HEA | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2023–2028

Contents

1 System Performance Framework 2023–2028

Introduction

The HEA Act, 2022 provides for a system performance framework and associated performance agreements with designated institutions of higher education.[1] The Act provides that the HEA should, *inter alia*, hold higher education institutions[2] to account for their performance, for securing value for money in the use of funding provided, and for their responsibility for performance and governance. As per the Act, the HEA has a mandate to measure and assess the strategic performance of higher education institutions with a view to strengthening the performance of individual institutions and the higher education system as a whole and to ensure institutions' accountability.
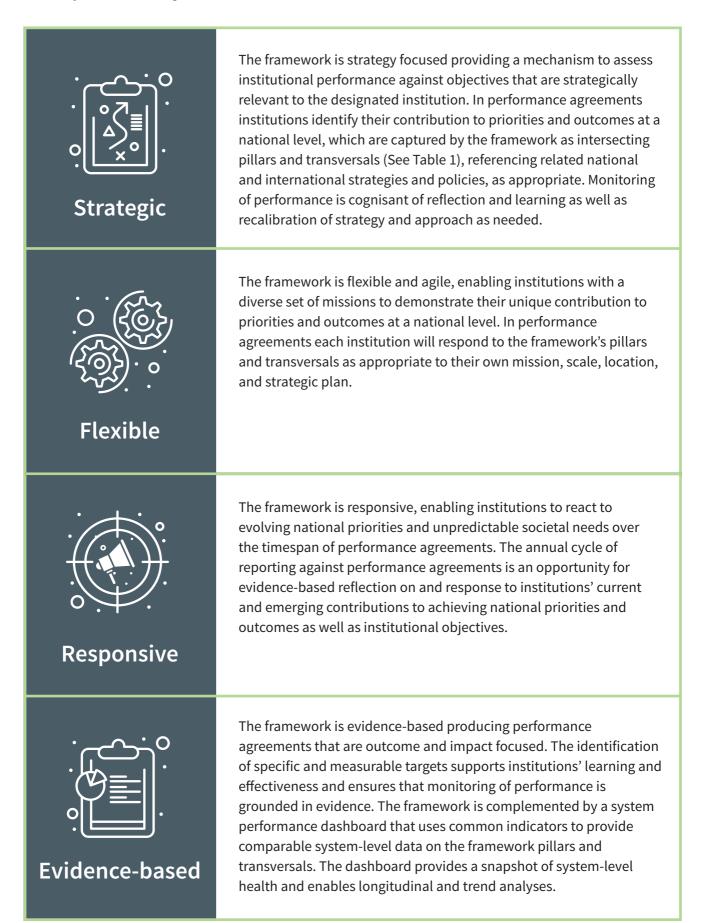
The System Performance Framework 2023-2028 sets out parameters under which designated institutions of higher education can identify their contribution to the achievement of national strategy, as appropriate to each institution's mission, scale, location, and strategic plan. The creation of four-year performance agreements with institutions, and the monitoring of same via annual reporting and strategy and performance dialogue with the HEA, will provide robust evidence on institutional and system health and inform the development of national policy.

Annual reporting under the framework will review institutions' strategic performance against performance agreements providing an opportunity to explore learning to assure progress. This review process is founded on an expectation of good institutional governance, with the HEA implementing the System Performance Framework and Governance Oversight Framework as parallel complementary frameworks.

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1   Designated institutions refers to designated institutions of higher education as defined in Section 53 (1) of the HEA Act, 2022, with which the HEA shall or may enter into a performance agreement, as per Section 36 (1) and (2) of the Act.

2   Higher education institutions means all 'relevant bodies,' as defined in Section 53 (1)(a) (i)-(v) of the HEA Act, 2022 and may also refer to any other designated institution of higher education, as defined by Section 53 of the Act, that is not a relevant body, that following engagement with the HEA, enters into a Performance Agreement with the HEA.

Principles of the System Performance Framework

Strategic	The framework is strategy focused providing a mechanism to assess institutional performance against objectives that are strategically relevant to the designated institution. In performance agreements institutions identify their contribution to priorities and outcomes at a national level, which are captured by the framework as intersecting pillars and transversals (See Table 1), referencing related national and international strategies and policies, as appropriate. Monitoring of performance is cognisant of reflection and learning as well as recalibration of strategy and approach as needed.
Flexible	The framework is flexible and agile, enabling institutions with a diverse set of missions to demonstrate their unique contribution to priorities and outcomes at a national level. In performance agreements each institution will respond to the framework's pillars and transversals as appropriate to their own mission, scale, location, and strategic plan.
Responsive	The framework is responsive, enabling institutions to react to evolving national priorities and unpredictable societal needs over the timespan of performance agreements. The annual cycle of reporting against performance agreements is an opportunity for evidence-based reflection on and response to institutions' current and emerging contributions to achieving national priorities and outcomes as well as institutional objectives.
Evidence-based	The framework is evidence-based producing performance agreements that are outcome and impact focused. The identification of specific and measurable targets supports institutions' learning and effectiveness and ensures that monitoring of performance is grounded in evidence. The framework is complemented by a system performance dashboard that uses common indicators to provide comparable system-level data on the framework pillars and transversals. The dashboard provides a snapshot of system-level health and enables longitudinal and trend analyses.

System Performance Framework 2023–2028

The System Performance Framework 2023-28 comprises four pillars and a series of transversals capturing national system level priorities and outcomes for the higher education and research system (see Table 1). In keeping with the principles of the framework, the use of pillars and transversals in a matrix presents institutions with a flexible mechanism to identify performance objectives that are aligned to institutional strategy.

The pillars of the framework represent key activities in which institutions engage, namely, teaching and learning, research and innovation, access and participation, and engagement. The framework's transversals represent key areas of impact for the system. In performance agreements, institutions will consider the impacts of activities to identify tailored performance objectives with measurable outcomes.

Please note that prioritisation or weighting should not be inferred from the order in which the pillars or the transversals appear in the matrix.

Table 1: System Performance Framework 2023–2028

Transversal Areas of Impact	Pillars			
	Teaching & Learning	Research & Innovation	Access & Participation	Engagement
Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning				
Climate & Sustainable Development				
Student Success				
Enterprise				
Society				
Region				
International				
Digital Transformation				
Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging				
Institutional Leadership & Culture				
Sectoral & Tertiary Cohesion				

Performance Agreements

Purpose and Scope

Performance agreements set out an institution's contribution to the pillars and traversals of the System Performance Framework (Table 1). Using a template provided by the HEA (see Section 3), designated institutions will identify a minimum of four performance objectives with measurable targets that map onto the matrix. Performance agreements will be used by the HEA to assess an institution's strategic performance for the duration of the framework (2023-2028) and are connected to the provision of funding.

Performance agreements are expected to be outcome and impact focused, making use of baseline and benchmarking data to identify targets that support reflection and learning and enhance institutions' effectiveness. Institutions' mechanisms for effective implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on performance objectives are also specified in performance agreements.

Development

The development of institutions' performance agreements under the System Performance Framework 2023-28 will be an iterative process over year one of the framework and involve consultation and dialogue with the HEA. This development phase may also include the input of external advisors. The process and indicative timeline for agreeing performance agreements with the HEA is set out in Section 2. Performance agreements will span four years and once finalised, agreements will be published on the HEA website to promote the transparency of the System Performance Framework process and ensure accountability across the system.

Climate, environment, and sustainability

The higher education and research system has an important role to play in securing a sustainable future and will contribute to the targets set out in Ireland's Climate Action Plan and the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The System Performance Framework 2023-28 spans this critical period in Ireland's transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy and society, and the HEA recognises that institutions' performance agreements are being developed in this context. In developing performance agreements, institutions will therefore be required to comment on how climate, environment and sustainability have been considered in the development of their performance objectives.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Similarly, in line with institutions' Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty to promote equality and prevent discrimination, as well as national policy to further and protect equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the higher education and research system, institutions will be required to comment on how EDI has been considered in the development of their performance objectives.

Reporting and Monitoring

Designated institutions will be required to report annually against their performance agreements in the form of a structured self-evaluation report that is evidence-based. Self-evaluation reports will be reviewed by the HEA Executive as part of a wider process of strategy and performance dialogue. This yearly dialogue will discuss an institution's achievements and challenges and explore opportunities and risks related to objectives identified in their performance agreements. This review process will facilitate reflection and learning that is evidence-based, providing information on progress toward strategic and national objectives and insight into institutional and system health.

The HEA recognises that an institution's strategy and objectives may shift in response to evolving national policy objectives or changing external factors. As such, the annual reporting process will include a mechanism for institutions to propose modifications to the performance agreement. Proposed modifications will be reviewed by the HEA and agreed in consultation with institutions as part of the cycle of reporting and strategic dialogue.

Performance Funding

The annual strategy and performance dialogue process will include submission of an impact assessment case study. Impact assessment case studies are linked to a positive funding mechanism that supports and recognises excellent performance within the higher education system. Impact assessment case studies provide institutions with an opportunity to demonstrate an exemplary and significant contribution towards the delivery of national priorities and outcomes. Case studies will be assessed by an independent panel. Institutions will be provided with a submission template together with criteria and guidance on the process.

System Performance Framework and Governance Oversight Framework

The System Performance Framework engages with the HEA's Governance Oversight Framework for the higher education system. Good institutional governance is a prerequisite for accessing performance related funding. Institutional governance is reviewed via the Governance Oversight Framework in advance of the annual strategy and performance dialogue process and the evaluation of impact assessment case studies.

Governance Oversight Framework

The HEA Act, 2022 provides that one of the functions of the HEA is to support the effective governance of designated institutions of higher education by overseeing appropriate governance frameworks requiring accountability and compliance with those governance frameworks. The Act further provides that in performing its functions, the HEA acknowledge the responsibility of designated institutions of higher education for the performance and governance of those institutions.

The Governance Oversight Framework through which the HEA exercises oversight and seeks assurance from HEI Governing Bodies of their compliance, is underpinned by Legislative Provisions and the Code of Practice for Governance. It is informed by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) audit and certification of the financial statements of higher education institutions.

The framework includes the following requirements:

- **Annual Oversight Agreements** between the HEA and the institution.

- **Annual Governance Statements (AGS)** – The AGS is reviewed by the Governing Body and signed by the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chief Officer of the Institution before submission to the HEA. The HEA assesses these submissions for compliance. Matters identified are followed up as necessary and institutions are provided with feedback.

- **Regular Institutional Reports** – Institutions are required to provide Regular Reports to the HEA on Financial, Governance, Capital, and Strategic matters. In reviewing these reports, the HEA has oversight of governance matters as they may arise within designated institutions and follows up as necessary.

- **Annual Budget Meetings** allow for issues in relation to governance to be declared by institutions, as necessary.

System Performance Dashboard

The system performance dashboard captures key data on system-level health. The dashboard presents a set of common indicators to enable comparability and longitudinal and trend analyses across the system. The criteria for inclusion of indicators in the dashboard are as follows: available at institutional and system level, centrally collected, regularly updated, produced in a timely manner, and is a measure of performance.

The indicators presented in the dashboard align with the pillars of the System Performance Framework and therefore complement the individualised performance agreements developed by institutions. A section of additional metrics that support the monitoring of any National Training Fund investment will be created and will be available to access via the dashboard once available. The HEA's understanding of an institution's strategic performance against its performance agreement is enhanced by the system-level data presented in the dashboard.

The dashboard will be continuously updated as new data becomes available, giving the most up-to-date picture of institutional and system performance possible. The availability of new reliable data will be kept under constant review, and new indicators may be included in future iterations of the dashboard, where appropriate. An overview of the system performance dashboard indicators for the System Performance Framework 2023-2028 is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: System Performance Dashboard

Dashboard Overview	Total enrolments and graduates Progression and completion rates Graduate employment rate International enrolments Student staff ratio
Teaching and Learning	Student Survey Effective Teaching Practices Score Student Survey Quality of Interactions Score Student Survey Supportive Environment Score
Research and Innovation	Postgraduate research students as a % of those studying at honours degree level or above Research Income per academic staff SciVal Bibliometrics Citation Impact No. of Active Spin-Outs No. of Licenses, Options & Assignments
Access and Participation	% of new entrants who are socioeconomically disadvantaged % of disadvantaged new entrants who are mature % of new entrants who have a disability % of new entrants who are Irish Travellers
Engagement	No. of Springboard/HCI Pillar 1 Enrolments % of graduates who undertook a work placement/internship % plan to do or have done community service or volunteer work % of senior academic staff who are female No. of Athena Swan Ireland Awards Energy savings since energy efficiency baseline

System Performance Report

The insights from the strategy and performance dialogue process along with system performance dashboard data will inform an annual higher education system performance report to the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science on the progress of the higher education system.

2 Performance Agreement Process

Introduction

As set out in the HEA Act, 2022, designated institutions of higher education enter into performance agreements with the HEA. Performance agreements are established in accordance with the System Performance Framework 2023-28 and span the period September 2024 to August 2028. A performance agreement must identify a minimum of four performance objectives for the institution and set out associated implementation, monitoring, assessment and reporting processes.

In line with the principles of the System Performance Framework, the HEA is committed to supporting institutions to develop performance objectives that are aligned with an institution's mission, scale, location, and strategic plan, as well as national priorities and outcomes. As such, the development of performance agreements will be an iterative process during the first academic year of the framework (2023-2024) involving several engagements with institutions.

Development of Performance Agreements

Performance agreements will be developed using the template provided by the HEA (Section 3). The template supports institutions to respond to the System Performance Framework (Table 1) and provides coherence to the performance agreement process across the higher education system. The template has been designed to support the development of tailored performance objectives for each institution, as per the framework principles (strategic, flexible, responsive, evidence-based).

As a performance agreement is a mutual agreement between the HEA and a designated institution, development will be supported by a number of interactions. The steps and indicative timeframe for each stage of the performance agreement process is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Development of Performance Agreements – Indicative Timeline

Phase	Date
System Performance Framework published	September 2023
SPF Launch and Briefing on Performance Agreement Process and Template	25 September 2023
First draft PA due	November 2023
HEI presentation of draft PAs to HEA	December 2023/January 2024
Second draft PA due	March 2024
HEA review of PA	March/April 2024
HEI PA finalisation phase	April/May 2024
PA agreements published	June 2024

As set out in Table 3, institutions will present draft performance agreements to the HEA Executive in December 2023/January 2024. Verbal feedback will be provided during these meetings, with institutions submitting a revised draft performance agreement within 4-6 weeks of the meeting date. These second drafts of performance agreements will then undergo formal review by the HEA Executive during March-April 2024. The HEA will arrange further meetings, as necessary, with institutions to finalise agreements during April and May. The final date for agreeing performance agreements with the HEA is 31 May 2024.

Scope of the Performance Agreement

Performance agreements should set out an institution's proposed contribution to the achievement of national priorities and outcomes referencing national and international strategies and policies, as appropriate. Contributions will be identified as performance objectives under each of the four vertical pillars of the framework – teaching and learning, research and innovation, access and participation, and engagement – with reference to relevant transversal areas of impact.

The guiding principles of the System Performance Framework (strategic, flexible, responsive, evidence-based) will ensure the development of performance agreements that are tailored to an institution's mission, scale, location, and strategic plan. Institutions should therefore interpret and respond to the framework pillars and transversals as appropriate to their own context.

Using the template provided by the HEA, institutions must set out at least one performance objective for each of the four pillars, cross-referencing transversals as appropriate. Further guidance on completing the sections of the template is provided below. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Performance Agreement Template (Section 3).

Overview of Performance Agreement Template

The Performance Agreement template is split into three sections:

1 Context

2 Performance Objectives

3 System Performance Framework Matrix

Section 1 provides institutions with an opportunity to outline the context (scale, mission, location, strategy) that shapes their contribution to the delivery of national priorities and outcomes as set out in the performance agreement. The section captures information on an institution's approach to developing the performance agreement as well as high-level information on the factors that frame and influence institutional strategy and the selection of performance objectives for the duration of the performance agreement. Information on the approach to selecting specific and measurable targets for performance objectives as well as the mechanisms in place for monitoring and evaluating implementation should also be provided.

Section 2 identifies performance objectives, the rationale for their selection, and the processes in place in the institution to ensure success. Institutions will identify a minimum of four performance objectives, identifying at least one objective for each of the four pillars of the framework.

Section 3 plots institutional performance objectives onto the System Performance Framework to provide a snapshot of the institution's contribution to national priorities and outcomes.

Guidance for Populating the Performance Agreement Template

The performance agreement should be clear, concise, and evidence-based. Narrative or bullet point formats may be used to answer Section 1 and Section 2.1-2.3 and the use of plain English is encouraged. Where institutional strategies, policies, or other institutional documents are referenced in the performance agreement, these should be hyperlinked where possible, or attached as appendices, where appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the institution to ensure that the information presented in the performance agreement (including qualitative and quantitative data) is accurate. Institutions are reminded that performance agreements will be published on the HEA website.

Selecting Performance Objectives

In selecting performance objectives, institutions should consider the objectives of the institution's strategic plan and engage with a range of evidence to ensure there is a sound rationale for the prioritisation of the selected objectives. Engagement with the institution's baseline data should inform this process, establishing an evidence base for the selection of objectives. Benchmarking with external data will further support the selection of performance objectives that respond to the opportunities and challenges for the institution. Engagement with and analysis of qualitative data, such as free-text survey responses or focus group transcripts, may also inform the selection of performance objectives by helping to identify or understand a challenge or opportunity.

In selecting performance objectives, institutions may find it useful to consider the following questions:

- Are there emerging national or international policy priorities that the institution would like to inform, prepare for, or be at the forefront of responding to?

- Are there international standards or other benchmarks the institution would like to attain?

- Is there underperformance in terms of contribution to targets or achievement of minimum standards set out in national strategies which the institution would like to address ?

- Is there an area in which the institution would like to lead, or an area in which it is already a strong performer and would like to ensure this is sustained, or to innovate or develop further?

- Are there initiatives that are new, developing or strategically important that would benefit from evaluation?

- Could pursuit of a performance objective conflict with or negatively impact upon other institutional objectives; if so, can this be adequately managed?

Identifying Measurable Targets

Engagement with baseline and benchmarking data will enable institutions to identify measurable targets that support institutional learning and evaluation of effectiveness over the timeframe of the performance agreement. As such, the Performance Agreement Template prompts the creation of performance objectives with targets that are:

- Tailored to institutional context

- Evidence-based

- Specific

- Quantifiable

Measurable targets should capture outcomes that are achieved as a result of actions taken, such as an improvement in quality, success rate, or change in proportional representation of a group within the wider cohort, rather than outputs, such as volume of activities completed, number of participants, or other increases in scale.

The Performance Agreement Template prompts institutions to present data as a number and a proportion. Institutions will identify baselines and benchmarks to establish the context and rationale for their selected per annum and cumulative (four-year) performance objective targets. Gaps in data, such as the unavailability of baseline data, should be identified and explained. Information on how the data gap is being addressed should also be provided.

A wide range of quantitative and qualitative data may be used to develop measurable targets for performance objectives. Some databases containing centrally collected data that can be accessed online are listed below for information. Institutions should also consider the use of quantified measurements of qualitative outcomes to support performance objectives that are cognisant of experience. Where indicators are qualitative, appropriate data analysis methodologies should be applied to establish a baseline and set a measurable target for improvement.

List of Online Databases

The following data is collected centrally by the HEA and is available at institutional and system level via the HEA website:

- **Student Records System:** This database holds data on student enrolments and graduations in HEIs and includes comprehensive information on course and student characteristics. Outputs from this database can be accessed here: hea.ie/statistics/data-for-download-and-visualisations/

- **Equal Access Survey:** This database holds data on the Equal Access Survey, as carried out in each HEI annually for new entrants, and includes information on disability, ethnicity, lone parenthood status, commuting time, etc. Outputs from this database can be accessed here: hea.ie/statistics/data-for-download-and-visualisations/

- **Graduate Outcomes Survey:** This database holds data on the Graduate Outcomes Survey, as carried out in each HEI annually for recent graduates and includes information on employment and further study. Outputs from this database can be accessed here: www.graduateoutcomes.ie

In addition, **Student survey data** is available at www.studentsurvey.ie.

Energy Savings data for the tertiary sector is available at https://www.seai.ie/business-and-public-sector/public-sector/monitoring-and-reporting/public-sector-results/3rd-level-large-energy-us/ and annual energy statements for all public sector organisations including higher education institutions can be accessed via https://psmr.seai.ie/Public#.

3 Performance Agreement Template

Preamble

This performance agreement is established between the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and [Higher Education Institution] in accordance with the System Performance Framework 2023-28. The agreement identifies [Higher Education Institution's] performance objectives and the associated implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting processes.

This Performance Agreement will be used by the HEA to measure and assess the strategic performance of the institution via an annual cycle of reporting against the agreement and strategy and performance dialogue. [Higher Education Institution] should notify the HEA in writing of any proposed modifications to the performance agreement with a supporting rationale when submitting the annual report. Any agreed amendments to the performance agreement will be recorded by the HEA with the supporting rationale. This information may inform future monitoring and review processes and inform HEA reporting at a system level.

The HEA and [Higher Education Institution] acknowledge that policy underlying some or all of this performance agreement is subject to review from time to time by the HEA or Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. The HEA and [Higher Education Institution] agree that if changes need to be made to the Performance Agreement because of such a review, the HEA will notify the institution in writing.

This performance agreement will be published on the HEA website in line with the HEA mandate to measure and assess institutions' strategic performance with a view to strengthening the performance of the higher education and research system and of Higher Education Institutions, and to ensure institutions' accountability. It is the responsibility of the institution to ensure that the information presented in the performance agreement (including qualitative and quantitative data) is accurate.

The term of this performance agreement is from September 2024 to August 2028 unless terminated earlier by agreement.

Performance Agreement 2024–2028

Section 1: Context

1 Overview of the institution and its context

Provide a brief introduction to the institution, including any contextual information relevant to the development of this performance agreement. This should include information on:

- The mission of the institution;

- The strategic plan, including key areas of focus and stage of development and/or implementation;

- The profile of the institution, including total number of staff by category of post and the total number of student enrolments by programme type.

2 Approach to the development of the Performance Agreement

Outline the institution's approach to the development of the performance agreement, including the process for identifying performance objectives. This should include information on:

- Governing Body and any management and/or committee structures, or student representative bodies that participated in the development process;

- Institutional processes for authorising the performance agreement;

- Any consultation with stakeholders that informed the identification of performance objectives;

- Approach to selecting indicators of success for performance objectives. This should include reference to the internal and external data sources that informed the identification of specific and measurable targets;

- Consideration of climate, environment, and sustainability in identifying performance objectives, including approach to assessing and mitigating any negative effects or impacts;

- Consideration of equality, diversity, and inclusion in identifying performance objectives, including approach to assessing and mitigating any negative effects or impacts;

- Learning from other evaluation processes that has been incorporated. This may include previous rounds of Strategy and Performance Dialogue; Strategic Plan development, QQI Cinnte Reviews; QQI Annual Quality Reviews (AQRs); Athena Swan Ireland self-assessment; HEInnovate; or other benchmarking or consultation exercises.

3   Structures in place for evaluation

Outline the institution's approach to evaluating the implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on the performance agreement. This should include information on:

- The role and responsibility of Governing Body, management/committee structures, student representative bodies, or other reporting structures in the institution;

- The use of existing data collection and evaluation processes, with reference to relevant data systems, reporting structures, and mechanisms and timelines for evaluation;

- Plans to improve or develop data collection and evaluation processes across the timeframe of the performance agreement. This should include reference to any relevant data challenges or gaps, and how the institution plans to address these;

- Plans to communicate evaluation of progress against the performance agreement and relevant learnings to Governing Body, relevant management and/or committee structures, student representative bodies, and wider institution.

Section 2: Performance Objectives

As institutions will identify a minimum of four performance objectives, one to align with each pillar of the framework, the final template will repeat Section 2 for each of the four objectives.

1   Performance Objective 1

Pillar:

Transversal(s):

State the performance objective [max. 40 words].

2   Rationale for Performance Objective 1

Outline the rationale for selecting this performance objective. This should include information on:

- Alignment with the institution's strategy and contribution to institutional strategic objectives;

- Alignment with national strategy and contribution to national policy objectives with reference to specific national, supranational, or intergovernmental policies, strategies, or agreements (see Appendix 1);

- The evidence base that informed selection of the performance objective. This should outline how analysis of baseline and benchmarking data informed the strategic prioritisation of this performance objective and provide a rationale for the targets selected;

- Whether the performance objective represents achievement of minimum/foundational level, maintenance of current performance or continuing development in a priority area, or ambition to be a leader in the sector, system, or internationally. This may include reference to relevant previous achievements or learning.

3   Implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on Performance Objective 1

Provide a description of the institution's implementation, monitoring, assessment, and reporting structures for this performance objective. This should include information on:

- Management and reporting structures relevant to the performance objective, including identification of roles responsible for oversight;

- How the performance objective will be achieved, including identification of specific strategic actions that will support success;

- Resource provision associated with the performance objective and how this will contribute to success;

- Mechanisms for evaluating progress on the performance objective across the lifetime of the performance agreement;

- Opportunities, challenges, and risks identified with the performance objective and how these will be managed. This should include comment on dependencies or internal/external factors that could impede progress;

- How learnings, adaptation, and improvements garnered through evaluation of the performance objective will be actioned.

4. Indicators and targets for Performance Objective 1

Using the table below, identify specific and measurable target(s) that will be used to evaluate performance against the objective over the timeframe of this agreement.

Rows may be added or deleted in the table as required. Please see the following guidance on what should be provided under each heading:

Indicator: Short description of what is being measured, without specifying the target.

Data source: Name of body and/or process or database that captures, holds, and/or analyses the data.

Data Type: Indicate whether the target is based on qualitative or quantitative data.

Baseline: Provide the baseline in the format number (n), proportion (%) of denominator (N). Where a baseline is not available, record 'Not available 'and provide an explanation under point 3 above (Section 2, point 3).

Benchmark: Identify a benchmark, specifying the comparator institution or group, and whether the benchmark figure is drawn from a single year or the average over a number of years.

Per annum targets: Provide the target for the value to be achieved in that year only in the format number (n) as proportion (%) of denominator (N).

Cumulative 4 Year target: Final target, which should be equal to the sum or average of the four annual targets, or difference from baseline, as appropriate.

PO 1.		Data source	Data Type	Baseline	Benchmark	Per annum targets (number # and proportion %)				Cumulative 4 Year target
#	Indicator	Body, process, repository	Select from dropdown	With reference to calendar or academic year	With reference to comparator, timeframe and source	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	2024–28
1.1	e.g., # mature student entrants as % of total entrants	HEA, SRS	Quantitative	500 mature student entrants in 2022/23, 5% of Total entrants, 10,000	TU sector average 2022, 7%	535 5.3%	601 5.9%	670 6.5%	749 7.2%	2,555 2.2 percentage point (pp) increase
						10,100	10,201	10,302	10,403	41,006
1.2	e.g., % of participants reporting an overall positive experience of the working environment and institutional culture with regards to gender equality in staff focus groups	HEI Annual EDI review – content analysis of focus group transcripts	Qualitative	24 focus group participants in 2023/2024, 60% of all participants from 4 focus groups of 10 (gender balanced and diverse cohort for each)	80% of focus group participants in comparator HEI (increased from 60% following 5yr intervention programme)	26 65% 40	28 70% 40	30 75% 40	32 80% 40	32 20 pp increase from baseline 40
1.3	e.g., no of active spin-outs	EDI	Quantitative	8 active spin outs in 2022	4-year average (2018-2021) for Irish HEI of similar size and profile, 8	8(+/-2) in 2023	8(+/-2) in 2024	8(+/-2) in 2025	8(+/-2) in 2026	4-year average of 8

Section 3: Framework Matrix

Plot the institution's performance objectives (using the objective reference number) in the matrix below. Performance objectives may be plotted in multiple cells as appropriate. Please note that prioritisation or weighting should not be inferred from the order in which the pillars or the transversals appear in the matrix.

		Pillars			
		Teaching & Learning	Research & Innovation	Access & Participation	Engagement
Transversal Areas of Impact	Flexibility, Upskilling & Lifelong Learning				
	Climate & Sustainable Development				
	Student Success				
	Enterprise				
	Society				
	Region				
	International				
	Digital Transformation				
	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging				
	Institutional Leadership & Culture				
	Sectoral & Tertiary Cohesion				

Appendix 1: List of national and international policies and strategies

The following list of national and international policies and strategies have informed the development of the System Performance Framework 2023-2028 and may be referred to in performance agreements. Please note that this list is indicative rather than exhaustive. Institutions may reference other national and/or international policies and strategies as appropriate to their context.

National Development Plans:

- Project Ireland 2040
  - *National Planning Framework* (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage - DHLGH, 2020)
  - *National Development Plan 2021-2030* (Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform - DPER, 2021)
- *Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021* (DPER, 2021)
- *Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2022 – 2024* (Enterprise Ireland, 2022)
- *Programme for Government* (Department of the Taoiseach, 2020)

Regional Development Plans:

- *Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025* (Department of Rural and Community Development, 2021)
- *Housing for All: A New Housing Plan for Ireland* (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage - DHLGH, 2021)
- Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies
- Regional Enterprise Plans

Higher Education General:

- *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (DoE, 2019)
- *Statement of Strategy 2021 – 2023* (DFHERIS, 2021)

- *Progressing a Unified Tertiary System for Learning, Skills and Knowledge: Public Consultation Report* (DFHERIS, 2022)
- *Future FET: Transforming Learning, the National Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy* (SOLAS, 2020)

Funding:

- *Funding the Future Investing in knowledge and skills: Ireland's competitive advantage* (DFHERIS, 2022)

Access:

- *National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2022-2028* (DFHERIS, 2022)

Teaching and Learning:

- *Next Steps for Teaching and Learning: Moving Forward Together* (National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 2021)
- *Adult Literacy for Life – a 10-year adult literacy strategy* (DFHERIS, 2021)
- *NF-2021-Student-Success-Guiding-Framework.pdf (teachingandlearning.ie)* (National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 2021)
- *Understanding and Enabling Student Success in Irish Higher Education* (National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 2019)

Student Engagement:

- *NStEP Strategy 2022-2025* (National Student Engagement Programme, 2022)

- *Irish Survey of Student Engagement (*ISSE, 2022)

Skills:

- *National Skills Strategy 2025* (DFHERIS, 2021)

- *Technology Skills 2022* (DoE, 2019)

- *European skills agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience* (European Commission, 2020)

- *Together for Design report* (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2020)

- *Action Plan for Apprenticeships 2021 – 2025* (DFHERIS, 2021)

- Regional Skills Strategy

International:

- International Education, Research and Innovation Strategy (DFHERIS, in development)

- *European Strategy for Universities* (European Commission, 2022)

Languages:

- *Languages Connect Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017 – 2026* (DFHERIS, 2017)

- *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language (GoI, 2010)*

Research and Innovation:

- *Impact 2030 – Ireland's Research and Innovation Strategy* (DFHERIS, 2022)

- *IRC Strategic Plan 2020-2024* (Irish Research Council, 2020)

- *Shaping Our Future – SFI Strategy 2025* (SFI, 2021)

- *Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland* (IUA and THEA, 2019 - revision forthcoming)

- *HEA Principles of Good Practice in Research within Irish Higher Education Institutions* (HEA, revised 2022)

- *National Framework for Doctoral Education* (HEA and QQI, revised 2023)

- *National Framework on the Transition to an Open Research Environment (*National Open Research Forum, 2019)

- *National Action Plan for Open Research 2022 -2030* (DFHERIS 2022)

- The *European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity* (ALLEA - All European Academies, revised 2023)

- *The National IP Protocol 2019* (Knowledge Transfer Ireland, 2019)

- *Framework to Enhance Research Integrity in Research Collaborations* (IUA, 2022)

- *Export Control and Dual-Use* (European Commission, 2022)

- *European Research Area policy agenda* (European Commission, 2021)

- *National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation 2022-2027* (DETE, 2022)

Sustainable Development:

- *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (UN, 2015)

- *National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024* (Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications – DECC, 2022)

- *Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030* (DoE and DFHERIS, 2022)

- *Climate Action Plan 2023* (DECC, 2023)

- *Public Sector Climate Action Mandate and Strategy* (DECC, 2023)

- *Green Public Procurement Guidance for the Public Sector* (EPA, 2021)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

- *Second HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions* (HEA, 2022)

- *Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Higher Education Institutions, Implementation Plan, 2022 – 2024* (HEA, 2022)

- *Framework for Consent in Higher Education Institutions: Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive – Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions* (DoE, 2020)

- *Race Equality in the Higher Education Sector Implementation Plan 2022-2024* (HEA, 2022)

- *Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty* (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 2019)

Health and Wellbeing:

- *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018 – 2023)* (DoE, 2019)

- *National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework* (HEA, 2020)

- *Sharing the Vision - A Mental Health Policy for Everyone* (DoH, 2020)

- *Higher Education Healthy Campus Charter and Framework* (DoH, 2020)

- *Healthy Workplace Framework* (Healthy Ireland and DoH, 2019)

- *WHO's Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018 – 2030* (WHO, 2018)

- *Healthy Ireland Alcohol policy* (Healthy Ireland and DoH, 2019)

- *The Drug Use in Higher Education in Ireland (DUHEI) Survey 2021* (DFHERIS, 2022)

- *Framework for Response to the Use of Illicit Substances within Higher Education* (DoE, 2020)

- *Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025* (Healthy Ireland, 2021)

- *Policies for tackling obesity and creating healthier food environments in Ireland: Food-EPI 2020: Current policies & priority actions* (UCC and PEN, 2020)

- *Healthy Ireland and Department of Health's Physical activity guidelines*

- *HSE's Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme*

- *HSE's National Healthy Eating Guidelines*

- *HSE's Tobacco Free Ireland Programme*

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