C·H·I·U
Conference of Heads of Irish Universities

**C.H.I.U. Review [02/3] for C.H.I.U. Meetings
on 17 June, 2002 in Trinity College Dublin.**

1. Research Policy

1.1. *Government Policy*

The new Government has set out a fairly detached statement of policy on "Research Development and Innovation" in its "Agreed Programme for Government" as follows.

"Research, Development and Innovation
We believe that ongoing action is required to ensure that Ireland continues to be a world leader in knowledge-based industries.
* *We will ensure the putting in place of open-access broadband on a national basis.*
* *We will create real competition for local phone services by ensuring the unbundling of the local loop.*
* *We will ensure that that the full range of options, including wireless technologies, are utilised to expand broadband access in rural areas.*
* *We will drive forward the Schools IT programme based on the principle of school-based planning and devolved funding. We will ensure that progressive training courses are available to teachers.*
* *We will work to ensure that Ireland develops a world-class research capacity. We also recognise the importance of encouraging a dynamic research culture and will continue to support research on the basis of recognising the distinct, but also inter-connected roles of different programmes, from individual grants up to more targeted support for areas of national strategic interest.*
* *We will build the capability of firms to carry out and manage R&D in Ireland.*
* *We will ensure that the Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions administered by the Higher Education Authority on behalf of the Government is maintained with funding rounds being placed on a multi-annual basis.*
* *We will place Science Foundation Ireland on a statutory basis as a dynamic vehicle to provide funding for areas of strategic national importance including ICTs and biotechnology.*
* *We will bring together the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering & Technology and the Irish Council for Humanities and Social Sciences Research as parts of a new council.*
* *We will ensure that all major research funding is based on external assessments.*
* *In order to ensure that structures and mechanisms for overseeing national policy on research are improved, we will implement change on an agreed basis.*
* *We will work to ensure that Ireland maximises its draw-down under the EU 6th Framework Programme for Research and Development.*
* *We will actively support research collaboration between firms and third-level institutions.*
* *We will seek to improve structures and practices to enhance the commercialisation of publicly funded research.*
* *We will review available fiscal instruments for the support of advanced connectivity.*

- *We will implement an ambitious eGovernment agenda aimed at ensuring that the public will be able to access most key Government services electronically.*
- *We will support the establishment, following competitive funding procedures, of interactive science centres and awareness programmes aimed at enhancing knowledge and interest in science.*
- *We will actively promote the study of physics, chemistry and maths".*

1.2. ICSTI Commission

The Government's decision to request ICSTI to convene a Commission to bring forward proposals for a framework for an overarching national policy for RTD was reported in para. 1.1 of C.H.I.U. Review 02/2 for the C.H.I.U. meetings on 15th April, 2002. Dr. Walsh, Chair, ICSTI, informed C.H.I.U. Director of these developments in a letter dated 25th April, 2002 and invited C.H.I.U. to submit its views to the Commission by 23rd May, 2002. By reply dated 2nd May, 2002 Dr. Walsh was informed that C.H.I.U. would endeavour to make a submission in June. Dr Walsh subsequently indicated that he would be glad to speak to the C.H.I.U. Council.

The Irish Times reported that the move to establish the Commission was seen as an attempt by DETE to gain greater control of research funding at the expense of DES/HEA. Provisions on research policy in the Fianna Fáil election manifesto which made no reference to the Commission were portrayed "as a defence of the current position in which the HEA and the universities enjoy considerable freedom to decide research priorities". The section in the agreed Programme for Government on Research, Development and Innovation quoted in full in paragraph 1.1 above does not mention the ICSTI Commission. The Government Programme make very clear statements about "structures, policies and implementation mechanisms" for research, development and innovation which the ICSTI Commission was to examine and make recommendations on. It might be prudent to seek clarity on the status of the Commission and relevance and scope of its Terms of Reference in the light of the new Government's policy on "Research, Development and Innovation". The first meeting of the Commission is planned for 18th June, 2002.

1.3 Leading Europe in Promoting Change in FP6

The European Commission has recently proposed a change in the Sixth Framework Programme that would seriously impede the mobility of Irish researchers and reduce opportunities for funding. The new rule would mean that in order to receive a European postdoctoral fellowship (Marie Curie) candidates would need four years of research experience. The implication is that researchers who complete a PhD in less than three years would not be eligible for a postdoctoral fellowship. C.H.I.U., as leader of the Irish Delegation to the EC Mobility Programme, is actively leading the campaign to remove this obstacle to Mobility. We have lobbied all Irish MEP's to support a motion to rescind this chance and have the support of all other Member States. Our Irish representative to the Council Research Committee will also support this policy.

2. Research Developments

2.1. HEA - PRTL

The Head of PRTLI, Dr. Eucharia Meehan, participated in our last VPDOR Group Meeting on 24th May. There is a clear policy move to involve the third level sector in the process of developing the next PRTLI programme. There are as of yet no details on PRTLI 4 but HEA will take into account the views held by the VPDOR Group. It was noted that events will progress independently of the Walsh Commission.

The HEA is proposing to organise a major event to publicise the research funded by the PRTLI. The HEA is currently in the early stages of preparing a response for the Walsh Commission.

2.2. Science Foundation Ireland

New Schemes: The SFI Investigative Programme Grants generated about 100 applications for 15th May deadline. They are currently being sent to international experts for review. Results are expected in early Autumn.

The Centres for Science Engineering and Technology (CSET) generated about 30 proposals for the closing date of 31st May. Two panels of experts will be established to review these planning proposals and a number will be invited to submit full proposals. There were difficulties experience by all in dealing with IP but these problems have been solved. Results are expected by end of July.

SFI Columbia Report: The SFI Board welcomed the report prepared by Columbia University as commissioned by SFI. This report recommends strongly the adoption of the US approach to IP.

Terms and Conditions: SFI have a new set of draft Terms and Conditions for all grants. They key feature is that IP will be held by the universities and SFI expects no direct return from exploitation of IP. These Terms and Conditions will be submitted to the SFI Board at their next meeting in early July.

2.3. Funding of Indirect Costs for Research

The Steering Group met last on 3rd May to discuss possible approaches. It was agreed that the US model provides the most effective, practical and transparent framework. Although the Australian model was considered it is unlikely to be adopted. The final report is currently being prepared and will be presented to HEA/Forfás at the end of June.

2.4. Enterprise Ireland

There was a special meeting of the VPDOR Group with EI representatives on 31st May. EI presented their new Technology Innovation Strategy. It seems that EI will take the lead in implementing the SFI Columbia Report.

2.5. Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET)

There was a total of 1020 applicants for the Postgraduate Research Scholarship Scheme "The Embark Initiative". Applicants in Computer Science and Engineering account for about 700 applicants. There is funding for 150 and results will be available by the end of June.

2.6. Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Science (IRCHSS)

The Council has recently launched a scheme to fund research projects in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

2.7. *Research Information System*
InterTrade Ireland has commissioned a feasibility study for the development of an all island research expertise web portal. Dr. Conor Long has presented the system to the Council of Directors of ITs : they have expressed strong interest in the system. He also presented to C.H.I.U./IBEC Council again receiving a positive response.

2.8. *Attracting Researchers to Ireland*
The Steering Group has commissioned a study on obstacles to mobility for research coming to Ireland (Visa, taxation, social welfare etc). There has been full consultation with the research officers of all the universities who have provided valuable input.

2.9. *EU Sixth Framework Programme*
Mobilisation Event: There will be an Irish launch of the 6th Framework Programme in Dublin Castle on 12th July. This will be the first national launch of the FP6 following the Council decision later this month. It will allow Irish researchers to discuss the new programme with the key members of the European Commission.

Mobility and the European Research Area (ERA): C.H.I.U. is part of a national representation on the Steering Group to improve the mobility of researchers in Europe. The Commission is planning to fund national mobility centres and a European Researchers Mobility Web Portal.

2.10. *VAT on Research -Implementation of VAT Legislation*
A list of public funding bodies and the VAT status on each is almost completed. The delay was caused by Bord Iascaigh Mhara only agreeing the final version of their contracts recently.

2.11. *Apportionment of overhead recovery and reclassification of ancillary activities*
BDO Simpson Xavier (C.H.I.U. advisors) had expected a decision from the Revenue Commissioners by late March. However, the Revenue Commissioners have raised a number of queries which BDO are dealing with. There are two main issues; firstly, the proportion of overheads attributable to research. The Revenue Commissioners are anxious to have as many overheads as possible charged directly to research. However, they have accepted that this is not possible and will accept a formula. But they are insisting that this is audited annually. Secondly, what percentage of Academics' time can be added back as part of the claim. The Revenue Commissioners are currently reviewing a BDO submission on these items. BDO have been requested to give a deadline of 30th September for completion of this exercise. This will enable the universities to make an appropriate entry in their accounts.

2.12. *VAT guide on implementation issues*
This will be finalised once the outstanding matters outlined above have been clarified.

3.   University Funding

3.1.   *Recurrent funding – 2002 allocations*

Notification of funding levels to universities has been made by the HEA. The grant seems to have taken account of the funding increase model proposed by CHIU in 2001. Funding for part-time pensions has not yet been released. It is likely that the HEA will be looking for costings for part-time pensions from the universities shortly. Some funding has been retained by the HEA to cover unit cost adjustments arising from the 1999/2000 data. At the HEA meeting to approve the grant notification, concern was expressed by the Authority at the late notification.

3.2.   *Tuition Fees*

The HEA are unable to confirm agreement on the fee levels for 2002/03. Confirmation is still awaited from the Department of Education and Science.

3.3.   *Unit Cost Returns*

The HEA has revised the deadline for submission of the 2000/01 unit cost return from 31 March to a more realistic date of 1 June and expects this date be adhered to by the universities. This would allow publication of comparative data in time for universities to plan for the new academic year.

3.4.   *Capital funding*
3.4.1.   *PRTLI*

In relation to the shortfalls on PRTLI Cycles 1&2, the Chairman of UCFOG has written once again to the HEA asking for a favourable response to the universities' request for 50% of the funding to cover capital deficits caused by higher than expected inflation. Further delay may jeopardize access to private funds to meet the remaining 50%. In relation to Cycle 3, the HEA has written to the universities asking them to re-profile expenditure due to a cashflow shortage. This will involve expenditure being distributed more evenly over 2003 – 2006.

3.4.2.   *Investment in Infrastructure*

In the run up to the general election the Council of Directors of Institutes of Technology lobbied for increased investment particularly for research in the institutes arguing that most of government investment was going to universities, particularly in the Dublin area. This view of investment in higher education was countered by a subsequent article which demonstrated with official statistics that the state gives more capital funding for infrastructure to institutes that to universities. The proposed National Development Finance Agency (NDFA) being established to fund major public projects and to evaluate options for PPP projects may have implications for future capital investment in universities and these will need to be examined.

4.   HEA Issues

4.1.   *C & AG*

The Deputy Director of Audit, C & AG's Office wrote to the Heads of the Universities, in early April 2002 setting out the basis on which the C&AG's audit of the financial statements for 2001 would be conducted. The letter raises a number of issues of concern and the fundamental question of the relationship between, and the respective roles and

responsibilities of, the C&AG, the DES, the HEA and the Universities regarding the finances of the universities. The contents may have implications for the status of the procedures agreed by the HEA/universities as set out in the joint HEA/C.H.I.U. publication *The Financial Governance of Irish Universities*.

This matter is being considered by UCFOG and will be discussed at the Plenary meeting on 17th June, 2002. It was agreed at the last Plenary that University Heads should await examination of the issues by the Finance Officers before replying to the correspondence. A meeting with the HEA has been requested on behalf of C.H.I.U. Council and this issue be on the agenda.

4.2. *Harmonisation of accounts*
A working group reporting to UCFOG has been formed to develop an agreed format for harmonised accounts. It has been agreed by the group that there should be two main statements, a consolidated income and expenditure accounts showing all income and expenditure for the university and its subsidiaries and a funding statement showing income and expenditure for core teaching and research. A number of issues have yet to be worked out.

4.3. *Agreed Framework for Departures from Approved Levels of Remuneration – University Act Section 25 (5)*
In response to a HEA letter of 4th March, 2002 seeking universities views on the continuance and on review of the framework, the Council decided at its meeting on 15th April, 2001 that the framework should be reviewed but that it remain in place pending completion of the review. The HEA has been informed accordingly and the views of relevant senior university officers have been sought with the aim of formulating a sectoral position. A C.H.I.U. working group will be convened to conduct discussions with the HEA.

4.4. *HEA Review of Universities Statements of Equality*
At the latest count a submission from one university was awaited by the HEA.

4.5. *Completion Rates*
Revised draft terms of reference for follow-up research on completion by university students have been prepared following discussions between the C.H.I.U. retention network and the HEA and Dr. Morgan. The Registrar's Group considered that the views of the C.H.I.U. Retention Network had been taken on board and noted that the Network would be involved in monitoring progress on the research project.

5. Enrolment/Future Strategy
5.1. *Strategic Planning Process*
A presentation on the process to date was made to the Plenary meeting on 15th April, 2002. Full account was taken of the views expressed in the discussion that followed at the Plenary at a further workshop held by the Council on 15/16 April, 2002.

5.2. *Enrolments*

Latest university total enrolment statistics for [2000/01] for full-time and part-time students and for new undergraduate entrants available on the HEA website. Noteworthy features of enrolments are -

Undergraduate : Postgraduate Ratio	84 : 16
Male : Female Ratio	40 : 60
National : International Ratio (approx)	92 : 8

5.3. *Access*

There is no progress to report on implementation of the recommendations of the Report of the Action Group on Access to Third Level Education. A recommendation critical to progress being made relates to a "National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education". The Registrar's Group agreed that C.H.I.U. should write to new Minister for Education and Science requesting that the recommendation to establish the National Office within the HEA be implemented as a matter of urgency.

5.4. *Lifelong Learning*
5.4.1. *Task Force on Lifelong Learning*

The final text of the Task Force Report is being completed with a view to its preparation for submission to the new Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment and Minister for Education and Science.

5.4.2. *EC Draft Memorandum on Lifelong Learning.*

The EUA has published a Consultation Report on its process on the EC Draft Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. In 2001, EUA was asked by the Commission to take a leading role in the conference organised in Brussels on *Making Lifelong Learning a Reality* to discuss the EU Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. EUA collective and individual members were asked in a questionnaire to present their thoughts, strategies and policies at national or institutional level, and to give examples of good expectations of universities for putting lifelong learning into practice across Europe. Professor John Coolahan, NUIM prepared a paper on behalf of C.H.I.U. as an input to the process. The full report should be available shortly on the EUA website www.unige.ch/eua.

5.5. *Foreign Students*

A breakdown of the domiciliary origin of full time university students 2000/2001 is published by the HEA on its website. Some 8.2% of students enrolled in the institutions covered are from outside of Ireland including 1% who come from Britain.

The above figures for overseas students contrast starkly with the picture in Australian universities as explained by the delegation from the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee AVCC in a joint seminar held with C.H.I.U. Council members on 28th May in UCD. More that 30% of students in some Australian Universities are foreign students and the AVCC is campaigning for increased investment by the Government to make a substantial increase in the promotion and profiting of Australian education internationally. The competition for overseas students faced by Australian Universities and the benefits to the Australian economy of international education are set out in an "AVCC Discussion Paper on International Education" on the AVCC website.

5.6. *Expert Skills Group*

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) in their third report (published in July 2001), made recommendations on the need for concerted investment in the facilities available for the teaching and learning of Information and Communications (ICT) studies in higher education institutions. The EGFSN in their report noted that their projected forecast for the ICT industry was one of future growth, leading to a strong long-term demand from the sector for substantial numbers of appropriately skilled graduates. The Group estimated that this demand was likely to result in a shortfall of approximately 3,500 graduates over the period 2001-2005. The demand for these graduates was predicted to be in both the hardware and software areas of ICT. To address this imbalance, and taking into account the very real and important impact of the ICT industry on economic growth in Ireland, the EGFSN recommended the investment by Government of €165 million in the IT area over 5 years. This investment is to be focused in 4 broad areas.

(i)   Increased access to education in the IT skills area for mature students, marginalized and disadvantaged groups, through a combination of more part-time education and company up-skilling.
(ii) Provision of post-graduate conversion courses, including attendance on a part-time basis, should be increased.
(iii) Increased completion rate of IT courses in third level institutions.
(iv) Provision for equipment renewal and the development of the state of the art facilities for third level education in IT related areas.

The investment is to be managed by an expert Project Team located in the HEA.
The role of the Team will be to

(i)   Identify needs
(ii) Seek proposals from institutions
(iii) Examined feasibility and costings and make recommendations for investment
(iv) Developing and implementing actions.

The intention is that the funding will be allocated amongst the Universities, the Institutes of Technology on the basis of proposals made and evaluated by the Project Team. The HEA is currently making arrangements for the recruitment of the Project Team and would hope to be in a position to appoint a Head of Project Team shortly.

An Expert Advisory Group, to which, C.H.I.U. was invited to nominate a member, has been set up to support the Project Team in their work. It is anticipated that the Group will play a particular role in bringing their collective knowledge and expertise to assist in the prioritisation of funding, and in the development of structures to seek and assess proposals. The Group will be chaired by a representative of the HEA. Gregory O'Hare, Computer Science Dept, UCD has been nominated by C.H.I.U. to the Group. The Advisory Group first met on 5th June to set out in more detail the role of the Advisory Group and the management of the process of implementation of recommendations. Work also commenced on the consideration of areas for investment this year, and planning future investment.

The Minister for Education and Science announced the establishment of a fund to implement this EGFSN recommendation, and initial allocations of funding for this year. [copy of Press release on DES website].

5.7.   **LCVP Link Modules**

The issue of recognition of the Link Modules of the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme for 'Points' purposes for entry to universities is about to be raised with the universities again by the NCCA. The following are the arrangements the universities decided to implement for the purposes of entry to courses from the 1999/2000 academic year –

Link Modules of the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme to be acceptable for 'Points' purposes for entry to universities for a trial period on the following basis:

- points will be awarded as follows : 30 points for a pass, 40 points for a merit and 50 points for a distinction;
- students will have the opportunity to use their points allocation for the Link Modules as one of their six subjects for the purposes of calculating points;
- the Link Modules will not qualify as a subject for matriculation purposes.

When agreeing the above arrangements, the universities undertook to keep the level of points under review.

It is planned to introduce revised Link Modules Syllabus approved by the NCCA in September 2002. The NCCA has decided to request that the universities reconsider the amount of points awarded in the light of the revised Link Modules. The Registrars' Group has discussed this matter and is making arrangements for a review of the progress of students who gained entry to universities by virtue of points awarded for the LCVP Modules and students who undertook the LCVP Link Modules Programme and entered university without including LCVP points in their points total used for college entry.

6.   New Government

The Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrats Programme for Government contains a number of provisions relevant to the universities. Of particular interest are the sections dealing with Research and Development and Education. A priority for C.H.I.U. will be to establish relations with the new Minister for Education and Science, Mr. Noel Dempsey T.D. and an early meeting will be sought with him.

7.   Quality Assurance
7.1.   **IUQB**

The governing authorities of the seven universities have approved the proposal for the establishment of the IUQB. Arrangements are being made for the appointment of an Assistant Director (Academic) C.H.I.U. who will act as Chief Executive of the IUQB and will undertake, as a priority, arrangements to put the Board in place as soon as possible.

7.2.   **QA Q1 Reports**

The Registrar's Group, at a meeting on 31st May, 2002 agreed the general terms of a draft proposal in relation to the publication of reports and undertook to take the terms of the proposal to their governing authorities for approval.

7.3. HEA Review of QA Procedures

A revised proposal for the conduct of the HEA review of universities QA/Q1 procedures as provided for under the Universities Act 1997 was sent by the HEA to University Heads on 14th May, 2002. The Registrar's Group considered that the revised proposal had taken on board the views of the Group as conveyed at meetings with the HEA and was therefore generally acceptable. It was noted that submission from universities were required by 4th October, 2002 and it was proposed that the contributions be submitted with a general overview for the sector.

7.4. IUQSC Project

The document entitled *"A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities: Meeting the Challenge of Change"* being prepared by a subgroup of the IUQSC has undergone extensive redrafting since last reported on at the Plenary on 15th April, 2002. The latest draft was considered at the IUQSC on 10th June, 2002 and will be discussed at the Registrars' Group meeting on 17th June.

7.5. ENQA

Professor Aidan Moran represented C.H.I.U. at the General Assembly and Bi-Annual Conference of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Copenhagen, 27-28 May, 2002. The conference was attended by over 60 delegates. These included almost 40 from the ENQA member organizations. These are mainly national or regional quality assurance agencies for higher education, of which their were 23 in attendance; 14 ministries of education, not including Ireland; 9 representatives from quality assurance agencies in Central and Eastern European countries; other attendees are guests such as the European Commission, the International Association of University Presidents, the ENIC/NARIC network, the tuning project, and candidate agencies. The Irish delegation consisted of Mary Kerr of the Higher Education Authority, Aidan Moran on behalf of the Irish Universities, Seamus Puirseil and Liam Ryan from the Higher Education and Training Awards Council, and Bryan Maguire from the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. A full set of conference documents and proceedings will be posted on the ENQA website shortly at www.enqa.net.

Preliminary results were presented from a comparative project on quality assurance in Europe conducted on behalf of ENQA by the Danish Evaluation Institution. Trends noted were an increasing tendency to internationalisation and Europeanisation in the Quality Assurance procedures; increasing use of audit methods; under-utilisation of student or learner input at national level. The project raised considerable methodological issues around the use of terms such as evaluation, accreditation, and audit. The difficulty in defining these terms was noted. The publication of this report could influence approaches to quality assurance in higher education in Ireland by HETAC and NQAI.

An important theme of the ENQA conference was on how the network can respond to the profile given to it in the Prague declaration where ENQA was the only organisation mentioned by name with a role in developing the European dimension of Quality Assurance. The staff from the Danish Evaluation Institute are likely to be influential in developing the policies and approaches of ENQA.

8. NQAI

As a further stage in the development of a national framework of qualifications, the NQAI published *"Towards a National Framework of Qualifications: Establishment of Policies and Criteria"*. Copy of full document is available at www.nqai.ie.

The NQAI also published a discussion paper *"Towards a National Framework of Qualifications – Inclusion of Professional and International Awards"* and has invited submissions from interested parties by end of August 2002. Copy of full document is available at www.nqai.ie.

9. International

9.1. *EUA Conference*

The EUA's first Annual Assembly was held in Roskilde, Denmark on 19th & 20th April in conjunction with an EUA Conference on "Autonomy and Quality: The Challenge for Institutions". The principal conference papers presented at the conference were circulated to C.H.I.U. Council, Registrars and IUQSC are attached as appendices as follows:

- University Autonomy in Europe: Changing Paradigms in University Policy
- University in Europe: Ebbs and Flows of Institutional Autonomy
- Quality as a Tool for Autonomy: Autonomy as a Condition for Quality
- Towards a Worldwide Quality Register for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agencies
- Autonomy of Universities and Standardisation of Quality

9.2. *Bologna Process*

The EUA submitted a number of pilot projects to the Socrates programme and announced a call for applications for the following two projects which C.H.I.U. circulated to Irish universities on 29th April, 2002.

- **Quality Culture** in European higher education, for 40 institutions to be clustered in six networks, each network focusing on a specific issue of internal quality assurance
- **Joint Masters** degree programmes for 10 existing networks of European institutions co-operating at Masters level

Applications were to be completed and returned by 15th June, 2002. These projects are seen by EUA as essential to advancement of one of the priorities of the EUA Action Plan which is to support the development of the European Higher Education Area. The results will be fed into preparations for the 2nd Convention of European higher education institutions to be held in Graz in May 2003 and following that its contribution to the Ministers' conference scheduled for September 2003 in Berlin.

9.3. *EUA Project – Tuning Educational Structures in Europe*

Early in 2001Rectors' Conferences in EU member states nominated universities to take part in the Tuning Project, a Socrates-sponsored initiative proposed and co-ordinated by the Universities of Deusto (Spain) and Groningen (Netherlands). Over 100 universities from 14 countries are participating in the project, and EUA is represented in the Project Steering Committee.

The Socrates supported initiative addressed several objectives of the Bologna process notably the establishment of readable and comparable degrees and the adoption of a two cycle system while maintaining university autonomy and diversity. More specifically the project attempted to define generic and subjective specific competences for first and second cycle studies in seven subject areas (business studies, educational sciences, geology, history, mathematics, chemistry and physics), and to provide a methodology for analyzing common elements and differences.

Irish universities were nominated as follows to participate in the project: Mathematics, UL; Business Administration, TCD; Geology, NUIG; History, UCC; Education Sciences, UCD; Synergy Groups Physics, NUIM; Chemistry, DCU.

A Closing Conference for the project hosted by the European Commission held on 31st May, 2002 was attended by Professor Don McQuillan for C.H.I.U. The programme for the Conference, presentations made to the Conference on the findings of the Project and the opening address given by EU Commissioner, Viviane Reding are on the project website : http://www.relint.deusto.es/TUNINGproject/indes.htm. The address is significant as it outlines Commission thinking and plans on Quality Assurance, Credits for Lifelong Learning and European Masters.

9.4.   *GATS Negotiations and Higher Education*

9.4.1. At the EUA Council meeting and Annual Assembly held on 18-20 April in Roskilde, Denmark, serious concern was expressed about the implications forthcoming negotiations on GATS would have for higher education services. In a number of countries – UK, Germany and Netherlands – for instance, there have been ongoing negotiations between Rectors Conference and Ministers of Education to address universities' concerns about the implications of GATS. In turn, the Ministers of Education have become involved with the Ministers for Trade who carry primary responsibility for GATS discussions within the EU.

There was a definite view that the EU would be reaching decisions on its stance on GATS negotiations in June and that it was vital that Ministers of Education and university bodies engage fully with the Trade Ministries to ensure that the full implications of the GATS proposals for higher education be understood and that each countries' interests in higher education be protected. C.H.I.U. circulated copies of a Report –*"Trade in Higher Education Services: The Implications of GATS"* to C.H.I.U. Council and Registrars' Groups for information [http://www.obhe.ac.uk/products/reports/pdf/March2002.pdf].

The implications for Irish universities and the whole Irish higher education sector need to be assessed and kept under review. The urgent need for proactive engagement with higher education interests in each country is set out clearly in Section 5.4., Concluding Remarks of the Report as follows:-

> *"5.4. Concluding Remarks*
> *Complex and contentious. These two words sum up the current analysis and debate about the impact of GATS on higher education. Opinions on the risks and benefits are divided, if not polarised. They differ within and between countries. Each country must undertake the very serious challenge of balancing opportunities and commitments to liberalise trade for exporting higher education services, with the possible impact, related to the same commitments, of the import of education services. This is not an easy task. One can tend to be liberal while considering*

exporting opportunities and more perfectionist when analyzing the implications of importing.

At this stage, one is left with the impression that there are more questions than clear answers. The questions are complex as they deal with –

- *Technical/legal issues of the agreement itself*
- *Education policy issues such as funding, access, accreditation, quality and intellectual property, and*
- *The larger more political/moral issues for society, such as the role and purpose of higher education, and the 'public good' or 'market commodity' approach.*

The one certainty in this picture is the need for the higher education sector to study these questions and to consult stakeholders. At the same time, it is necessary to be proactive and strategic in monitoring and influencing government negotiating positions for the request/offer stage of the GATS negotiations. This, of course, involves close communication with education departments and bodies in one's country. It is equally important not to lose sight of the need for international approaches and frameworks for the regulation of providers, quality assurance and qualification recognition. Finally, it is important not to overstate the impact of GATS. Trade in education was alive and well prior to and outside the purview of trade agreements. Yet, it is also critical not to understate the potential implications – risks and opportunities – of GATS".

9.4.2. Arising from discussion on GATS at the EUA Roskilde Conference, two papers prepared by Dr. Per Nyborg, Chairman, Committee for Higher Education and Research, Council of Europe were circulated to participants. The first paper *"GATS in Higher Education"* examines to what extent national proposals to WTO deal with the need for governments to retain sovereign rights to determine their own domestic educational policies and whether measures are envisaged to maintain and improve the quality of education. The second paper deals with the possible relationship of the Lisbon Convention to GATS in higher education.

9.4.3. *OECD/US Forum*
A Forum was held in Washington on 23/24 May, 2002 to allow for dialogue between advocates of trade in education services and education stakeholders. In practice it appears that the Forum was an attempt by the trade advocates to reassure education interests that there was no reason to be concerned about the impact of the GATS on either the public good nature or the quality of higher education. Proceedings of the Forum should shortly be on-line on the OECD website.

10.   Copyright

At the last C.H.I.U. meetings it was agreed to re-establish a C.H.I.U. Copyright Group representative of Librarians, Registrars, Secretaries, Finance Officers and IT staff to prepare for the inevitable negotiations with ICLA on copyright charges. An important element of the Group's work could be to ascertain the full range of uses to which copyright materials are put in universities and the various technologies involved. A critical issue that the Group would have to bear in mind is that most of the books and other copyright materials used in universities were not of Irish origin and that the copyright holders would not be represented by the ICLA. This raised the question as to whether universities would need to negotiate licences with a range of copyright holders as had happened in the UK.

C.H.I.U. Council Members were requested to make nominations from which a representative from each university would be chosen. The following is the composition of the Group: Sean Philips, Chair, Librarian UCD; Bill Simpson, Librarian, TCD; Aidan Moran, Registrar, UCC; Mary Dooley, Bursar, NUIG; Ann Gallagher, Director, Language Centre, NUIM; John Lancaster, Librarian, UL; Pat Barker, Registrar, DCU; John Coman, Corporate & Legal Affairs Secretary, UCD. It is understood that necessary arrangements are not yet in place for the issuing of licences under the Copyright Act.

A copy of a report *"Intellectual Property, the Internet and Higher Education"* can be downloaded from http://www.obhe.ac.uk/products/reports/pdf/April2002.pdf. It deals with the issue of ownership of copyright in academic institutions in the context of expanded use of the internet in higher education.

11.   Health Promotion
11.1.   *Health Promoting Colleges Network*

The establishment of the Network was a recommendation made at a national conference held in November, 2000 in MIC entitled *"Promoting Health on Campus"*. The Consultative Group for Health Promoting Colleges has agreed to the establishment of the Netwrok and to the appointment of a National Co-ordinator. The Group has been advised that HEA/DES have agreed in principle to finance the network and the co-ordinator.

11.2.   *National Working Group on Alcohol Consumption in Higher Education*

Following publication of the *"Framework for a College Alcohol Policy"*, the Working Group identified as a key action the undertaking of a Life-Style Survey on all third level college campuses, the Department of Health and Children will fund the questionnaire development and data analysis. Individual colleges will be expected to support the local advertising of the survey and the distribution and return of questionnaires. The survey will be undertaken around weeks 4 and 5 of the coming academic year. Information on the survey was sent to the Registrars and they agreed at their meeting on 31st May, 2002 that the survey should be fully supported by the universities.

12. External Relations

12.1. Australian Vice Chancellors' Visit

A delegation from the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) visited Dublin on 27/28th May. The AVCC delegation was as follows:-

Professor Di Yerbury, (Vice-President of AVCC), Vice-Chancellor, Macquerie University; Professor Lance Twomey, Vice-Chancellor, Curtin University of Technology; Professor Michael Osborne, Vice-Chancellor, La Trobe University; Professor Jarleth Ronayne, Vice-Chancellor, Victoria University; Professor John Rickard, Vice-Chancellor, Southern Cross University; Mr. John Mullarvey, CEO, AVCC; Mr. Bob Goddard, Director, International, AVCC.

C.H.I.U. arranged the programme for the visit which included a C.H.I.U./AVCC seminar on a range of issues of common interest. A press release issued by the AVCC in Australia is on their website. C.H.I.U. and AVCC representatives agreed that both sides should work towards establishing a formal agreement on co-operation. AVCC is to provide copies of agreement they have signed with rectors conferences in other countries. The AVCC delegation extended an invitation to C.H.I.U. representatives to visit the AVCC and Australian universities in October/November 2002.

13. Work Permits/Visas

The Irish Independent reported on C.H.I.U.'s submission to the Minister for Enterprise Trade and Employment seeking fast-track visa and work permit arrangements for academics and students recruited from abroad. C.H.I.U. subsequently requested the DES to pursue the matter with DETE in the light of reported relaxation of work permit arrangements for non-EEA nationals for recruitment to certain positions in the health services. The matter will be pursued directly by C.H.I.U. with the new government and through the Steering Group reported on at para.2.8 above.

14. Buckley Review Body Report, No. 39

The findings of the Saxton Bampfylde Hever Report which reviewed the recommendations of Buckley Report No. 39 on the salaries of university Heads were reported on in an Irish Times article on 29th April, 2002. A response to the Report was received from the Minister for Finance on 22nd April, 2002. Predictably the response fails to address the substantive conclusions but instead suggests that universities should accept the Buckley Report recommendations without question and that the Minister does not propose to revisit the recommendations. However, he did note that Report No. 39 might limit the field of applicants for posts of Heads of Irish Universities.