STRATEGIC PLAN

2018 - 2021

Waterford Institute *of* Technology
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA PHORT LÁIRGE

OUR VISION

We are an education-focussed collaborative, inclusive, ethical and innovative community. Our goal is to be in the top one hundred young universities in the world by 2030, demonstrating quality and excellence in all our activities. Our focus will be on forming responsible global citizens, creating new knowledge and actively leading social and economic change.

Is pobal comhoibríoch, ionchuimsitheach, eiticiúil agus nuálach atá dírithe ar an oideachas muid. Is é an sprioc atá againn ná a bheith mar chuid de na céad ollscoil óg ar domhan roimh 2030 ag léiriú ardcaighdeáin agus feabhais inár ngíomhaíochtaí go léir. Díreoimid ar saoránaigh domhanda freagracha a mhúnlú, eolas nua a chruthú agus athruithe sóisialta agus eacnamaíochta a threorú go gníomhach.

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Waterford Institute of Technology has through its history come to be known as one of Ireland's most innovative educational institutions, leading in research and teaching, driven by a strong ethos of partnership and co-operation. The Institute's past achievements are considerable; the time has now come for the Institute to move to the next stage in its development. This it will do in the course of this Strategic Plan as it transforms, with Institute of Technology Carlow, into a Technological University. The university will be a university for the entire region and will have significant impact nationally and internationally—it is our ambition that in time it will be amongst the top universities in the world. In this way it will lead the future economic, social and cultural development of the South East.

This Strategic Plan has been developed through extensive consultation and debate across the Institute and in discussion with external partners such as business groups, employers, local authorities, and others. The Plan sets out priorities designed to direct the Institute's efforts in the coming years. At the heart of the Plan are students: the Plan in the first instance prioritises the further development of the Institute's teaching and wider support for its learners. The Plan seeks to enhance the enormous commitment to students and to teaching evident in the Institute's history. The Plan emphasises attention to the individual personal and career needs of every learner; the Plan will ensure that the individual needs of students are at the core of the Institute's activities for the future. The Plan has been developed against the backdrop of challenging financial circumstances. Restoring the Institute's finances is critical to the execution of the strategy and informs the priorities set out in the Plan.

The Plan is a declaration of intent on the part of Waterford Institute of Technology and is ambitious and confident. Notwithstanding current challenges, the future for the South East is very bright and Waterford Institute of Technology with this Plan places itself at the centre of future regional development.

Chairman of Waterford Institute of Technology, Jim Moore

FOREWORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ireland is entering an exciting and challenging period in its economic, social and cultural development. Our future wellbeing will be based on our ability to embrace the positive opportunities that globalisation and the knowledge economy brings. Waterford Institute of Technology has a proud tradition of leadership and innovation in the delivery of third-level education to its community and positions itself with this Plan at the fore of the national effort to embrace a bright and prosperous future.

We will do so in the first instance by challenging and empowering our staff and students to be leaders in their chosen sphere of expertise. We are committed to forming creative and innovative citizens, citizens who will contribute positively and productively to society, who will be informed, ethical, and who will be solution focussed. We will do this by ensuring that opportunities are available at the Institute for every citizen to meet his or her full potential. We have a strong commitment to life-long learning and to social justice and will continue to make available multiple and flexible opportunities for people to engage with higher education. Technology is changing the way we function as a society; we are committed to ensuring that we use state-of-the-art technology in the production and delivery of our educational offerings.

This strategic plan builds on a long-established culture of stakeholder engagement at the Institute directed towards economic and social development. This Strategic Plan recognises and builds on the our track record of innovative collaboration with industrial, commercial and social partners in the knowledge creation and exploitation process—we recognise that knowledge creation and exploitation through teaching, research and Innovation is now a fundamental requirement of all third-level institutions. This Strategic Plan is committed to enhancing substantially Waterford Institute of Technology's research and innovation capacity to support the delivery of a resilient, prosperous, and sustainable society in the South-East of Ireland. In seeking to achieve this we embrace our leadership role not just in the region but nationally and internationally.

For education increasingly must be defined in a global context. We embrace our role as an international academic leader as defined by our global networks of excellence in teaching, research and innovation. We have set the ambitious task of becoming one of the top 100 new universities by 2030. This commitment is based on the economic, social and cultural requirements for the creation of a sustainable society in the region. It is stated in the knowledge that we will deliver a University for the South East during the period of the strategy. The University name is not our objective but rather the delivery of a university recognised globally for excellence and quality. This Plan provides the blueprint for that future organisation.

President of Waterford Institute of Technology, Professor Willie Donnelly

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan for Waterford Institute of Technology for 2018-2021 comes at a time of opportunity and challenge for Ireland, the South East region, and for Waterford Institute of Technology itself. The work of the Plan is to lay out a strategic direction for Waterford Institute of Technology that is focussed on those opportunities with realistic ambition and identifies the resources required. The Plan is a declaration of the Institute's ambition, its conviction in facing future challenges and its determination to grasp opportunities as they emerge.

Ireland is experiencing the strongest economic growth in the European Union. The renewed confidence arising from this strong economic performance coupled with predicted demographic shifts places Ireland on the cusp of significant social as well as economic change. The South-East is experiencing also a major transformation in its economy with the region shifting its emphasis to high-value, knowledge-intensive industries in advanced manufacturing and ICT (Biopharma, ICT and Fintech) as well as emerging opportunities in tourism and areas such as agricultural technology and health and the caring professions. At the same time the region is hindered in its ability to develop by the ongoing migration of its young people out of the region and under-developed infrastructure. It continues to under-perform other regions on many measures. Moreover, the region, as part of Ireland's open economy, is particularly vulnerable to events such as Brexit that may halt future growth. The future development of Waterford Institute of Technology as charted in this Plan is to act as a vehicle to further the resilience and sustainability of the region against such external forces.

Since its foundation in 1970, Waterford Institute of Technology has been at the forefront of the development of third-level education and in particular the development of the Institute of Technology (formerly the Regional Technical College) sector. The Institute's history is one of innovation and creative disruption and through its ambitious actions over many decades it has demonstrably enhanced higher education provision in the South East and in Ireland. The Institute is a considerable resource for the South East, a proven catalyst of regional development, job creation, enterprise, and cultural activity, and has been to the fore in addressing regional social challenges. Through student placement, education and training programmes, research partnerships and many other means, the Institute has become embedded in the cultural, social and economic fibre of the city and region. Its alumni have distinguished themselves by their contribution to the region, the nation and the wider world.

The Institute is now ready for the next stage in its development, that is, the creation of an entity with the scale, autonomy, attractiveness and performance of an international university. The Institute welcomes the commitment of the community of the region to realising that ambition. The ambition of the institute is not only to make an application to be a Technological University within the life of this Plan (in accordance with the legislation and in partnership with Institute of Technology Carlow) but to be within the top one hundred "Young" Universities by 2030.

The new university envisaged by the Institute and created with our partner, Institute of Technology Carlow, will have the quality, scale, breadth of programme and disciplinary provision and depth of research to rival existing "young" universities in Ireland and elsewhere. It will be a new university founded on three pillars: a commitment to inclusivity and educational access for all with a particular focus on cohorts traditionally under-represented in education; a collaborative approach to learning and research through connection to an active network of partnerships across multiple sectors regionally, nationally and internationally; and a sharp focus on real individual and social transformation—whether by social innovation, knowledge exploitation and commercialisation, or cultural development—aimed at sustainable, resilient regional and national development.

The Institute's ambition in this sense is international. While Waterford Institute of Technology responds to the immediate challenges of its region and its stakeholders, it is clearly positioned as an internationally-measured academic institution and the Plan below seeks to consolidate that position as the Institute transforms itself to a university. While addressing the skills needs of regional employers as well as the needs of the unemployed in the region, Waterford Institute of Technology is outward-facing and actively participates in the global academic community. Waterford Institute of Technology is and will remain an active contributor to global academic, industrial, social and cultural knowledge networks which validate the

excellence of its teaching, research and innovation. These networks also support the flow of knowledge and brainpower between the region, Ireland and the world, greatly contributing to realising the region and Ireland's growth potential.

The new university will build on this strong foundation better to enhance impact in terms of improved quality of life, enhanced employment opportunities, more stimulating cultural activities, and a more equal, just and diverse social environment for the region's population and for Ireland as a whole.

The Plan speaks for the Waterford Institute of Technology community; it is a public declaration of intent on the part of Waterford Institute of Technology. Waterford Institute of Technology's strong, informed, critical voice is and can be a powerful shaping influence on the city's, the region's and Ireland's continuing economic, social and cultural transformation and towards the creation in the South East of a robust, resilient, diverse, equitable, sustainable society. The further enhancement of higher education provision in the South East through the creation of a new, international-standard university will accelerate the realisation of these goals.

The Plan also speaks to the Waterford Institute of Technology community, for the Plan is a recipe for organisational change. Our students and our partners in the community, the region, the nation and beyond need a transformation of the organisation's curriculum and teaching approach, the organisation's structures and processes, the organisation's knowledge creation and exchange activity, and its public presence and profile—a transformation that builds on the achievements of the organisation to date and its deep traditions, but recognises and responds to the complexity of contemporary experience, the rapidity of social change, and in particular the increased opportunities afforded by technology. The Plan seeks a path for institutional development that will unify the organisation around key values, enable individual professional and personal development for all members of the community (students and all staff), that will empower the community so that it can contribute to the future transformation of Ireland.

The Institute is ready for the next stage in its development, that is, the creation of an international university

VISION

A VISION FOR WATERFORD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

The context within which this vision is articulated is that of significant change in higher education in Ireland and worldwide. This context is recognised in the National Strategy for Higher Education where it is noted that, while "higher education in Ireland has been a major agent of positive change and development", "new challenges, changed demographics, different employment patterns and new ways of understanding Ireland's role in the world [...] will all change what we expect from higher education, in terms of both intellectual stimulation and more practical skills development." Structural change in Irish higher education, supported by legislation, is currently underway and will enable institutions to position themselves better to be able to meet these expectations. The National Strategy envisages the creation of new universities in the shape of Technological Universities and it is specifically in this context that Waterford Institute of Technology's future ambitions are set. The Institute will, through the Technological University process—driven by the region's need for higher performing, more impactful higher education provision—place itself firmly on the trajectory towards a top one hundred ranking.

This vision, gives expression to the values and beliefs of the organisation; in this sense, the vision, while future-oriented, is also cognisant of the Institute's deep traditions. These values are articulated in more detail in the next section (Section 3). These values manifest themselves in our behaviours as members of the community, behaviours (this Plan proposes) that will be codified in a Behavioural Framework for all staff and students. The organisation's commitments to students, its staff and external stakeholders will, it is proposed, also be articulated and described in order to give public expression to our value system. The organisation's mission is described in Section 4. The mission sets out Waterford Institute of Technology's reason for being and the methodology it applies in its activities. The characteristics described in the Mission will enable the organisation achieve its vision. Section 5 of the Plan sets out the areas for action over the coming three years. A number of specific actions are proposed. Taking these actions will lead the organisation towards the achievement of its vision. Direction on the implementation of the Plan is offered in Section 6.

The vision gives expression to the values and beliefs of the organisation. It is future-oriented and also cognisant of the organisation's deep traditions.

We are an education-focussed collaborative, inclusive, ethical and innovative community.

Our goal is to be in the top one hundred young universities in the world by 2030, demonstrating quality and excellence in all our activities.

Our focus will be on forming responsible local citizens, creating new knowledge and actively leading social and economic change.

VALUES

THE INSTITUTE'S VALUES IN ACTION

Central to this Plan is the maintenance of a stimulating, collegiate, inclusive learning and working environment that gives expression to the values listed above. The behaviours of individuals within the organisation are critical to this for those behaviours embody in action the organisation's value system and its culture.

The Plan below includes the formal development of a set of behavioural ideals for the members of the organisation—employees (professional, managerial, academic) and students and partners—that will give clear direction to individuals on behaviours that best express the organisation's values and will guide in career, professional and personal development. The co-creation through an agreed, collegiate process by members of the community of a "values into action" behavioural framework—which will describe a set of acceptable behaviours relatable to all staff and all students, and will seek to make those behaviours visible in our everyday activities—will ensure that our values are more than words; the development of this framework will seek to lead towards greater institutional and community cohesion, and a renewed sense of belonging and organisational citizenship.[4]

Proposed Behavioural Framework

The Institute will over the course of the Plan develop a behavioural framework for members of the community, students and staff. The framework will describe a suite of agreed and acceptable (and un-acceptable) behaviours in support of the Institute's values with regard to, for instance,

- Professional and interpersonal relations
- Communication and information sharing
- Inclusivity and equality
- Quality and excellence
- Public role and external engagement

THE INSTITUTE'S VISION GIVES EXPRESSION TO ITS CORE VALUES

At Waterford Institute of Technology we share the values that inform the missions of universities globally and we seek actively to promote the principles that guide universities in every manifestation. These principles, shared by Waterford Institute of Technology, mean that we believe in ...

- Autonomy of thought and expression and intellectual independence;

- Truth and the centrality of truth-seeking to the university mission;

- Inquiry for its own sake;

- The university as a meeting-ground for the free exchange of ideas;

- The university as a trustee of tradition with a responsibility for handing tradition on to future generations;

- Ethical and responsible action;

- Continuous quality improvement, high standards, including the highest standards of professionalism.

Waterford Institute of Technology has also distinguished itself over several generations as upholding certain other values in addition to the above. These differentiate the organisation in the minds of its staff and students and the public at large. At Waterford Institute of Technology ...

- We believe in the transformative power of education and of the value of knowledge. Our commitment is to creating educational experiences that liberate the potential of every individual. Through teaching and research and by our example we form active and responsible global citizens.

- We believe education should be open and knowledge freely available. We believe in access to education for all and acknowledge that this requires a focus on particular cohorts of society that have been traditionally under-represented in education. We believe in equality of opportunity and social mobility.

- We believe in the value of challenging and disruptive ideas and pioneering thinking. We are comfortable with and endorse interdisciplinary approaches. We embrace the opportunities presented by technological innovation.

- We believe in the power of community, in inclusivity and partnership and in the co-creation, exchange and sharing of knowledge. We work closely with our partners in a collaborative manner to ensure positive outcomes for students and social and economic impact.

- We believe in empathy with our students and colleagues and ambition for our students and ourselves. The Institute's vision gives expression to its core values. The Strategic Plan reflects and furthers those values.

PUBLIC COMMITMENTS TO STUDENTS, STAKEHOLDERS, AND STAFF

As an expression of our commitment, and a declaration that the organisation is centred on community and collaboration between students, staff and external partner we include in the Plan below the formal development and endorsement of agreed commitments to our students, our staff, and our external partners. These "charters" will articulate legitimate expectations students, staff and stakeholders may have of the organisation, and the organisation's expectations of them, and form the basis of the organisation's pursuit of these ideals.

Indicative Summary Student Charter

The Student Charter agreed between the Institute's students and the organisation will specify the expectations students may have of the organisation with regard to

- The quality of the learning experience
- Access to supports and resources
- The qualifications and expertise of staff - Being empowered by the organisation in their learning and future development and employability
- Being treated with dignity and respect
- Receiving an internationally-recognised qualification

In turn the charter will identify the Institute's expectations of its students in terms of behaviour, application, and effort.

Indicative Summary Staff Charter

The Staff Charter agreed between the Institute and its staff will outline the expectations staff may have of the organisation and the organisation will have of staff. The charter will identify the organisation's common purpose and articulate expectations with regard to:

- Students, teaching and research

- The quality of the work environment

- Upholding trusting, collegiate and collaborative approaches

- Behaviours in support of equality, inclusivity and dignity and respect for all

- Communication and organisational decision-making

- Career development

- The recognition of the talents and contribution of all staff to the achievement of the collective mission

Indicative Summary Charter for External Partners

The Institute is connected to many networks of external partners, including commercial partners, parents, community groups, alumni, and other academic institutions in Ireland and abroad. The Institute supports the further extension of these networks and the development of partnerships for mutual benefit.

External partners of the Institute have expectations of the organisation and the organisation also approaches such partnerships from a certain perspective. The charter with external partners will set out these expectations with regard to:

- Preserving a positive engagement

- Approaching engagement in an ethical , fair-minded way

- Cultivating an approach that guarantees mutual and collective benefit

- Responsiveness and flexibility

The further development of these charters forms a critical set of actions in the Plan below. While these charters commit the Institute to certain actions in support of its staff, students and community, they also describe an environment in which all actors commit actively to engage and support the ambitions and goals of the organisation.

MISSION

page 22

We will achieve our vision by being collaborative, progressive, active in support of equality, and excellent.

THE MISSION OF WATERFORD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Guided by our values, we will achieve our vision by being, in our teaching and learning, in our research, in our structures and organisation, by our engagements with our stakeholders and partners, and by our other activities:

Collaborative and cooperative, supportive of equality and diversity, inclusive and accessible

We are a community centred on education and we believe strongly in collaboration and aspire to collegiate and cooperative ways of organisation and problem-solving. We are committed to equality. We encourage and promote, celebrate and cherish diversity in our community. We value the contributions of all members of our community—all staff and all students—to the learning effort.

Active in support of equitable social, economic and cultural development

We act positively to enable local, regional and national development towards future sustainability. We use our academic leadership to support the emergence of a more prosperous and just future for all. We are a catalyst for development and we are committed to ensuring that our academic programmes and research are relevant, flexible and responsive to the needs of our students and stakeholders.

Progressive and innovative, generating new knowledge and new ways of doing things

We positively and proactively cultivate responsible research and innovation. We are a dynamic and responsive organisation, an organisation that is unafraid of and relishes challenge. We understand technology and its impact, embrace the opportunities technology presents, and shape our activities including our teaching accordingly.

Demonstrably excellent, leading, and ambitious

We are committed to guaranteeing the quality of all of our activities. We have the ambition to create an international-quality university. We have the confidence to imagine a better future and to take practical steps to bring it into being. Our commitment to excellence, leadership and ambition is measured against the highest standards internationally.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTIONS

STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTIONS

The following section outlines the organisation's strategic goals for the coming period, guided by our over-arching vision. Actions to create change, better to achieve the Institute's stated mission and to achieve its future vision, will be required over the coming period in the curriculum, the Institute's physical environment, its research activity, its public role, processes and structures, and approach to developing its staff. The alignment of all the above and the creation of a robust, credible operational plan that positively directs organisational changes towards the constituent elements of the Institute's vision is necessary for success.

Actions over the course of the Plan are designed to transform the organisation in many ways. The transformational agenda will ensure that by 2021 the Institute will be known

1 For our provision of high quality educational experiences to students that are student centred and responsive to learner needs

2 As an accessible new university that offers a wide range of learning opportunities, access and progression routes and flexible modes of engagement with learning that reflect learner needs and societal change

3 As a research-led organisation with a demonstrably impactful, innovative, and dynamic research community

4 For being deeply embedded in regional discourse, policy-making, economic, social and cultural activity and as a driver of regional change

5 For our international profile that finds expression in the approach of our students and staff and in our extensive partnerships

6 As an effectively governed and managed organisation that is strategically focussed and demonstrates quality in all its activities

7 A financially stable and sustainable organisation well-equipped to meet future needs.

Technological University

Waterford Institute of Technology is committed, over the course of this Plan, to making an application for Technological University designation in collaboration with IT Carlow and in accordance with legislation.

The Institute's engagement with this process is consistent with its strategy which is to enhance higher education in the region to optimise its social, cultural and economic impact and to enable regional change. The institutional change agenda proposed in this Plan, while taking as its reference point the need to grow towards a top one hundred "young" university, incorporates the achievement of the criteria specified for Technological University. The Institute sees such designation as enabling it to achieve its ultimate goal.

The Technological University as described in legislation and in higher education policy involves:

- an institutional orientation that facilitates innovation, that is open and engaged with the community, society and business, and that is active in the creation of positive, developmental partnerships with regional, national and international agents. The Institute's vision gives expression to its core values. The Strategic Plan reflects and furthers those values.

- actions listed below in particular with regard to Waterford Institute of Technology's role in developing regional and national human capital, the actions with regard to an expanded and greatly enhanced research agenda leading to significantly greater research impact, and the consequent actions relating to management and governance changes reflect this orientation;

- a profile in terms of students that reflects a greater emphasis on educational access and on expanded graduate education. The actions listed below will see Waterford Institute of Technology devote increased resources to expanding part-time learning opportunities and access to education for particular cohorts traditionally under-represented in education as well as to expanded graduate programmes;

- a staffing profile that supports expanded graduate education and enhanced research activity through increasing the numbers of research active faculty, through extending the capacity for advanced degree supervision by expanding the doctorate-qualified staff numbers, and that supports enhanced teaching and learning through training and development of teaching skills. The actions listed below see Waterford Institute of Technology, building on significant past investment, further enhance its capacity in terms of staff expertise and qualifications in both teaching and research;

- a position within the higher education system nationally that is differentiated from existing provision. The actions listed below build on Waterford Institute of Technology's distinguished tradition and strong reputation with its stakeholders to fashion an organisation that will have even greater impact on regional communities, on the economy, and on society in general. The actions below are focussed on optimising the ability of the new university created through the Technological University process to make the maximum impact for the better on the South East and on Ireland.

Operations and Targets

The actions listed below involve defining clear, ambitious targets. These targets are expressed in quantitative terms in some instances (as an increase or decrease), as a specific policy development and the implementation of that policy in others, as involving reformed structures and business processes, or in terms of quality enhancement. The targets take account of the organisation's values and mission, its ambitious vision, and at the same time the resources it has at its disposal and its ability to generate new resources. With these things in mind, the operational plan that charts the detailed implementation of this strategy will focus on the (re)distribution of the resources of the organisation in pursuit of these targets.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Provision of high quality educational experiences to students that are student centred and responsive to learner needs

National strategy sets as a goal to "promote excellence in teaching, learning and assessment to underpin a high-quality student experience" (HEA, System Performance, p.35). We are committed to our students and to creating an excellent, transformative learning experience for them. Maintaining such an environment is essential if the organisation is to be a university of real and ongoing impact and reputation. Forming the kinds of graduates we wish to form, with the capacities and skills we wish to cultivate, can only be achieved through maintaining a high quality learning environment.

The excellence of our teaching and learning environment and approach has already been affirmed in the quality reviews undertaken by the Institute, most recently in School Reviews of academic schools and in the Institutional Review 2010. The latter, for instance, commented on "the centrality accorded to learners in the Institute's policies and procedures for quality assurance" (p.28) and "the availability of a broad range of institute-wide academic and pastoral support services for learners", "the accessibility of staff to learners outside formal teaching hours", and "the pedagogic response of individual members of staff to the changing learner profile" (p.42). Such affirmations of the quality of the organisation's teaching are fundamental to maintaining a reputation with the general public and with peer academics for excellence. Notwithstanding the challenging financial environment, maintaining the high quality of the learning experience within the Institute as recognised in quality assurance reviews and our strong reputation is core to the Institute's continued development. Ensuring our quality assurance infrastructure meets our needs is critical.

The Institute's commitment to collegiality and cooperation extends to its approach to teaching and learning: students are co-creators of knowledge and partners in the educational endeavour; staff support them through curating their learning experience and acting as stewards and guides. We work closely also with employers and take an individualised approach to work placement and career support. We wish to further develop our approach to continue to align in positive ways pre-entry information to students, student induction, work placement, final year and post-graduation support.

Students are actively involved in the Institute's decision-making forums (Governing Body, Academic Council) and in School and Programme Boards. The Institute supports extending opportunities for students to contribute to the future development of the Institute and its future direction and, with the expert guidance of staff, making available opportunities for students to direct their own learning experiences and actively guide their own learning. The Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) is a tool for the Institute to validate the quality of its teaching. Ensuring students use this instrument, and ensuring that action follows on foot of their feedback, is important.

The improvement of student retention and progression is a priority goal. Staff training in support of this goal is necessary. Staff training in teaching and learning in general is also necessary and needs to continue. The further development of research into teaching and learning at the Institute can be assisted by consolidating research activity formally into a Centre for Teaching and Learning Research. Such a Centre can lead research-informed approaches to teaching.

Learning happens not only in the classroom and in encounters with teachers but elsewhere on campus and increasingly in an online space. Increasingly the learning environment includes digital dimensions with technology changing the way we teach and learning at an ever increasing pace. The Plan will involve the development of the Institute's technology enhanced learning strategy to incorporate how technology is used as part of the learning experience to enhance learning through this means both on campus and in the delivery of programmes in online and blended modes. The development of a separate Blended and Online Delivery strategy is also required to ensure we offer best practice in online pedagogy which will be applied in through the design, delivery and assessment of blended and online courses. The Blended and Online Delivery strategy will outline the quality assurance procedures and resources needed to guarantee the integrity of any programme offered by the Institute. The Plan recognises the centrality of the Institute's library to the learning environment and requires the creation of a library development plan.

GOAL 1 ACTIONS

To improve the quality of the student learning experience, we will do the following:

Action 1

Develop, agree, publish and implement a student charter.

Action 2

Optimise quality assurance structures in support of (a) planned increases in the range and type of part-time programmes, and (b) multi-disciplinary research programmes.

Action 3

Increase training budget by 25% in further training in Teaching, Learning and Assessment for faculty and staff and align at least 35% of the overall budget in support of training in online, digital and technology-enhanced teaching and learning.

Action 4

Commence an appropriately resourced Community of Practice for online and technology-enhance learning project and appoint a selection of staff from across the Institute formally to the project.

Action 5

Develop, publish and implement a digital learning strategy that places us at the forefront of the field. Action 6: Recruit students to at least one fully online programme (of at least 10 credits) in every Department.

Action 6

Develop, publish and implement a library development plan.

Action 7

Enhance the collection of student feedback on our teaching and the teaching environment, specifically through the Irish Survey on Student Engagement (ISSE) (with a target of increasing participation to 40%), and optimise mechanisms for acting on that data through Schools, Programme Boards and Academic Council.

Action 8

Create a Centre for Teaching and Learning Research and consolidate all research activity in teaching and learning into that Centre.

Action 9

Direct increased resources at School and department level and in central areas in support of student retention and progression, aligned with a published retention and progression strategy that plans for a 30% reduction in non-progression rates.

Action 10

Develop formal structures with Further Education providers and the Education and Training Boards to offer students who drop out of higher education opportunities to continue to study—and return to higher education—through Further Education and Training.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

An accessible university that offers a wide range of learning opportunities, access and progression routes and flexible modes of engagement with learning that reflect learner needs and societal change

The right to access to higher education for all is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26). This is reflected in Ireland's education strategy: "To promote access for disadvantaged groups and to put in place coherent pathways from second level education, from further education and other non-traditional entry" is set as a priority for higher education nationally (HEA, System Performance, p.27). The Institute is firmly committed to equality and to building a more diverse organisation; the Institute welcomes all students. In this context, its priority is embedding equity and equity of access in all our activities. Our vision of our future organisation make explicit reference to our desire for greater inclusivity and diversity in our community.

This plan will support the development of a widening participation framework aligned to the specific needs of each academic School within the Institute—the plan requires that access initiatives are mainstreamed within the work of individual departments and Schools. The framework will explicitly incorporate (as reflected in the actions below):

- targeted approaches to meet quotas of specific access cohorts identified in National policy;

- vertical integration from pre-school to post-secondary through supporting early intervention programmes and key transitions in education;

- recruitment activities based on accurate data pertaining to local and regional participation rates of under-represented groups;

- the consolidation and expansion of our pathway programme; and

- the implementation of universal design in the curriculum to ensure its accessibility.

We are committed to an open organisation where the curriculum is readily available in response to rapidly changing societal needs. We start from a position of tailoring our educational offering to individual student needs and an overarching commitment to realising the potential of every individual in the organisation. We are aware of increasing demand and need for flexibility in programme delivery; significant numbers of potential students cannot take programmes full time or are ineligible to take programmes full time. We need therefore to expand our part-time and flexible-learning offering considerably to meet the needs of these regional cohorts.

Our commitment to enhancing the diversity of our population—of staff and students—involves the recognition of the unique contribution of every individual to the community, to the learning experience and to knowledge creation. Certain responsibilities follow from this commitment, including a responsibility to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all students; certain adjustments to the learning environment, support structures, as well as to the taught curriculum, will be required in the period of the Plan. Our commitment to the formal recognition of the unique contribution of every individual involves developing training programmes for staff so that they can fully engage in promoting and facilitating access and flexible learning.

Waterford Institute of Technology is part of a wider educational system in the region and its future development must be seen in the context of developments across the system, particularly at second level and in further education. The further development of partnership between the Institute and further education providers will be necessary to enhance the efficacy of the entire system in offering opportunities to all.

We are committed to enhancing the diversity of the student population, to recognising the unique contribution of every individual to the community, to the learning experience, and to knowledge creation.

GOAL 2 ACTIONS

We will do the following in pursuit of this goal:

Action12

Gather and report on data relating to access to identify under-represented groups in the profile of the Institute, and actively recruit from those groups to align with national targets with a particular focus on socio-economic disadvantage.

Action 13

Expand our pathway programme from Further Education (increasing by 5% the number of students recruited through this means) in the context of a cross-institutional and cross-functional review of all pre-entry access programmes.

Action 14

Further develop our relationships with ETB post-primary and other secondary schools by offering at least one Continuing Professional Development programme for second-level teachers in every School in the Institute.

Action 15

Increase the number of programmes available in flexible (non-full-time) mode to recruit an additional 1,500 flexible learners over three years.

Action 16

Review the learning environment and student support structures for flexible programmes to ensure a consistent and enhanced learning experience, reflecting in the scores from flexible learners in the ISSE. every Department.

Action 17

Apply Universal Design for Learning (UDL) on a pilot basis in at least one programme per School and develop a plan for implementation across all programmes in collaboration with the Centre for Teaching and Learning and the individual School access strategy.
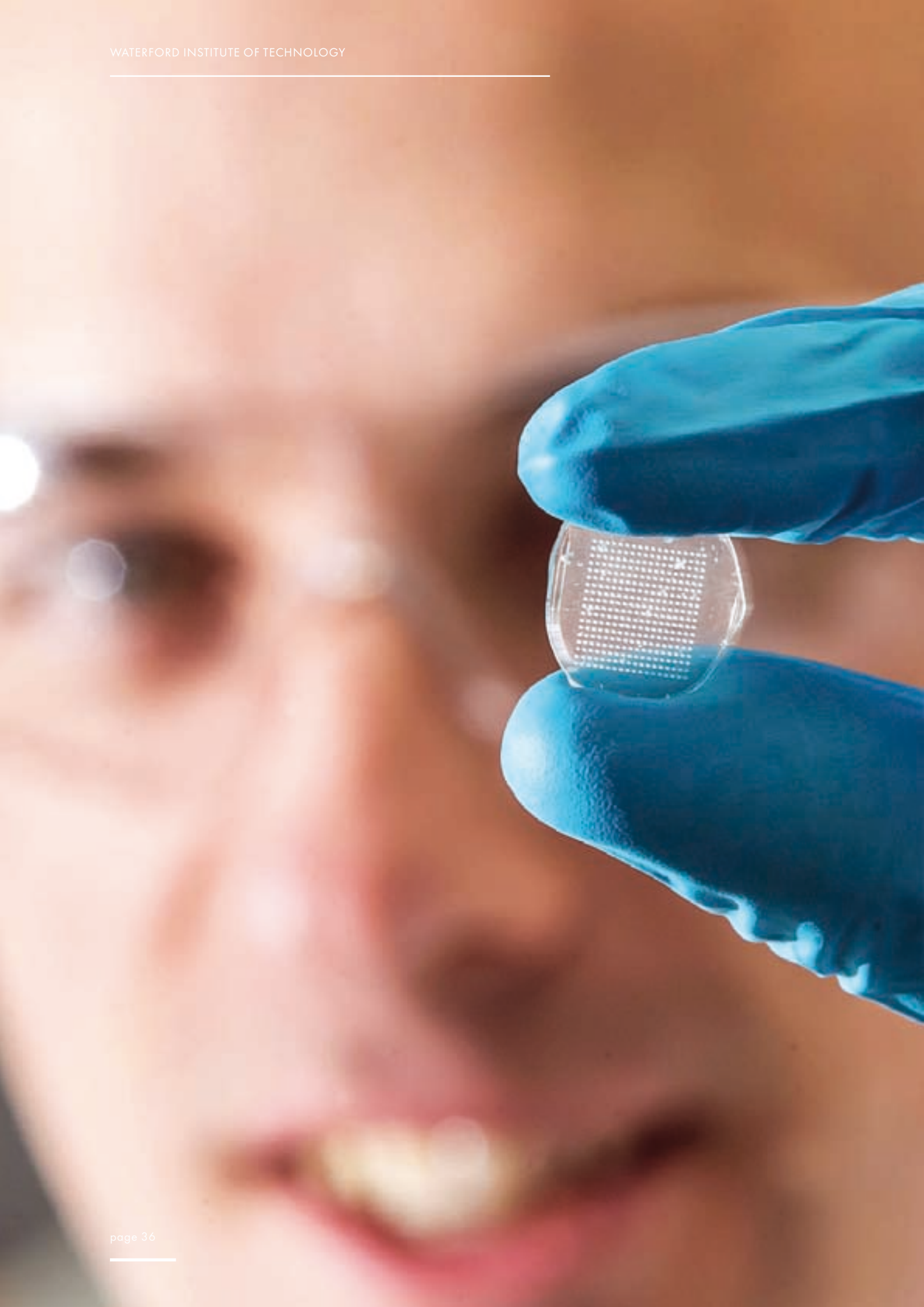
STRATEGIC GOAL 3

A research-led organisation with a demonstrably impactful, innovative, and dynamic research community

National strategy is "to maintain an open and excellent public research system focussed on the Government's priority areas and on the achievement of other societal objectives, and to maximise research collaborations and knowledge exchange between and among public and private sector research actors." Waterford Institute of Technology is uniquely positioned within the Institute of Technology sector in research; the Institute has been a leader in research across the sector for many years. The Institute wishes to retain this pre-eminent position. Greatly increasing research activity, in fact, is a requirement if we are to feature as a top one hundred university.

The Institute has sought to generate impact through creating critical mass in areas of priority and on quality and excellence in research output. The Institute continues to maintain several international-standard research centres across a range of disciplines; it is the priority as articulated below to develop additional centres based on excellence, scale and opportunity. A new designation—Research Institute—will be adopted. The merit of focussing aligned research group activity under an umbrella theme will be considered and a plan developed. Research governance infrastructure needs to be further developed. A range of new policies is required to facilitate, for instance, the growth of research institutes and centres as well as in support of research activity, human resource structures in research, and in other areas. Given the critical need to initiate and co-ordinate inter-disciplinary research activity, a suitably-resourced Institute-wide Research Council will be created.

In terms of research dissemination, the Institute wishes to focus on greatly increasing its impact in terms of publications and citations. In general terms, it is necessary that the Institute disseminates more widely the results of its research activity and descriptions of the nature of the activity itself; creates greater critical mass amongst research groups to enable them attract more research funding, research students, and generate more high-quality publications; and broadens the range of research activity into new disciplines and between disciplines. The Institute will retain its commitment to research excellence, will continue to deliver innovation and will enhance its research impact.

Excellence in research and innovation requires excellent support structures and services. We will ensure that achievements in research are adequately captured and communicated. We need to attract, develop, support and retain research staff of the highest quality, thereby ensuring a diverse staff who are enabled to reach their full potential. Measures will be put in place through the Human Resource Strategy for Researchers (HRS4Rs) to enhance the quality and diversity of researcher recruitment and the career development and retention of research staff. We will implement best practice in personal development programmes for staff, researchers and research students. We will help our researchers enhance their profiles nationally and internationally and support them in identifying research opportunities and as they pursue prestigious career development awards. The systematic gathering and reporting of research data—including, as a priority, data on publications and citations, as well as on funded research activity—is critical; we will prioritise the creation of a current research information system (CRIS) to capture more systematically data on research outputs. The Institute will take steps to ensure gender balance in senior positions, in particular in STEM areas, which will be achieved through the Athena Swan process.

It is vital that WIT researchers do not break the trust held in them by their peers in the research community, by the Institute, and by society at large. Observance of the highest standards of honesty and integrity must underlie all decisions and actions related to research activity. Moreover, all research carried out under the auspices of the Institute must be in accordance with the highest ethical standards and must take into account effects and potential impacts on the environment and society.

There is a need for continued connectivity between undergraduate and graduate studies. All teaching should be research informed and opportunities for research activity need to be embedded in all academic programmes where suitable. Cross-Institute Graduate School structures need to be enhanced to ensure uniform access to training and professional development opportunities for graduate students. This will necessitate the further development and resourcing of the Graduate Studies Office.

GOAL 3 ACTIONS

The following actions will be taken to contribute to increasing impactful research activity and improving research infrastructure:

Action18

Develop and/or maintain international-standard research centres/institutes across five prioritised discipline areas.

Action 19

Recognising that excellence research and innovation requires excellent infrastructure, continue to prioritise investment in research infrastructure and prioritise institutional strategic research area for targeted national infrastructure calls, such as those of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), Enterprise Ireland (EI) and Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PRTLI).

Action 20

Create and implement a new designation, Research Institute.

Action 21

Increase the numbers of research-active staff and of research postgraduate students by 25% and provide them with a range of training and professional development opportunities

Action 22

Develop and implement a research dissemination strategy that leads to a 30% increase in the number of quality peer-reviewed publications.
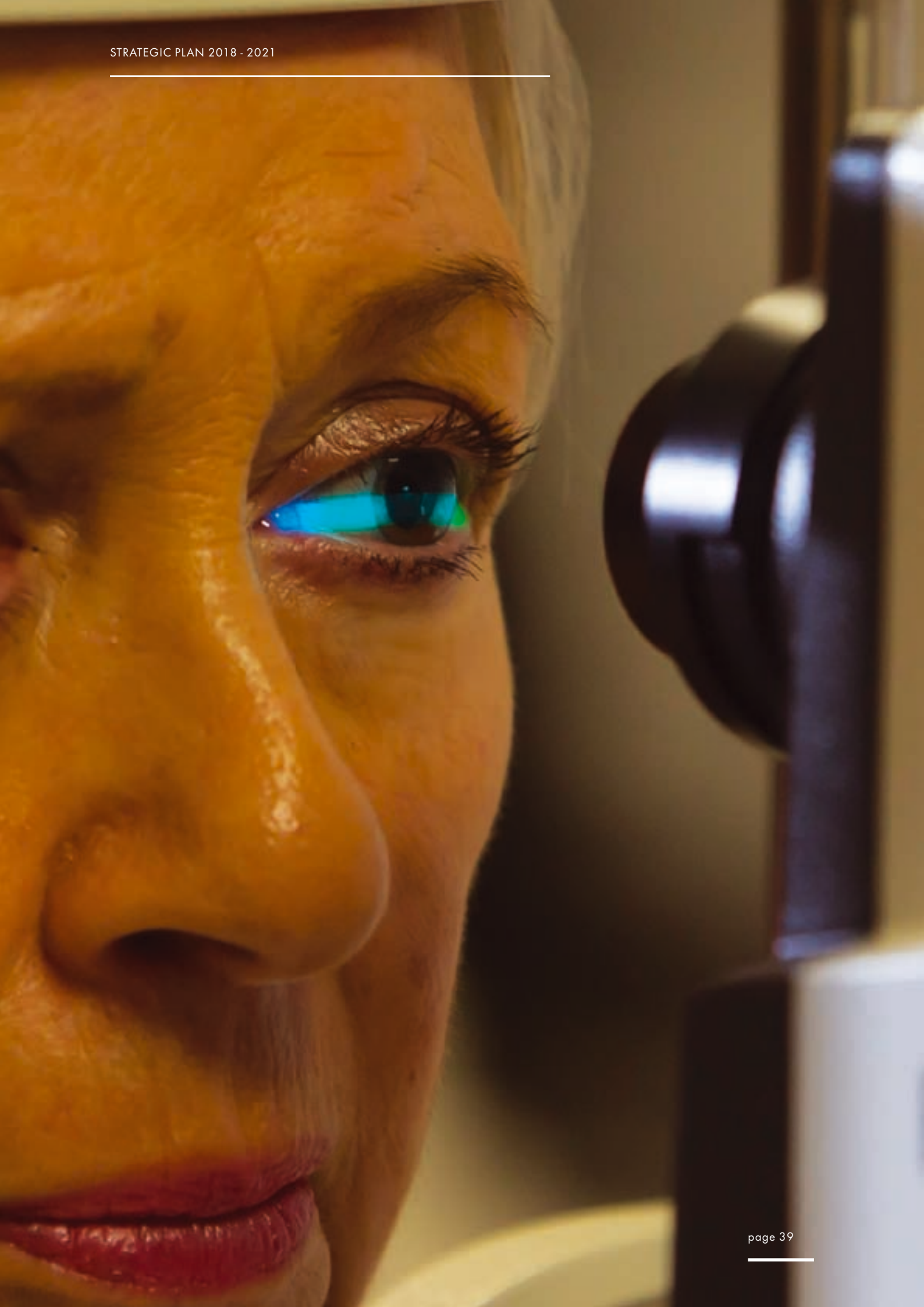
Action 23

Measure and optimise the impact of Waterford Institute of Technology research outputs for economic, cultural and social gain into one source aligned with the Institute's core data gathering instruments.

Action 24

Implement support structures and personal development processes that enable researchers to flourish in WIT, specifically (a) creating a Research Council, (b) developing and implementing a workload allocation model that formally recognises the many dimensions to research activity and (c) implementing fully the HRS4R to include the development of a Good Practice policy, the appointment of a research integrity officer, and the development of a research career framework.

Action 25

Overhaul existing research governance infrastructure, policies and processes to maintain a research environment that reaches the highest research integrity standards.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4

An organisation deeply embedded in regional discourse, policy-making, economic, social and cultural activity and as a driver of regional change

National policy has set as a higher educational objective "meeting Ireland's human capital needs, across the spectrum of skills, by engaged institutions, through a diverse mix of provision across the system and through both core funding and specifically targeted initiatives." Indicators relevant to the achievement of this objective involve measurement of overall educational attainment, alignment to the needs of the labour market, and student outcomes following participation in higher education.

Waterford Institute of Technology provides leadership in many ways, particularly within the South East—it is a regional employer of significance, a catalyst for regional economic development and the regional higher education destination of choice for school leavers and others from the region, and a symbol of regional identity and success for the population. In particular the Institute has a pivotal role in developing the regional workforce and in cultivating the kind of innovation ecosystem that will guarantee and sustain prosperity. The re-orientation of the organisation towards offering more part-time programmes and the ongoing expansion of online and blended learning opportunities (see Goal 1) is partly to do with strengthening our role in regional workforce development. Our vision involves recognising and enhancing that leadership role in response to the challenges and opportunities that the region faces in developing towards a high-impact knowledge-based economy. To do this, we offer and promote global perspectives on the opportunities and challenges for the region and orient ourselves internationally in addressing local and regional needs: while we are region-based, in other words, we are globally facing and outward looking.

Consistent with this orientation, we validate our approach to teaching and research by benchmarking our performance against international quality metrics. In this respect, we are committed continually to evaluating our activities against international best practice and constantly challenging our own academic assumptions and performance. We are fully committed to a process of constant improvement which guarantees that our graduates are internationally sought after and will occupy leadership positions in their chosen professions. From a research and knowledge transfer perspective this commitment provides confidence to our stakeholders that our solutions are at the leading edge.

Waterford Institute of Technology needs to continue to present an attractive educational proposition to prospective students, both school leavers and others. This is vital to retain talent within the South-East region and to attract talent from outside, including from abroad. We need to ensure the relevance of our curriculum not simply to regional need but the demands likely to be made on twenty-first century global citizens. The Institute must present a proposition to its staff that ensures they are retained and their career prospects enhanced. It must also ensure that its staff recognise the changing demands the regional educational needs and are capable of responding accordingly. The Institute and its community must ensure that internal structures and practices evolve in line with the changing educational landscape as fashioned both by the demands of the population and national policy.

The Institute makes a critical contribution to educating the regional population for the current and future regional needs. The Institute, in this respect, responds to the requirements set out in the various regional job-creation and skills-development strategies. The Institute has a strong tradition of partnership with regional stakeholders in the development and delivery of programmes and in research. There is a need for greater co-ordination of our partnerships to maximise their effectiveness.

Waterford Institute of Technology provides leadership in the South-East and is a symbol of regional identity and success.

New levels and kinds of regional activism on the part of the Institute's community are required: Waterford Institute of Technology must become identified as the voice of the region in public discourse, must advocate for the city and region in the public domain, and become a credible source of regional intelligence. The Institute should advance a compelling programme of activities for the general public as an expression of its commitment to regional development.

It is clear that the single most transformational initiative for the region will be the creation in the South East of a high-quality, internationally-recognised university. The Institute supports and is committed to the delivery of such a university for the region and welcomes the Technological University legislation that will progress this goal. This Plan aims to chart a path where, over the coming years, we enhance aspects of our research, teaching and other undertakings to align with our ultimate aim: a high-ranking university of substance with all the features expected of an internationally-recognised higher education institution—scale, breadth of provision, financial profile, autonomy, international visibility and impact.

Aithnímid sainiúlacht na cathrach, an réigiúin agus ár ndaoine. Is é gné tábhachtacht den tsainiúlacht sin ná tábhacht na gaeilge sa réigiún toisc go bhfuil Gaeltacht na nDéise anseo sa cheantar againn. Tá an institiúid tiomanta go láidir don ghaeilge agus í a fhorbairt mar ghné suntasach dár bhféiniúlacht leithleach.

We recognise the distinctiveness of the city, the region, and our people. An important element in that distinctiveness is the prominence of the Irish language in our region because of the existence of Gaeltacht na nDéise. Waterford Institute of Technology is strongly committed to the further development of the Irish language as a very important expression of our unique identity.

It is clear that the single most transformative initiative for the region will be the creation in the South East of a high quality, internationally-recognised university.

GOAL 4 ACTIONS

The following actions will be taken:

Action 26

Develop and publish a stakeholder charter

Action 27

Extend our public presence across the region and our outreach activity in regional counties and centres of population, facilitating in at least three instances in each county activities of regional or sectoral interest

Action 28

Create formal structures to facilitate co-ordinated and cohesive engagement with stakeholders and partners (and in support of existing forums such as the Regional Skills Forum) and convene this group around an appointed senior officer.

Action 29

Increase our student recruitment from key regional populations, maintaining our rank as the leading provider of higher education in the region and enhancing our ranking across each regional county.

Action 30

Issue employability statements on all programmes in the context of a co-ordinated career development programme for all students focussed on future employability and linked to regional and national skills needs.

Action 31

Increase knowledge transfer activity—measured in invention disclosures, patents, licenses, and spin-outs—in line with national targets, and continue to expand SME and industry collaborations regionally and nationally.

Action 32

Extend our presence in the community sector through work placement options, staff involvement, and CPD for community groups with evidence of at least one activity in this domain in each School.

Action 33

Describe existing engagements with alumni (both centrally and through individual Schools), outline a plan for the development of an alumni office, and increase by 20% the engagement of our graduates with our graduate survey.

Action 34

Contribute to and lead on regional policy initiatives relating to economic, social and cultural development of the South East by publishing policy "green" papers (at least two per year).

Action 35

Tacaíocht a thabhairt don Ghaeilge agus do Ghaeltacht na nDéise trí thionscadail chomhoibríocha le muintir na Gaeltachta (ceann amháin ar a laghad i ngach scoil); trí chláir léinn, nó chuid de na cláir sin, a chur ar fáil trí mheán na Gaeilge (dhá cheann ar a laghad trasna na hInstitiúide); trí líon na ndaoine ar an bhfoireann atá ag foghlaim na teanga a mhéadú agus trí thionscnaimh gaolmhara eile. (Support the regional Gaeltacht and the Irish language through collaborative projects with the Gaeltacht community (at least one per School), delivering programmes partially or entirely in the Irish language (at least two across the Institute), and increasing the number of staff engaged in language classes and other related initiatives.)

Action 36

Recruit formally (on an associate or other basis) external industry experts in support of programme development and delivery.

STRATEGIC GOAL 5

An international and internationalised profile that finds expression in the approach of our students and staff and in our extensive partnerships

National strategy has as a priority to ensure that we have internationally-oriented, globally competitive Higher Education Institutions. Our vision of the future organisation is of an organisation where internationalisation is more deeply embedded and where we are habitually outward-facing. Waterford Institute of Technology's global orientation is expressed in its long tradition of working with international partners—in research and in teaching—and in facilitating student mobility, inward and outward; in this sense, Waterford Institute of Technology has always been and wishes to continue to be "internationally oriented". The national aspirations that Irish higher education would be "globally competitive" speaks to a particular (and limited) element in internationalisation, that is, student recruitment. Waterford Institute of Technology is however committed to a broader view of internationalisation which reflects that of the European Parliament whereby internationalisation is defined as "the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society."

The further internationalisation of the Institute is critical from multiple perspectives: students now function and go on to work in a world where an international perspective is required in every domain and where cultural and inter-cultural competence is vital; internationalisation is an expression of an institutional commitment to diversity; building internationalisation is a means to attract and retain talent in the region; and internationalisation typically creates a source of income through international research funding and through the recruitment of fee-paying students. In order to prepare our students for the global workplace, the Waterford Institute of Technology curriculum must be further internationalised, both in content and in the international opportunities available to students. Study abroad options should be integrated into all undergraduate programmes where practicable.

We aim to attract additional international staff both in academic and professional, management and support domains to assist in developing the Institute's practices as well as to expose students to international perspectives. We aim to create international exchange opportunities for all staff in academic and professional, management and support areas.

Waterford Institute of Technology has an excellent record in attracting EU funding. We will increase the volume of applications across more domains with the view to attracting more funding from this source; Waterford Institute of Technology wishes to remain the leading Institute of Technology when it comes to attracting EU research funding.

We continue to demonstrate our desire to create a diverse, multi-national organisation and will continue to recruit international students from many cultures and countries. We will prioritise the development of a relatively small number of key partnerships in order to maximise the impact of our internationalising effort in alignment with national policy regarding key markets.

WIT will be internationally oriented because students now function in a world where an international perspective is required in every domain and where cultural and intercultural competence is vital. We will further internationalise our curriculum, both in content and in international study opportunities that we make available to students.

GOAL 5 ACTIONS

We will pursue further internationalisation of the Institute by doing the following:

Action 37

Develop a comprehensive internationalisation strategy for the curriculum, including the creation of study abroad options on all programmes (at least one per School in the first instance, with a view to increasing greatly outward student mobility)

Action 38

Promote staff exchange opportunities for all staff, academic and professional, management and support staff, with faculty exchanges taking place in all Schools (at least two per year per School) and at least two professional, management and support staff exchanges over the course of the Plan.

Action 39

Extend by one per School the range of international partners in articulation and joint degree agreements as part of an international partnership development strategy.

Action 40

Increase the diversity of the student population by increasing the number of incoming EU and non-EU students as part of an international student recruitment strategy consistent with national targets.

Action 41

Optimise support structures for international students, including the appropriate distribution of responsibilities between Schools and the International Office for international recruitment and support.

Action 42

Increase EU funding through competitive research-funding applications by 20%.

STRATEGIC GOAL 6

An effectively governed and managed organisation that is strategically focussed and demonstrates quality in all its activities

The Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviours specifies that "Civil servants should endeavour to ensure the proper, effective, and efficient use of public money"; the effectiveness and efficiency of the operations of a publically-funded organisation like Waterford Institute of Technology is valued by the organisation and its employees. The acute austerity programme of the last decade has particularly focussed the organisation on ensuring the effective deployment of limited resources. This reflects national policy which expresses a desire "to increase accountability of autonomous institutions for public funding against national priorities" (p.69). More to the point, the Institute's critical financial position requires concerted action to restore the organisation's sustainability. Restorative action towards this goal is central to the action of the Plan and, as a first step, ensuring increased effectiveness and efficiency in existing operations is vital.

We develop our capacity to determine the efficacy of our resource utilisation and our other activities by creating a robust body of institutional data and by measuring our performance against national and international benchmarks. We will further develop our evidence base in terms of institutional data and will analyse and utilise integrated data in directing decision-making.

We will ensure the efficiency of our programme delivery in the first instance by reviewing all programmes in terms of relative cost and contribution to institutional income, as well as in the light of the strategic priorities identified elsewhere in this document. Optimising programme efficiency while enhancing the quality of the student learning experience is vital. The further enhancement of the Institute's income-expenditure model will assist in identifying areas of efficiency and inefficiency. Devolving authority and responsibility for the efficient running of programmes to Schools and Department is critical.

The methodology by which workload is allocated for academic staff is in need of revision given the variety and span of work undertaken by our staff. The increasing complexity of the organisation requires a more devolved approach to resource management and budget. The target-based approach evident in this document also requires a model of resource allocation that allows for reward for performance that meets or exceeds targets. A new model for resource management will be developed over the course of the Plan.

The management structures were designed in different times for different ends. Structures will be reviewed to ensure an equitable and effective distribution of workload in the light of changing student profiles and numbers. The administrative structures similarly both in Schools and central areas will be reviewed to ensure the optimum distribution of staff in areas of priority (as indicated elsewhere in this document): regional impact; access; teaching and learning; internationalisation; research.

We will ensure increased efficiency and effectiveness in our operations.

GOAL 6 ACTIONS

In pursuit of this goal, we will:

Action 43
Convene a "Values into Action" group and develop and implement a behavioural framework in the life of the Plan.

Action 44
Develop and publish a staff charter.

Action 45
Secure the Athena Swan bronze award and post-accreditation identify two Schools that will proceed for their own bronze accreditation.

Action 46
Review the programme portfolio and the module catalogue in terms of efficiency and effectiveness and revise programme and module offerings with a view to reducing the overall institutional Unit Cost.

Action 47
Develop and implement a workload allocation model to introduce greater flexibility to faculty deployment.

Action 48
Develop and implement a resource allocation process for Schools and functions based on agreed principles.

Action 49
Develop, collate and disseminate publically data on institutional performance measured against national and international benchmarks.

Action 50
Review the allocation of space and develop a capital plan for all WIT campuses to align with future needs, including making specific provision for online and technology-enhanced programmes.

STRATEGIC GOAL 7

A financially stable and sustainable organisation well-equipped to meet future needs

The reform of funding structures within higher education in Ireland is underway in tandem with structural, legislative and other reforms. Changes in the approach to funding higher education have been informed by (a) the limited available funding to higher education, (b) the new expectation of the system as outlined in policy, and (c) increased emphasis on holding to account organisations for the disbursement of public finances and delivering on national strategic objectives.

It is widely acknowledged that higher education is under-funded. This under-funding has manifested itself at Waterford Institute of Technology, in the first instance, in a lack of significant capital investment. Post-economic recovery pay increases have also had the effect of further limiting available funding to institutions including Waterford Institute. In common with other institutions, the Institute's financial sustainability has been severely threatened in recent years. The Institute continues to carry a substantial deficit. It is critical that the Institute restores financial stability if it is to be in a position to realise its own and the region's ambitions.

The Institute's reliance on Exchequer funding means that it is adversely impacted when State funding is unavailable or decreases, as has taken place over recent decades. Notwithstanding, the Institute has within its span of control some types of activity that will impact positively on its financial position. As outlined elsewhere in this Plan, these involve significantly greater recruitment of part-time students, increased retention of existing students, an increase in international recruitment, and beginning to create the infrastructure needed to source additional private funding. Changes in our structures and processes, as indicated elsewhere, will allow us also to release staff capacity that can be directed towards the achievement of our targets in these areas.

To become a financially stable and sustainable organisation, as a first step we will:

Action 51

Break even in any one year by 2021.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

Resourcing

The (re)distribution of Institute resources is the key instrument for institutional change. The priority actions identified in the Plan necessitate planning ways of attracting new resources, as well as creating flexibility within the existing resources. The Plan is target driven and the Operational Plan (that supports this Strategy and is published separately) necessarily involves the expenditure of resources; at the same time, in many cases additional income is anticipated because of the actions taken. The Operational Plan will be renewed annually in the light of progress updates.

Flexibility

The empowerment of decision-makers at the point closest to operations is critical to the implementation of the Plan. However, every individual in the organisation is critical to the implementation of the Plan. The Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure the continued relevance of the goals and targets. The HEA Strategic Dialogue process will inform the ongoing development of the Plan. The dynamic nature of the policy environment and the changing nature in particular of the economic and financial context will need to be taken into account as the Plan is implemented; flexibility in implementation and flexibility in terms of goal setting and resource deployment will be required.

Communication

If the Plan is to empower staff and enable collegiality, necessary for any institutional change, there needs to be a regular, honest communication between the various parties to the Plan: the governing authority; the Executive; the wider management team; the Institute's staff; the Institute's students; and the external partners and stakeholders. The Institute will declare its performance and will publish an update on progress against the strategic objectives outlined in the Plan on a quarterly basis. This will be accompanied by All Staff discussion sessions and briefings.

The Institute's Academic Council and its various committees (including School Boards) are critical to the implementation of the Plan. Progress on the Strategy will be presented to Council also on a quarterly basis. The Institute created a number of Executive "Working Groups" in 2015 as instruments for organisational change. These groups will be recast and will act as communication tools for progress against the strategic goals. The Executive Working Group on Strategy will retain an overview of the Planning process and progress towards institutional targets. The Governing Body retains ownership of the Plan. The Governing Body Strategy Committee will continue to meet on a regular basis to review progress against the targets in the Plan.

The Institutional Review quality enhancement process will take place during the coming Strategic Planning cycle. The relevant dates are included in the schedule below.

Reporting and Publication Schedule

Time	Report	Relevant Body
Q2 2018 (May 2018)	Publication of Strategic Plan 2018-2021 (May) Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 Submission (May) Publication of Operational Plan Year 1	Governing Body, Academic Council, Institute Community, General Public HEA
Q2 2018 (May-Jun 2018)	Progress Update 1 on Strategic Implementation (June)	Governing Body, Academic Council, Institute Community
Q3 2018 (July-Sept 2018)	Progress Update 2 on Strategic Implementation (September)	Governing Body, Academic Council, Institute Community
Q4 2018 (Oct-Dec 2018)	Publication of Operational Plan Year 2 Progress Update 3 (December)	Governing Body, Academic Council, Institute Community
Q1 2019	Annual Review/Progress Update 4 (February) Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 Progress Update (March)	Governing Body, Academic Council, Institute Community, General Public HEA
Q2 2019	Progress Update 5 (June) Institutional Self-Evaluation Report for Institutional Review	Governing Body, Academic Council, Institute Community / QQI
Q3 2019	Progress Update 6 (September)	Governing Body, Academic Council, Institute Community
Q4 2019	Progress Update 7 (December) Scheduled Panel Review visit for Institutional Review Publication of Operational Plan Year 3	Governing Body, Academic Council, Institute Community / QQI
Q1 2020	Annual Review/Progress Update 8 (February) Strategic Dialogue Cycle 4 Progress Update (March) Institutional Review panel Report	Governing Body, Academic Council, Institute Community, General Public HEA / QQI
Q2 2020	Progress Update 9 (June)	Governing Body, Academic Council, Institute Community
Q3 2020	Progress Update 10 (September) Commencement of Development of Next Plan	Governing Body, Academic Council, Institute Community Institute Community
Q4 2020	Overall Review of Plan 2018-2021(December)	Governing Body, Academic Council, Institute Community, General Public
Q1 2021	Publication of next Strategic Plan	

APPENDICES
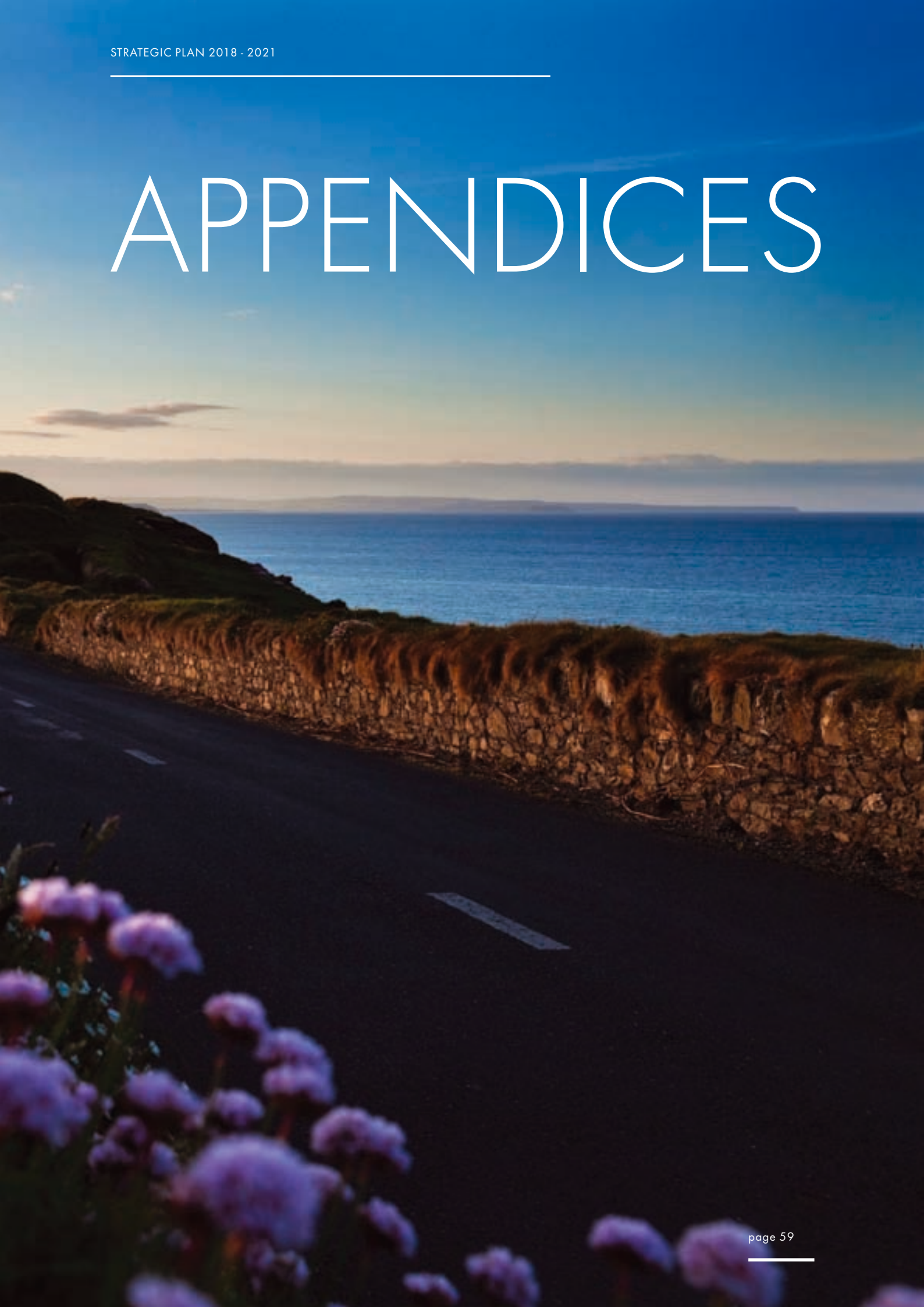
APPENDIX 1: TABLE OF ACTIONS

The following table describes the consolidated list of actions that will be taken over the period of the Plan. The Operational Plan that supports this strategy will (a) assign Executive responsibility for each action, (b) specify the timeline within which the action is to be taken, (c) identify a target (and interim targets where applicable) so that progress can be measured, and (d) quantify the resources associated with the action.

Action 1

Develop, agree, publish and implement a student charter.

Action 2

Optimise quality assurance structures in support of (a) planned increases in the range and type of part-time programmes, and (b) multi-disciplinary research programmes.

Action 3

Increase training budget by 25% in further training in Teaching, Learning and Assessment for faculty and staff and align at least 35% of the overall budget in support of training in online, digital and technology-enhanced teaching and learning.

Action 4

Commence an appropriately resourced Community of Practice for online and technology-enhance learning project and appoint a selection of staff from across the Institute formally to the project.

Action 5

Develop, publish and implement a digital learning strategy that places us at the forefront of the field.

Action 6

Recruit students to at least one fully online programme (of at least 10 credits) in every Department.

Action 7

Develop, publish and implement a library development plan.

Action 8

Enhance the collection of student feedback on our teaching and the teaching environment, specifically through the Irish Survey on Student Engagement (ISSE) (with a target of increasing participation to 40%), and optimise mechanisms for acting on that data through Schools, Programme Boards and Academic Council.

Action 9

Create a Centre for Teaching and Learning Research and consolidate all research activity in teaching and learning into that Centre.

Action 10

Direct increased resources at School and department level and in central areas in support of student retention and progression, aligned with a published retention and progression strategy that plans for a 30% reduction in non-progression rates.

Action 11

Develop formal structures with Further Education providers and the Education and Training Boards to offer students who drop out of higher education opportunities to continue to study—and return to higher education—through Further Education and Training.

Action 12

Gather and report on data relating to access to identify under-represented groups in the profile of the Institute, and actively recruit from those groups to align with national targets with a particular focus on socio-economic disadvantage.

Action 13

Expand our pathway programme from FE (increasing by 5% the number of students recruited through this means).

Action 14

Further develop our relationships with ETB post-primary and other secondary schools by offering at least one Continuing Professional Development programme for second-level teachers in every School in the Institute.

Action 15

Increase the number of programmes available in flexible (non-full-time) mode to recruit an additional 1,500 flexible learners over three years.

Action 16

Review the learning environment and student support structures for flexible programmes to ensure a consistent and enhanced learning experience, reflecting in the scores from flexible learners in the ISSE.

Action 17

Apply Universal Design for Learning (UDL) on a pilot basis in at least one programme per School and develop a plan for implementation across all programmes in collaboration with the Centre for Teaching and Learning and the Institute's Access office.

Action 18

Develop and/or maintain international-standard research centres/institutes across five prioritised discipline areas.

Action 19

Recognising that excellence research and innovation requires excellent infrastructure, continue to prioritise investment in research infrastructure and prioritise institutional strategic research area for targeted national infrastructure calls, such as those of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), Enterprise Ireland (EI) and Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PRTLI).

Action 20

Create and implement a new designation, Research Institute

Action 21

Increase the numbers of research-active staff and of research postgraduate students by 25% and provide them with a range of training and professional development opportunities.

Action 22

Develop and implement a research dissemination strategy that leads to a 30% increase in the number of quality peer-reviewed publications.

Action 23

Measure and optimise the impact of Waterford Institute of Technology research outputs for economic, cultural and social gain into one source aligned with the Institute's core data gathering instruments.

Action 24

Implement support structures and personal development processes that enable researchers to flourish in WIT, specifically (a) creating a Research Council, (b) developing and implementing a workload allocation model that formally recognises the many dimensions to research activity and (c) implementing fully the HRS4R to include the development of a Good Practice policy, the appointment of a research integrity officer, and the development of a research career framework.

Action 25

Overhaul existing research governance infrastructure, policies and processes to maintain a research environment that reaches the highest research integrity standards.

Action 26

Develop and publish a stakeholder charter.

Action 27

Extend our public presence across the region and our outreach activity in regional counties and centres of population, facilitating in at least three instances in each county activities of regional or sectoral interest.

Action 28

Create formal structures to facilitate co-ordinated and cohesive engagement with stakeholders and partners (and in support of existing forums such as the Regional Skills Forum) and convene this group around an appointed senior officer.

Action 29

Increase our student recruitment from key regional populations, maintaining our rank as the leading provider of higher education in the region and enhancing our ranking across each regional county.

Action 30

Issue employability statements on all programmes in the context of a co-ordinated career development programme for all students focussed on future employability and linked to regional and national skills needs.

Action 31

Increase knowledge transfer activity—measured in invention disclosures, patents, licenses, and spin-outs—in line with national targets, and continue to expand SME and industry collaborations regionally and nationally.

Action 32

Extend our presence in the community sector through work placement options, staff involvement, and CPD for community groups with evidence of at least one activity in this domain in each School.

Action 33

Describe existing engagements with alumni (both centrally and through individual Schools), outline a plan for the development of an alumni office, and increase by 20% the engagement of our graduates with our graduate survey.

Action 34

Contribute to and lead on regional policy initiatives relating to economic, social and cultural development of the South East by publishing policy "green" papers (at least two per year).

Action 35

Tacaíocht a thabhairt don Ghaeilge agus do Ghaeltacht na nDéise trí thionscadail chomhoibríocha le muintir na Gaeltachta (ceann amháin ar a laghad i ngach scoil); trí chláir léinn, nó chuid de na cláir sin, a chur ar fáil trí mheán na Gaeilge (dhá cheann ar a laghad trasna na hInstitiúide); trí líon na ndaoine ar an bhfoireann atá ag foghlaim na teanga a mhéadú agus trí thionscnaimh gaolmhara eile. (Support the regional Gaeltacht and the Irish language through collaborative projects with the Gaeltacht community (at least one per School), delivering programmes partially or entirely in the Irish language (at least two across the Institute), and increasing the number of staff engaged in language classes and other related initiatives.)

Action 36

Recruit formally (on an associate or other basis) external industry experts in support of programme development and delivery.

Action 37

Develop a comprehensive internationalisation strategy for the curriculum, including the creation of study abroad options on all programmes (at least one per School in the first instance, with a view to increasing greatly outward student mobility).

Action 38

Promote staff exchange opportunities for all staff, academic and professional, management and support staff, with faculty exchanges taking place in all Schools (at least two per year per School) and at least two professional, management and support staff exchanges over the course of the Plan.

Action 39

Extend by one per School the range of international partners in articulation and joint degree agreements as part of an international partnership development strategy.

Action 40

Increase the diversity of the student population by increasing the number of incoming EU and non-EU students as part of an international student recruitment strategy consistent with national targets.

Action 41

Optimise support structures for international students, including the appropriate distribution of responsibilities between Schools and the International Office for international recruitment and support.

Action 42

Increase EU funding through competitive research-funding applications by 20%.

Action 43

Convene a "Values into Action" group and develop and implement a behavioural framework in the life of the Plan.

Action 44

Develop and publish a staff charter.

Action 45

Secure the Athena Swan bronze award and post-accreditation identify two Schools that will proceed for their own bronze accreditation.

Action 46

Review the programme portfolio and the module catalogue in terms of efficiency and effectiveness and revise programme and module offerings with a view to reducing the overall institutional Unit Cost.

Action 47

Develop and implement a workload allocation model to introduce greater flexibility to faculty deployment.

Action 48

Develop and implement a resource allocation process for Schools and functions based on agreed principles.

Action 49

Develop, collate and disseminate publically data on institutional performance measured against national and international benchmarks.

Action 50

Review the allocation of space and develop a capital plan for all WIT campuses to align with future needs, including making specific provision for online and technology-enhanced programmes.

Action 51

Break even in any one year by 2021.

APPENDIX 2: YOUNG UNIVERSITY RANKING

The Times Higher Education Young University Rankings list the world's best universities that are aged 50 years or under. Ireland's entries in the top 200 were Maynooth University (placed 49), Dublin City University (74), University of Limerick (101-150) and Dublin Institute of Technology (151-200). These universities represent the benchmark against which Waterford Institute of Technology will measure relevant elements of its performance.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings group measures of performance into five areas:

Teaching (the learning environment)
  · Reputation survey
  · Staff-to-student ratio
  · Doctorate-to-bachelor's rati
  · Doctorates-awarded- to-academic-staff ratio
  · Institutional income Research (volume, income and reputation)
  · Reputation survey

Research income
  · Research productivity

Citations (research influence)

International outlook (staff, students and research)
  · International-to-domestic-student ratio
  · International-to-domestic-staff ratio
  · International collaboration

Industry income (knowledge transfer)

The weighting of each area in the final reckoning is important in directing institutional effort. Each area is weighted as follows: Teaching (30% of the final score), Research (30%), Citations (30%), International Outlook (7.5%) and Industry Income (2.5%). The scores of Irish universities and others provide a benchmark against which Waterford Institute of Technology can develop its targets.

The 2017 top-ranked young university is the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne in Switzerland. Other high-ranking European universities include Maastricht University (6th) and Ulm University in Germany joint 8th with Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (also Germany).

APPENDIX 3: REFERENCE DOCUMENTS AND RELEVANT POLICIES

The key national strategy to which this Strategic Plan has been aligned is the NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION TO 2030 published by Department of Education and Skills in 2011. A range of other policy documents and statement have also informed the development of this Plan, amongst them the following:

Department of Education and Skills (2006)
DEIS (DELIVERING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN SCHOOLS) AN ACTION PLAN FOR EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION

Department of Education and Skills (2010)
20-YEAR STRATEGY FOR THE IRISH LANGUAGE 2010 – 2030

Department of Education and Skills (2015)
DIGITAL STRATEGY FOR SCHOOLS 2015-2020 ENHANCING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Department of Education and Skills (2015)
ICT ACTION PLAN: MEETING THE HIGH-LEVEL SKILLS NEEDS OF ENTERPRISE IN IRELAND

Department of Education and Skills (2015)
IRELAND'S NATIONAL SKILLS STRATEGY 2025

Department of Education and Skills (2015)
NATIONAL PLAN FOR EQUITY OF ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION 2015 – 2019

Department of Education and Skills (2015)
PROJECTIONS OF DEMAND FOR FULL TIME THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION, 2015 – 2029

Department of Education and Skills (2016)
ACTION PLAN TO EXPAND APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINEESHIP IN IRELAND 2016 – 2020

Department of Education and Skills (2016)
IRISH EDUCATED GLOBALLY CONNECTED: AN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STRATEGY FOR IRELAND, 2016 – 2020

Department of Education and Skills (2016)
POLICY ON GAELTACHT EDUCATION 2017 – 2022

Department of Education and Skills/Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Employment (2014)
ICT ACTION PLAN 2014 – 2018

Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (2015)
ENTERPRISE 2025: IRELAND'S NATIONAL ENTERPRISE POLICY 2015 – 2025

Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (2015)
INNOVATION 2020: IRELAND'S STRATEGY FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Higher Education Authority (2012)
TOWARDS A FUTURE HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

Standards in Public Office Commission (2008)
CIVIL SERVICE CODE OF STANDARDS AND BEHAVIOUR

Technological Higher Education Association (2018)
THEA CODE OF GOVERNANCE FOR INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY

TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITIES ACT, 2018