
National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

June 2011

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to set out in detail the necessary actions to implement the recommendations as described in National Strategy for Higher education in Ireland to 2030; to show where lead responsibility will lie amongst the various actors involved in the higher education sector and to indicate where possible the phasing and timelines of these actions.

A full table of recommendations is attached to this plan in the order in which they appear in the report for ease of reference.

2 Implementation Oversight Group

Ongoing management of the implementation process will be overseen by an Implementation Oversight Group chaired by the Secretary General of Department of Education and Skills and will have representation of officials from that department; the Department of Enterprise Jobs and Innovation; the Department of Finance; the Higher Education Authority; the Irish Universities Association; Institute of Technology Ireland; and other relevant members who will participate as required and who will consult with wider stakeholders if necessary.

3 Major Actors in Implementation Process

3.1 Proposed Cabinet Committee Role

It is intended that future system governance in higher education will be based on national priorities for the system that will be articulated by Government through a Cabinet Committee with assigned responsibility for this purpose. This will identify and review the national priorities of Government that are of relevance to the higher education sector in Ireland. These priorities will then inform the strategic dialogue between the institutions and the State through the HEA.

3.2 Key Organizations

These are as follows:

1. Department of Education and Skills
2. Higher Education Authority
3. Qualifications Quality Authority Ireland (comprising agencies HETAC, FETAC, NQAI, IUQB)
4. Higher Education Institutions
5. Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation
6. Research Funding Agencies (SFI, EI, HRB and others)

Existing structures for delivery of SSTI, Innovation Taskforce and Internationalisation recommendations will continue to oversee implementation of those recommendations relating

to their area of responsibility. DJEI and DES will report to the Higher Education Strategy Implementation Oversight Group on progress as appropriate.

4 Major Implementation Actions

The following section details the major implementation actions for each of the departments and organizations listed in section 3 with key roles to play in the implementation of the Strategy. The numbers in brackets after each action refers to the recommendation number in the Strategy Report. The timescale categories refer to: **immediate** – within one year; **short term** – within two years; **medium term** – between two and five years; **long term** – longer than five years.

4.1 Department of Education and Skills

The following actions are the lead responsibility of DES and these will be implemented in partnership with other actors where appropriate. As necessary, DES will draw upon additional expertise during the implementation process.

Immediate Actions

- i. To identify appropriate expertise to assist in drawing up criteria for re-designation of institutes of technology
- ii. To lead process of establishment and publication of criteria for re-designation of institutes of technology in conjunction with HEA and IOTI **(20)**
- iii. To develop project plan with HEA to transfer administrative responsibility for funding of DES funded institutions to the Higher Education Authority on a case by case basis pending potential legislation (see 4.1.1) **(21)**
- iv. To progress negotiations on academic contracts in both institute of technology and university sector and on other HR reforms to improve flexibility. **(22)**
- v. To progress student support reform towards single agency – identification and selection of agency and government approval to be obtained. **(24)**
- vi. To agree Terms of Reference with HEA for Sustainability review **(24)**
- vii. To review all relevant legislation in order to identify where legislative amendments or new legislation will be required, see 4.1.1
- viii. To draft necessary legislation (further detail below)
- ix. To initiate a review of the capacity of the HEA **(Sec 7.4)**

Immediate to Short Term

- i. Minister to ask HEA to convene independent expert panel for first stage of re-designation of institutes of technology following development of criteria (see 5.1, iv and v). **(20)**
- ii. Transition to new student support payment arrangements

4.1.1 Legislative Considerations

The following areas may/will require legislative amendments/or new legislation.

1. *Governance of institutions* – will require amendments to Universities Act 1997 as well as potential amendments to Institute of Technology Act 2006 **(18)**
2. *Governance of HEA* – will require amendment HEA Act 1971 (already amended in IOT2006) **(18)**
3. *Re-designation of institutes of technology* – will require new legislation for Technological University **(20)**
4. *Student support reforms* - (Student Support Act now complete) **(24)**
5. *Transferring DES funded standalone institutions* - may require amendment of HEA Act 1971 **(21)**
6. *Enabling commissioning teaching and learning activities from private institutions by HEA* – will require amendment of HEA Act 1971 **(21)**
7. *Strategic Dialogue and performance funding*
8. *Other relevant enabling legislative issues*

4.2 Higher Education Authority

Immediate Actions

- i. Review of data collection capacity – identification of gaps **(17)**
- ii. Co-operate with organizational review **(Sec 7.4)**
- iii. Develop proposals for new institutional funding model and credit based allocation; continue to phase in IoT funding model **(26)**
- iv. Identify and submit to Minister/DES KPIs for system based on major objectives of report as well as KPI's for HEA accountability **(17)**
- v. Provide advice on system sustainability in light of current funding/participation levels and offer guidance on future growth in light of expected funding **(25)**
- vi. Advise institutions on clusters **(Sec 8.4)**
- vii. Collaborate with DES on identification and publication of criteria for re-designation IOTs following consolidation of IoTs **(20)**
- viii. In conjunction with QQAI establish national quality framework for Irish PhD education building on work of HEA, IUQB and IUA **(11)**
- ix. Take over funding of DES funded institutions according to project plan developed with DES (see 5.1(v)) **(21)**
- x. To convene a conference with NCCA on 2nd level/3rd level interface **[5 and Sec 3.5]**

Immediate to Short Term actions

- i. Commission and put in place adequate data collection to measure institutional and system performance **(17)**
- ii. Put in place national student survey and employer's survey in consultation with QQAI – development of standard set of questions for students and for employers – international practice to inform this process **(2 & 14)**
- iii. To establish network of agencies that interact with the higher education sector to enable open information flows and to ensure alignment of strategies. **(17)**
- iv. Initiate discussions with IUA and IOTI regarding the parameters and format of strategic dialogue and performance contracts **(17)**
- v. Identify important and measurable performance outcomes for each institution
- vi. Develop framework for strategic dialogue process **(17)**

- vii. Review of course provision in sector – preparation of proposals for future process of course provision **(Sec 8.10)**

4.3 Qualifications Quality Authority Ireland

Drafting of legislation for QQAI is almost complete and a CEO designate has been appointed. It is expected that the organization will be established in the second half of 2011.

Immediate to short term Actions

- i. Continue to implement and build upon NFQ **(Sec 3.4)**
- ii. Co-ordinate development of subject guidelines framework in conjunction with subject experts from institutions **(7)**
- iii. Initiate full and comprehensive review of external examiner system and grading system **(7)**
- iv. Put in place review of PhD provision according to new national framework developed with HEA – formal assessment informed by good practice and international metrics **(11)**

Immediate to medium term actions

- i. Ensure alignment and balance between learning outcomes, pedagogy and assessment in course of quality assurance of institutions and programmes **(6)**
- ii. Begin development of National framework of RPL based on work already underway by EGFSN/NQAI **(4)**
- iii. Assist HEI's to develop structures and procedures to involve wider community in programme design and revision. **(14)**

4.4 Higher Education Institutions

The following actions apply to all higher education institutions:

Immediate to short term actions

- i. Institutional strategies to be directed towards the highest quality research and teaching and learning experience **(1)**
- ii. Put in place a comprehensive anonymous student feedback system coupled with structures to ensure prompt action taken in response to concerns **(2)**
Develop and implement a comprehensive approach to Human Resources which will support the achievement of the Higher Education Strategy's goal and the specific recommendations of the strategy in relation to performance and talent management, remuneration and career structures, contractual provisions and the overall accountability framework.
- iii. Develop and implement a comprehensive approach to Human Resources which will support the achievement of the Higher Education Strategy's goal and the specific recommendations of the strategy in relation to performance and talent management, remuneration and career structures, contractual provisions and the overall accountability framework. **(10)**
- iv. Reflect parity of esteem to roles of research and teaching in resource allocation, promotion criteria and performance metrics for staff and institution **(3)**

- v. Allocate resources equally to full and part time students/on/off campus students **(4)**
- vi. Review accreditation for courses to include work or service learning **(4)**
- vii. Engage with QQAI and other institutions to ensure flexible routes into, within and across higher education institutions **(4)**
- viii. Expand provision of induction provision/preparation and supports for 1st year students **(5)**
- ix. Develop options to reform of CAO entry system **[5 and Section 3.5]**
- x. Engage with QQAI to provide experts to develop subject guidelines framework **(7)**
- xi. Engage with QQAI in their review of external examiner system and grading system **(7)**
- xii. Ensure all academic staff including research-active staff is engaged in undergraduate teaching/laboratory supervision/tutorials **(10)**
- xiii. Engage with employers to facilitate mobility of staff both in and out of institutions to other sectors **(14)**
- xiv. Engage with employers to facilitate mobility of students between HEIs, business, the professions and wider community **(14)**
- xv. Co-operate fully with HEA in the implementation of fully comparable database and timely provision of data deemed necessary to measure performance **(17)**
- xvi. Co-operate fully with HEA in the strategic dialogue process **(17)**

Immediate to Medium Term

- i. Engage with QQAI and adopt national framework for RPL **(4)**
- ii. Review course design to include broad based and interdisciplinary opportunities for first year students within the institution or in conjunction with other institutions **(5)**
- iii. Review undergraduate and postgraduate education to ensure range of generic skills incorporated into programme design **(6)**
- iv. Ensure alignment and balance between learning outcomes, pedagogy and assessment **(6)**

The following actions apply to the Institute of Technology Sector:

Immediate to Short Term

- i. Engage in institutional strategic review to identify whether re-designation is desired outcome for institution **(20)**
- ii. Identify suitable partners for amalgamation and begin negotiations **(19)**
- iii. Engage with DES and HEA in the identification of criteria for re-designation **(20)**

Short Term to Medium Term

- i. Put forward proposals to Minister/Department Education and Skills for amalgamation **(20)**
- ii. If applicable develop and submit proposals for first stage of re-designation process **(20)**

The following actions apply to small standalone institutions:

Immediate Actions

- i. Submit proposals for amalgamations and alliances where appropriate to HEA **(19)**

4.5 Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation

Immediate to Short Term Actions

- i. Develop national IP Protocol and appropriate structures **(13)**
- ii. Develop review mechanisms, performance metrics, and metrics to measure return on investment etc. to ensure parity of esteem for differentiated research missions across disciplines and across types of research and innovation activities, including knowledge transfer and commercialization. **(10)**
- iii. Engage in research prioritization exercise to establish priority areas of focus for Irish public investment in research **(12)**

4.6 Research Funding Agencies

- i. Cooperate with DEJI as appropriate on lead actions above

5. Implementation Cost

The overall delivery of the Strategy is predicated on the need to meet the increasing demand for higher education which will result in a significant expansion of the system over the coming twenty years. The overall resource implications are dealt with in the strategy which addresses the need to widen the funding base and to explore resource efficiencies as a necessary pre-requisite to any increased exchequer investment. The funding model used to distribute exchequer funding will also be aligned with the strategic priorities outlined in the strategy report.

The implementation of recommendations in the strategy report will involve a mix of high/low/cost neutral and cost saving actions. The resource implications of specific recommendations will be addressed as part of the implementation process and in the context of the need to prioritize available resources to support the progression of the strategy.

6. Implementation Monitoring

Overall monitoring of implementation will be overseen by the Implementation Oversight Group described in 2.1. The implementation of recommendations that are identified as responsibility of HEI's will be also monitored during the strategic dialogue process which will include measurement of performance outcomes in agreed areas by HEA. Implementation of quality assurance recommendations may be monitored by QQAI in the course of their quality assurance remit.

Appendix: Table of Recommendations

This table shows the list of recommendations from the report of the Strategy Group. The timeline shows time for implementation to start and when implementation should be complete:

- **Immediate** implies action within one year.
- **Short term** is less than two years
- **Medium term** is two to five years
- **Long term** is five years and over.

In some cases, there may be relevant action already underway and in this case **immediate** denotes where further immediate actions are suggested to enhance existing activity.

Where resource issues are noted in the comments column for higher education institutions, this will require prioritisation within institutional budgets.

The implementation oversight group will monitor progress on delivery of recommendations and, where appropriate, identify and co-ordinate detailed supporting actions required.

The following **abbreviations** have been used:

Min E&S	Minister of Education and Skills
Min EJI	Minister of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEA	Higher Education Authority
QQAI	Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland
STI	Science Technology and Innovation
IDC	Interdepartmental Committee on SSTI
HERG	Higher Education Research Group
SSTI	Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation
NTMA	National Treasury Management Agency

	Teaching and learning	Lead Actor/s	Timeline		Comments
			Start	Imp. Complete	
1.	<p>Higher education students of the future should have an excellent teaching and learning experience, informed by up-to-date research and facilitated by a high-quality learning environment, with state-of-the-art learning resources, such as libraries, laboratories, and e-learning facilities.</p>	<p>Min E&S Min JEI HEI's</p>	Immediate	Ongoing	Overarching recommendation – resource intensive
2.	<p>Higher education institutions should put in place systems to capture feedback from students, and use this feedback to inform institutional and programme management, as well as national policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A national student survey system should be put in place and the results published. ■ Every higher education institution should put in place a comprehensive anonymous student feedback system, coupled with structures to ensure that action is taken promptly in response to student concerns. 	<p>HEA HEI's</p>	<p>Immediate Immediate</p>	<p>Short Term Short Term</p>	Low cost
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Every student should learn in an environment that is informed by research, scholarship and up-to-date practice and knowledge. ■ The roles of teaching and research should be afforded parity of esteem. This should be reflected in resource allocation, in promotion criteria, and in the metrics used to assess performance at individual, institution and system level. 	<p>HEI's HEA</p>	Immediate	Short Term	No cost. Institutional performance will be assessed through strategic dialogue process

<p>4. The Irish higher education system must continue to develop clear routes of progression and transfer, as well as non-traditional entry routes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In the coming decades, the delivery of higher education in Ireland must be characterised by flexibility and innovation. ■ All students, whether full-time or part-time, on-campus or off-campus, should be equally supported by the funding model used to allocate resources to and within institutions. ■ Undergraduate students should be encouraged to spend some time in a work or service situation, and formally acknowledge such work through accreditation or inclusion in the student's Diploma Supplement. ■ Routes of progression should be flexible into, within and across higher education institutions. ■ A national framework for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) must be developed and recognised by all higher education institutions. 	<p><i>HEA HEI's HEI's HEI's QQAI HEI's QQAI</i></p>	<p><i>Immediate Immediate Immediate Immediate Immediate Immediate</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing Short Term Medium Term Short Term Medium Term</i></p>	<p><i>Will involve implementation of funding model changes, programme changes at level of HEIs, continuing development of modularisation, deeper implementation of NFQ – resource issues for HEIs</i></p> <p><i>Possible resource issues. Industry partnership required</i></p> <p><i>Resource issues</i></p>
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	Teaching and learning contd	Lead Actor/s	Timeline		Comments
			Start	Imp. Complete	
5.	<p>Higher education institutions should prepare first-year students better for their learning experience, so that they can engage with it more successfully.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher education institutions should expand the provision of induction and preparation programmes for first-year students. Higher education institutions should offer broad-based courses and more interdisciplinary learning opportunities for students in the first year of their undergraduate studies. 	<p>HEI's</p> <p>HEI's</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <p>Medium Term</p>	<p>Likely resource and timing issues for HEIs</p>
6.	<p>Both undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes should develop the generic skills needed for effective engagement in society and in the workplace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate and postgraduate education should explicitly address the generic skills required for effective engagement in society and in the workplace. In the design of courses and programmes, higher education institutions should ensure alignment and balance between learning outcomes, pedagogy and assessment. 	<p>HEI's QQAI</p> <p>HEI's QQAI</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>Medium Term</p> <p>Medium Term</p>	<p>Likely resource and timing issues for HEIs</p>

	Teaching and learning contd	Lead Actor/s	Timeline		Comments
			Start	Imp. Complete	
7.	<p><i>In light of the scale of transformation in teaching and learning that is under way in Irish higher education, the quality assurance framework must be reviewed and further developed.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Subject guidelines should be developed to support the National Framework of Qualifications. This work should be progressed by subject experts from the academic community and coordinated by the new Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland agency. ■ A full and comprehensive review should be undertaken of the external examiner system and the grading system more generally. 	HEI's QQAI	Immediate	Short Term	Resource issues for HEIs
		QQAI	Immediate	Short Term	Will require QQAI to be up and running before commencement – estimated mid 2011
8.	<p><i>All higher education institutions must ensure that all teaching staff are both qualified and competent in teaching and learning, and should support ongoing development and improvement of their skills.</i></p>	HEI's	Immediate	Medium Term	Resource and timing issues for HEIs

	Research	Lead Actor/s	Timeline		Comments
			Start	Imp. Complete	
9.	<p>Investment in R&D should be increased</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in R&D target should be increased to 3 per cent of GDP, in line with the renewed Programme for Government, and the Innovation Taskforce report, which recommends a timeframe for delivery of investment in an updated SSTI for the 2014-2020 period. 	Gov	Immediate	Long Term	Also rec'd by Innovation Taskforce (Recommendation 5.1 page 94). Major Exchequer implications
10.	<p>The researcher's role should be afforded a wider focus, better mobility and increased career opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear career path should be established for researchers that develops their talents and rewards them appropriately. In addition to all research-active staff normally participating fully in undergraduate teaching, researchers should, where possible, be afforded opportunities to participate in teaching such as laboratory supervision and tutorials. Greater mobility of staff should be facilitated between higher education on the one hand and enterprise and the public service on the other, to promote knowledge flows and to capitalise on the expertise within higher education for the benefit of society and the economy. This could be through full time or part-time secondments for up to six months at a time or by consultancy by academics where this is of mutual benefit to the individual, the institution and society. To ensure a more effective level of collaboration with 	<p>Min E&S HEI's</p> <p>HEI's</p> <p>HEI's</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <p>Immediate</p> <p>Short Term</p>	<p>Innovation Taskforce Report (Recommendation 6.2 page 101)</p> <p>To be overseen through SSTI implementation structures. Work on a standardised career path has been developed by HERG although IDC have not signed off.</p> <p>Industry partnership required. Higher Education institutions to take lead, with co-ordinating/ facilitating role for oversight group/ HEA and roles for Ministers for Education and Skills and Finance re broader development of public service</p>

	enterprise, funding agencies and higher education institutions should develop review mechanisms, performance metrics and promotional criteria to ensure parity of esteem for differentiated research missions across disciplines and across types of research and innovation activities, including knowledge transfer and commercialisation.	All Research Funding Agencies HEI's HEA	Immediate	Short Term	mobility schemes.
11.	<i>A consistent quality framework should be developed for Irish PhD education, based on critical mass.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A demanding framework that meets or exceeds international standards for PhD education should be applied consistently across all higher education institutions, as an essential underpinning of the Irish PhD brand. This should lead to greater consolidation and collaboration among providers, with stronger offerings for students. 	HEA QQAI	Immediate	Immediate	<i>Role for SSTI implementation structures in inputting to standards development. System oversight of appropriate quality PhD provision will also be an important element of the strategic dialogue process.</i>
12.	<i>Public research funding should be prioritised and better coordinated and underpinned by effective foresight, review and performance measurement systems.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Research across all disciplines should be supported both to inform teaching and to ensure a platform for strong research in strategic priority areas. ■ Focused research funding should be based on national priority-setting exercises. Such exercises identify a number of thematic areas in which Ireland can excel, make its mark internationally and maximise economic and social return. Priorities should be reviewed and modified to ensure Ireland's research system remains responsive to the 	Gov Cabinet Comm. STI As above	Immediate Immediate	Ongoing Ongoing	<i>Innovation Taskforce Report (Recommendation 5.6 page 99)</i> <i>Innovation Taskforce Report (Recommendation 5.2 page 94)</i> <i>Oversight for delivery on this agenda through IDC, HERG etc. is</i> <i>Responsibility of Cabinet Committee on Science Technology and Innovation.</i>

	<p>changing national and international environments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In selecting priorities, particular attention should be paid to the opportunities for research spanning AHSS and STEM. ■ Structures for delivering research funding should be reformed in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Fully coordinate funding across all government agencies; □ Ensure that funded research has an identified funding pathway and a single lead responsible agency, underpinned by commercialisation supports; and □ Ensure a balance between different types of research from fundamental to strategic and applied, and from single investigator to large multi-disciplinary teams working in partnership with other relevant players. 	<p><i>As above</i></p> <p><i>As above</i></p>	<p><i>Immediate</i></p> <p><i>Immediate</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>Steering Group for National Prioritisation Exercise being established (under auspices of Min ETI)</i></p>
<p>13.</p>	<p><i>Knowledge transfer should be better embedded into institutional activity and rewarded accordingly. The commercialisation of intellectual property from publicly-funded research should primarily provide a gross return to the economy.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A national IP protocol should be developed and structures agreed to facilitate speedy commercialisation of IP from all higher education institutions 	<p><i>Min JEI HEI's</i></p> <p><i>Min JEI</i></p>	<p><i>Immediate</i></p> <p><i>Immediate</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p> <p><i>Short Term</i></p>	<p><i>Innovation Taskforce Report (Recommendation 6.1 pg100)</i></p> <p><i>Innovation Taskforce Report (Recommendation 6.7 pg95)</i></p> <p><i>Work already underway through IP implementation group established on foot of Forfás review/ Innovation TF report</i></p>

	Engaging with the wider society	Lead Actor/s	Timeline		Comments
			Start	Imp. Complete	
14.	<p>Engagement with the wider community must become more firmly embedded in the mission of higher education institutions. To achieve this, higher education institutions will need to take the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage greater inward and outward mobility of staff and students between higher education institutions, business, industry, the professions and wider community. Respond positively to the continuing professional development needs of the wider community to develop and deliver appropriate modules and programmes in a flexible and responsive way. Recognise civic engagement of their students through programme accreditation, where appropriate. Put in place structures and procedures that welcome and encourage the involvement of the wider community in a range of activities, including programme design and revision. <p>In addition to these actions, a national survey of employers should be taken by the HEA on a regular basis and used as part of an assessment of quality outcomes for the system.</p>	HEIs Industry	Immediate	Medium Term	<p>Lead role for HEIs – possible support role for Implementation Oversight Group/ D Finance in respect of possible supporting policy actions re staff mobility</p> <p>Possible involvement of enterprise agencies</p>
		HEIs	Immediate	Ongoing	
		HEIs + QQAI	Immediate	Short Term	
		HEIs	Immediate	Short Term	
		HEIs QQAI	Immediate	Short Term	
		HEA			

	Internationalising higher education	Lead Actor/s	Timeline		Comments
			Start	Imp. Complete	
15.	<p>Higher education institutions should set out their international vision in an institutional strategy that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is related to their institutional mission and to wider national policy goals; and ■ Considers internationalisation and global engagement in the widest perspective. 	HEI's	Immediate	Short Term	<p>Consistent with Internationalisation Strategy being separately adopted by Government. High Level Group to co-ordinate policy/ delivery. Upfront costs with potential for overall revenue generation</p>
16.	<p>Higher education institutions should put in place appropriate supports to promote the integration, safety, security and well-being of international students.</p>	HEI's	Immediate	Short Term	

	Leadership and governance	Lead Actor/s	Timeline		Comments/Next Steps
			Start	Imp. Complete	
17.	<p><i>Ireland's autonomous institutions should be held accountable for their performance to the State on behalf of Irish citizens.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Minister for Education & Skills will articulate the Government's national priorities for higher education. ■ To ensure that the national priorities for higher education are informed by a whole of government approach, the Minister of Education & Skills should chair a cabinet committee on higher education. A network of all agencies that interact with higher education will be convened by HEA. ■ The HEA should continue to be accountable to the Minister for the funding and oversight of the sector, and a new process of strategic dialogue should be introduced to enhance accountability and performance, while respecting institutional autonomy. ■ The accountability framework for the system should be underpinned by the availability of a fully comparable system database with data on student 	<p><i>Min E&S</i></p> <p><i>Min E&S HEA</i></p> <p><i>Min E&S HEA HEI's</i></p> <p><i>HEA HEI's</i></p>	<p><i>Immediate</i></p> <p><i>Immediate</i></p> <p><i>Immediate</i></p> <p><i>Immediate</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>Overarching national policy priorities (as already expressed in national reports e.g. Building a Smart Economy, which will inform the initial Strategic Dialogue process, are summarised in the Memorandum for Government for agreement</i></p> <p><i>The Minister will convene, as required, a cabinet committee to review and agree the overarching national priorities and performance against these</i></p> <p><i>HEA to commence strategic dialogue process with HEIs</i></p> <p><i>Build on ongoing student database, Full Economic Cost etc. developments.</i></p>

	and staff profiles, efficiency and other indicators that will aid in research on and evaluation of public policy in higher education and inform the HEA during the strategic dialogue process.				
18.	<p><i>Governance structures should be reformed at both institutional and system levels.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The size of the governing authorities of higher education institutions in Ireland should be reduced to no more than 18; the majority of members should be lay members with expertise relevant to the governance of higher education; and ■ The Board of the HEA should be reduced in size to 12 members; its composition should be reformed to ensure that it contains the appropriate blend of expertise and experience to undertake its mission. 	<p><i>Min E&S</i></p> <p><i>Min E&S</i></p>	<p><i>Immediate</i></p> <p><i>Immediate</i></p>	<p><i>Medium Term</i></p> <p><i>Medium Term</i></p>	<p><i>Legislation will be required to give effect to this recommendation.</i></p> <p><i>Work to commence on drafting heads of bill for Universities (Amendment) Act and new legislation for Technological University</i></p> <p><i>Will also amendment of Schedule (2) HEA Act 1971.</i></p> <p><i>Filling of upcoming vacancies on Authority in December 2010 to take account of recommended composition skill sets.</i></p> <p><i>Organisational review of HEA executive to be commissioned by DES (& steering group to be established to oversee) – low cost</i></p>

	Coherent framework	Lead Actor/s	Timeline		Comments/Next Steps
			Start	Imp. Complete	
19	<p><i>A framework should be developed to facilitate system-wide collaboration between diverse institutions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collaboration between autonomous institutions within a region will be promoted in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Improve responsiveness to local economic and social needs; □ Encourage progression pathways for students; and □ Facilitate academic interchange and exchange of ideas. ■ Rational collaboration beyond regional boundaries will also continue to be supported. ■ There will be no new universities on the basis of Section 9 of the Universities Act. 	<p><i>Min ES HEI's HEA</i></p>	<p><i>Immediate</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>Deeper collaboration on a regional cluster basis will be promoted through strategic dialogue with individual institutions and clusters of institutions. HEA to advise on appropriate regional cluster configurations (building on spatial strategy and existing regional relationships). Potential cost efficiencies.</i></p>
20	<p><i>The institute of technology sector should commence a process of evolution and consolidation; amalgamated institutions reaching the appropriate scale and capacity could potentially be re-designated.</i></p>	<p><i>HEI's</i></p>	<p><i>Immediate</i></p>	<p><i>Short Term</i></p>	<p><u>Prioritisation of Actions</u></p> <p><i>HEIs to initiate any amalgamation proposals</i></p> <p><i>DES/HEA to prioritise development and early</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A process should be put in place to allow institutes of technology that have emerged from a process of consolidation to apply for designation as a technological university. 	<p><i>Min ES</i> <i>HEA</i> <i>IOT's</i></p>	<p><i>Immediate</i></p>	<p><i>Medium Term</i></p>	<p><i>publication of performance criteria for review process to lead to re-designation for amalgamated institutions.</i></p> <p><i>Work to commence on draft legislation for Tech Uni., including objects and functions of TU and designation criteria</i></p> <p><i>Two stage review process to be developed which will provide for initial 'outline agreement' on merger proposals</i></p> <p><i>Potential cost efficiencies in long term</i></p>
<p>21</p>	<p><i>Smaller institutions should be consolidated to promote coherence and critical mass.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the case of institutions in receipt of core grant (partial or full) and free fees funding, the overall framework of incentives should operate to achieve the incorporation or merger of such institutions into existing universities or institutes of technology or into technological universities. Funding for institutions in receipt of free fees only funding should not be extended beyond 	<p><i>HEI's</i> <i>HEA</i></p> <p><i>Min E&S</i></p>	<p><i>Immediate</i></p> <p><i>Immediate</i></p>	<p><i>Medium Term</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>Merging process specified in Universities Act 1997, part ii, S8.</i></p> <p><i>If merge into IOT, no process is specified under legislation.</i></p> <p><i>There a small number of smaller institutions who receive free fees for students on specific programmes and no core grant</i></p>

<p>institutions currently in this category.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In respect of private institutions (independent colleges in receipt of no direct funding), it should be open to the HEA to commission teaching and learning activity on an economic cost basis to meet priorities that may be identified within a cluster. Independent providers, including those in the 'for-profit' sector should be free to tender for provision on this identified needs basis. Such public funding to these institutions will be allocated through the HEA 	<p>HEA</p> <p>HEA</p> <p>Min E&S HEA</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p><i>funding. HEA to review continuing support to those currently in this category</i></p> <p><i>May require amendments to legislation HEA Act 1971. potential cost efficiencies for system</i></p> <p><i>The institutions referred to in this recommendation with the exception of private institutions, are currently funded directly through the Department of Education and skills. Transfer to HEA on an administrative basis initially. May require amending legislation/designation process under HEA Act 1971. staffing/resource issues for HEA</i></p>		
<p>Sustainable and equitable funding model</p>	<p><i>Lead Actor/s</i></p>	<p><i>Timeline</i></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="978 1203 1146 1279"><i>Start</i></td> <td data-bbox="1146 1203 1377 1279"><i>Imp.Comp.</i></td> </tr> </table>		<i>Start</i>	<i>Imp.Comp.</i>	<p><i>Comments</i></p>
<i>Start</i>	<i>Imp.Comp.</i>					

<p>The current employment contracts for academic staff must be reviewed with a view to recognising academics' professional standing and requiring comparable levels of accountability to those in place in the wider public and private sectors. Such a review will require the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Contracts that are transparent and deliver accountability for appropriate workload allocation models to ensure that priorities around teaching and learning, research and administration can be managed and delivered; □ In the case of institutes of technology, contracts should specify a minimum number of hours to be delivered on an annualised basis; □ Contracts that reflect a much broader concept of the academic year and timetable; and □ Greater flexibility, adaptability and mobility of staff to meet new demands from structural and other changes arising from the strategy. 	<p>HEI's Min E&S</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>Medium Term</p>	<p><i>This recommendation will be progressed in discussion with unions under the auspices of the Croke Park Agreement. The overall framework to be established by government and implementation will be a matter for higher education institutions.</i></p> <p><i>Potential cost efficiencies</i></p>
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	Sustainable and equitable funding model contd.	Lead Actor/s	Timeline		Comments
			Start	Imp. Complete	
23.	<p><i>Over the lifetime of the strategy and in the context of a reducing reliance on the exchequer, individual higher education institutions will progressively take on greater responsibility for key human resource functions.</i></p> <p>Such responsibility will require institutions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Take on the powers to recruit and set terms and conditions for staff, within agreed parameters; ■ To maintain balanced budgets and to budget for the full costs of recruitment, including pension costs; ■ Work within an appropriate framework for HR management that ensures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Adequate consultation with staff interests; and □ Transparency as regards levels of staffing and rates of pay; and ■ Accept clear accountability for overall delivery on agreed outcomes. 	Gov.	Medium Term	Long Term	<i>Longer term strategic direction tied to broader development, particularly in relation to level of funding reliance on exchequer. No specific implementation actions required at this point</i>
24.	<p><i>The funding base for higher education must be broadened through the reform of student financing, including a new form of direct student contribution based on an upfront fee with a deferred payment facility.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implementation of this will require the Department 	<p>Gov</p> <p>Min E&S</p>	<p>Medium Term</p> <p>Immediate</p>	<p>Medium Term</p> <p>Short Term</p>	<p><i>Potential significant revenue benefits (immediate and long term – depending on model)</i></p> <p><i>Expert Group to be established to commence detailed scheme design (incl</i></p>

<p>of Education & Skills to establish an expert group (with international representation) to design the appropriate loan system for Ireland, taking into account the attendant implementation issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The setting of fee rates should occur within a national framework that will regulate the maximum level of fees, with periodic review. ■ Future growth and improved quality delivery in Irish higher education will not be possible without such a contribution. ■ The reform of financing must also include a reform of the procedures for means testing for students' maintenance grants. This should be more streamlined and timely, and should be delivered through a single agency. ■ In situations where there are identified skills shortages that need to be addressed or where there are specific upskilling priorities within the workforce, the State should consider alternative funding arrangements, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Using the NTF to support students in meeting the required student contribution; or □ Defined funds or bursaries for which public or private higher education institutions could compete for onward disbursement to students following particular programmes of study; or Discounted fees. 	<p><i>Min E&S</i></p> <p><i>Min E&S</i></p>	<p><i>Immediate</i></p> <p><i>Immediate</i></p>	<p><i>Short Term</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>DES, HEA, NTMA, D/Fin, Revenue, HEIs, independent expertise)</i></p> <p><i>DES to advance ongoing reform process Legislation currently at committee stage.</i></p> <p><i>DES to consider as part of overall labour market activation responses/ skills initiatives</i></p>
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	Sustainable and equitable funding model contd.	Lead Actor/s	Timeline		Comments
			Start	Imp.Comp	
25.	<p><i>The growth of higher education must be sustainable and resourced with an appropriate funding base. Growth and quality improvement must be progressed together.</i></p> <p>In particular, the HEA must be charged with keeping institutions under close review in relation to the sustainability of their ambitions for growth, as measured against the financial resources available to underpin that growth.</p>	HEA	Immediate	Ongoing	HEA to assess and provide advice to Minister
26.	<p><i>Public investment in higher education must be aligned with national policy priorities, including widening of access, enhanced performance outcomes, and greater flexibility in provision.</i></p> <p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Widening access to higher education by people from lower socio-economic backgrounds or other under-represented groups (by additional weighting); ■ Recurrent grant allocation that achieves parity between all students, whether full- or part-time, on- or off-campus; ■ An element of reward to match private donations sourced through philanthropy; ■ Recurrent grant allocation for all institutions based 	HEA	Immediate	Short Term	HEA to address through implementation of revised funding allocation model. Allocation changes can be made on a cost neutral basis

	<p>on the current unit cost model (RGAM) operational in the university sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Service level agreements, as part of a strategic dialogue, with higher education institutions establishing the key outputs, outcomes and levels of service to be delivered and the resources allocated to achieve them. 	<p><i>HEA</i> <i>HEI's</i></p>	<p><i>Immediate</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	
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