to the composition of Academic Council.

Following detailed discussion at Academic Council and consultation with Legal Advisors, a Working Group was established, chaired by the Vice President for Equality and Diversity, which brought forward a proposal in February 2017. The Academic Council adopted the proposal by the Vice President to radically change the membership composition to achieve 40% gender balance. Central to the proposal was the removal of the automatic entitlement of all of the professoriate to membership, replaced instead by College-based membership with a 40% gender balance requirement built in.

This change to the composition of Academic Council represents a major transformation of governance structure at NUI Galway and indicates the University's strong commitment to advancing gender equality. The change requires the drafting of a revised statute - the draft statute has had its first reading at Governing Authority and will have its second and final reading in October 2017, with a view to moving to the new membership composition by January 2018 at the latest.

NUI Galway notes that once this change has been fully implemented, and the 40% gender balance in the membership achieved, its Academic Council will be one of only two such bodies in the national University sector to have achieved 40% gender balance. All other decision-making bodies at NUI Galway, including College and School-level Committees, have implemented the 40% gender requirement.)

The HEA reports that improvement in the percentage of women at personal Professor grade from 10% to 16% is welcomed. However, it is unfortunate that no further statistics are provided for comparison to those provided as a baseline, as this makes it more difficult to quantify NUIG's progress in this domain.

NUIG subsequently provided the following further details:

Please find below details of NUI Galway's academic staff profile by gender and grade (Table 3); HEA comparative data for the sector (Table 4); and NUI Galway's STEMM academic staff by grade and gender, prepared for its Athena Swan application (Table 5):

**Table 3: All Academic Staff by Gender and Grade (2014 - 2016)**

	2014			2015			2016		
	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %
Lecturer (Below Bar)	67	78	54%	71	82	54%	73	82	53%
Lecturer (Above Bar)	126	169	57%	139	179	56%	147	174	54%
Senior Lecturer	74	34	31%	65	35	35%	61	30	33%
Personal Professor	45	5	10%	49	6	11%	51	10	16%
Established Professor	57	8	12%	56	8	13%	55	8	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>44%</b>

**Table 4: HEA Benchmark Data (Institutional Staff Profiles 3 Year Average (Dec 2013-Dec 2015))**

	NUI Galway		All Irish Universities	
	%Male	%Female	%Male	%Female
Lecturer	46%	54%	50%	50%
Senior Lecturer	67%	33%	65%	35%
Associate Professor <sup>3</sup>	n/a	n/a	74%	27%
Personal Professor	84%	16%	n/a	n/a
Established Professor	87%	13%	81%	19%

**Table 5: NUI Galway STEMM Academic Staff by Gender and Grade (2014 - 2016)**

	2014			2015			2016		
	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %
Lecturer (Below Bar)	37	39	51%	40	42	51%	37	42	53%
Lecturer (Above Bar)	72	103	59%	78	101	56%	87	99	53%
Senior Lecturer	46	19	29%	41	18	31%	38	14	27%
Personal Professor	28	1	3%	30	2	6%	36	5	12%
Established Professor	39	6	13%	39	6	13%	40	5	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>41%</b>

The most notable change in NUI Galway's data from 2014-2016 is at the Personal Professorship grade with the number of female Personal Professors doubling from 5 to 10, with a proportionally larger increase in STEM. This trend at Personal Professorship level is encouraging and accounts for the corresponding decrease of women at Senior Lecturer.

The improvement at Personal Professorship level may be attributed to a number of factors: promotions board receiving unconscious bias training; increased gender balance on the promotions board since 2015; and a review of the Personal Professorship Promotion Scheme with recommendations for change.

For comparison, the Personal Professor grade in NUI Galway is similar to a Personal Chair in other institutions, with a single salary point of approx. €122K compared with a 6-point salary scale which overlaps at the lower end with the Associate Professor grade in other universities. Therefore, it is not comparable directly with Professor grades in other Irish Universities or internationally. The absence of an incremental Associate Professor grade at

NUI Galway increases pressure on promotion to Personal Professor and the impact may further disadvantage women. NUI Galway is below the sectoral average for Professors (Table 3.2.5) with 15% women at Personal Professor and Established Professor.)

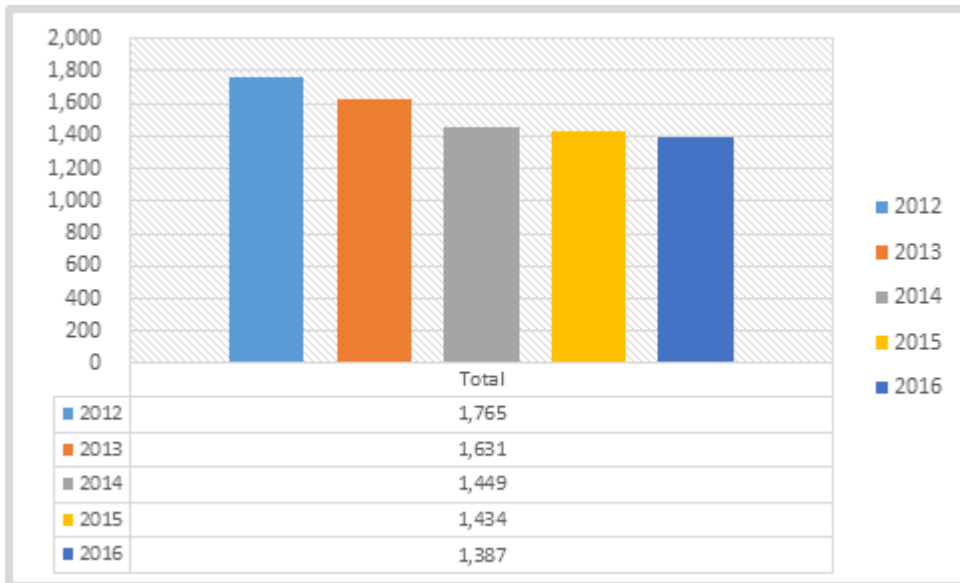
It is acknowledged that this is a new addition to the compact, so the HEA notes that only five of the twenty-four recommendations of the Gender Equality Action Plan have been fully implemented.

NUIG states that, with the agreement of the HEA, the domain of gender equality was added to the Compact in order to reflect the priority afforded to this area in the University. NUI Galway feels it is important for reviewers to note that the six targets set out in the Gender Equality domain are a small subset of a comprehensive programme of work currently underway in the University to implement the 24 recommendations of the Gender Equality Task Force and the recommendations of the HEA's Review of Gender Equality in Irish HEIs. Led by the Vice-President for Equality and Diversity, a Gender Equality Action Plan sets out the University's progress on gender equality commitments at regular intervals. See [Appendix Five](#) for the latest version of the Gender Equality Action Plan from July 2017. The current status is that seven of the Task Force recommendations have been fully completed, remaining recommendations are on track, with different timelines for completion. It should be recognised that some of the Task Force's recommendations are more stretching than others and will take longer to implement.

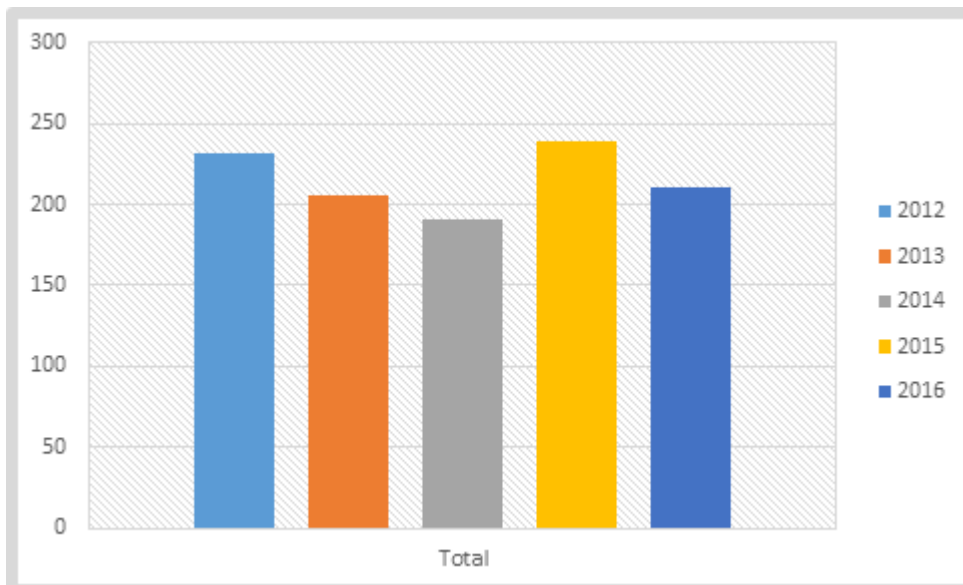
Also included in [Appendix Six](#) is the Annual Report on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for 2016-17 from the Vice President for Equality and Diversity, which sets out the breadth of activity completed over the last year in this important domain.

## APPENDIX A

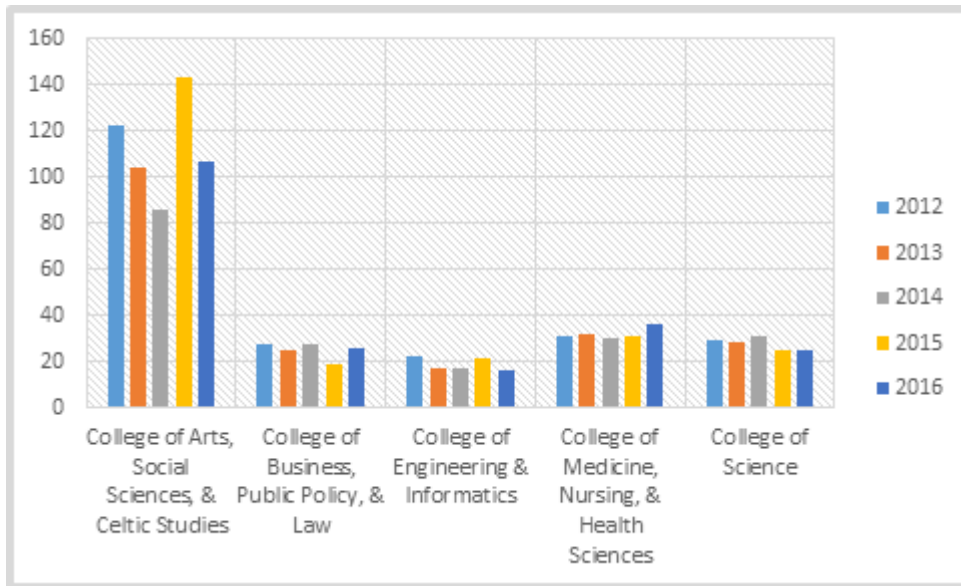
Details of Mature student applications and registrations since 2012.



**Table 1: Mature Applicants to NUI Galway 2012-2016**



**Table 2: Mature Registrants to NUI Galway 2012-2016**



**Table 3: Mature Registrants by College 2012-2016**

Registrants by College	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
College of Arts, Social Sciences, & Celtic Studies	122	104	86	143	107
College of Business, Public Policy, & Law	27	25	27	19	26
College of Engineering & Informatics	22	17	17	21	16
College of Medicine, Nursing, & Health Sciences	31	32	30	31	36
College of Science	29	28	31	25	25
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>210</b>

## ISSE 2016

Index scores for Student-Faculty interactions in ISSE vary across institution types with the highest scores being achieved by Institutes of Technology (15.4). followed by Other Institutions (13.8) and Universities (12.0), yielding an average for all Institutions (13.7). It is this average that is presumably referred to by the Compact reviewers. Differing staff/student ratios and different teaching and learning styles at universities versus Institutes of Technology, mean that like-for-like comparisons on the student: faculty index are difficult to interpret across the whole HE sector.

NUI Galway has benchmarked its performance relative to the other six Universities on all indices (see Table 1 below). For Student-Faculty Interactions, NUI Galway has a score of 13.2 which is significantly higher than that of 11.7 for the other six Universities. Scores are higher for Final Year Students and Postgraduate Taught students in comparison to First year students. This is not unexpected as two of the questions which contribute to this index are:

- Talked about career plans with academic staff
- Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with academic staff outside of class

Responses to such questions would reflect activities of students in more advanced years. NUI Galway is aware that feedback on performance for first year students requires further exploration and improvement across the sector.

Results of the **ISSE 2017** survey again indicate that for Student-Faculty Interaction, NUI Galway's score of 13.7 is significantly better than the other six Universities with a mean score of 12.3.



**Table 1: NUI Galway scores in 2016 ISSE versus the other 6 Universities combined (scores in green indicate a stronger performance by NUI Galway relative to average for the Universities)**

Index Score <sup>‡</sup>	NUI Galway	Other 6 Unis	Difference between NUI Galway and other 6 Universities combined <sup>†</sup>		
			Year 1	Final Year	Taught PG
Higher Order Learning	38.0	37.4	=	↑	↑
Reflective & Integrative Learning	32.1	31.7	↓	↑	↑
Quantitative Reasoning	19.8*	19.1	=	=	↑
Learning Strategies	32.3**	30.7	↑	↑	↑
Collaborative Learning	29.1	28.8	=	↓	↑
Student-Faculty interactions	13.2**	11.7	=	↑	↑
Effective Teaching Practices	35.6**	33.9	↑	↑	↑
Quality of Interactions	37.9**	36.7	↑	↑	↑
Supportive Environment	30.0	30.0	=	=	↑