A FLOURISHING LEARNING COMMUNITY

MIC STRATEGIC PLAN 2023

BRIATHAR DÉ MO LÓCHRANN

MIC
MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
COLÁISTE MHUIRE GAN SMÁL

Active Learning

Community Belonging

Collaborative

Connecting

Culture

Creativity

Growth & Diversification

Employability skills

MIC continues to make a unique and significant educational, social and cultural contribution to all aspects of society.

CONTENTS

Welcome

Chairperson's Welcome

On behalf of the Trustees and Governing Authority of Mary Immaculate College, I am very pleased to present *A Flourishing Learning Community*—the College's new Strategic Plan, for the period to 2023.

Mary Immaculate College (MIC) is recognised and celebrated for its excellence in teaching, learning and research and its essential contribution to the continuum of academic provision in effective and productive collaboration with its partners in the higher education sector. Founded in 1898, by the Sisters of Mercy and the Bishop of Limerick, Edward T. O'Dwyer, and linked academically with the University of Limerick, MIC is the oldest higher education institution in Limerick and remains an independent and autonomous, university-level entity within the Irish higher education system. It is also one of the network of some 1,500 Catholic institutions of higher learning in the world.

In the context of the Irish higher education sector, it is no exaggeration to state that MIC has expanded continuously and dramatically within a comparatively brief time-span. It is the case that the College's remarkable period of growth over the last quarter of a century followed a steep decline where it saw its student population dwindle to less than 300. But in the most recent academic year (2018-19), student enrolment levels have risen to unprecedented numbers of over 5,000.

Significant expansion in recent decades has seen the College's offerings proliferate across two impressive campuses, one based in the heart of Limerick City and one in Thurles, Co. Tipperary. The diverse student community sees more than 5,000 learners, participating in nine undergraduate degree programmes and a multiplicity of postgraduate opportunities extending to doctoral level. Academic staff are engaged in a wide range of research which underpins all teaching and learning at the College.

Today, Mary Immaculate College plays a pivotal role in higher education as the alma mater of 40% of professional teachers working in a wide range of schools across Ireland. Our graduates are also working in educational, civic and corporate settings around the world. The programmes of study at our College are among the most highly sought after in the country. As you will read in this Strategic plan, the College seeks to provide an ethos and an environment where our students have both the freedom and the opportunity to achieve their full potential for a flourishing life at the service of others. The College is justifiably proud of its reputation as a caring institution, where there is genuine concern for the individual and there is a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. This is a mark of the distinctiveness of MIC as the only Catholic College of Education and the Liberal Arts in the higher education landscape here in Ireland.

As you read on further to learn about our significant ambitions for Mary Immaculate College, I hope you will find them as worthy and exciting for our students, staff and the broader community in Ireland and abroad as we do, as we prepare to embark upon the third decade of the 21st Century.

Le meas,

Bishop Brendan Leahy †
Chairperson, MIC Trustees and An tÚdarás Rialaithe (Governing Authority)

Introduction by the President

On the 120th anniversary of the foundation of Mary Immaculate College and as President of this ambitious university-level institution, I am proud to introduce our Strategic Plan which sets out our broad agenda and strategic priorities for the next five years. We launch this plan from the position of an innovative contributing partner in the economic, social and cultural development of our surrounding environs and of the broader Irish educational landscape.

At the heart of our reputation is care for our students' well-being and this remains the core principle which underpins our new Plan. In keeping with our Mission, we place the student at the centre of everything that we do, where we seek to foster the intellectual, spiritual, personal and professional development of students within a supportive and challenging environment that guarantees the intellectual freedom of staff and students.

Our 5 year plan, entitled *A Flourishing Learning Community*, will be realised by 7 Strategic Pillars.

We will be known as a high quality university-level institution, in line with our distinctive mission as a Catholic College of Education and the Liberal Arts, and will make sure that our programmes are available to all learners, whatever their backgrounds may be.

We will review our suite of academic programmes, and develop new ones, and we will ensure that they are fully geared towards the educational and career needs of our students.

We will make sure that everything we do is informed by high quality research. This is in line with the best standards of learning and teaching at higher level educational institutions.

We will continue to make sure that the physical resources of the College, both in Limerick and Thurles, as well as our expertise, are made available to our neighbours and our wider community.

We will have a strong international profile, with students and staff having opportunities to travel to visit institutions in other countries, and our campus will be enriched by the presence of a growing number of international students.

Our excellent staff will reflect the diversity of our society. They will have the best levels of support we can provide, helping them to achieve the highest quality work and fostering their well-being.

We will lead the College responsibly, ethically and in accordance with the highest standards of excellence and accountability.

This Plan aims to serve our learning community ensuring that each individual has the potential and means for professional excellence and, in the case of students, the wherewithal for career entry and success in the 21st Century workplace. Beyond this, our ultimate aspiration is to enable our graduates to enjoy a life of continuous thriving and, indeed, to uphold the dignity of others.

This Plan was formulated in consultation with students, staff, stakeholders, governors and trustees, in a process led by the late Professor Michael Hayes. The drafting process for the Plan began with Prof. Hayes' vision of a strategy that would focus on our students and bind together our efforts towards their holistic well-being. *A Flourishing Learning Community* is dedicated to Michael and we will keep his memory to the fore in its implementation. The achievement of its outcomes will be his legacy. Ar dheis dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Professor Eugene Wall
President

SECTION 1

Setting the Context:
Growth & Diversification

In the context of the Irish higher education sector, it is no exaggeration to state that MIC has expanded continuously and dramatically within a comparatively brief time-span. It is the case that the College's remarkable period of growth over the last quarter of a century followed a steep decline where it saw its student population dwindle to less than 300. But in the most recent academic year (2017-18), student enrolment levels have expanded to unprecedented numbers of over 5,000.

A 17-fold increase in student numbers is obviously extraordinary, although – quite clearly – the baseline for MIC was also very low. The key consideration, though, is the constant rate of growth that has occurred since the low point seen in 1991. By the year 2000, 2,000 students were registered, with 2,600 in 2007, 3,000 in 2010 and 4,000 by 2015. Moreover, the rapid movement along such a vertical trajectory was given impetus by an ambitious and successful agenda aimed at academic programme development, enhancement of campus infrastructure, and purposeful engagement in external relations focused on the building of civic, governance and sectoral partnerships. In other words, development at MIC has been carefully planned and nurtured during the last 25 years.

There is an even more significant conclusion that must be drawn from the result of this strategic growth: MIC can no longer be described as a 'small college,' as it has been known heretofore. By any measure, this institution takes its place, today, as a substantial entity that has potent agency within the current Irish higher education sector – and, in fact, throughout the wider educational and socio-economic landscapes. As this new Strategic Plan will demonstrate, these circumstances present the College not only with excellent opportunities but also challenges that must be overcome if MIC is to deliver on its clear potential to maintain and augment its impact under a distinctive and coherent vision for the third decade of the 21st Century.

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Ambition Realised: Strategic Plan 2012-2017

MIC launched its first formal strategic plan in 2012, coinciding with the beginning of a transformative era both for the College and higher education in Ireland more broadly.

Externally, the Department of Education & Skills and the Higher Education Authority began a process of 'strategic dialogue' with the sector, culminating in a newly-configured system landscape. The latter was especially significant for MIC given the preference at national level for a merger of the College's academic progammes into the University of Limerick. Given the historical ethos of the College, retention of institutional autonomy remained its fundamental strategic position and, ultimately, MIC was not only successful in achieving this goal, but it was presented with the opportunity to absorb the provision of the former St. Patrick's College in Thurles, County Tipperary. The importance of these outcomes for the College is difficult to overstate. From a position of having to face an existential threat derived from the external environment, MIC was able to assert and safeguard its status as an independent and autonomous university-level institution.   Moreover, it boosted its influence within the Irish higher education system as a multi-campus College; increased its range of Level 8 degrees to a total of 9 and, most notably of all, extended its aptitude for professional teacher education to the post-primary sector. MIC can now provide a full suite of initial teacher preparation programmes, beginning with Early Childhood Education.

The External Environment: Standing Proudly

In fact, the outcome of engagement by MIC with the sectoral strategic dialogue has been resoundingly positive. A re-invigorated culture of partnership and collaboration with the DES and HEA has taken root with the College now heavily and routinely involved in the practical implementation of a number of key national policy areas. These include:

- Direct access to teacher education for mature second-chance learners
- Scaled up regional initiatives in STEM/STEAM (Science, Technology, Education, Arts, Mathematics)
- Irish language immersion (MIC has been selected by the DES as strategic partner to deliver a Level 9 professional programme in Irish-medium and Gaeltacht education)
- Entrepreneurial education in primary and post-primary class-rooms and in the community
- Innovation in higher level teaching and learning through the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning
- A thriving relationship with private industry and local governance actors each sharing a stake in education, inclusion and regional development.

A focus for our growing external presence during the 2012-2017 period has been the Shannon Consortium of MIC, UL and LIT, reconstituted as the Mid-West Cluster of higher education institutions within a new, more optimised architecture for the sectoral landscape emerging because of system reform. Building on its earlier success as a vehicle for inter-institutional strategic cooperation and operational resource-sharing, the Shannon Consortium is regarded nationally as an exemplar of the cluster model. Led by the

MIC was able to assert and safeguard its status as an independent and autonomous university-level institution

Presidents of the three institutions, the Consortium is advanced in its delivery of key objectives set out during the 2012-2017 period, including the establishment of a tri-partite Federated Limerick Graduate School (FLGS). FLGS captures the synergies characteristic to a commitment towards collaborative graduate mentoring, professional training and joint programme mapping and development (including structured doctoral programmes).

Rounding out the Consortium's current agenda is the creation, by MIC and UL, of a national Centre of Teaching Excellence, in response to recommendations contained in a review of the structure of teacher education in Ireland by an internal team led by renowned Finnish academic, Pasi Sahlberg. This review formed part of the process of re-conceptualisation of Irish higher education and the strategy pursued by MIC and UL was to embark on the establishment of a National Institute for Studies in Education (NISE). NISE is prompting new innovations in high quality teacher education at both institutions – as well as in LIT's School of Art & Design – and the Institute has appointed an academic director to lead implementation of an ambitious plan for crystallising best practice in teaching, learning and research. In addition to this, NISE has proven to be an effective vehicle for delivering national objectives within a cooperative and well-coordinated space, including the DES Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH).

Expansion & Diversification of Provision

From a singular institutional perspective, the period 2012-2017 was marked by nothing short of exceptional and unprecedented growth and development. Student numbers doubled, as did the number of under-graduate programmes. Alongside the concurrent post-primary teacher education programmes delivered in Thurles, the College developed and launched an innovative and exciting BA in Contemporary & Applied Theatre Studies (CATS). This exciting endeavour capitalises on MIC's strong tradition of excellence in the Performing Arts, academic expertise, and the presence on the Limerick Campus of the Lime Tree Theatre—a professional venue that has gained international recognition as an outstanding contributor to the current vibrancy of the dramatic arts in the region, and the cultural and economic development of Limerick City. The College was also successful in winning the State tender to provide the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) programme, which offers Level 6 Special Purpose Certification for people working with children who have additional needs in early childhood settings across the country. This programme aims to provide training and professional accreditation for up to 3,600 individuals and, given its scale, is largely delivered by blended methodologies. LINC won the Best Online Teaching Experience Awards in the 2017 Education Awards.

A multiplicity of structured doctoral programmes has been created, for which there is a thriving demand; the number of PhDs earned by students at MIC during the 2012-2017 period exceeded 130. The College became a multi-campus institution, more than doubling its physical infrastructure at its Limerick and Thurles estates, and we invested heavily in the quality of our assets with accommodation for Thurles students and acquisition of state-of-the art postgraduate facilities at our new John Henry Newman Campus (in Limerick City) being foremost priorities.

Inclusive Participation

Several innovative examples of the College's long-standing commitment to inclusive education were introduced in the 2016-17 period. A newly-created Department of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education drew on the College's exceptional expertise in this area by introducing two important strategic initiatives following its establishment: introduction of a new FETAC Level 4 Certificate in General Learning & Personal Development for adults with intellectual disabilities and a Level 9 General Certificate in Autism Studies in partnership with Middletown Centre for Autism in Northern Ireland - providing specialists throughout the island, and elsewhere in the United Kingdom, with an opportunity for professional development (again, in an online setting). One of the most innovative inclusion initiatives created by the College during this period is its Teacher Education Access Programme (TEAP). This two-stage programme involves a foundation year immersing participants in essential preparatory academic modules designed to enable them to progress by direct means (as Mature Students aged 23 or over) into the Level 8 Bachelor of Education Programme. As part of the first stage, students received a grounding in the Irish language enabling them to acquire the matriculation requirements for entry into the degree. An exceptionally high rate of progression from the foundation year has taken place and of those entering the degree programme less than 12% have paused their studies (with the opportunity to recommence remaining) and more than 50% have gained a First or Second Class Honours grade in cumulative assessment outcomes. This model has served to inform development of the Programme for Access to Third Level (PATH) – a funded national strategic initiative introduced by the HEA - and MIC is now leading implementation of one of the PATH projects under the Shannon Consortium and NISE as mentioned above.

Continuous Quality Assurance

In terms of its academic mission, the College presents itself as a high quality institution and this was recognised in the statutory Cyclical Institutional Review carried out in 2016 by an international panel appointed by Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI). This strategic plan itself is a product of the inclusive consultation and thorough situational analysis that was carried out as an element of that review in an internal self-evaluation process. The commendations and recommendations that emerged from the review were formally adopted by the University of Limerick in May 2017 and are incorporated fully within this plan.

Against the Tide: Sustained Excellence During Austerity

From a less favourable perspective, it is essential to note that while growth in student numbers and the pace of academic programme development accelerated during the 2012-2017 period, the continuation of restrictions on public service recruitment meant that there remained a flat-line of approximately 150 full-time Academic Staff at MIC (matched by a similar number of Professional Services Staff). The College was obliged to increase its relatively high degree of dependence on part-time staff to meet its commitment to student contact hours. All told, more than 500 people were employed by the College at the end of this period and there is obviously a preference for higher numbers of full-time academic personnel. The
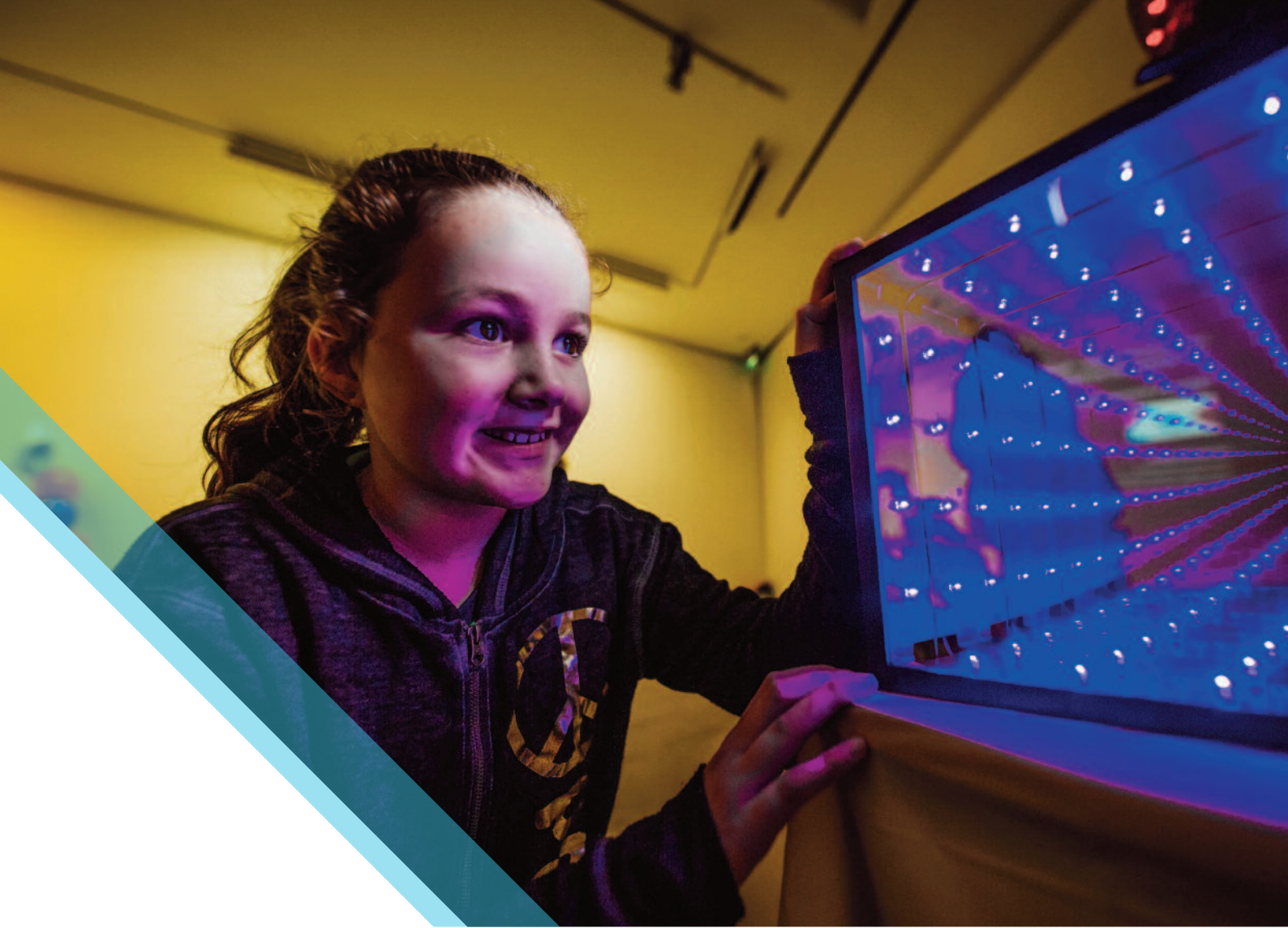
College would hope that current restrictions will be lifted in the short to medium term, and during the implementation of this current strategic plan, it will retain the objective of reviewing its resourcing requirements accordingly.

Notwithstanding the deficits imposed upon their work, the MIC staff community continued to exemplify the highest levels of commitment to the particular trait for which the College is known: a high quality teaching and learning environment and a collective contribution to a student experience defined by familiarity and accessibility of lecturing and support staff. It has been a genuine challenge to maintain this rich practice but the College's success in doing so is borne out by recognition of our many outstanding exponents of excellence in the art of teaching under regional and national initiatives and we have our staff to thank profusely for this. We have also been successful in nurturing a professional development culture and, side-by-side with this, a concerted effort to introduce blended learning approaches and educational technology methodologies. The MIC Centre for Teaching & Learning (together with its Blended Learning Unit) was singled out in international reviews of achievements reached under our 'Performance Compact' (2014-2016) with the HEA. Our academic community has also remained research-active and the College is swiftly closing in on the strategic goal of sustaining a staff complement whose level of doctoral degree acquisition is in the 90th percentile, which was a target set out in the 2012-2017 plan.

Serving Our Mission Through Targeted External Engagement Initiatives

MIC has a long history of engaging with the wider community in a meaningful, responsive and inclusive way. The institution promotes inclusion and celebrates diversity through a wide variety of initiatives with community groups, the creative industries, schools, children, parents, teachers and with groupings from a diverse range of communities, background and cultures across Limerick City and County, nationally and internationally, in collaboration with a wide variety of stakeholders. We also open our campus and facilities to the public through a wide variety of educational, social, cultural and creative activities and initiatives, for example Culture Night; Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival; the League of Legends Soccer Tournament; MIC Community Choir; MIC Children's Choir and; through a variety of conferences and symposia.

All undergraduate programmes incorporate a large variety of elective modules and cooperative placements providing our students with the opportunity to foster ideas and innovations. These modules involve a wide variety of service-learning and civic engagement activities, and many are run collaboratively with public and private sector organisations. This brings students in contact with their surrounding communities as community partners and allies in practices of transformation and social justice. Staff and students work with people from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds to help them to become more effective leaders in society. Students work with community groups, charitable organisations, and cultural organisations to develop knowledge and connections in order that they become more active and engaged in society and develop a better understanding of how community organisations work.

Examples of Elective Modules include:

- Music Elective: Requires students to work with a local community choirs to develop a programme of work and perform at a choral event
- Drama elective: Requires students to work with a local drama groups
- DEIS elective: Provides students with the opportunity to spend a significant amount of time working on specific educational initiatives within the school context.

Two new strategic directions taken in the conjunction between academic development, research and external engagement during the 2012-2017 period included a focus on STEM/STEAM and internationalisation. MIC is concertedly advancing STEM/STEAM learning by claiming the space for authentic educational interventions in a range of ways. In terms of curriculum, MIC hosts the LEGO Innovation Studio and the College Science Education programmes are informed by collaboration with the Coder Dojo initiative. The College also provides professional development for primary- and post-primary-level teachers and has active partnerships with the private and NGO sectors, including Dell-EMC with which we have partnered in the national VEX Robotics initiative for primary and post-primary children. The MIC campus hosts the RDS Primary Science Fair annually, now accommodating a larger cohort of participating schools than either the Dublin event or the other regional event in Belfast. MIC co-established the inaugural Science Week initiative in County Tipperary with our Shannon Consortium partners, LIT, and on the research front, has raised €500,000 in grant funding for STEM / STEAM projects with children from Science Foundation Ireland and the Irish American Partnership Fund. Building on these strategic outcomes, the College has established a new Department of STEM Education and introduced a new MA in STEM for Academic Year 2017-18.

International engagement, through student and staff mobility, is now core to the College's academic provision and the institution has developed an international strategy and operational framework to capitalise on its attractiveness to learners from other countries. The Erasmus+ programme has been implemented very successfully by MIC which has one of the highest levels of participation in the Irish higher education system and a HEA review of Erasmus+ in 2017 attested to the quality of the College's participation in the programme.

A nascent international programme focusing on scalable opportunities outside the European area is on target to deliver significantly on the objectives held by the College to ensure that all of its 'home-registered' students benefit from at least a single instance of international academic experience, and to further diversify the learning community by attracting staff and students from other countries. North and South America are key zones of strategic interest to the College and in the past five years, a plethora of exchange agreements have been signed. MIC is registered with the Association of International Educators (NAFSA), and is authorised to enable applicant students from the United States and Canada to enjoy Federal Student Aid (which makes the prospect of study abroad significantly more attainable than otherwise). The College has featured prominently in the International Student Satisfaction Awards and was the proud recipient of the award for Outstanding International Student Satisfaction Award in 2014 and 2016, making a direct contribution to the overall success of Ireland in these benchmark awards recognising the high quality of the international student experience offered here. At the 2016 Education Awards, the College won the International College Achievement Awards and was nominated again in this category in 2017 as well as gaining three separate nominations for Best International Collaboration Award for initiatives that include partnership with Notre Dame University in Indiana, and St John's University, New York.

This strategy has allowed our 'home registered' students to engage in exciting and educationally rewarding academic opportunities abroad and because of the ways in which we are in harmony with our partners, there is a multiplicity of dividends for students, institutions, other educational stakeholders and the broader community. For example, in collaboration with Notre Dame and that university's community outreach service, our teacher education students have the opportunity to teach STEM/STEAM subjects and Visual Arts in American elementary schools. The students also work in community centres working with learners from all age groups and backgrounds while in Notre Dame's home town of South Bend, Indiana. Conversely, students visiting MIC from higher education institutions in the United States are enabled to participate in service- learning opportunities with community groups in our own immediate hinterland. *A Flourishing Learning Community* aims to expand this model by creating a flow of resource to these groups from our institution, based on profit leveraged by us from short-stay visits. In this manner, all within a symbiotic relationship gain from it.

MIC aims to expand its international academic engagement by increasing the opportunities for professional development (through summer and winter schools) and is gearing up to achieve the long-standing goal of establishing new partnerships with prestigious institutions in the United States to produce a joint International Bachelor of Education that would permit graduates to be licensed to teach in multiple jurisdictions.

Capital Development

As noted above, MIC is a multi-campus institution. In addition to St. Patrick's Campus in Thurles, Co. Tipperary, the main Limerick campus has expanded its footprint significantly with the acquisition of adjacent property. The College is targeting acquisition of further adjoining brownfield property with the aim of extending and upgrading its accommodation provision to the highest standards. Today, the College extends, physically, from Limerick City's main thoroughfare to the primary arterial link, located on the banks of the River Shannon, that connects the eastern and western corridors of the country. The College aims to be integral to the newly-announced Limerick Docklands Framework Strategy and to be part of the Limerick Docklands Economic Park, with the intention of establishing itself as "Ireland's Shannonside Campus".

The campus-centric location of accommodation is in harmony with the strategic objective of creating an open and high quality estate that, while not dispersed spatially, is nevertheless an integral part of the broader community commons. In 2012 the College removed its formidable stone wall boundaries and, following this important symbolic act, revitalised its links with the wider community. A major investment was made in the construction of a fit-for-purpose public auditorium – the Lime Tree Theatre – where seating for 500 theatre-goers is embedded within one of the College's finest teaching buildings. This synchronicity between the immediate learning community and the social and cultural character of broader civic life is a hugely successful example of the College's commitment to meaningful inclusion. Further, the College has extended its reach into Limerick City Centre itself, with the Lime Tree Theatre now operating the venerable Belltable venue on behalf of the municipal authority, Limerick City & County Council. Over 250,000 patrons have been hosted by the College since the Lime Tree Theatre opened its doors to a resoundingly positive critical reception and the theatre is now a fixture on the national Arts scene, with companies such as the Abbey Theatre and Druid Theatre making it their 'home-from-home' for touring productions.

One of the key strategic capital development objectives prioritised by the College during the period of its last strategic plan was to make concrete progress in its goal to construct an all-new Library & Learning Resource Building. Within that plan (2012-2016), the College set itself the target of creating a design that meets the needs of 21st Century users and acquiring planning permission for construction. These goals have been accomplished and the current objective is to complete the project by 2022, following the securing of a sustainable funding package. This work is underway and there is confidence that the objective will be met, providing 500 spaces for readers - in addition to the furnishing of extra teaching rooms and the establishing of state-of-the-art, flexible learning spaces for innovative, creative and collaborative approaches that further empower students as co-drivers of their own educational experiences.

Partnership & Collaboration

While the University of Limerick (UL) is the accrediting body for degrees conferred by MIC (i.e. the University is the Designated Awarding Body, or 'DAB' under the Quality & Qualifications Act, 2012), in practice the inter-institutional partnership with UL extends far beyond the narrow confines of this statutory arrangement. Together with Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT), MIC and UL are positioning the Shannon Consortium as the fulcrum for developing the region as a locus for higher education excellence and research activity—important drivers in the rising prominence of Limerick City as an economic social and cultural force and a significant factor in the attraction of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

MIC works closely with the Local Authorities that are adjacent within its regional hinterland - Limerick, Clare and Tipperary – both within the context of the Shannon Consortium and bilaterally. The College's strategic objectives form part of the regional development plan, as well as the development plans of the three authorities. Given its location in Limerick City, MIC is particularly focused on and well-embedded within the Local Authority's guiding development document - Limerick 2030: An Economic & Spatial Plan for Limerick. The College is also a signatory to the Charter for Cohesion & Convergence, a framework agreement binding the key statutory, public and private stakeholders together for the rejuvenation of Limerick City and County. The Charter was drafted by the College on behalf of its partners and accompanied the launch of the Limerick 2030 plan in 2014. Similarly, the College is proactively involved in the Regional Skills Forum and leads a number of initiatives contained in the Regional Skills Action Plan while supporting the implementation of many others. The College is engaged in the Digital Leaders Network in Limerick contributing to many actions in the Limerick Digital Strategy 2017-2020 and participates in Innovate Limerick, established by Limerick City and County Council to help drive innovation and act as the delivery mechanism for the projects outlined in the Limerick 2030 plan and the Limerick Regeneration implementation plans. Innovate Limerick's aim is to develop Limerick's business ecosystem and position Limerick City and County as one of the most attractive locations to start and grow a business and the College sees a key role for itself in this wider aspect of local development and local governance.

MIC is an active partner in measures designed to enhance academic participation, retention and progression and in 2017 deepened its excellent existing partnership with Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board (LCETB) within a new framework designed to provide a well-structured continuum between Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) leading to better access, transition and outcomes for learners. As a next step, the College will build on this relationship by signing a new Memorandum of Understanding with LCETB aimed, in particular, at a more systematic approach to shared objectives based on local needs as well as national strategic priorities, which call for such collaboration.

SECTION 2

Key Factors Influencing Our New Strategy

A Pivotal Moment

Whereas the College's outgoing Strategic Plan was developed in a context of great uncertainty, with reconfiguration of the higher education landscape, a historically important international review of teacher education and the doubling-down of austerity measures each predominating within the consideration of strategic options, MIC weathered a 'perfect storm' and emerged in 2017 in an unprecedentedly strong position with an abundance of fertile ground for new growth. MIC is thriving, with its highest ever enrolment levels, a robust presence within the higher education system and the College is exercising significant influence as a contributor to local and regional governance. The richness and quality of its academic provision has been recently endorsed and across a proliferating range of programmes, students currently enjoy retention and progression levels that match the best in the sector.

Estate development targets set in the outgoing strategic plan were fully met and the College's market reach was extended significantly with the development of several new programmes, and absorption of a new campus in Thurles—providing it with the full continuum of options in initial teacher preparation. A burgeoning international strategy was in place and the College's new Research and Graduate School presented a much-improved environment for graduate-level study and research.

All of the successes detailed in the previous sections were achieved within a deliberate step-change strategy designed to augment the reputation and penetration of the College in terms of its core academic mission and also its stakeholding as a key public body with agency in the wider community and governance contexts. Thus, there is now major potential and scope to be leveraged for scaling up to the next level of excellence and impact.

Looking Ahead: Risk & Opportunity

Notwithstanding this, the strategic choices available to the College for the next five-year phase of development are not without genuine challenges and inherent risks. Among these risks—none of them alien to complex organisations attempting to maintain and expand a healthy rate of development—could be overstretching resources, drifting away from the College mission and the loss of institutional identity.

Pacing our Growth, Consolidating our Presence

The most significant challenge for MIC in 2018 is to eliminate the risk that the quality of student experience will begin to diminish as student numbers and ancillary demands upon our resource base accelerate beyond our capacity to keep pace. By the year 2000, 2,000 students were registered at all levels within the College. That baseline number corresponds to the most active period of strategic development in the history of the College, from which a constant growth rate of 40% has been recorded at each consecutive seven-year interval that has followed. At this rate, the College projects a total student cohort of approximately 6,000 by the middle of the coming decade. While this imminent expansion is contingent (as explained below), there are three important points to note:

1. The volume of the projected student population can no longer be said to be characteristic of a 'small college,' as MIC has been commonly described within the Irish higher education institution landscape heretofore. This must surely have repercussions for the strategic posture that will be adopted by the College in the medium to long term.

2. Notwithstanding the pace and volume of growth, the College remains strongly committed to the importance of maintaining the intimacy of its 'learning community' that has long been a hallmark of its mission, values and distinctiveness within the continuum of provision. Graduates consistently express their appreciation for this and link it to the quality of their student experience. For these reasons it is currently regarded as unlikely that the College will risk entertaining the possibility of growth beyond the critical threshold of 6,000 due to the adverse effect this would have upon the unique ambience that a comparatively smaller institution can offer over larger HEIs.

3. The College will require resources that are commensurate with its projected size and that are sufficient to ensure that all measures to sustain performance against quality indicators are in place. These include adequate campus infrastructure and well-directed capital development, strong administrative capacity, and above all, academic provision that is robust enough to meet the needs of a diverse learning community and to ensure that academic outcomes (including retention and progression) remain at the same level of excellence as they are today.

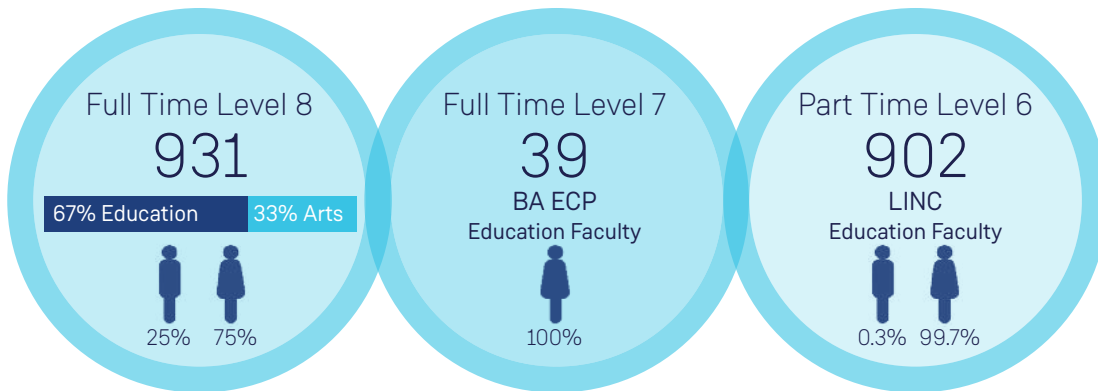## Managing the Strategic & Operational Resource Base

There are approximately 150 full-time Academic Staff at MIC (matched by a similar number of Professional Services Staff) with a relatively high degree of dependence on part-time staff. All told, the College employs more than 500 people and although there is obviously a preference for higher numbers of full-time academic personnel, reliance on part-time contracts has been a consequence of the austerity measures put into effect by the Irish Government since 2008. The College would hope that current restrictions will be lifted in the short to medium term, and will continue to review its resourcing requirements accordingly while presenting the serious need for greater scope to augment its existing depth of expert knowledge and talent.

One of the key strategic capital development objectives being prioritised by the College is the construction of a new Library & Learning Resource Building. Within its last strategic plan (2012-2016), the College set the goal of creating a design that meets the needs of 21st Century users and acquiring planning permission for construction. These goals have been accomplished and the current objective is to complete the project by 2022, following the securing of a sustainable funding package. This work is underway and there is confidence that the objective will be met, providing 500 spaces for readers - in addition to the furnishing of extra teaching rooms and the establishing of state-of-the-art, flexible learning spaces for innovative, creative and collaborative approaches that further empower students as co-drivers of their own educational experiences.
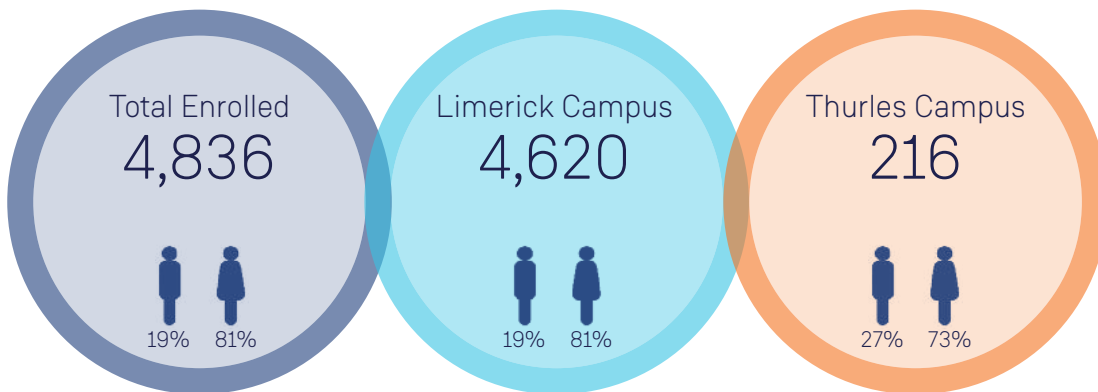
It must be stressed, as it was in the previous strategic plan, that a well-resourced, fit-for-purpose Library is the lifeblood of all university colleges. It is essential that the final stages of our plan to secure the new Library and Learning Resource Building at our Limerick City campus is realised. This will depend largely on Exchequer support. We argue that our students are the best investment that can be made by this State.

If the College library project is achieved it will be the most significant accomplishment of *A Flourishing Learning Community.* But it will not be a singular one. Rather, as an embodiment of the loftiness of our vision and as a reflection of our commitment to the highest quality of provision for our learning community, it exemplifies the scale and substance of ambition all our goals and objectives. These follow below.
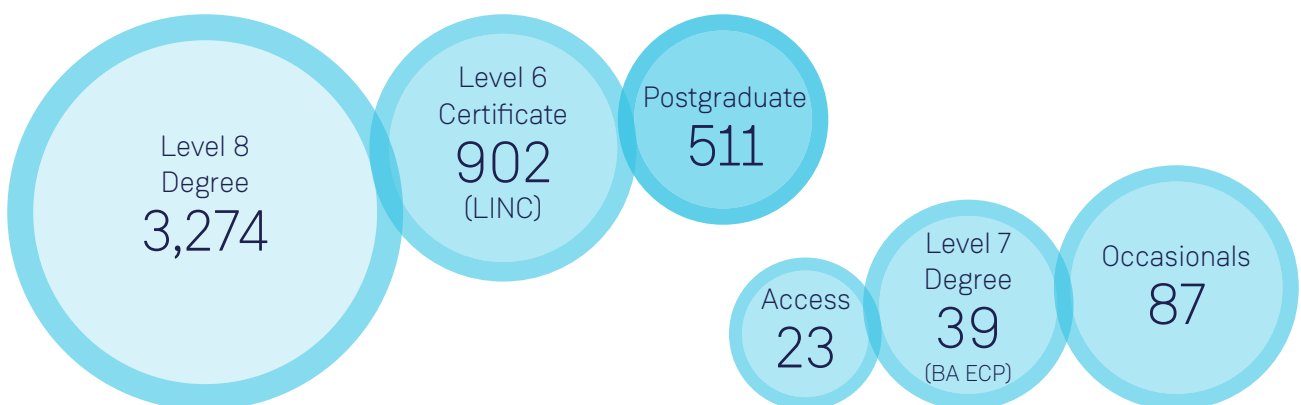
Undergraduate New Entrants 2017/2018 - **1,872**

Full Time Level 8
931
67% Education   33% Arts
25%   75%

Full Time Level 7
39
BA ECP
Education Faculty
100%

Part Time Level 6
902
LINC
Education Faculty
0.3%   99.7%

Total Students Enrolled 2017/2018 - **4,836**

Total Enrolled
4,836
19%   81%

Limerick Campus
4,620
19%   81%

Thurles Campus
216
27%   73%

Total Students Enrolled 2017/2018 - **4,836**

Level 8
Degree
3,274

Level 6
Certificate
902
(LINC)

Postgraduate
511

Access
23

Level 7
Degree
39
(BA ECP)

Occasionals
87

5.61% (n=186) Mature Undergraduate Students, L7 & L8	8.0% (n=262) Total SED Rate (HEAR), L8 UG	3.91% (n=128) Total Disability Rates, L8 UG
7.11% (n=69) Mature Students New Entrants, L7 & L8	8.7% (n=81) Total SED New Entrants Rate (HEAR), L8 UG	3.44% (n=32) Total Disability New Entrants, L8 UG

Inclusive of DARE & non-DARE applicants

International Participation 2017/2018

Incoming International Full-Time Postgraduates

Incoming International Full-Time Undergraduates

Incoming International Occasionals

Outgoing MIC Students

Incoming International Students to MIC

Full-Time Postgraduate
17

Full-Time Undergraduate
9

European
43

Occasionals
87

Non-European
44

Outgoing MIC Students

Outgoing MIC Students
60

Erasmus+ Study Mobility
52

Erasmus+ Work Mobility
8
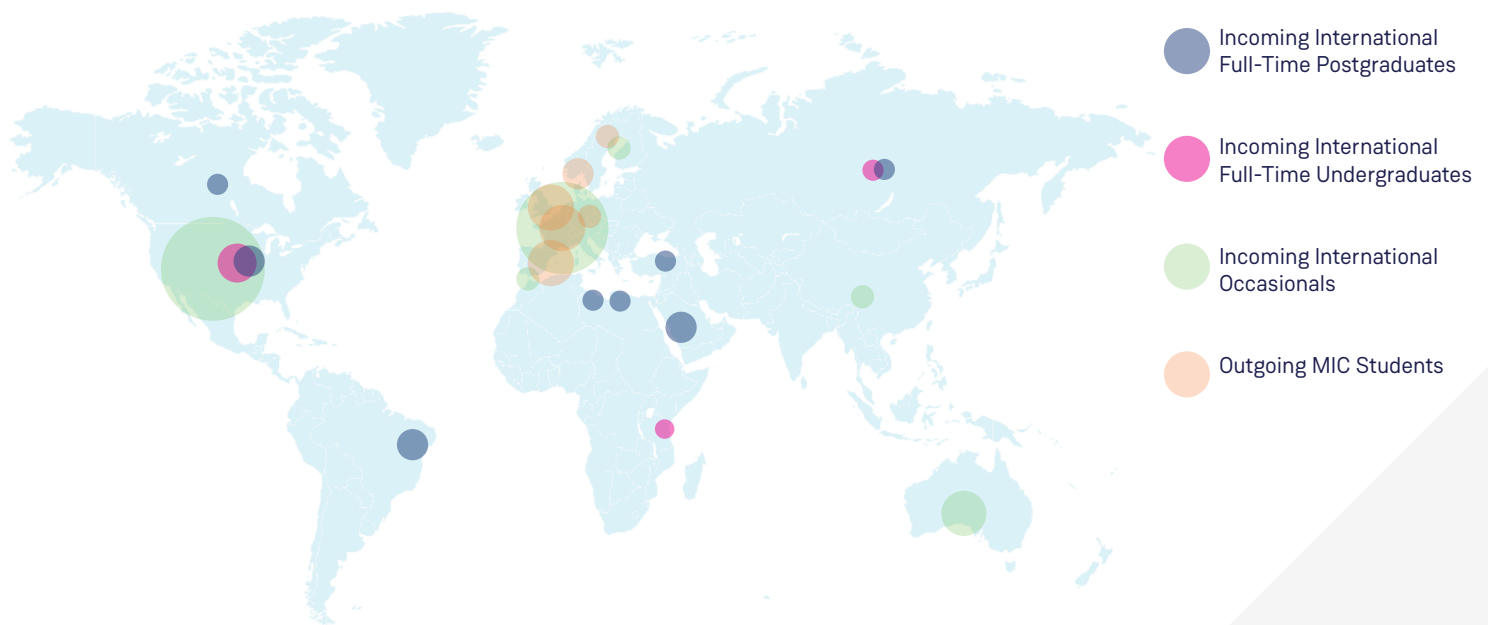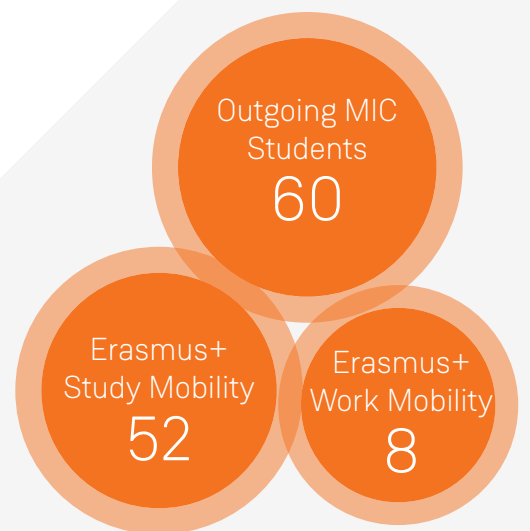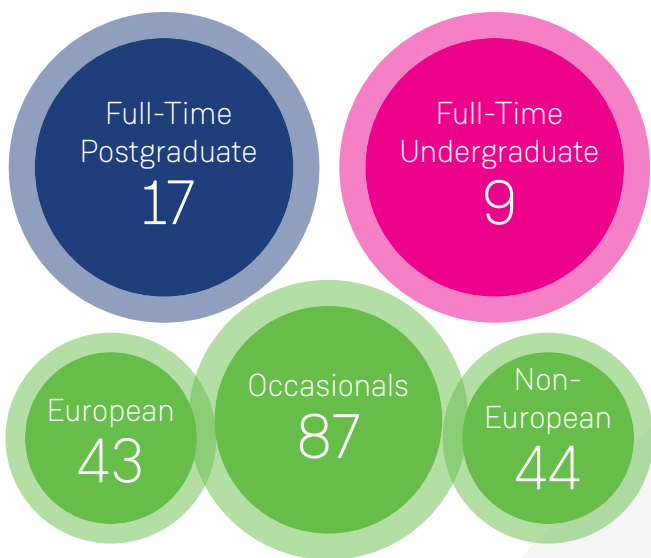
In 2002 the first PhD was conferred in the College

No of PhD's

2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018

2012 - 2018 Overview

2012

- Inauguration of Prof. Michael Hayes as President
- Launch of MIC's first Strategic Plan
- Opening of Lime Tree Theatre
- Opening of Franco-German House

2013

- Reconceptualised four-year B Ed Programme launched
- Launch of Junior Entrepreneur Programme
- Review of Governance
- Shannon Consortium Strategic Alliance
- Establishment of National Institute for Studies in Education (NISE)
- 21st anniversary of Liberal Arts Programme
- Launch of Irish Institute for Catholic Studies
- New programmes: Teacher Education Access Course; Certificate in General Learning and Personal Development; M Oid san Oideachas Lán-Ghaeilge; MA in Education and the Arts.
- Establishment of International Office

2014

- Two Artist-in-Residency programmes
- Launch of the LEGO Education Innovation Studio
- Significant increases in CAO applications
- New programmes: BA in Early Childhood Practice; Graduate Diploma in Adult and Further Education; Master of Education in Educational Leadership and Management; Professional Masters in Education
- Extensive campus development including the opening of an International Student Residence

2015

- Launch of Institute for Irish Studies
- Launch of Institute for Educational & Social policy Studies (PRISEM)
- 100th PhD awarded
- New programmes: BA in Contemporary & Applied Theatre; MA in Applied Linguistics
- Establishment of Department of Theatre & Drama Studies
- Student numbers exceed 3,500

2016

- Consortium led by MIC awarded contract to deliver programme for Inclusion Coordinators (LINC) in Early Years settings
- Incorporation of St Patrick's College Thurles
- Doubling of undergraduate offerings
- New programmes: LINC Programme; BA in Education, Business Studies & Accounting; BA in Education , Business Studies & Religious Studies; BA in Education, Gaeilge & Business Studies; BA in Education, Gaeilge & Religious Studies; MA in Education and Wellbeing of the Older Person; Graduate Certificate in Autism Studies
- Student numbers exceed 4,000
- Launch of undergraduate scholarships
- 1st RDS Primary Science Fair @ MIC
- Cyclical Institutional Review
- Development of John Henry Newman Campus

2018

- Appointment of Professor Eugene Wall as the 10th President of MIC
- New programmes: SPhD / M Ed in Literacy Education; SPhD in Irish Studies; Doctorate in Educational & Child Psychology; M Oid san Oideachas Lán-Ghaeilge agus Gaeltachta; Graduate Certificate in Christian Leadership in Education; Graduate Diploma in Mentoring & Leadership; BA in Education, Mathematics & Gaeilge (MIC Thurles)

2017

- Establishment of the Department of STEM Education and the Department of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education
- Establishment of Tipperary Festival of Science
- New programmes: MA in STEM Education
- Student numbers exceed 4,800
- Passing of Prof. Michael Hayes, President of MIC

2019

- Launch of MIC's second Strategic Plan: A Flourishing Learning Community

Mission Statement

Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, founded in 1898, is a third level Catholic College of Education and the Liberal Arts.

The College community promotes excellence in teaching, learning and research at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It seeks to foster the intellectual, spiritual, personal and professional development of students within a supportive and challenging environment that guarantees the intellectual freedom of staff and students.

In particular, the College seeks to foster in its students a spirit of justice and compassion in the service of others, together with an openness to the religious tradition and values of each individual.

The College promotes a sense of identity enriched by an awareness of its Catholic tradition, the cultures, languages and traditions of Ireland and its special commitment to the Irish language.

Mary Immaculate College respects cultural diversity. It strives to promote equity in society and to provide an environment where all have freedom and opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Values

Our core values will guide and underpin our actions in the realisation of this plan.

Excellence

Catholic Intellectual Tradition

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Flourishing
Life

Community

Social
Justice

Academic
Freedom

The successful achievement of *A Flourishing Learning Community*

This strategic plan will be enabled by the following cross-cutting strategies:

· Focus on the Learner
· Provide Resources Effectively and Sustainably
· Sustain a Culture of Quality Assurance
· Work in Partnership
· Foster Subsidiarity of Decision-Making

These cross-cutting enabling strategies can be superimposed over any of the seven Strategic Pillars which give the plan its structure. This ensures cohesiveness and consistency of implementation.

Seven Strategic Pillars

1. Catholic Heritage & Values

2. High Quality, Whole-Student Experience

3. Research Culture

4. Community Belonging

5. Global Outlook

6. Professional Infrastructure

7. Ethical Governance & Connected Leadership

Each Pillar contains High-Level Goals, each with a set of Priority Objectives, which will be achieved by implementation of all 207 Key Enabling Actions (KEA's) that set corresponding targets. What follows is a summary of high level goals and selected key enabling actions. The full plan may be viewed at www.mic.ie

1 Plan

7 Pillars

Key Enabling Actions

207

47

Goals

20

Priority Objectives

Crosscutting Strategies

5

1 Shared Vision

Our Vision

Based on the direction and pace of development at MIC during the most recent period of the College's history, a well-founded appreciation of our essential standing within the Irish higher education system, and with a keen sense of the opportunities for further strategic advancement of our core mission, our vision for the institution in 2023 is as follows:

MIC is an **ambitious university-level institution** in the **Catholic intellectual tradition,** providing a unique learning experience within an ideal ambience for higher education participation. It is **active in research** that informs its teaching directly, and contributes richly to academia. The College is outward-looking, with strengthened **international linkages,** and is a resource placed purposefully at the heart of the civic commons. It is an active and **innovative contributing partner** in the **economic, social and cultural development** both of its surrounding environs and of the broader Irish educational landscape, helping, in particular, to sustain the vital **spirit of collaboration** within the higher education system.

The College endeavours to offer its students the means to a **flourishing life** through the **highest quality of academic engagement** within a rounded and holistic context of participation.

The College calls upon its learning community to make a difference in the broader world, bearing in mind a received obligation to galvanise efforts to foster social justice and promote equality for the most marginalised.

SECTION 3

The Pillars

Seven Strategic Pillars

1. Catholic Heritage & Values

2. High Quality, Whole-Student Experience

3. Research Culture

4. Community Belonging

5. Global Outlook

6. Professional Infrastructure

7. Ethical Governance & Connected Leadership

PILLAR 1

Catholic Heritage & Values

PILLAR 1: CATHOLIC HERITAGE & VALUES

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 1.1

MIC will be recognised and valued as a leading Catholic College of Education & the Liberal Arts characterised by inclusivity, plurality of expression by all individual members of its campus community, and freedom to pursue truth.

Priority Objective 1.1.1

We will provide practical opportunities to express the ethos and identity of our institution as College of Education & the Liberal Arts in the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Key Enabling Actions:

1.1.1.a   We will provide practical opportunities for engagement with the Catholic intellectual tradition, including participation in the study of Theology and Religion at all levels of the qualifications continuum as well as in professional development settings within the broader Catholic education context with support for governance, leadership, management and administration;

1.1.1.b   We will establish the Irish Institute for Pastoral Studies at the MIC Thurles campus by setting a vision statement and objectives for the initiative that reflect the values and goals of the College and which deliver impactful learning opportunities for those in engaged in Catholic teaching and pastoral activity;

1.1.1.c   We will connect with institutions that share our heritage and values and form partnerships that add to the quality and coherency of the particular learning experience we wish to provide for our students, including by membership of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) and the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU), etc.;

1.1.1.d   We will make a distinctive contribution to the plurality of teacher education provision by maintaining our commitment to expert preparation for Catholic education settings at primary and post-primary levels alongside our broader philosophy that MIC graduates will be characterised by a commitment to the inclusive education of all children in the full diversity of settings;

1.1.1.e   We will provide opportunities for Catholic liturgical participation that are integral to the Academic Calendar and we will ensure that the broader pastoral welfare of our student and staff communities are met by a thriving and well-resourced chaplaincy service which meets the pastoral needs of people of all faiths and none;

1.1.1.f   We will strive, through practical student life and staff relations initiatives, to engender a culture of mutual respect, fellowship and professional collegiality that is galvanised by an abiding commitment to the holistic well-being of all persons within our flourishing learning community.

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 1.2

Our students will have a transformative educational experience and will be recognised widely as rounded individuals, highly adept at critical reflection, the elegant expression of ideas and galvanised by a restless pursuit for excellence, well prepared for a flourishing life, a successful and fulfilling career, and their contribution to the making of a just society.

Priority Objective 1.2.1

Our graduates will bear the hallmarks of academic excellence, imbued with an appreciation for the value of the Catholic intellectual tradition, by their capacity for advanced analytical thinking, creativity and effective communication of ideas considered from the standpoint of reason and objectivity.

Key Enabling Actions:

1.2.1.a   Through programme conceptualisation and curriculum design under our new Academic Plan, our students and graduates will be enabled to persuasively vocalise their distinctiveness in further educational, professional and cultural settings and will be ambassadors for the excellence of the MIC academic experience.

Priority Objective 1.2.2

The members of our student community will have a multiplicity of opportunities to engage in service of College life as well as with the needs of external communities by making a difference through the sharing of knowledge, the expression of their skills and abilities, and, especially, their active fellowship with the most marginalised members of our diverse society.

Key Enabling Actions:

1.2.2.a   New experiential learning opportunities, volunteering initiatives, and measures for recognition of achievement will be created in order for students both to benefit from and to exert transformative encounters.

Priority Objective 1.2.3

Our learning community will be enabled and encouraged to advocate for social justice and equality, inspired by the College's commitment to the precepts of Catholic social teaching, with an emphasis on supplanting inequalities and disparities by acting as agents of change that enliven the binding forces of community.

Key Enabling Actions:

1.2.3.a   Creative initiatives and partnerships (including collaboration with the MIC Student's Union and external stakeholders) will be developed that provide students with the means to develop their skills as advocates and change agents;

1.2.3.b   In harmony with the College's mission of Catholic social justice and its commitment to respect for the dignity of the human person, we will foster collaborative attempts to generate new knowledge formation that will have a meaningful effect (e.g. MIC will make an active and meaningful contribution to the Santa Marta Group project to eradicate human trafficking and modern human slavery).
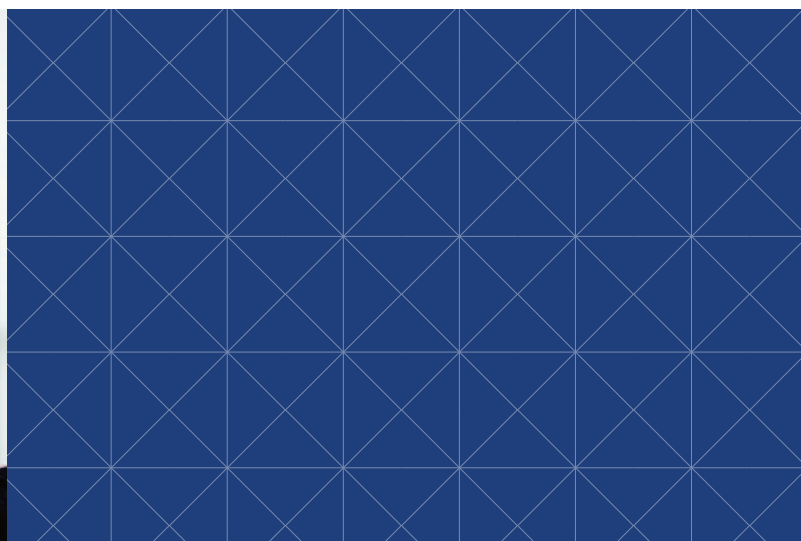
PILLAR 2

High Quality, Whole-Student Experience

PILLAR 2: HIGH QUALITY, WHOLE-STUDENT EXPERIENCE

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 2.1

We will refresh our academic portfolio with programmes that promise a unique, rigorous and compelling intellectual challenge to our students.

Priority Objective 2.1.1

Renewal of our suite of programmes, ensuring that they remain innovative, of demonstrably high quality and value to the student, as well as to the wider social, cultural and economic needs of our society.

Key Enabling Actions:

2.1.1.a Joint appointment by Academic Council and the Executive of a coordinated Faculty-led Task Force to create a new Academic Plan 2019-2024;

2.1.1.b Full continuum of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) opportunities will be available with the introduction of 4 new concurrent undergraduate degree programmes for second level ITE at MIC St. Patrick's Campus, in Thurles;

2.1.1.c Identification and selection of new concurrent and consecutive undergraduate degree programme development opportunities for second-level ITE provision post-2021;

2.1.1.d Create an all-new Department of STEM Education within the Faculty of Education that serves to drive STEM/STEAM programme development and research activities including a new and highly innovative Level 9 programme in STEM;

2.1.1.e Explore the potential for developing a framework for multi-lingual studies;

2.1.1.f Develop new Entrepreneurial Education modules at Level 8 and Level 9 (Taught) that will involve leadership, creativity, innovation, problem solving, critical thinking and leadership skills;

2.1.1.g Work with our partners in the National Institute for Studies in Education (NISE) to develop innovative approaches to teacher education, research skills development and professional development.

Priority Objective 2.1.2

Academic programme development procedures will be enhanced in order that they remain efficient, consistent with the relevant regulatory frameworks and fit-for-purpose.

Key Enabling Actions:

2.1.2.a   Conduct a thorough review of academic administration systems, structures and organisational reporting relationships towards implementation of recommendations that will lead to coordination and enhancement of relevant services;

2.1.2.b   Develop an integrated suite of online academic information systems inclusive of a new, fit-for-purpose Student Records System (SRS), a programme development workflow, student attendance management system and a scheduling database;

2.1.2.c   Create a new and accessible change-management Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that maps the critical path for approval of programme/module design and amendment;

2.1.2.d   Create a cohesive, interactive and cross-searchable online Book of Modules.

Priority Objective 2.1.3

We will strengthen the teacher-scholar partnership between the College and its students by increasing commitment to shared responsibility for the quality of learning outcomes and a productive culture of learning dialogue and engagement.

Key Enabling Actions:

2.1.3.a   Replacement of the MIC Student Charter with a new Learning Partnership & Dialogue Charter.

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 2.2

The practice of teaching and learning at MIC will be acknowledged nationally and internationally as exemplary, and recognised as a benchmark of quality that is informed by innovation and research.

Priority Objective 2.2.1

Led by the Centre for Teaching & Learning, development of learning technologies, spaces and pedagogies will be informed by best practice, international research, and innovative methodologies.

Key Enabling Actions:

2.2.1.a   Development of a new Strategy for Learning & Teaching governing integrated academic provision and professional service support by 2018;

2.2.1.b   Full integration of the Centre for Teaching & Learning (CTL) with the Academic Programme Approval Process;

2.2.1.c   Creation of new opportunities for professional development and accreditation in academic practice;

2.2.1.d   Teaching & Learning Directorate to coordinate audit and review of physical teaching resources, learning technologies and ergonomics leading to recommendations in line with the Strategy for Teaching & Learning;

2.2.1.e   Establish MILL—Mary Immaculate College Learning Lab—a dedicated and fully-resourced incubation space for staff and students to conduct, demonstrate and exhibit pilot innovations in teaching & learning.

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 2.3

Our student experience will be regarded as uniquely rewarding and highly desirable for the exceptional quality and philosophical underpinnings of its integrated approach to academic, cultural, civic and professional formation.

Priority Objective 2.3.1

By 2021, MIC will offer one of the top student experience programmes preferred by first time applicants to higher education.

Key Enabling Actions:

2.3.1.a   Development of a Student Success Strategy to be implemented by 2020;

2.3.1.b   A new brand awareness and academic attributes strategy for MIC, St Patrick's Campus, Thurles, will be developed.

Priority Objective 2.3.2

Overall satisfaction with the MIC student experience will be consistent across our campuses and, as a whole, will rank within the highest percentile measure of student experiences preferred by exiting graduates within the Irish higher education system.

Key Enabling Actions:

2.3.2.a   Analysis of our 2018 baseline student survey data will be conducted and will result in development of a set of robust, measurable and comparable student satisfaction indicators;

2.3.2.b   A review of student satisfaction with representation and participation levels in all fora where student affairs are discussed will take place at the mid-life point of *A Flourishing Learning Community;*

2.3.2.c   In line with recommendations in the Strategy for Teaching & Learning, a step-change plan for optimisation of teacher-learner ratios will be implemented by Academic Year 2020-2021;

2.3.2.d   An availability of open-access, networked desktop computer facilities, equipped with the most current operating software and learning and research applications will be sufficient to meet the requirements for optimal usage by Academic Year 2020-2021;

2.3.2.e   By Academic Year 2021-21, high-capacity, fail-safe wi-fi availability will be extended to 100% of College precincts at the main Limerick campus, the John Henry Newman Campus and St Patrick's Campus, Thurles.

2.3.2.f   Group study facilities will be extended;

2.3.2.g   Clustered and individually-customisable assigned work spaces, including full fit-out of desk and office-based resources that equal internationally-recognised quality benchmarks, will be provided for graduate research students;

2.3.2.h   MICloud, a secure, networked student portal (intranet), accessible remotely, will be provided for all students and will include personal Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and individual student e-portfolio profiles;

2.3.2.i   A new and comprehensive student information provision strategy will be developed with full consultation in parallel with creation of MICloud;

2.3.2.j   A new student resident accommodation plan will be developed with capital investment in refurbishment of existing accommodation stock and acquisition of new fit-for-purpose infrastructure;

2.3.2.k   Sporting facilities at the Limerick and Thurles campuses will be upgraded;

2.3.2.l   A new, high quality student hub for tenancy by MISU at MIC, ST Patrick's Campus, Thurles, will be designed and launched.

Priority Objective 2.3.3

Student retention rates will be constant and amongst the highest overall comparable performance levels reported by institutions in the Irish higher education sector, with institutional-level KPIs developed that provide comprehensive detail about the continuous rate of progression, per student, from entry to graduation.

Key Enabling Actions:

2.3.3.a   A new holistic and tightly coordinated Student Health & Well-Being Strategy that combines development of a support framework and referrals protocol with inculcation of resilience and self-care principles will be developed;

2.3.3.b   The importance of participation in sports and physical activity for student well-being, social interaction and academic success will be recognised and will inform the new Student Health & Well-Being Strategy;

2.3.3.c   A core dimension of the Strategy for Teaching and Learning will be a new Learner Engagement & Activation Plan (LEAP) that will be supplemented by keystone objectives of the Student Health & Well-Being Strategy;

2.3.3.d   A fully integrated Transition Management Programme—Tús Maith—will be introduced as part of the Learner Engagement & Activation Plan;

2.3.3.e   Institutional measures of retention and progression that provide comprehensive data on entry-to-exit rates will be developed and incorporated within the new MIC management information system - Data Hub.

Priority Objective 2.3.4

The College will give particular attention to those at risk of failing to progress in their studies for financial, health-related or other reasons.

Key Enabling Actions:

2.3.4.a   A re-configured and augmented financial assistance fund will be provided for the support students that aspire to participation in overseas experiences whose financial circumstances limit their chances of doing so;

2.3.4.b   RAPHAEL (Rapid Response Protocol for Students at Risk of Harm or Emotional Vulnerability), a new protocol for coordinated management of student crisis events, including sudden bereavement, will be developed.

Priority Objective 2.3.5

Employability will be a key focus for us on behalf of all MIC students—including mature entrants and learners engaging through part-time or blended modes—who will be enabled to be career-ready with key skills transferable to the 21st Century workplace and who will have the capacity for self-directed career advancement including selection and commencement of employment opportunities as first-time professionals.

Key Enabling Actions:

2.3.5.a   Integral to LEAP, a new, fully resourced and articulated Careers Service with Faculty-level management, administration structures, programme curricula and ancillary professional support services will be created;

2.3.5.b   Each student will be provided with a personalised career vision resource plan, ADVANCE (Alumnus Development Vision and Career Entry), and enabled to self-deliver key career development milestones pre and post-graduation;

2.3.5.c   In a new programme coordinated by the Careers Service—CPD-21—professional skillsets will be developed using CPD and student-led Train-the-Trainer models;

2.3.5.d   Two key components of CPD-21 will be: (i) to build a new portfolio of relationships with local regional and national employers and, (ii) to integrate training from external partners with relevant expertise in transferable skills-building.

Priority Objective 2.3.6

Potential for academic, sporting and cultural excellence, as well as civic engagement will be nurtured, and recognised.

Key Enabling Actions:

2.3.6.a   Create a new awards scheme for celebrating and rewarding our students' excellence in curricular and non-curricular areas in partnership with the Students' Union (MISU);

2.3.6.b   Establish a cohesive volunteering, civic engagement and College representation support framework for students, aligned with sectoral and non-sectoral initiatives such as Campus Engage in partnership with key sporting, cultural and community bodies;

2.3.6.c   Introduce 'MIC Scholars,' a significant and high-value student scholarship initiative for applicants who demonstrate high levels of academic potential and excellence in sporting or musical/cultural accomplishments.

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 2.4

We will refresh our academic portfolio with programmes that promise a unique, rigorous and compelling intellectual challenge to our students.

Priority Objective 2.4.1

There will be an increase of relative participation rates by people at all stages along the life-cycle, with special focus on those most distanced from access to higher education opportunities, for reasons linked to age, nationality, ethnicity and socio-economic or cultural attributes.

Key Enabling Actions:

2.4.1.a   A new wider participation strategy - WELCOME (Widening Entry to Life-Long Learning and Career Opportunities through MIC) will be developed enabling a community-connected pre-entry targeting as a well as transition / retention support strategy;

2.4.1.b   WELCOME will include establishment of a dedicated scholarship fund for applicant students applying from backgrounds characterised by significant levels of marginalisation and deprivation;

2.4.1.c   The Teacher Education Access Programme (TEAP) will be independently evaluated and the programme will be extended so as to promote and support transition to full undergraduate degree level in primary and secondary Initial Teacher Education;

2.4.1.d   The Certificate for General Learning & Personal Development (CGPLD) for access to MIC by adults with intellectual disabilities will be enhanced and mainstreamed;

2.4.1.e   The operational capacity of the Academic Learning Centre (ALC) will be enhanced in order to underpin the WELCOME and Tús Maith programmes as well as the academic support dimension of the Student Health & Well-Being Strategy and LEAP programme.

Priority Objective 2.4.2

The College will be actively and productively engaged with external stakeholders focused on promotion of wider participation in higher education.

Key Enabling Actions:

2.4.2.a   The College will engage fully with the Irish Universities Association (IUA) Access Strategy Group;

2.4.2.b   The College will put itself forward for participation in Higher Education Authority (HEA) structures that analyse methodologies and outcomes for the promotion of access to higher education;

2.4.2.c   The College will develop strategic partnership arrangements with the statutory, community and Local Authority sectors for coordinated provision of new direct access opportunities for student transition from Further Education to Higher Education.
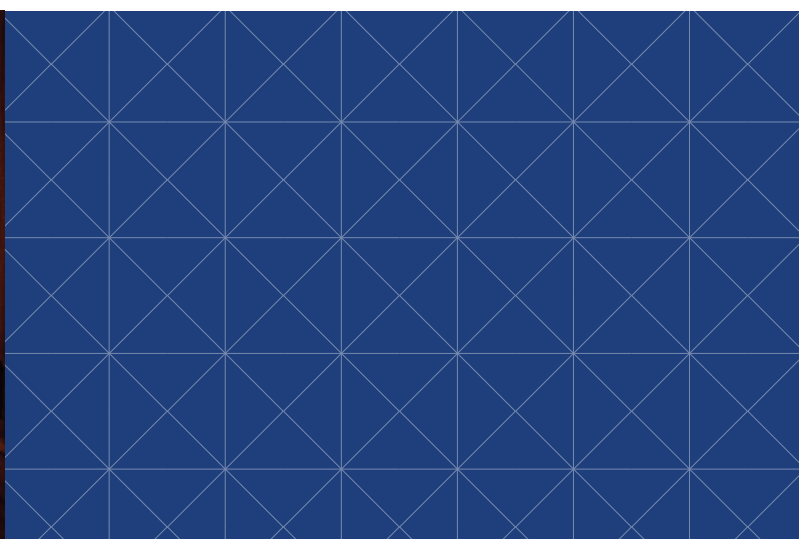
PILLAR 3

Research Culture

PILLAR 3: RESEARCH CULTURE

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 3.1

We will create an environment in which research engagement and performance is valued as an integral part of professional academic life that provides for and underpins the intellectual development of our students to the highest standard and for the betterment of our wider society.

Priority Objective 3.1.1

Staff research engagement will be incorporated into an institutional Workload Allocation Model (WAM) and will be a recognised part of the academic workload profile with reference to discipline-specific norms.

Key Enabling Actions:

3.1.1.a   Build a sustainable workloads system for fostering increased research engagement by staff that provides flexibility mechanisms for off-setting potential constraints linked to in-semester teaching and administrative responsibilities;

3.1.1.b   Systematically record, promote and disseminate staff research output across agreed key impact criteria that are clear, relevant and coherent and that are aligned with discipline-specific norms.

Priority Objective 3.1.2

Provide leadership and practical support measures that will enable staff research engagement.

Key Enabling Actions:

3.1.2.a   Provide formal and informal opportunities for professional development in research planning and evaluation;

3.1.2.b   All Academic Staff will be supported to engage in continuous reflective planning and evaluation of their research through Personal Research Plans and Departmental Research Plans;

3.1.2.c   Embed annual planning for research at Faculty and Departmental levels building on Personal Research Plans and Departmental Research Plans;

3.1.2.d   Provide induction on both internal and external research support schemes;

3.1.2.e   Review resource availability towards enhanced support for research leave;

3.1.2.f   Financial instruments for research support will continue to be enhanced and strategically targeted to support active researchers;

3.1.2.g   Provide professional development in targeted publication strategies, research citations and metrics and open access publication, including the Mary Immaculate Research Repository (MIRR);

3.1.2.h   A research ethics clearance facility will be provided through the Mary Immaculate Research Ethics Committee (MIREC) which will continue to be modified and streamlined in accordance with best international practice;

3.1.2.i   Provide professional development (accredited and unaccredited) in academic practice through the alignment of teaching, supervision and research through the Research & Graduate School and the Centre for Teaching & Learning;

3.1.2.j   Establish GROW (Grant-to-Research Openings: Information & Writing Support Unit)—a research bid-writing unit within the Research & Graduate School to help researchers identify and respond to external grant opportunities.

Priority Objective 3.1.3

Extend the recognition, reach and impact of new knowledge formation by the MIC research community.

Key Enabling Actions:

3.1.3.a   Increase the 2018 baseline of engagement with MIRR (Mary Immaculate College Research Repository) towards greater penetration of citation indices and generation of new research opportunities with external peers;

3.1.3.b   Stimulate research networking by providing seed funding to support the building of professional collaboration.

Priority Objective 3.1.4

At institutional level, consolidate our seminal research footings with well-developed dissemination strategies as well as through adequately resourced and coordinated research institutions.

Key Enabling Actions:

3.1.4.a   Develop a clearly defined and well-integrated Knowledge Transfer Strategy (KiTS) towards expansion of the College's contribution, through research, to academia, society, culture, public policy and the economy;

3.1.4.b   Foster increases in the number of staff involved in the support of institutional research and academic research leadership;

3.1.4.c   Develop and resource multi-annual action plans for MIC Research Institutes;

3.1.4.d   Target assistance towards applications that are made to international research funding bodies via MIC Research Institutes.

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 3.2

We will develop a framework for doctoral education focused on research capacity-building in combination with research and transferrable skills to enhance students' opportunities for success in their future careers.

Priority Objective 3.2.1

Development of an innovative, high-quality Framework for Doctoral Education.

Key Enabling Actions:

3.2.1.a   Appoint a high-level working group to create a Framework for Doctoral Education;

3.2.1.b   Develop a suite of signature doctoral pedagogies, assessment formats, and feedback practices;

3.2.1.c   Champion innovation and excellence in doctoral education with a focus on enhancing the quality of the educational experience to produce graduates with attributes for future careers.

Priority Objective 3.2.2

Development of doctoral programme capacity-building, including researcher development frameworks, shared programme development practices, and mediation and advocacy protocols.

Key Enabling Actions:

3.2.2.a   Develop new capacity-building projects and optimisation of learning outcomes in respect of (i) Masters dissertation projects and (ii) Doctoral thesis projects;

3.2.2.b   Develop a faculty researcher development framework based on the European Charter for Researchers;

3.2.2.c   Develop a tailored support and assistance programme for postgraduate researchers making applications to governmental, corporate and philanthropic organisations;

3.2.2.d   Develop research thesis project management training and training in supervisor/supervisee relationships.

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 3.3

We will develop coordinated strategic approaches for attracting, recruiting, and retaining postgraduate students with reference to social, cultural and economic needs, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Priority Objective 3.3.1

Development and promotion of MIC as a highly regarded locus and community-of-practice for doctoral research and study.

Key Enabling Actions:

3.3.1.a   Complete the MIC Capital Development Plan for John Henry Newman Campus, including investment in meeting and seminar rooms, and equipment;

3.3.1.b   Raise the profile of postgraduate students' academic accomplishments through increased visibility in MIC communications, including website;

3.3.1.c   Establish student and Faculty-focused shared publication and dissemination protocols;

3.3.1.d   Develop a shared strategy for alumni-focused activities in relation to recruitment, research and themed events in collaboration with the International Office (IO) and Corporate Communications and Marketing (CCM).

Priority Objective 3.3.2

We will enhance and diversify our postgraduate student recruitment and retention strategies.

Key Enabling Actions:

3.3.2.a Develop an all-new, fully-coordinated cross-College postgraduate programme development and student recruitment strategy that is consistently and transparently resourced and monitored;

3.3.2.b Develop recruitment and retention strategies that specifically target high-performing students capable of securing significant funding such as European Research Council (ERC) funding;

3.3.2.c Optimise student recruitment in new and established subject areas by attracting prestigious fellowships and scholarships, including the Irish Research Council (IRC) and Marie Sklodowska-Curie;

3.3.2.d   Increase doctoral enrolment levels while improving completion times and rates;

3.3.2.e   Implement the new MIC Strategy for Postgraduate Supports following inclusive consultation and adoption.

Priority Objective 3.3.3

Recruitment of international students through engagement with doctoral communities.

Key Enabling Actions:

3.3.3.a Enhance our external and internal postgraduate research communication activity by emphasising dissemination, international audiences, and digital delivery;

3.3.3.b Develop roles and relationships for international students through scholarship funding for training and development opportunities in key research institutes and centres in collaboration with IO and CCM;

3.3.3.c Develop a postgraduate international alumni ambassador scheme to highlight international alumni successes and develop peer-to-peer communications with potential MIC students in EU and non-EU countries;

3.3.3.d Expand summer-time and inter-semester MIC-hosted events, including the launch of interdisciplinary summer schools focused on themes and topics that draw from the particular strengths and expertise of the MIC research community.

Priority Objective 3.3.4

Collaborate, with our regional partners, towards joint doctoral programme development.

Key Enabling Actions:

3.3.4.a   Address current national policy in the context of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 with reference to the National Framework for Doctoral Education and the development of the Federated Limerick Graduate School (FLGS) by the Shannon Consortium;

3.3.4.b   Develop shared academic opportunities for FLGS in the context of mutually agreed governance, management and operational procedures, particularly with reference to structured doctoral programmes and research and transferrable skills training;

3.3.4.c   Develop joint Structured PhD programmes in partnership with the University of Limerick and Limerick Institute of Technology that is characterised by the highest quality of programme design and delivery and a unique student experience.
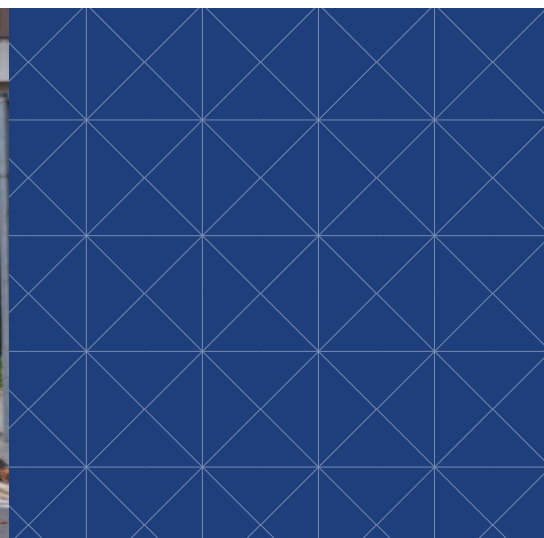
PILLAR 4

Community Belonging

PILLAR 4: COMMUNITY BELONGING

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 4.1

Position the material, intellectual and cultural resources of the College within the civic commons and enable their adoption by the wider community.

Priority Objective 4.1.1

Widen access to our estate and increase the range of campus facilities available for social, cultural and municipal engagement by our community.

Key Enabling Actions:

4.1.1.a   Become a signatory to the City of Sanctuary Charter and establish a Place of Sanctuary for access to higher education at our Limerick and Thurles campuses;

4.1.1.b   Work with our Charter for Change partners to integrate our Limerick City estate development plan with the Limerick Docklands Framework Strategy with a focus on establishing MIC as Ireland's 'Shannonside Campus';

4.1.1.c   Integrate a new public visitor and readers programme tailored for both adults and children, within the service-delivery strategy for our new, state-of-the-art Library Building;

4.1.1.d   Open John Henry Newman Campus to our main city thoroughfare and establish a dynamic, interactive public 'maker space' for the fusion of creative arts and STEM education—CRAFT (Creative Arts /Future Technologies)—that engages young learners in particular by integrating our professional disciplines and combines authentic pedagogical approaches to STEM, visual art and performance as well as exploration, play, creativity, and early years learning;

4.1.1.e   Develop a plan for introduction of a new theatre space refurbishing and repurposing existing provision that can be accessible to public use as well as reintegrated into our core performing arts programme as a quality learning space;

4.1.1.f   Conduct feasibility study for introduction of a new, high quality café/bistro within the new plaza precinct of the Limerick campus;

4.1.1.g   Participate in the Campus Engage initiative;

4.1.1.h   Launch a new Age-Friendly Campus strategy as a member of the Limerick Age Friendly Alliance.

Priority Objective 4.1.2

Establishment of new learning relationships with our neighbouring communities that helps transfer our knowledge capital to local and community development settings instead of within the campus boundaries.

Key Enabling Actions:

4.1.2.a   Complement the TED Project (Transforming Education through Dialogue) and our other inclusive education initiatives with the coordinated targeting of inclusive education measures at our new immigrant communities and the Traveller Community;

4.1.2.b   Establish a new partnership with the 'City Connects' initiative of Boston College's Lynch School of Education aimed at collaborative educational inclusion initiatives that result in mutual learning and sustainable practice in Limerick and Boston;

4.1.2.c   Work under our WELCOME access strategy to help build awareness in community settings at all stages of the life-cycle of opportunities for higher education participation and linked careers using student and alumni ambassadors;

4.1.2.d   Work with community education groups, FE providers and schools to put long-term structures in place for acquisition of higher education entry requirements;

4.1.2.e   Launch a new initiative - 'Tapestry' - in collaboration with our international academic partners and community education partners that sustains impactful service-learning placement opportunities in community settings through the sharing of resources;

4.1.2.f   Deliver 'Surfers' initiative—practical ICT tutorials geared towards preparation to be a higher education student.

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 4.2

Build on our long-standing dialogue with local and wider communities towards a shared contribution to local development, the enhancement of governance and the active engagement of civil society.

Priority Objective 4.2.1

To provide leadership, within our core competency domains, in collaborative initiatives that make a significant educational, social and cultural impact in Limerick City, as well as regionally, nationally and internationally.

Key Enabling Actions:

4.2.1.a   Develop, with our current students and our industry partners, two new future career workshop programmes for delivery in community partner and FE settings: Build a Rocket Ship, Girls & Boys and All the World's a Stage;

4.2.1.b   Development of NextWave (for primary level) and Wireframe World (for post-primary level)—new bespoke science education strategies aimed at providing opportunities for conceptual and practical engagement with next generation technologies;

4.2.1.c   Showcase new practical applications of science and technology that enables interactive engagement by children including educational projects using smart technologies, sensors, Internet of Things (IoT) and robotics;

4.2.1.d   Work towards modelling the 'smart classroom' as a future-ready physical and virtual space (indoors and outdoors);

4.2.1.e   Continue our partnership with the ESB Science Blast event, delivered by the RDS (formerly known as the RDS Primary Science Fair);

4.2.1.f   Establish an accessible and inclusive CoderDojo at MIC with our own students as mentors (and co-beneficiaries in terms of their professional development);

4.2.1.g   Develop a new partnership initiative with DELL and other local stakeholders for extending the opportunity to participate in the VEX Robotics Design & Competition programme;

4.2.1.h   Develop and lead primary and post-primary teacher education initiatives linked to the Regional Action Plan for Jobs, Regional Skills Fora, Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025 and regional initiatives such as Limerick for IT;

4.2.1.i   Develop and host a new Creative Education Leadership & Linkage Centre (CELL) that delivers Entrepreneurial Leadership initiatives and leadership skills CPD programmes for primary and post-primary students and teachers;

4.2.1.j   Contribute, from our resource base (campus infrastructure) and intellectual capital (staff expertise), to the success of the new Limerick City & County Cultural Strategy;

4.2.1.k   Help sustain and expand the cultural revival of Limerick City and in particular, efforts within the civic and community spaces to foster inclusion and diversity through culture.

Priority Objective 4.2.2

As a key stakeholder and partner in local governance and development, we will integrate our mission, Strategic Plan and outcome reporting with the development plans of the principal relevant agencies within the region.

Key Enabling Actions:

4.2.2.a   Integration of MIC strategic objectives with the Regional Authority's Mid-West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP) 2012-2030, the Local Economic & Community Plans of our hinterland local authorities and Limerick 2030: Economic & Spatial Plan (in tandem with 7.3.3, below).

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 4.3

Broaden our new engagement with enterprise, industry, State bodies and NGOs by actively seeking out new opportunities for collaboration and partnership towards shared goals.

Priority Objective 4.3.1

Ensure that the knowledge, expertise and experience of MIC staff and students is visible by and connected to a wide variety of relevant sectoral partners.

Key Enabling Actions:

4.3.1.a   Promote knowledge-sharing with enterprises and industry through the Enterprise Ireland Innovation Vouchers Scheme;

4.3.1.b   As part of our ADVANCE strategy, increase the range of industries open to our undergraduate students to carry out a career-relevant work placement;

4.3.1.c   Appoint task group to conduct a feasibility study that identifies options for research and development, product licensing and spin-out for innovative educational technologies in collaboration with industry partners;

4.3.1.d   Work with our partners to funnel the experience and skill-sets of our students to prospective higher education participants through the Slingshot Academy and similar initiatives;

4.3.1.e   Widen civic engagement activities by collaborating with alumni, local, regional and national organisations, industries and enterprises;

4.3.1.f   Promote practical civic and community engagement and leadership by our student population through initiating and leading Community-Campus Partnerships emphasising inclusion, knowledge exchange, and community-based learning;

4.3.1.g   Engender a culture of creativity, leadership and innovation for undergraduate, current postgraduate, alumni, staff and the wider public linked to the new MIC Creative Education Leadership & Linkage Centre (CELL);

4.3.1.h   Work with Enterprise Ireland to establish and lead new Enterprise Innovation Partnerships.

PILLAR 5

Global Outlook

PILLAR 5: GLOBAL OUTLOOK

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 5.1

To encourage a global outlook in all that the College does. This will be achieved by strengthening our network of strategic partnerships around the world and by internationalising the campus community through inbound and outbound mobility of students, Faculty and Professional Services staff.

Priority Objective 5.1.1

To double the number of international students (undergraduate, postgraduate and short-term) attending learning programmes at MIC by 2021.

Key Enabling Actions:

5.1.1.a   Develop a new cohesive and integrated internationalisation strategy for 2019-2024;

5.1.1.b   Continue to deliver and promote outstanding international student satisfaction at MIC;

5.1.1.c   Implement a new student recruitment strategy in the USA for full-degree programmes on foot of the College's acquisition of Federal Aid status;

5.1.1.d   Progress focused strategies, specific to undergraduate, postgraduate and English Language School programmes, in other priority markets;

5.1.1.e   Cultivate and enhance existing international links and create new strategic partnerships conducive to the implementation of our internationalisation strategy;

5.1.1.f   Create inclusive and well-coordinated planning frameworks for design, marketing and launch of Faculty-led short-stay and exchange programmes for inbound 'study abroad' students.

Priority Objective 5.1.2

To double the number of MIC students availing of international learning experiences by 2021.

Key Enabling Actions:

5.1.2.a   Devise strategy to encourage and support all MIC students to complement their programmes of study with an international learning experience;

5.1.2.b   Identify new opportunities for overseas student exchange and internships for our students;

5.1.2.c   Create further Alternative Education Experience opportunities in partnership with international HEIs.

Priority Objective 5.1.3

To increase international mobility for academic MIC staff for peer networking, teaching and learning and research opportunities.

Key Enabling Actions:

5.1.3.a   Continue to be one of the most active Irish HEIs participating in Erasmus+ activities;

5.1.3.b   Develop mobility strategy for MIC staff to include seed funding for research and for peer networking.

Priority Objective 5.1.4

To create new programmes aimed at providing international learning experiences.

Key Enabling Actions:

5.1.4.a   Introduce a one-year English Language Foundation programme;

5.1.4.b   Introduce new MIC-designed and accredited short-duration Summer Programmes;

5.1.4.c   Continue to evolve the College's academic offerings specifically tailored to international students;

5.1.4.d   Develop joint programmes with international partner institutions;

5.1.4.e   Design and deliver bespoke CPD opportunities for primary and post-primary teachers and university faculty from selected countries.

PILLAR 6

Professional Infrastructure
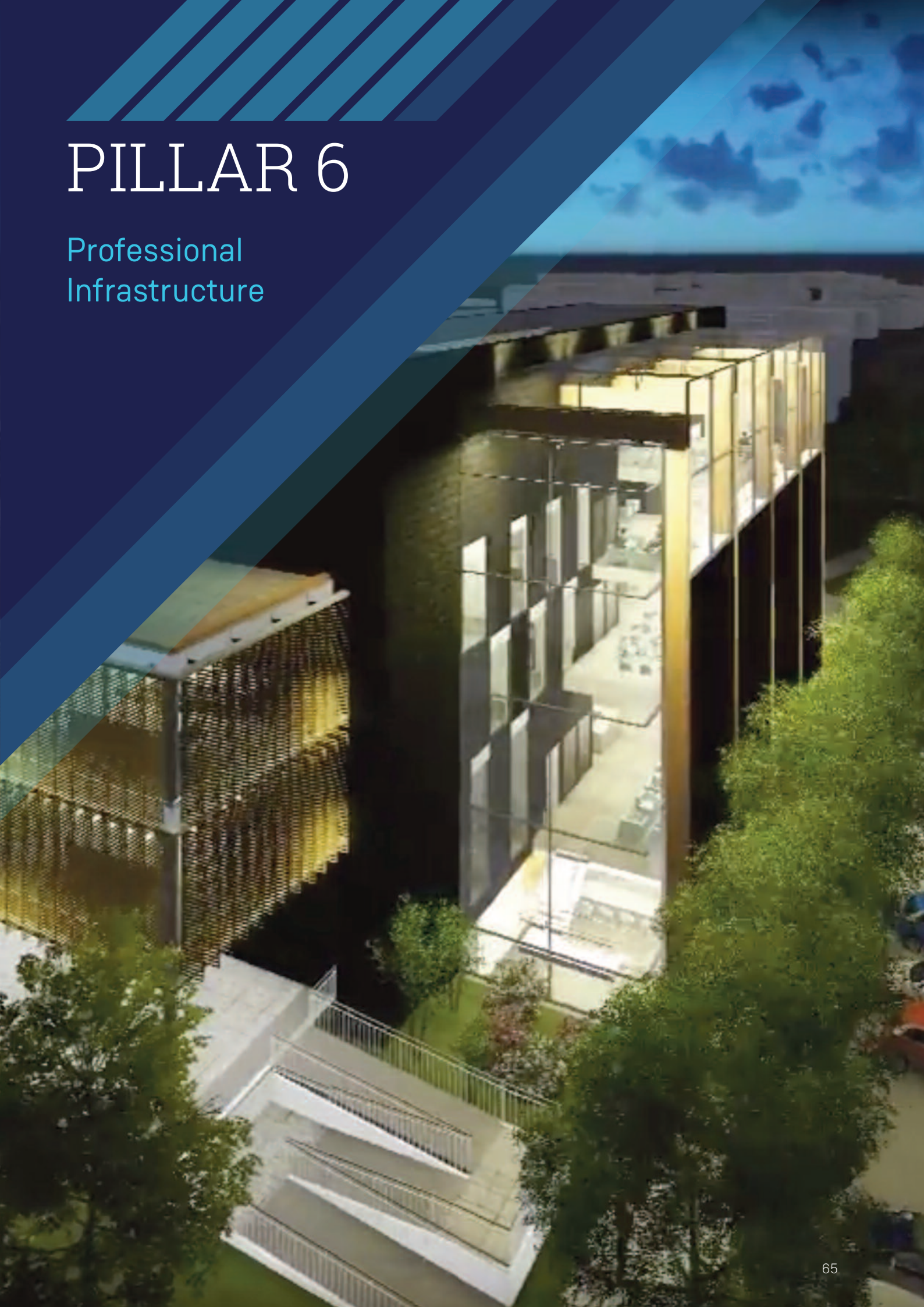
PILLAR 6: PROFESSIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 6.1

We will actively support the professional excellence of our academic and professional services staff, to raise current measures of staff diversity and to enhance the quality of employee well-being at work.

Priority Objective 6.1.1

Provide new opportunities for career development and for incentivising, supporting and rewarding professional excellence.

Key Enabling Actions:

6.1.1.a   Introduce new promotional posts at Senior Lecturer (SL) and Principal Lecturer (PL) levels;

6.1.1.b   Develop, a sustainable and fit-for-purpose Academic Workloads Allocation Model (WAM) in partnership with Academic Staff, to be agreed and adopted in full by 2020 at the latest;

6.1.1.c   External review of Professional Services grading structures against fit-for-purpose sectoral benchmarks;

6.1.1.d   Establishment of a new annual professional development programme aligned to role-specific responsibilities, strategic goals and effective contemporary work practices;

6.1.1.e   Introduce an integrated framework for recruitment, induction and probation, a formal self-evaluation process linked to mechanisms for tailoring development needs, promotion, and employee support for staff at all levels.

Priority Objective 6.1.2

Further engender equality of opportunity and outcome for Academic and Professional Services employees towards an inclusive and diverse staff community.

Key Enabling Actions:

6.1.2a   Appointment of senior project leader and creation of ancillary support structures towards development of the College's Athena SWAN agenda;

6.1.2.b   Development and implementation of an action plan aimed at submission of an application for (i) the Athena SWAN institution-level Bronze Award by November 2019, and for (ii) the institution-level Silver Award by November 2023;

6.1.2.c   Implementation of institution-level Athena SWAN Action Plan 2020-2023;

6.1.2d   Commence process of coordinated applications for Athena SWAN department-level Bronze awards in parallel with institution-level applications and action plan implementation;

6.1.2e   Establish a new, senior management-level post responsible for creation of, and leadership of, the College's equality and diversity strategy;

6.1.2.f   Agree and adopt a new Inclusion, Diversity & Equality Awareness Logic Model—IDEAL—together with an easy-to-use equality-proofing toolkit and a structured training programme targeted at all staff.

Priority Objective 6.1.3

Create, through openness to innovation and contemporary best practice, a positive and healthy environment for all employees of the College that fosters high quality and self-reinforcing work-life balance and engagement.

Key Enabling Actions:

6.1.3.a   Adopt, following in-depth consultation and literature review, a new Work-Life Balance Charter that seeks to ameliorate work-related stressors;

6.1.3.b   Introduce a continuous training programme for staff aimed at helping to reduce overload through tailored adoption of blended digital and non-digital workload organisation skills;

6.1.3.c   Review and enhance the current Employee Assistance Programme, integrating new indicators of employee assistance including the reasonable accommodation of the physical, social and cultural requirements of employees;

6.1.3.d   Engage more effectively and supportively with older members of staff and retirees through achievement of Age-Friendly Campus status under the European Innovation Partnership on Active & Healthy Ageing (EIP on AHA);

6.1.3.e   Develop and adopt, in consultation with staff, a set of staff engagement indicators and form a new Employee Communications & Engagement strategy that is evaluated annually during the life of *A Flourishing Learning Community.*

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 6.2

We will provide our learning community, our visitors, and the wider community with an estate of the highest standard of quality, accessibility and beauty.

Priority Objective 6.2.1

Develop a new Multi-Campus Development Masterplan that provides a ratio of greater than 8.0 m2 per 1.0 student FTE (based on current student population growth) and undertake actions required to achieve a 25% increase in Category A infrastructure adopting suitable funding models as prudent and appropriate.

Key Enabling Actions:

6.2.1.a   Implement the necessary steps to commence building of a new Library / Learning Resource Centre at the MIC Limerick Campus with a total floor space of 5,000 m2, replacing the current Áras na Phiarsaigh Library Building;

6.2.1.b   Building of a new ESSP Learning Centre at the MIC Limerick Campus for clustering teaching, advanced scholarship and policy development in the areas of Early Childhood Education, Special Education, Educational Psychology and Primary STEM (in combination with the CRAFT, CELL and NextWave initiatives detailed elsewhere in this plan);

6.2.1.c   Integrate a new dedicated Five-year strategy for enhancement of the MIC Thurles campus and estate within the new Multi-Campus Development Masterplan that focuses on teaching and learning, academic learning support, accommodation, and sports;

6.2.1.d   Develop a new, fully costed, revenue-raising strategy and implementation plan for commercial offerings based around availability of our multi-campus resources to the wider market.

Priority Objective 6.2.2

To be environmentally accountable and committed to the concept of human care for our common home—including the precepts of Laudato Si'—by rigorously applying the highest and most sustainable standards to energy usage and waste management and to raise awareness of green issues within the College community, leading to a greener campus and the mainstreaming of sustainable development practices towards achievement of Green Flag status.

Key Enabling Actions:

6.2.2.a Develop a five-year strategy for environmental management with a special focus on impactful carbon reduction, sustainable energy usage and optimal green space preservation;

6.2.2.b Create an awareness campaign based on the College's environmental values and strategy aimed at informing the campus communities and visitors and engaging them in implementation;

6.2.2.c Build partnerships with local, regional and national stakeholders sharing similar missions and operational concerns aimed at collaborative learning and policy influencing for care of the environment.

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 6.3

To enhance the management and effectiveness of our external and internal communications, including development of information-sharing systems and service delivery for prospective learners, current students and alumni, current and retired staff, partners, peers and the wider community.

Priority Objective 6.3.1

We will create a new information-sharing and digital communications infrastructure.

Key Enabling Actions:

6.3.1.a Create new mechanisms for assisting sustainable and consistent information flows between decision-making bodies and with the campus community through its various fora (see link with 7.2.1.b);

6.3.1.b Enhance the online staff information portal through improved accessibility, promotion, and relevant training;

6.3.1.c   Create greater articulation between the President's Office and the Communications function towards well-coordinated communications with external audiences.

Priority Objective 6.3.2

Our campus and the activities of our learning community will be reflective of a revitalised emphasis on the cultures, languages and traditions of Ireland, with special emphasis on the usage of the Irish language.

Key Enabling Actions:

6.3.2.a   Conduct a complete and comprehensive review of our Bilingual Strategy and corresponding Bilingual Policy, which will, in turn, be used as drivers for Irish language initiatives at MIC;

6.3.2.b   Provide newly-designed CPD opportunities for staff that ensure service and task delivery are carried out in harmony with the current linguistic landscape in the context of higher education as well as within the wider social and cultural context;

6.3.2.c   Each administrative function within the College will be enabled to develop its Irish language service-delivery in keeping with the provisions of Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003.

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 6.4

We will renew our emphasis on continuous quality assurance and to work as a whole community to situate our work in strategic context, to value and celebrate our endeavours, to actively seek the views of all those whose needs we serve, and to be imaginative in realising the potential for improvement.

Priority Objective 6.4.1

To provide the infrastructure and strategic framework necessary to establish a quality-assurance culture of recognisable and measurable excellence.

Key Enabling Actions

6.4.1.a   Design, approve and implement institution-wide Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) informed by the Institutional Self-Assessment Report (ISER) and QQI Peer Review Report (PRR), together with objectives set out in *A Flourishing Learning Community;*

6.4.1.b Develop and adopt a new MIC Quality Assurance Framework, QUILL (Quality Improvement Leadership & Learning), that identifies and enables relevant personnel to act cohesively as drivers that innovate, initiate, coordinate, communicate and report;

6.4.1.c A Seven-year internal quality review cycle will commence and will be published by the College through external-facing media;

6.4.1.d Reconstitute the MIC Quality Office under the strategic leadership of a full-time Director of Quality and the operational coordination of a Quality Assurance Manager;

6.4.1.e Situate a new Institutional Data Management function within the Quality Office with core responsibility for data collation and analytics based on institution-level KPIs and data sets drawn from key functional areas;

6.4.1.f Establish Data Hub, a real-time securely segmented interactive data visualisation resource available to the College Executive and Department / Function leaders for informing planning, monitoring and intervention processes;

6.4.1.g Develop a comprehensive and practical listing of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) towards continuity of operations;

6.4.1.h Establish a new institution-level Customer Charter that sets out the high standards of service provision members of the College community, visitors, partners and the wider public can expect from engagement with MIC.

PILLAR 7

Ethical Governance & Connected Leadership

PILLAR 7: ETHICAL GOVERNANCE & CONNECTED LEADERSHIP

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 7.1

To provide the highest standard of governance, characterised by commitment to our institutional ethos and mission, enlightened visioning, prudent and ethical leadership, collective responsibility and inclusive representation that is informed by the presence of authentic and effective gender equity, and which results in equality of opportunity for all persons with a stake in the mission and activities of the College.

Priority Objective 7.1.1

The MIC governance structure will be fit-for-purpose, fully realised and accountable, with its success measurable by the level of collegial support it commands.

Key Enabling Actions:

7.1.1.a   Act upon recommendations contained in the 2016 Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) by capturing the essential balance between collective governance, and equity of representation at An tÚdarás Rialaithe;

7.1.1.b   Develop a new, fully-resourced induction and continuous development programme for members of An tÚdarás Rialaithe (Governing Authority), An Comhairle Acadúil (Academic Council), the Executive Team and the standing committees of the College;

7.1.1.c   Review the College's internal audit functions towards best practice enhancement and delivery of all compliance requirements;

7.1.1.d   Conduct a major review of all College Policies to ensure their continued applicability and compliance.

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 7.2

To ensure efficient, effective and transparent management and decision-making that is cohesive and connected and that locates responsibility at the most appropriate levels within the institution in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.

Priority Objective 7.2.1

Systematise planning, decision-making and progress tracking processes.

Key Enabling Actions:

7.2.1.a   Develop and systematise a project management culture that encompasses risk assessment, due diligence and ethical consideration in a coordinated, coherent and accessible blueprint for planning;

7.2.1.b   Annual Operating Plans (AOPs) sorted and coordinated across all levels of the institution that are based on Strategic Plan, approved and monitored by appropriate bodies;

7.2.1.c   Develop an appropriate, transparent and effective Resource Allocation Model (RAM).

HIGH LEVEL GOAL 7.3

To broaden and deepen our commitment to working in partnership with other HEIs and external bodies to further our mission and goals as well as to contribute to the advancement of national priorities and policy imperatives, particularly in the education sector.

Priority Objective 7.3.1

Engage with the University of Limerick, in a partnership buttressed by mutually held parity of esteem, to strengthen our academic linkage.

Key Enabling Actions:

7.3.1.a   Joint review of the MIC-UL Memorandum of Understanding;

7.3.1.b   Foster reciprocity of representation in key governance and academic bodies in accordance with the statutory linkage between the institutions.

Priority Objective 7.3.2

Continued commitment to the Shannon Consortium maintained as primary clustering arrangement with a corresponding increase in joint initiatives and shared service-delivery based on best practice, quality outcomes and key strategic objectives expressed at institutional and regional levels.

Key Enabling Actions:

7.3.2.a   National Institute for Studies in Education (NISE) operational and strategically aligned to the recommendations contained in the Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland;

7.3.2.b   Federated Limerick Graduate School (FLGS) operational and the Mid-West Region promoted collaboratively as a rewarding destination for research and advanced scholarship;

7.3.2.c   Work with our partners to develop a unique, innovative and forward-looking vision for the Shannon Consortium premised on local, regional and national needs and based on combining the individual strengths of each of the institutions.

Priority Objective 7.3.3

Join with local, regional and national partners to enhance social, cultural and economic quality of life through the harnessing of institutional expertise and resources in collaborative strategic initiatives designed to optimise outcomes through coordination and integration of activities.

Key Enabling Actions:

7.3.3.a   Create, with our partners across the range of sectors, multi-level opportunities for learning engagement that tap the potential for collaborative development of academic and service provision, and inter-sectoral coordination;

7.3.3.b   Work with the Mid West Regional Assembly and the Local Authorities in Limerick, Clare and Tipperary, along with our fellow signatories of the Limerick Charter for Change, to harmonise strategy and share resources;

7.3.3.c   Secure third-party support from the public, statutory, private and community sectors for broad institutional strategic objectives held commonly to be of high value, with a focus on promoting social justice and educational inclusion.

SECTION 4

Implementation
& Progress Reporting

MIC's Strategic Plan 2023 was approved by An tÚdarás Rialaithe (Governing Body) in October 2018 and officially launched and implemented on March 29 2019.

Each of the seven pillars contains **High-Level Goals,** each with a set of **Priority Objectives** which will be achieved by implementation of **Essential Actions** and corresponding **Critical Targets.**

These, and additional supporting actions, will be included in the College's **Master Annual Operating Plans** (AOP's) during each year of the implementation of *A Flourishing Learning Community.*

Quarterly implementation **status reports** will be submitted to the **MIC Governing Authority** with cumulative Annual Reports provided at the end of each Academic Year.

Empowerment
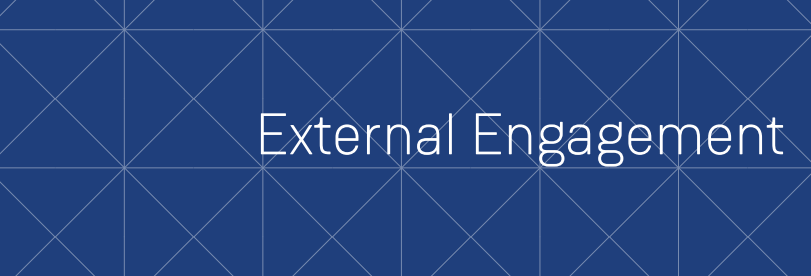
External Engagement

Inclusive

Internationalisation

Leadership

Life-long Learning

Next Generation

21st Century Skills