

The logo for the Higher Education Authority (HEA) of Ireland, consisting of the letters 'HEA' in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas
The Higher Education Authority

Report of the HEA Policy Forum on Student Progression in Higher Education

May 2026



Foreword

On behalf of the HEA Policy Forum on Student Progression in Higher Education, I am pleased to present our report. The Policy Forum was convened by the HEA in January 2025 following HEA Board approval, in September 2024, of the recommendation to establish a Policy Forum on Student Progression in Higher Education.

The Policy Forum comprised representation (the ‘Associates’) nominated by 17 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Its establishment was timely, as society and the sector were adjusting to a post-COVID pandemic era and the ramifications of that for teaching and learning and the broader student experience.

The aim of the Policy Forum was to develop an evidence base, identify good practice, and inform policy and practice development on student progression in higher education. It met on six occasions from January 2025–May 2026. In September 2025, the Policy Forum oversaw the publication of two reports presenting analyses of information provided by member institutions in response to two surveys issued in early 2025. The Policy Forum also contributed to the development of the evidence base on student progression through the development of exemplars of good practice; these are now published on the HEA National Resource Hub (Student Progression). Since August 2025, the Policy Forum has progressed much of its work through three working groups, now culminating in this final report and the recommendations set out therein for the HEIs, the sector, and the HEA.

I would like to express my appreciation to the seventeen Higher Education Institutions (see Appendix 1) that participated on the Policy Forum for their engagement in and commitment to its work. In particular, I am grateful to the Associates for their contributions to the development of the evidence base, participation on the working groups, and input into this report.

Lastly, I would like to thank the HEA for its invitation to chair the Policy Forum. I am very grateful for the opportunity and, moreover, am indebted to the HEA staff involved in the management and coordination of the Forum’s programme of work, in particular Linda Darbey and Dr Louise McAteer for their support throughout.

I now encourage higher education institutions, the sector, and the HEA to draw on both the recommendations of this report and the HEA National Resource Hub to inform institutional practices on student progression, and to continue to contribute to the evidence base through the publication of exemplars of good practice to further inform, develop, and strengthen existing practices.

Dr Áine Ní Shé
Chair of the Policy Forum



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Overview

The Policy Forum on Student Progression in Higher Education was established by the HEA in January 2025 to inform the development of an evidence base to inform policy and practice development and to share and disseminate good practice on student progression across the Sector. The scope of the Policy Forum's work was confined to full-time in-person programmes (across the student lifecycle) offered at NFQ levels 6–8.

Following approval by the Board of the [Report of the HEA Conference on Student Progression in Higher Education 2024](#) and the recommendation to establish a Policy Forum, the HEA invited Dr Áine Ní Shé, MTU, to chair the Policy Forum, and invited each of 17 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to nominate an Associate (see Appendix 1) to participate on the Policy Forum over an 18-month period.

The role of the Associate was to:

- Advise, inform, and provide guidance to the HEA on the scope and nature of the activities of the Policy Forum, and on proposed methodologies for engaging with the Sector on the development of a national evidence base.
- Review and provide feedback on draft reports, proposals, and surveys.
- Share information, knowledge, insights, and expertise (including data and trends) on student progression and on practices to support it within institutions.
- Support the collation of institutional data and practices (initiatives, interventions, etc.) that promote progression and measures adopted to address non-progression.
- Share and disseminate the work of the Policy Forum across the institution to develop awareness and promote good practice.

Associates nominated by HEIs comprised representatives with responsibility for student progression and retention within their institutions. The diversity of representation on the Policy Forum reflected the variety of approaches to student progression across institutions and facilitated a rich dialogue at Policy Forum meetings reflecting the range of expertise, experience, and perspectives of representatives.

1.2 Meetings of the Policy Forum

The Policy Forum met on six occasions over its term, with four meetings held in 2025 and two meetings held in 2026 as follows:

- 23 January 2025
- 30 May 2025
- 27 August 2025
- 8 December 2025
- 7 April 2026 (online)
- 26 May 2026

1.3 Policy Forum Reports

Over its term, the Policy Forum oversaw the publication of two reports in September 2025 that presented analyses of information provided by member institutions in response to two surveys in the Spring of 2025. The surveys were circulated to the 17 institutions through the Associates, with Associates collating/coordinating responses where appropriate. The first report considered data-gathering practices and interventions of 17 HEIs on student progression, and the second presented an analysis of 42 Case Studies submitted by 16 HEIs on institution-wide practices to promote student progression/address non-progression rates.

The reports, which informed the development of a programme of work for the Policy Forum, are as follows:

1. [Student progression in higher education: outcomes of a HEA survey on institutional data and interventions](#) (“Data and Interventions Report”)
2. [Analysis of Student Progression in Higher Education Case Studies: Report on Key Trends and Themes](#) (“Case Studies Report”).

Following this, good practice exemplars and case studies on student progression were developed by Associates and their respective HEIs and were published on the HEA National Resource Hub ([Student Progression](#)).

1.4 Policy Forum Working Groups

Following the completion of the two aforementioned reports, the Policy Forum agreed, on 27 August 2025, to establish three working groups to deliver on the Policy Forum programme of work (see Appendix 2) to address the recommendations of the two reports, as follows:

- Working Group 1: Data and Evidence
- Working Group 2: Towards Guidelines/Framework for Good Practice on Student Progression
- Working Group 3: Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration

On completion of its work, each Working Group prepared and submitted a report to the Policy Forum for consideration and approval in April/May 2026.

1.5 Conference

Over its term, the Policy Forum has been planning a conference, expected to take place in Autumn 2026 to continue the dialogue on student progression, disseminate and showcase the work of the Policy Forum, and to consult on/discuss next steps as appropriate.

1.6 Policy Forum Report Structure

This report comprises the following sections:

- Policy Forum Programme of Work
- Working Groups
- Evidence Base: Exemplars
- Conclusion and Recommendations



2. Policy Forum Programme of Work

2.1 Overview

Following the first meeting of the Policy Forum in January 2025, Associates committed to completing two surveys with the view to gaining additional insights on student progression in higher education, namely:

- (i) institutional data capturing and reporting practices, risk identification mechanisms, follow-up activity with non-progressed students, and related policies and procedures; and
- (ii) the identification of good practices on student progression in higher education across the undergraduate student lifecycle.

Each of the two [reports](#) presenting the analyses of the findings and recommendations for next steps was presented to the Policy Forum on 30 May 2025. The recommendations informed the development of proposed actions for the Policy Forum, which were considered and approved by the HEA Board on 1 July 2025; the two reports were subsequently published following endorsement by the Policy Forum in August 2025. At the August 2025 meeting, the Policy Forum also agreed a programme of work that prioritised specific actions that took account of the capacity of institutions and the HEA to deliver, consideration of what could be achieved in the shorter term, and the feasibility and impact of actions, and how they may be best progressed.

2.2 Proposed Actions considered by the Policy Forum

On consideration of the two reports, the following seven Actions were derived from the collective recommendations. These Actions were considered and prioritised in order to inform the Policy Forum's programme of work for 2025–2026.

Action 1: National framework for good practice on student non-progression

(Report Recommendations — Data and Interventions Report: Recommendation 1; Case Studies Report: Insights 1, 2, 5, 6)

- i. The Policy Forum to consider and advise on the development of a National Framework for good practice on student non-progression, and Associates to consult with their respective institutions on this.
- ii. The HEA to scope the development of a National Framework for good practice on student non-progression to determine the viability of such a Framework, with reference to international practice, where appropriate.
- iii. The Policy Forum to discuss and agree working terminology and definitions relating to student progression, e.g. commuting student, to facilitate its work on Frameworks, Strategies, Policies, and Reports.

Action 2: Institution-wide strategies and policies

(Report Recommendations — Data and Interventions Report: Recommendation 2; Case Studies Report: Insights 5, 7)

- i. A National Framework for good practice on student non-progression to inform institution-wide strategies and policies.
- ii. The Policy Forum to examine and determine institution-wide strategies and policies that may support student progression.

Action 3: New technologies, AI, learning analytics, and early intervention systems

(Report Recommendations — Data and Interventions Report: Recommendation 3; Case Studies Report: Insights 3, 4, 5, 11)

- i. The Policy Forum to explore the merits of harnessing AI and new technologies to identify students who may benefit from additional supports at an early stage in the academic year, taking into consideration legislative requirements.
- ii. The HEA to consult with institutions to establish practices that may be shared with the Policy Forum to inform policy and practice development.

Action 4: HEI student progression data

(Report Recommendations — Data and Interventions Report: Recommendations 4, 5)

- i. Policy Forum Associates to consult with their institutions to ensure data gathering and reporting for NFQ Level 6, 7, and 8 programmes, where appropriate.
- ii. The Policy Forum to examine steps required to ensure data are examined and reported on in the current academic year to inform early intervention strategies and measures and, where appropriate, programme and curriculum design.

Action 5: HEI progression data across the student lifecycle

(Report Recommendations — Data and Interventions Report: Recommendation 5)

- i. Policy Forum Associates to consult with their institutions to establish current practice, and how best to capture and report student progression rates across all years of all relevant programmes to inform early intervention measures.
- ii. The HEA to progress work in 2025 on the analyses of year-on-year progression rates.

Action 6: Follow-up with students who have not progressed

(Report Recommendations — Data and Interventions Report: Recommendation 6)

- i. The Policy Forum to explore mechanisms to follow up with students who have not progressed to establish the reasons why, and to support their transitions, where appropriate, to inform the development of policies and practices that support student progression.
- ii. The HEA to explore international practices on follow-up with students who have not progressed.
- iii. The HEA to engage with the CSO to further investigate the outcomes for students who do not progress.

Action 7: Knowledge exchange and collaboration

(Report Recommendations — Data and Interventions Report: Recommendation 7; Case Studies Report: Insights 2, 3, 4, 6, 7)

- i. The HEA to provide opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaboration on innovative and effective HEI practices through the Policy Forum, and at an event in late 2025/early 2026.
- ii. The Policy Forum to identify innovative, effective, and evidence-informed practices that can be adopted by institutions.
- iii. The Policy Forum to consider how the seven Insights presented in the Case Studies Report can further inform the development of case studies and practices and the impact of these practices, facilitate knowledge sharing and practice exchange, promote collaborative practices across the sector, and inform the development of an evidence base.

The Policy Forum agreed to prioritise Actions 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7. The prioritised actions reflected the capacity of institutions and the HEA to deliver on the actions, what could be achieved in the shorter to medium term, and the feasibility and impact of the Actions and how they may be best progressed. Three Working Groups (see Section 3) were established to progress the agreed prioritised Actions.

3. Working Groups

3.1 Overview

Three Working Groups, (i) Working Group 1 (WG 1): Data and Evidence, (ii) Working Group 2 (WG 2): Towards Guidelines/Framework for Good Practice on Student Progression, and (iii) Working Group 3 (WG 3): Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration, were convened in August 2025 to progress areas of work agreed and prioritised by the Policy Forum in response to the recommendations of two reports commissioned by the HEA in the Spring of 2025¹.

The Working Groups' remits (see Appendix 3) addressed prioritised areas (Actions) of work as follows:

- WG 1 — Action 4: HEI student progression data; Action 5: HEI progression data across the student lifecycle.
- WG 2 — Action 1: National framework for good practice on student non-progression; Action 2: Institution-wide strategies and policies.
- WG 3 — Action 7: Knowledge exchange and collaboration.

While the Working Group remits did not specifically address two Actions — Action 3 (New technologies, AI, learning analytics, and early intervention systems) and Action 6 (Follow-up with students who have not progressed), these areas were discussed by the Working Groups over the course of their work, and were also the focus of many Exemplars and Case Studies prepared by institutions and submitted to the HEA for publication on the [Teaching & Learning National Resource Hub/student progression](#).

The Working Groups were chaired by Dr Rachel Keegan (WG 1), Prof. Brian Bowe (WG 2), and Dr Deirdre Ryan (WG 3) and consisted of representation from the Policy Forum that reflected the diversity of the Sector. The Working Groups had the opportunity to invite stakeholders with specific expertise who were not members of the Policy Forum to attend meetings where appropriate. The HEA was represented on

¹ 'Student progression in higher education: outcomes of a HEA survey on institutional data and interventions', and 'Analysis of Student Progression in Higher Education Case Studies: Report on Key Trends and Themes'.

the Working Groups to provide guidance, to contribute to the discussions, and to provide support to the Chairs as required.

3.2 Working Group and HEA Achievements

This section presents an overview of the work of each Working Group and its respective achievements.

Working Group 1

Working Group 1, chaired by Dr Rachel Keegan, met on seven occasions (two of which were in person) from August 2025–May 2026. The Working Group, in consideration of its remit, considered the timing of data collection by institutions, the types, sources, and processing of progression data, and the use of data to inform early intervention measures. Discussions of the Working Group considered the availability of data during the academic year, the extent to which the data are stable and actionable, and how institutions may better leverage existing datasets to support timely and proportionate decision-making. The Working Group also considered the operational environment in which institutional data teams are working, including sectoral differences, resource pressures, and the broader complexities associated with progression-related data. In addition, the Working Group reflected on how retrospective and in-year evidence could be used in combination to identify emerging trends and patterns in student progression, while acknowledging the need for pragmatic, cost–benefit-driven approaches to analysis.

In consideration of its remit and the enhancement of institutional practices on data gathering, reporting, and sharing within institutions, the Working Group proposed several recommendations to the Policy Forum for deliberation. The recommendations discussed by the Policy Forum are captured in the conclusion and recommendations section of this report.

Working Group 2

Working Group 2, chaired by Prof. Brian Bowe, met on 11 occasions (eight online and three in-person meetings) from August 2025–May 2026. The Working Group was tasked with producing a glossary of terms and associated definitions to support the work of the Policy Forum, with a draft presented to the Policy Forum for discussion at the December 2025 meeting. The glossary, intended to be a living document responsive to developments, was endorsed at this meeting.

In January 2026, Working Group 2 focussed its efforts on the second area of its remit, which was to consider the appropriateness of national guidelines/framework on good practice on student progression following an exploration of international practice in this area. A desktop review of guidelines/frameworks internationally was undertaken, which informed the decision of the Working Group to propose a structure for guidelines, a set of high-level principles, that would be of benefit to the Sector in

the development of good practice. The proposed structure, comprising ten high-level principles, was presented to and endorsed by the Policy Forum in April 2026.

The conclusions of the Working Group and recommendations for next steps were to develop national guidelines presenting good practice principles on student progression in higher education, to consider how the glossary may inform a broader set of nationally agreed terms and metrics to support more detailed analyses, and to provide Sector-wide opportunities for further dialogue and collaboration on student progression.

Working Group 3

Working Group 3, chaired by Dr Deirdre Ryan, met on eight occasions between August 2025 and May 2026 (three of which were in person). The Working Group was tasked with identifying innovative evidence-informed practices and opportunities for practice exchange across the Sector.

To fulfil its remit, Working Group 3 assisted with the development of the exemplar collection (described in Section 4). The Group considered the case studies of good practice in light of the findings of the Case Studies Report and identified a need for greater focus on policy and strategic context and evidence of impact. Accordingly, the Working Group redesigned the template for capturing data for the exemplar collection, shifting the focus towards the identified areas and streamlining the data collection process to make it more efficient. The exemplar collection (<https://hub.teachingandlearning.ie/student-progression-in-higher-education/>) acts as a national evidence base, a platform to share good practice across the Sector.

The Working Group selected case studies for presentation at Policy Forum meetings, choosing initiatives that exhibited innovation and evidence of impact and offered scope for discussion. These knowledge exchange sessions were as follows:

- UCC: How data and institutional action have shaped the UCC response to early withdrawals
- TU Dublin: AI model (PreSS) and early intervention
- TCD: S2S (Student2Student)
- NCAD: The First Year Studies Experience
- UCD: Live Engagement and Attendance Project (LEAP)
- MTU: MTU Ready

The Working Group was additionally tasked with informing and supporting the planning of an event/conference on student progression. The Group explored potential items for inclusion on the programme and advised the HEA on how good practice could be showcased.

In concluding its work, the Working Group identified recommendations for institutions when planning new initiatives to support student progression, continuation, and completion. Areas identified for further

attention included AI-driven supports, predictive analytics, and digital engagement tools, thus harnessing the affordances of technology, and flexible course structures.

Working Group Chairs Meetings

The HEA convened three meetings of the Working Group Chairs over the lifetime of the Working Groups to enable Chairs to share and discuss progress in relation to the achievement of Working Group remits, areas of mutual interest and concern, and to establish complementarity/crossover across Working Group remits. The meetings also provided a forum for discussion of forthcoming Policy Forum meetings, and areas for discussion.

HEA Role and Contributions

The HEA's role on the Policy Forum was to lead the development and implementation of its programme of work, to work in partnership with the Chair, Associates, and the three Working Groups in the delivery of the Forum's programme of work, and to oversee the development and publication of exemplars and case studies. The HEA presented on key areas of its work during meetings of the Policy Forum to inform discussion and agreed actions and priorities.

Since the establishment of the Policy Forum, the HEA has continued to develop and expand its programme of data and analytical work to support evidence-informed policy development across the higher education sector. This includes the annual publication of progression and completion rates, providing new insights into student progression and outcomes across institutions and cohorts. The 2026 progression report includes a dedicated section on continuation. Continuation analysis provides a longitudinal tracking of the new entrant cohort from their initial enrolment through to the end of their studies. It bridges the gap between progression and completion, offering a more comprehensive view of the student journey.

The HEA is also continuing its work on the Student Records System (SRS) 2.0 project to modernise the data collected by the HEA to better reflect the evolving higher education landscape. In addition, the Socio-Economic Profiles 2020/2021–2023/2024 Reports, which highlight the socio-economic background of higher education entrants are available.



4. Evidence Base: Exemplars

4.1 Overview

The remit of the Policy Forum was to develop an evidence base on student progression in higher education to inform policy and practice development. This was achieved through the publication of two reports in August 2025 capturing the practices of HEIs on data capturing and reporting on student progression, and good practice case studies. This work continued through the presentation of institutional practices (case studies) at Policy Forum meetings (six such presentations, listed under 3.2 above); the development and publication of Exemplars (see below), with a specific focus on data, evidence, and impact; and the planning of a conference (Autumn 2026) to disseminate and showcase the achievements of the Policy Forum and the evidence base developed to date.

4.2 Exemplars

Following the compilation of case studies on good practice captured by the Policy Forum in August 2025, the HEA worked in partnership with Associates and Working Group 3 to develop the evidence base and to produce exemplars of good practice for publication on the [HEA Teaching & Learning National Resource Hub](#). The intention was to capture case studies from across the student lifecycle. The variety and diversity of practices across HEIs is evident from a review of exemplars published on the National Resource Hub.

The exemplars, which feature initiatives targeting new entrants, first-year students, specific cohorts of students, and all students, address the following themes:

- First-year experience
- Assessment & examination
- Student wellbeing, experience, & success
- Data analytics & dashboards
- Academic & curriculum supports

Some of the exemplars represent early identification and intervention initiatives, while others form part of institution-wide initiatives on student wellbeing and success that aim to address student progression and continuation.



5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the Policy Forum acknowledges the breadth of areas considered and progressed since its first meeting in January 2025, and that student progression, which is multifaceted in nature due to the diversity of the Sector and the student population, warrants greater attention. The Policy Forum is cognisant of the geopolitical and national contexts, existing structures, and funding and entry requirements which limit the nature and scope of the Sector's response to progression/continuation. The recommendations presented below have been informed by Policy Forum discussions, presentations received during meetings, and the work and conclusions of the three Working Groups, and are aimed at institutions, the Sector, and the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

Recommendations

Higher Education Institutions to consider:

1. Practices relating to the ethical capturing, reporting, and sharing of data on student progression/continuation and completion, and how best to harness and capitalise on the affordances of new technologies to better utilise and work towards the greater integration of national demographic and survey data, and institutional academic and engagement data at central, faculty/school, and programme levels.
2. Clear and internally consistent definitions of progression/continuation and non-progression to support analysis and decision-making that reflect and are aligned with HEA definitions.
3. The cost–benefit of undertaking analyses at different stages in the academic year to establish trends (including trends in assessment) and to provide timely insights, and to support and monitor targeted initiatives and interventions (which should clearly articulate roles and responsibilities) to ensure coherence in early intervention processes.
4. Monitoring and evaluating, through structured processes, the effectiveness of early and continuing initiatives and interventions by analysing data on progression/continuation supports delivered centrally and those embedded at programme or module level to establish approaches that are most effective.

5. Providing structured opportunities for staff to develop and deepen their data skills to ensure responsible and appropriate data use, and to build capacity across the Sector through collaborative initiatives to support shared understanding and to strengthen the wider quality ecosystem.
6. How student progression/continuation initiatives and interventions align with national/institutional strategic priorities and policies, and to consider embedding mechanisms for monitoring and establishing impact. Consideration should also be given to continued sustainability of initiatives and interventions especially when initial funding is timebound.

The Sector through its representatives bodies to consider:

1. Facilitating Sector-wide opportunities to support continued engagement, dialogue, and discussion of policy and practice on student progression.
2. Engagement with second-level and further education and training to support students' transition to third-level education and how the Sector may support student decision-making on course/institution choice, their academic preparedness, and readiness for third level.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) to consider:

1. Development of National Good Practice Guidelines on Student Progression in Higher Education.
2. Glossary terms and definitions and how they may inform a broader set of nationally agreed terms and metrics to support more detailed analyses.
3. Continued engagement with the Sector to facilitate a system-level discussion of national policy, practice, and structures that impact student progression and continuation.
4. Ongoing engagement with the Sector to develop an evidence base on student progression in higher education through publication and dissemination of good practice exemplars on the National Resource Hub.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Policy Forum Membership

Associates

Dr Áine Ní Shé, MTU, Chair of the Policy Forum
Prof. Brian Bowe, TU Dublin
Patrick Brophy, IADT
Dr Laura Keane, SETU
Dr Rachel Keegan, DCU
Marese Bermingham/Aileen Kennedy, MTU
Lisa McCormack, University of Galway
Rhona McCormack, UL
Marie McPeak, TCD
Finola McTernan, NCAD
Susan Mulkeen/Jennifer Murphy, UCD
Paul O'Donovan, UCC
Dr Brendan Ryder, DkIT
Dr Deirdre Ryan, MIC
Dr Owen Ross, TUS
Dr Perry Share, ATU
Prof. Judith Strawbridge, RCSI
Prof. Tim Thompson, MU

HEA Representation

Tim Conlon, Head of Policy & Strategic Planning, Teaching & Learning, System Development & Performance Management
Dr Vivienne Patterson, Head of Skills, Engagement, & Statistics
Linda Darbey, Policy & Strategic Planning
Dr Louise McAteer, Policy & Strategic Planning
Janice Lau, Statistics
David Sheils/Adam Cully, Statistics

Working Group Membership

Working Group 1
Chair Dr Rachel Keegan
Patrick Brophy
Lisa McCormack
Rhona McCormack
Susan Mulkeen
Dr Perry Share
Jancie Lau, HEA
David Sheils/Adam Cully, HEA

Working Group 2
Chair Prof. Brian Bowe
Dr Laura Keane
Paul O'Donovan
Dr Owen Ross
Dr Brendan Ryder
Prof Tim Thompson [Lisa O'Regan (Deputy)]
Adam Cully, HEA
Linda Darbey, HEA
Dr Louise McAteer, HEA

Working Group 3
Chair Dr Deirdre Ryan
Marese Bermingham, Aileen Kennedy
Marie McPeak
Finola McTernan
Prof. Judith Strawbridge
Dr Louise McAteer, HEA

Appendix 2: Policy Forum Programme of Work

Policy Forum on Student Progression in Higher Education

Proposed Actions to inform the Policy Forum Programme of Work (June 2025–26)

Introduction

Seven proposed actions endorsed by the Policy Forum to inform its programme of work from June 2025–2026 are outlined below. The proposed actions were informed by the recommendations of three reports, as follows:

1. Student progression in higher education: outcomes of a HEA survey on institutional data and interventions
2. Analysis of Student Progression in Higher Education Case Studies: Report on Key Trends and Themes
3. National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (2015). Focused Research Report No. 4. (nine recommendations drawn from the Report with some revision to the wording of recommendations).

Following approval by the Board, the Policy Forum will discuss and prioritise actions according to their significance and impact on student progression, discuss the capacity of institutions and the HEA to progress the actions, and consider what can be achieved in the shorter to medium term, and in the longer term. Actions will be examined to establish their feasibility, impact, and how they may be best progressed.

As the SETL committee has oversight of the Policy Forum's programme of work, the Executive and the Chair of the Forum, as a SETL committee member, will provide regular updates and briefings to the committee.

Proposed Actions

Action 1: National framework for good practice on student non-progression

(Data and Interventions Report: recommendation 1; Case Studies Report: Insight 1, 2, 5, 6; NF 2015 recommendations: 5–8, 10)

- i. The Policy Forum to consider and advise on the development of a National Framework for good practice on student non-progression, and Associates to consult with their respective institutions on this.

- ii. The HEA to scope the development of a national framework for good practice on student non-progression to determine the viability of such a Framework, with reference to international practice, where appropriate.
- iii. The Policy Forum to discuss and agree working terminology and definitions relating to student progression, e.g. commuting student, to facilitate its work on Frameworks, Strategies, Policies, and Reports.

Action 2: Institution-wide strategies and policies

(Data and Interventions Report: recommendation 2; Case Studies Report: Insight 5, 7; NF 2015 recommendation: 5–7, 9–11)

- i. A National Framework for good practice on student non-progression to inform Institution-wide strategies and policies.
- ii. The Policy Forum to examine and determine institution-wide strategies and policies that may support student progression.

Action 3: New technologies, AI, learning analytics, and early intervention systems

(Data and Interventions Report: recommendation 3; Case Studies Report: Insight 3, 4, 5, 11)

- i. The Policy Forum to explore the merits of harnessing AI and new technologies to identify students who may benefit from additional supports at an early stage in the academic year, taking into consideration legislative requirements.
- ii. The HEA to consult with institutions to establish practices that may be shared with the Policy Forum to inform policy and practice development.

Action 4: HEI student progression data

(Data and Interventions Report: recommendations 4, 5; NF 2015: recommendation 1, 11)

- i. Policy Forum Associates to consult with their institutions to ensure data gathering and reporting for NFQ Level 6, 7, and 8 programmes, where appropriate.
- ii. The Policy Forum to examine steps required to ensure data are examined and reported on in the current academic year to inform early intervention strategies and measures and, where appropriate, programme and curriculum design.

Action 5: HEI progression data across the student lifecycle

(Data and Interventions Report: recommendation 5; NF 2015 recommendation 11)

- i. Policy Forum Associates to consult with their institutions to establish current practice, and how best to capture and report student progression rates across all years of all relevant programmes to inform early intervention measures.
- ii. The HEA to progress work in 2025 on the analyses of year-on-year progression rates.

Action 6: Follow-up with students who have not progressed

(Data and Interventions Report: recommendation 6; National Forum recommendation 2)

- i. The Policy Forum to explore mechanisms to follow up with students who have not progressed to establish the reasons why, and to support their transitions, where appropriate, to inform the development of policies and practices that support student progression.
- ii. The HEA to explore international practices on follow-up with students who have not progressed.
- iii. The HEA to engage with the CSO to further investigate the outcomes for students who do not progress.

Action 7: Knowledge exchange and collaboration

(Data and Interventions Report: recommendation 7; Case Studies Report: Insight 2, 3, 4, 6, 7)

- i. The HEA to provide opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaboration on innovative and effective HEI practices through the Policy Forum, and at an event in late 2025/early 2026.
- ii. The Policy Forum to identify innovative, effective, and evidence-informed practices that can be adopted by institutions.
- iii. The Policy Forum to consider how the seven Insights presented in the Case Studies Report can further inform the development of case studies and practices and the impact of these practices, facilitate knowledge sharing and practice exchange, promote collaborative practices across the sector, and inform the development of an evidence base.

Appendix 3: Working Group Remits

Working Group 1: Data and Evidence

Remit:

To progress its Actions, Working Group 1 will:

- Consider the findings of report 1, in particular, and existing HEI practices and, where appropriate, formulate recommendations on:
 - The timing of data collection, including:
 - How institutions can examine, report on, and better utilise existing institutional data in the academic year in which these data are collected.
 - The collation and reporting of data on student non-progression in the early weeks of Semester 1, and in the latter weeks of Semester 2.
 - The types, sources, and processing of progression data, including:
 - The collation, analysis, and sharing of data across the institution, to enable Schools/departments and disciplines to identify the factors that influence non-progression.
 - The collation, analysis, and sharing of data across the institution to enable Schools/departments and disciplines to identify students who may benefit from early intervention to support progression.
 - Identification of gaps in existing data and recommendation of additional data that are required.
 - How best to capture data on why students do not progress.
 - The use of data to inform early intervention measures, including:
 - Ways in which data may be utilised to inform early engagement with students to support progression and retention.
 - Ways in which data may be utilised to monitor, review, and document the impact of this engagement.
- Draw from the HEA analyses (when available) of year-on-year progression rates to inform the work of the working group and its recommendations.
- Consult with and report on progress to the Policy Forum.

Working Group 2: Towards Guidelines on Good Practice

Remit:

1. To progress its Actions, Working Group 2 will:
 - Consider the findings of the reports, existing HEI practices, and existing terminology and definitions relating to student progression and,
 - develop, by November 2025, a glossary of working terminology and definitions relating to student progression (e.g. commuter student), to enable and inform the work of the Policy Forum.
2. Following development of the Glossary for consideration by the Policy Forum, the Working Group will:
 - review Guidelines/Frameworks on student progression available internationally for the purpose of determining the possible scope and content of such a framework in the context of Irish Higher Education,
 - consider and advise on the viability, potential, and appropriateness of having Guidelines or a Framework for good practice on student progression that acknowledge the diversity of the student profile across the Higher Education sector,
 - identify institution-wide strategies and policies that may support student progression, and how these may be informed by a Framework, where appropriate.
3. The Working Group will consult with, and report progress to the Policy Forum on a regular basis.

Working Group 3: Knowledge Exchange & Collaboration

Remit:

1. To progress its Action, Working Group 3 will:
 - Consider the findings of the reports and existing HEI practices and,
 - explore and identify innovative, effective, and evidence-informed practices that may be adopted by institutions;
 - consider how the seven Insights presented in the Case Studies Report can further inform the development of case studies and practices and the development of an evidence base to establish the impact of practices;
 - identify additional case studies (to address specific areas not currently addressed) that may be of benefit;

- identify opportunities for knowledge sharing and practice exchange, and to promote collaborative practices across the sector;
 - propose institution-wide practices that may be shared and discussed at Policy Forum meetings.
2. The Working Group will inform and support the planning of an event/conference on student progression in May 2026, namely:
- inform the development of a programme for an event to include reference to international practices where appropriate;
 - identify and recommend good practices on student progression that can be promoted and disseminated at an event on student progression in May 2026, drawing from exemplars;
 - recommend how the event can act as a forum to inform/consult on the activities of the Policy Forum (working groups).
3. The Working Group will consult with and report progress to the Policy Forum.

