

# Collaborating for talent and growth

STRATEGY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION-ENTERPRISE  
ENGAGEMENT 2015-2020



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- Association for Higher Education Career Services (AHECS)
- American Chamber of Commerce Ireland
- Cork Institute of Technology
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- EMC Corporation
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- Irish Centre for Manufacturing Research

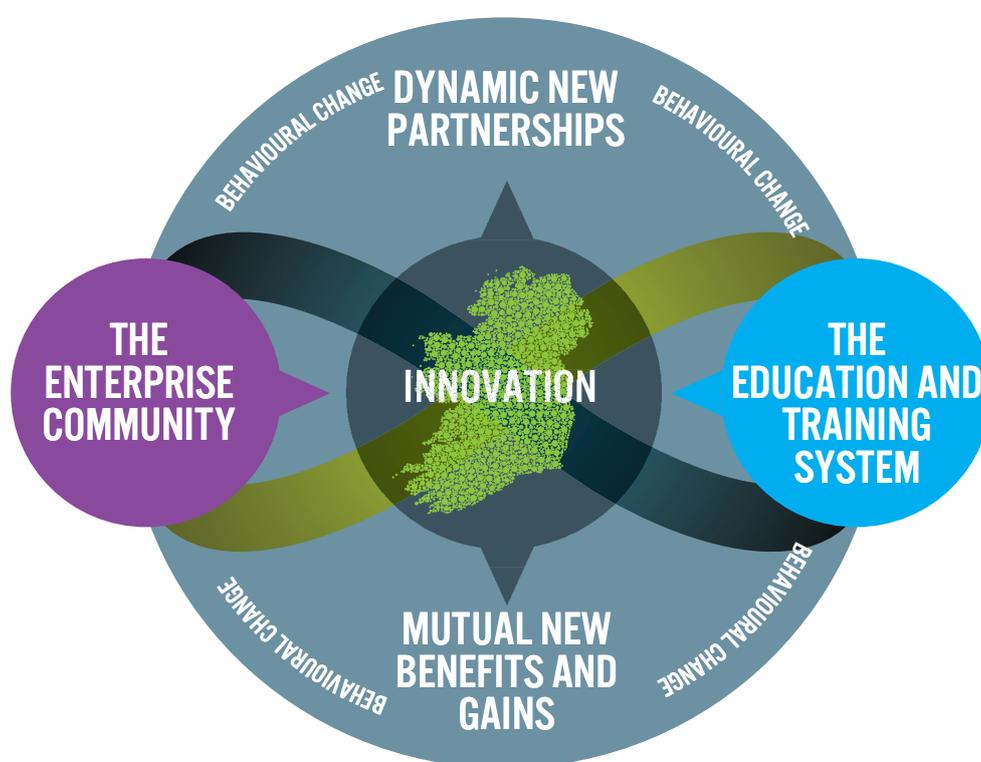
- Industrial Development Agency (IDA) Ireland
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- Skillnets
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- Union of Students Ireland
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The HEA looks forward to working with all partners to achieve the goals and actions set out in the strategy.

Higher Education Authority  
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# VISION

BY 2020 IRELAND IS RECOGNISED NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY FOR THE INNOVATIVE, HIGH-IMPACT PARTNERSHIPS IN PLACE BETWEEN ITS EDUCATION AND ENTERPRISE COMMUNITIES, CREATING BETTER SKILLS, BETTER JOBS, BETTER LIVES.



**THIS DOCUMENT PROPOSES A STRATEGY TO MAKE DYNAMIC, HIGH-IMPACT PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH ENTERPRISE A CORE FEATURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN IRELAND. ENTERPRISE PARTNERS INCLUDE PUBLIC- AND PRIVATE-SECTOR COMPANIES AND EMPLOYERS.**

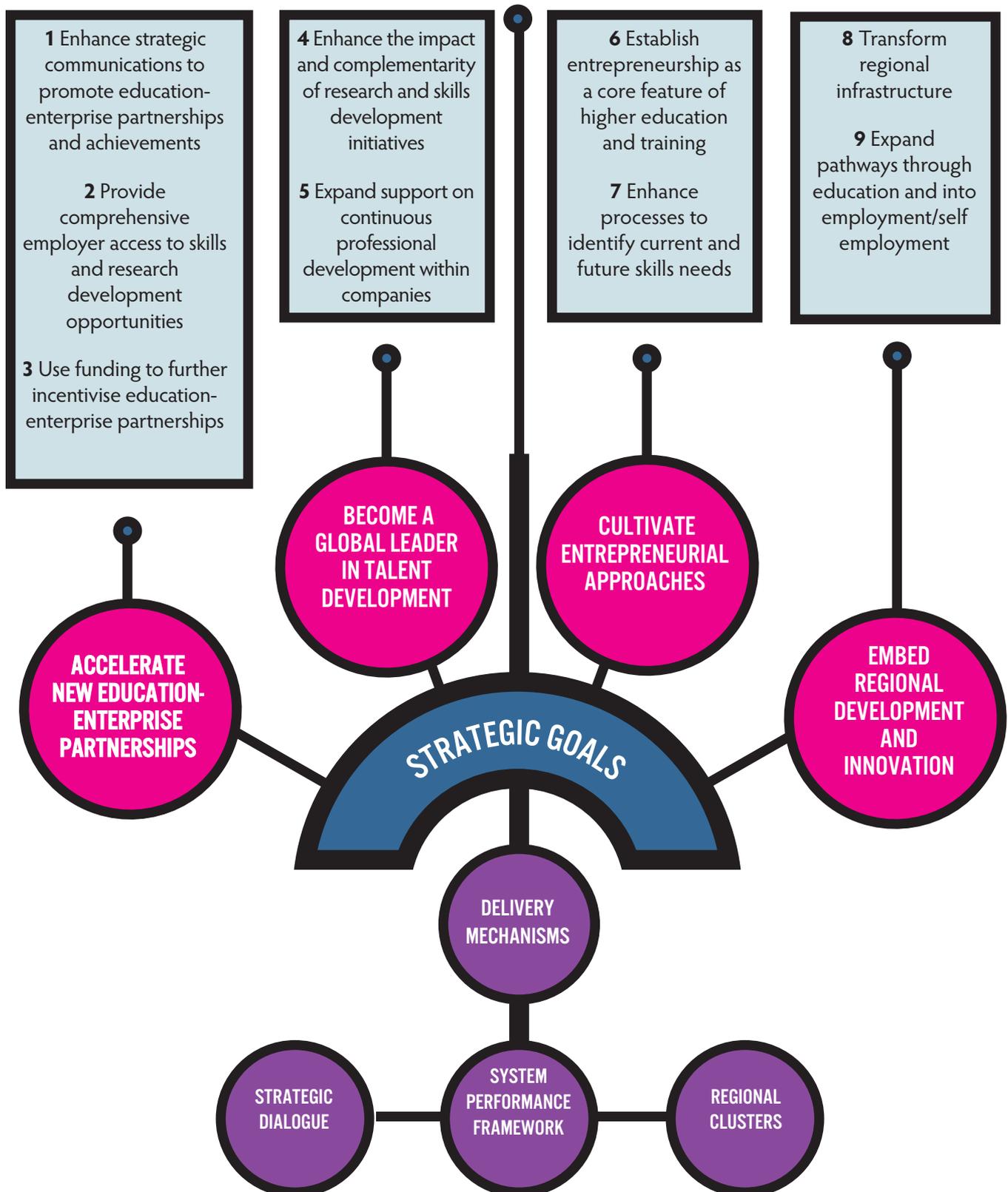
This strategy will support and accelerate the education and training reform currently underway, building on innovative partnerships already in place and set out in the first report on the performance of the higher education system in 2014.

Enterprise engagement is the primary focus of this strategy. Initiatives for the holistic areas of civic and community engagement are also underway, building on the role of education and training providers within their communities.

The strategy deals mainly with engagement between higher education and enterprise. It is intended, however, that implementation of the strategy will support rollout of the new National Skills Strategy (forthcoming); regional development initiatives underway, including regional skills fora; and a new enhanced partnership with further education and training.



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## CONTEXT - INTERNATIONAL

This strategy *Collaborating for talent and growth* has been developed against a backdrop of large-scale activity, policy development and new investment in education and training both nationally and internationally.

On the international stage, over the past ten years many countries have embarked on reform and development of their education and training systems. The work includes exploration of the role and contribution of education and training in a society and economy in the twenty-first century, and on how education supports individuals, families and communities to enjoy a good quality of life and to be prepared for the challenges of global as well as national citizenship. The fast-paced world we now live in is a recurring theme, and the need for education and training to prepare people throughout their lives to adapt and master new knowledge, new skills, to having several changes in career during their lifetime

Many countries have begun reform of their infrastructure and funding systems to support and incentivise more flexible, innovative education and training provision and outcomes. There have also been initiatives to reform and develop national labour market policies, including new approaches to better connect the education, training and enterprise communities. Many of these initiatives are still at an experimental stage; there is considerable interest in Ireland and internationally in the progress being achieved and disseminated, through individual country reports and via pan-evaluations being carried out by the OECD, the European Commission and others.

### Better skills, better jobs, better lives

With regard to skills development, the key message of *Better skills, better jobs, better lives*, a 2012 OECD report on skills policies around the world, is that skills have become the global currency of the twenty-first century. If individual countries want their economy and society to move ahead they must invest proactively in talent development. Skills do not, however, convert automatically into jobs and growth, and the challenge facing individual countries is to develop effective strategies for success.

Phrases such as 'the race for talent' and 'the war for talent' are common currency as economies compete in a global environment and there is a quest to secure the most highly-skilled people to drive innovation and growth. The initial interpretation of the race for talent has generally been focused on the capacity of countries to attract inward migration of people. This remains an important strategy in a small country like Ireland. However, the capacity domestically to develop talent is also to the fore.

A dynamic, high quality education system is identified in the OECD report as key to talent development. Strong, accessible pathways and connections between primary and second level, and from second level to further and higher education and training have been shown to be vital in ensuring that people of all backgrounds and abilities are fully benefiting from their country's education and training system and are successfully making the transition to employment.

A high-performing education and training system means that employment opportunities are maximised for individuals and communities; the availability of talent and skills makes a location attractive for companies of all sizes and types, and there is a strong basis for a progressive, prosperous economy and society. With regard to higher education and training, the significant pipeline of highly-skilled graduates is key, as well as a dynamic research and development function to support industrial innovation and expansion. Higher education institutes are also a primary resource for essential re-skilling and up-skilling of the workforce.

Notwithstanding the strong focus on skills development, the holistic role and functions of higher education and training have also been acknowledged internationally. In addition to developing talent, supporting job creation and growing the economy, higher education is a leader in development of new knowledge, discovery and insight, supporting the development of national culture and civic society, cultivating the values and good practices of global citizenship; and acting as an independent source of debate and commentary.

## CONTEXT - NATIONAL

The holistic mission of higher education and training is central to Ireland's *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*. The strategy emphasises that our higher education system must continue to excel in enlightened, rounded development of people and in constantly striving to reach new frontiers in discovery and knowledge. In addition, however, the role of higher education in human capital development is underlined, in a country where our people are our greatest asset and where we aim to become a high-value, high-knowledge economy and society.

Enhanced engagement between higher education and enterprise is a priority within a new system performance framework which has been introduced as part of the national strategy for higher education. There is a strong awareness of the central role that education has had in our national development strategies since the late 1950s and of the need to now perform outstandingly in a competitive, fast-moving global environment. The Strategy describes in comprehensive terms the challenge for the Irish higher education system to have innovation at its heart, identifying the need for new approaches, new thinking, new partnerships and new technology. By 2030 it is intended that our higher education and training system will be one of the most innovative and entrepreneurial knowledge systems in the world, providing a solid foundation for local and regional prosperity and a platform for public and private sector development.



### Comprehensive reform and development agenda

Higher education reform is part of a wider education and training reform programme in Ireland which includes early childhood education, primary, second level and further education and training. Innovative curricula and assessment approaches are being introduced at primary and in second level, and there is a strong focus on improving transitions between different parts of the system. SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority was established in the past two years, along with re-organisation of the national further education and training infrastructure into new Education and Training Boards. A first national strategy for further education and training is being implemented. A new agency Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) has also been established, which builds on qualifications and quality assurance policy and practice in Ireland over the past fifteen years.

Skills and talent development is core to the Irish education and training system, and has been progressed through consecutive national skills strategies. A new skills strategy is currently in development, and is due to be published in 2015. The strategy is being developed with reference to national enterprise policy initiatives, a 2015 strategy for science, technology and innovation; and regional action plans for jobs. The composition and profile of the Irish labour market will shape the new skills strategy, including Ireland's share of public and private-sector employers, a growing trend in entrepreneurship and business start-up, and learning from international trends and policy implementation.

### How *Collaborating for talent and growth* will support progress

This strategy, *Collaborating for talent and growth* will support implementation of the national strategy for higher education, the new national skills strategy and the system-wide reform and development programme. The strategy has a central, enabling objective, to effect a step-change in the scale and quality of partnerships between higher education and the enterprise community in all regions of the country.

Spanning 2015-2020, the strategy builds on a range of innovative initiatives and good practice that are already in place between higher education and enterprise in Ireland and which are documented in a first report on performance of the higher education system which was published in 2014.

The performance report includes examples and evidence of innovation in talent development and in quality partnerships that compare well with policy and practice around the world. There is collaboration on course design, content and delivery so that the skills and knowledge that graduates emerge with are relevant and promote job readiness. Companies provide tailored work experience and placements for students. High quality, focused continuous professional development (CPD) is provided by locally- and regionally-based higher education institutions for employees. State-of-the art research and development facilities are shared between higher education and partner companies. Enterprise can access dynamic researchers and personnel with expert knowledge in areas including national and international finance, law, entrepreneurship; successful commercialisation of products and services. Education and enterprise work on collaborative research and development; commercialisation of research; incubation and science park development.

The strategy also builds on targeted talent development initiatives nationally which are set out on page 10 of this document, as well as projects supported by the 2006-2012 Strategic Innovation Fund, including the Roadmap for Employer Academic Partnerships (REAP), the Campus Entrepreneurship Enterprise Network (CEEN) and Campus Engage, more recent initiatives such as *Limerick for IT* as well as many other local and regional partnerships between education providers and individual companies.

### Local and regional innovation

Notwithstanding the good practice evident in Ireland, there are areas where we can make further progress.

The funding system for higher education must further support and incentivise high performance and better responsiveness to the needs of economy and society. A culture of promoting employability among students and graduates is not yet a system-wide feature of higher education and training, embedded in curriculum design and delivery and in how higher education institutes connect with their alumni as a source of valuable feedback and influence.

Dynamic partnerships with enterprise are not yet fully in place in all regions of the country, or for all employers who need access to higher education in order to effect innovation and expansion in their operations.

And engagement between higher education and enterprise is not yet as consistently and evenly developed within regions as it needs to be.

Regional development is a central plank of the higher education reform programme; clusters of higher education institutions are in place and building up their profile as hubs for regional, national and international growth and innovation. As part of the new national skills strategy the Department of Education and Skills is working with stakeholders to develop regional skills fora, in tandem with a Government- wide drive on regional development and innovation. As individual colleges and as regional clusters of colleges, there is a clear and exciting agenda for change, development and new horizons.



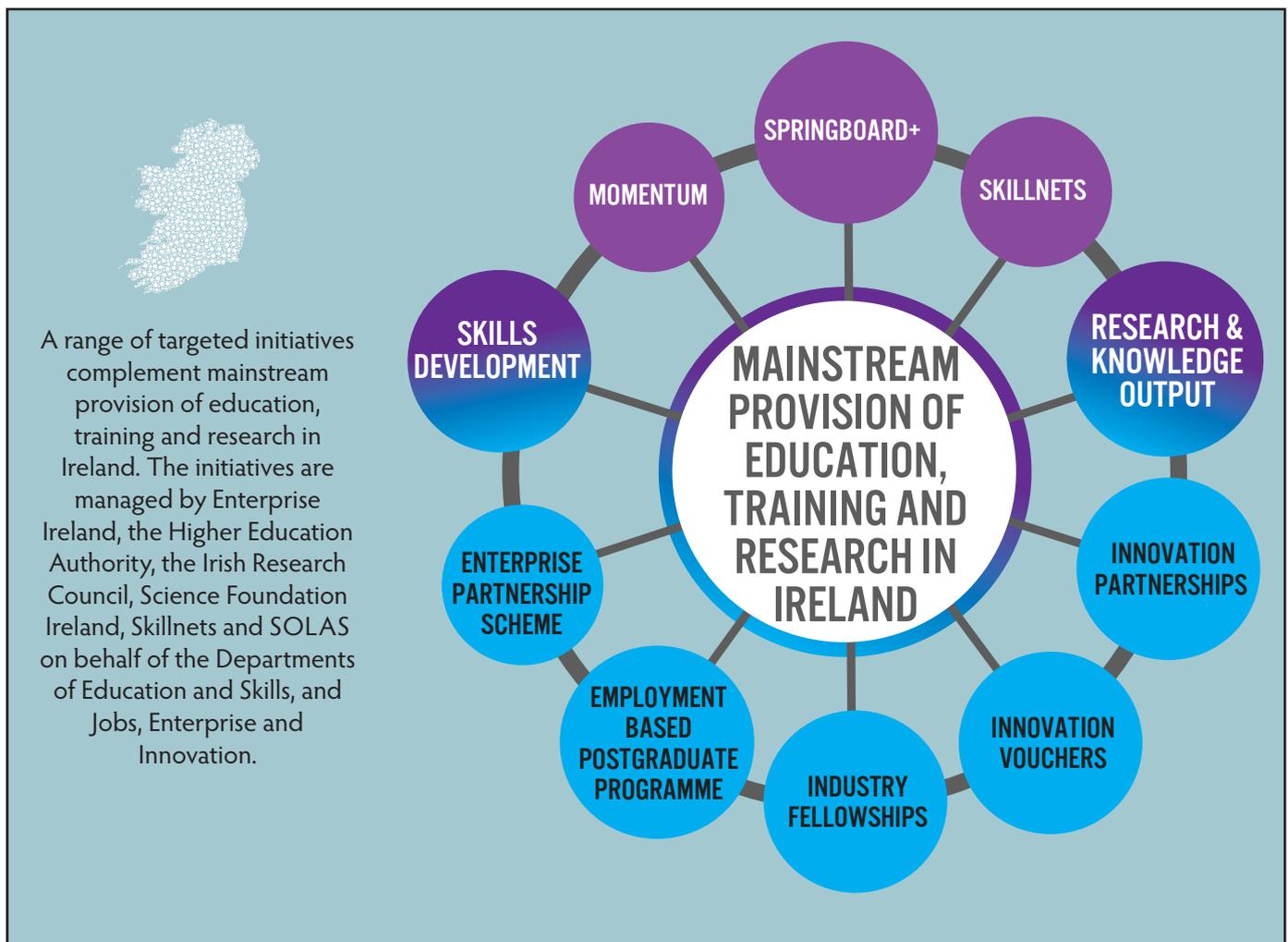
### A collaborative landscape

Ireland is still emerging from one of its deepest ever recessions, and although in 2015 there is still a challenging financial landscape in Ireland, there are nevertheless signs of recovery and growth. There is a steady, ongoing drop in unemployment; evidence of many employers in hiring mode; strong exports, growing levels of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), increasing income revenues for the State, and a range of sentiment surveys indicating that consumers are increasingly confident about spending and investing disposable income.

For the education and training system, the challenge over the next five years is to accelerate the reform and development agenda, and to grasp all of the opportunities and benefits of new partnerships, new ways of doing business, a new, enhanced role for higher education as part of the recovery and return to prosperity and a lasting good quality of life for the citizens of a small, island country in an ever-more global world.

This strategy sets out a path for partnership and action between higher education and training, the enterprise community, and other key stakeholders. Within the HEA, a Skills and Enterprise Engagement Team has been established to co-ordinate and drive progress on the new agenda. Ireland is responding well to the opportunities created by changing times. Through new education-enterprise collaborations we can greatly enhance our leadership position in the global fast lane of talent development and growth.

## DEVELOPING TALENT IN IRELAND



# System-wide enablers to support the strategy

There is a strong commitment within higher education to deepen and enhance engagement with the enterprise community. It is understood that such engagement is needed for the regions and communities in which higher education institutions and clusters of institutions operate, and to ensure the ongoing relevance of higher education to our society and economy. The benefits of a strong education-enterprise partnership are also understood in a global context, as Ireland strives to get ahead of the curve on talent development and economic growth.

System-wide enablers that will support roll out and achievement of this strategy are set out below. These enablers will be implemented as part of the overall reform programme and through the strategic goals and actions set out in this document.







	ACTION	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TIMEFRAMES	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	PARTNERS
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL: BECOME A GLOBAL LEADER IN TALENT DEVELOPMENT</b>				
<b>4</b>	<p><b>ENHANCE THE IMPACT AND COMPLEMENTARITY OF RESEARCH AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES</b></p> <p>Innovative, targeted skills and research initiatives in the Developing Talent infographic on page 10 of this document are developed in order to further enhance their impact for participants and for employment and job creation regionally and nationally</p> <p>The new apprenticeship model is developed as a core element of Ireland's education and training system</p>	<p>Year-on-year improvement in quality outcomes for participants (students, researchers, employers) in State-funded initiatives</p> <p>Number of participants and employers engaged in new apprenticeships</p> <p><b>Q2 2015 and ongoing</b></p>	HEA	Irish Research Council, SOLAS, Skillnets, SFI, D/ES, D/JEI, HEIs, ETBs, employers, enterprise agencies
<b>5</b>	<p><b>EXPAND CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN COMPANIES, WITHIN EDUCATION</b></p> <p>New education-enterprise partnerships established to develop continuous professional development (CPD) within companies, locally, regionally, nationally</p> <p>International models of HE staff-industry exchanges and knowledge exchange scoped out and a pilot initiative developed</p>	<p>Annual increase in number of CPD courses being supported by higher education institutions as reported in annual system performance reports</p> <p>Percentage increase year-on-year in positive feedback via national employer survey and feedback mechanisms via partner enterprise agencies</p> <p>Quality CPD and knowledge-sharing exchanges recorded and growing each year between higher education and enterprise personnel</p> <p><b>Q3 2016 and ongoing</b></p>	HEIs; employers; HEA	Enterprise agencies, D/ES; D/JEI



	ACTION	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TIMEFRAMES	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	PARTNERS
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL: CULTIVATE ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACHES</b>				
<b>6</b>	<p><b>ESTABLISH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A CORE FEATURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b></p> <p>All dimensions of the OECD strategic tool <i>HEInnovate</i> used to review and further develop best practice within the Irish higher education system, including expansion of good examples of practice and novel pedagogies</p> <p>Relevant examples and practice in entrepreneurship and innovation drawn from enterprise</p> <p>CPD opportunities for higher education staff, embedding entrepreneurial approaches</p>	<p>Percentage rise year-on-year in satisfaction on graduates' entrepreneurship skills among enterprise community, via national employer survey and other survey feedback mechanisms</p> <p>HEInnovate country review completed and recommendations implemented</p> <p><b>Q1 2016 and ongoing</b></p>	HEA; D/ES	HEIs; USI, employers; enterprise agencies
<b>7</b>	<p><b>ENHANCE PROCESSES TO IDENTIFY CURRENT AND FUTURE SKILLS NEEDS</b></p> <p>Processes further developed to engage with the work and outputs of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN)</p> <p>Regional skills and research fora used to engage with employers on skills and research needs, covering 'blue skies' as well as current needs</p> <p>Further opportunities for enterprise to be active partners in curriculum review and development, teaching, learning and research</p>	<p>Rollout of regional skills fora to include use of national data on skills needs and labour market intelligence</p> <p>Increase in number of education providers engaging with EGFSN reports via citations, requests for skills reviews</p> <p>Increase in local and regional publications on current and future skills needs</p> <p><b>Q3 2015 and ongoing</b></p>	HEA; D/ES	HEIs, D/JEI, SOLAS, QQI, SFI, employers; enterprise agencies



	ACTION	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TIMEFRAMES	IMPLEMENTATION LEAD	PARTNERS
<b>STRATEGIC GOAL: EMBED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION</b>				
<b>8</b>	<p><b>TRANSFORM REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE</b></p> <p>Regional infrastructure developed to support and deliver on education-enterprise partnerships and engagement</p> <p>Regional skills fora developed and supported</p> <p>Education a key partner in regional development policies and initiatives</p>	<p>Regional partnerships and engagement between education and enterprise growing year-on-year. Baseline 2015</p> <p>Regional fora established with annual growth in number of employers and enterprise agencies participating</p> <p>Feedback mechanisms on regional development charting the strong role of education system</p> <p><b>Q4 2015 and ongoing</b></p>	D/ES	D/JEI; D/Environment, HEA; HEIs; SOLAS; ETBs; employers; enterprise agencies
<b>9</b>	<p><b>EXPAND PATHWAYS THROUGH EDUCATION AND INTO EMPLOYMENT/SELF EMPLOYMENT</b></p> <p>Significant new pathways of access and progression established between second level, further and higher education as part of implementation of strategies for further and higher education and training in Ireland</p> <p>Enhance mechanisms and services supporting lifelong guidance on career options and choices, and lifelong learning opportunities</p>	<p>Annual percentage increase in positive feedback from employers and via enterprise agencies on the coherence and impact of the education system, via national employers survey, evaluation of new apprenticeship model, survey and other feedback mechanisms via enterprise agencies</p> <p>Increase annually in satisfaction among students as reported via surveys of further and higher education students and graduates</p> <p>Implementation of the Transitions Reform programme</p> <p><b>Q1 2016 and ongoing</b></p>	<p>HEA, HEIs; SOLAS, ETBs; D/ES</p> <p>HEA; HEIs</p>	QQJ; USI; HEIs, ETBs, schools, second level representative bodies, AHECS; careers services enterprise agencies



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