

**IUA Review [06/2] for IUA Meetings  
in UL on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2006.**

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### **1. Research**

#### **1.1. National Research Plan 2007-2014**

The universities have stressed that the proposed overhead of 30% on direct costs is totally inadequate for sustained investment in research. The IUA met with DES, HEA and Forfás in early February to discuss this issue and were fully supported by DES and HEA. Informal indications are that the plan will be announced after Easter.

#### **1.2. Science Foundation Ireland**

##### **1.2.1. Fixed Term Workers Act [see also section 3.5]**

The universities are considering taking a firm stand on this issue by informing SFI that they cannot sign contracts where pension and social costs for employed researchers are not covered.

#### **1.3. Work Permits and Visas for Non-EU Researchers**

With effect from February 2006, exemptions from the FÁS process were extended to all researchers in research-active organisation (including those to be employed in industry) who are being supported by public funding – national, EU or international.

#### **1.4. European Research Policy**

##### **1.4.1. Researchers Charter and Code of Conduct for Recruitment**

The quarterly Researcher Mobility Network meeting delivered an information seminar for network members (a high percentage representing the universities) on The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for Recruitment of Researchers. Numerous copies of the charter and code have been disseminated throughout the universities and other research based institutions. It is now proposed that the Irish universities formally adopt the Charter and Code of Conduct for Recruitment.

#### **1.5. EU Sixth Framework Programme**

##### **1.5.1. FP6 Drawdown**

The total funding to Ireland to-date from Framework Programme 6 is €163,956,145, with 74% of the total Irish figure attributable to the HE sector. The majority of Calls are now closed, with evaluation results pending.

### **1.5.2. Human Resources & Mobility Programme – Marie Curie**

The Marie Curie Programme continues to be the most successful part of the Framework Programme for Ireland in relative terms, and the Irish draw-down from the programme is €43,778,555 representing 27% of the total. Evaluation results are expected in April/May. The IUA, as National Contact Point for the Marie Curie Programme projects that the €50m target they set for Ireland in Marie Curie for FP6 will be exceeded

## **1.6. EU Seventh Framework Programme**

### **1.6.1. National Support Structure for FP7**

The Forfás Board has recommended a new national support structure for FP7 that will provide a dedicated service to applicants. This is much in line with the IUA recommendations to DETE/Forfás however there are still issues outstanding and IUA is concerned about the implementation of the report. For example;

- The report recommends that the new core unit to support FP7 should be housed in an existing agency. The IUA would be very concerned if this simply means assigning it without any clear selection and evaluation process. The IUA has provided full support for researchers accessing the Marie Curie Programme and would contend that this has been the most successful service in FP6. This is reflected in the results where the research income from Marie Curie represents 27% of the total for a programme with only 9% of the total FP6 budget. By the end of FP6 Marie Curie funding will dominate both indigenous and multinational industry funding. The IUA expects that this level of support and success must be replicated across all of FP7. For this reason the running of the FP7 support unit should go out to tender and both public and private organisations could bid for the contract.
- There is no recognition of existing national expertise in this model. For example, within the universities the Research Officers, Research Accountants and AURIL Ireland collectively have greater expertise than all of the current national delegates and NCP's. This expertise must be harnessed for the national good in FP7. Such groups should be recognised and become explicit members of the NSS with appropriate resourcing. They will bring great added value to the NSS.

The IUA will follow up with the Department of Enterprise on these and other issues to ensure that an effective support structure is put into place for universities during FP7.

### **1.6.2. Rules for Participation in FP7**

The IUA is involved in ongoing consultation on the Rules for Participation in FP7. The new Rules for FP7 propose the complete removal of the so-called "additional cost model" (AC) for the reimbursement of the costs of participants in EU FP projects. The EC is pushing hard for all participants to use full-cost accounting. This would have serious, negative effects for our universities (and for universities around Europe) as we do not yet operate a Full Cost

accounting system for research (it has taken the UK over 5 years to implement this move, and there are still issues with the new full cost system).

Leverage of alternative funding for research is seen by Government as an essential part of the National Research Plan. As the Framework Programme is our universities only substantial non-exchequer source of research funding, it is essential that we maximise our potential draw-down from this source. The proposed requirement for full cost accounting by the EC is premature and unrealistic for our universities at present, and will see the universities subventing the actual cost of involvement in FP, rather than it being a viable source of levered funds. Although the universities aim to move towards a Full-cost system, this will take time - FP7 will commence in 2007.

The IUA has therefore taken a strong stance on the removal of the AC model in the Rules for Participation. Our position paper prepared in wide consultation with the universities, formed the basis for our views. We have worked closely with DETE and Pdraig O’Conaill, Attaché at the Perm Rep to the EU, who has been representing our significant concerns in the ongoing negotiations on this issue. Minister Michéal Martin took a strong stance on the issue at the recent Council meeting supporting the IUA position, and was backed by France and Germany amongst others.

The IUA was invited to present to the Joint Committee on Education and Science on the implications of the new Rules for Participation in Framework 7 on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006. Dr. I. Ó Muircheartaigh, NUIG, as IUA President, led the IUA delegation with representation from a number of universities. Presenting to the Joint Committee provided the universities with the opportunity to emphasise the strategic need to increase investment in universities. The IUA position and that investment in research in the universities needs to be underpinned by realistic cost bases was pressed home with key politicians.

### ***1.6.3. European Institute of Technology (EIT)***

In the words of the European Commission the European Institute of Technology will be a new, multi-site legal entity which brings together the best teams and university departments in strategic fields across Europe to support and strengthen the innovation triangle of Education/Knowledge, Research and Innovation. The European Commission claims that the “real difference” is that EIT will “educate, do research and seek to apply the outcomes of that research to commercial and societal ends”, whereas in existing programmes “the Commission essentially distributes funds for various pre-defined activities”. In the opinion of the IUA the European Commission is an effective yet bureaucratic structure for funding research through the Framework Programmes. Europe (and Ireland) already has a cadre of research intensive universities that educate, do research and implement technology transfer programmes; there is no need for another institution (EIT) to fulfill this role.

We have been in contact with Universities UK and European Universities Association (EUA) who share our view of the EIT. We have also discussed this with the Office of Science and Technology. At a recent Council of Ministers' meeting the EIT was put on the back burner for the moment due to a wide degree of scepticism.

**1.7. *Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences:***

The IUA wrote to IRCHSS to indicate that the universities can no longer subsidise the fees of PhD students funded by the Council. Currently all other funding agencies do cover PhD fees and IRCHSS is the exception. They have responded and are willing to discuss the situation.

**1.8. *Co-ordination of Research Audits***

The IUA has written to the Chair of the Standing Committee of Research Funding Bodies seeking a meeting to discuss the possibility of agreeing a co-ordinated approach to research audits by funding agencies. It is expected that this would greatly reduce the administrative burden on universities. A response to the letter is awaited.

**1.9. *Irish Researcher Mobility Office and Web Portal***

The next development phase of the [researchcareersireland.com](http://researchcareersireland.com) portal involving the integration of the Research Job Opportunities function tool commenced in March. This will allow the universities to upload and advertise their research job opportunities *free of charge* both nationally and in Europe on **Europa** - the portal site of the European Union (<http://europa.eu.int/>) via the centralized national website.

To date, the Researcher Mobility Office Ireland portal **researchcareersireland.com** has been developed with co-funding from DETE (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment) ~ €25,000 in year 1 of the project. As a response to the IUA submission for increased DETE funding to develop and improve the recruitment advertising function of the Irish Portal, the IUA has been successful in increasing the allocation from €25,000 to €40,000 for 2006.

In addition to DETE funding, the project needs a further commitment of €17,500 that will be included in the IUA budget proposal for 2006-2007. The researcher mobility network which mainly consists of university representatives are fully committed to this development to ensure Ireland achieves the national targets for increased numbers of researchers by 2013.

The IUA will play a validating and controlling role at the centre of the research job opportunity process and the system will be designed to support this. Training will be delivered to all University members of the Network by the National co-ordinator to ensure that all research vacancies and opportunities within the universities are showcased on a national, European and International scale. The launch is scheduled to take place at the end of June.

**1.10. International Promotion of IUA at AAAS Conference:**

The IUA attended the AAAS Conference<sup>1</sup>, the largest scientific and research conference in the world held on 16-20 February, 2006 in St Louis and focused on promoting Ireland as a location for researchers (especially the research diaspora) and students. The exhibition stand consisted of three parts: the Irish Researcher Mobility Office, promoting researchcareersireland.com portal, expertiseireland.com portal and a section dedicated to promoting the seven Irish Universities.

The collaborative nature of both portals and the availability of university publications and literature proved very effective and attracted many visitors to the exhibition stand. Numerous follow-up emails and enquiries have been received from members of AAAS, prospective students and researchers wishing to move to Ireland and other research institutions.

**1.11. expertiseireland.com**

The number of experts contributing information to the portal has broken the 4,500 barrier. The breakdown is as follows:

University College Dublin 658; Dublin Institute of Technology 651; University of Dublin, Trinity College 607; University of Ulster 585; Dublin City University 466; University College Cork 447; Queen's University Belfast 409; National University of Ireland, Galway 352; University of Limerick 263; National University of Ireland, Maynooth 98\*; Institute of Technology, Tallaght 4

\*Note: 200 profiles uploaded from NUIM to expertiseireland.com, but only 24 were extracted, InfoEd are investigating.

The number of Technology Transfer Licensing Opportunities has increased to 26 from 6 institutions. There is a considerable time being invested with the other IoT's to facilitate their contribution of profiles.

A Diaspora database has been created and is due for publication in April 2006. All alumni offices have been contacted with requests for assistance in this endeavour.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.aaas.org/meetings/Annual\\_Meeting/](http://www.aaas.org/meetings/Annual_Meeting/)

**Comparison of the average annual statistics for year ending February 2005 vs year ending February 2006**

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Average duration per visit	27	80	196.3
# Page Impressions	214,017	310,651	45.1
# Searches	19,607	26,651	35.9
# Visits	19,438	32,276	66
New registrations	774	784	1.3
News articles viewed	2,220	2,336	5.2
# Profiles accessed	21,279	38,667	81.7

## **2. University Reform**

### **2.1. Sectoral Position**

#### **2.1.1. Strategic Innovation Fund**

A presentation was made to the Plenary on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2006. The presentation outlined the background to the SIF and the challenges it posed for the universities. The Council established a Working Group chaired by Dr. J. Hegarty, TCD, to prepare a sectoral position on the SIF for submission to the HEA. Other members of the Group are Prof. J. Browne, NUIG [Vice-Chair]; Prof. P. Giller, UCC; Dr. J. Walsh, NUIM; Ms. A. Quinlivan, UL; Prof. D. Fitzgerald, UCD; Prof. N. Canny, NUIG; Prof. M. Slowey, DCU, Dr. C.O'Carroll, IUA.

Having prepared a draft paper, the Working Group met with HEA Chair and Executive to discuss the main points. In the light of the discussions, the Working Group finalised a position paper which was then submitted to the HEA.

The HEA indicated that the Call for Proposals will be in early May with a deadline about 2 months later.

#### **2.1.2. Graduate Schools**

The universities have worked together to agree a common position on Graduate Schools/Programmes in the context of the Strategic Innovation Fund and submitted their conclusions to the HEA. The IUA believe that focus must be the creation of Fourth Level Ireland. The current system of a PhD student enrolling with a research supervisor to work on a narrowly focused project and graduates in 3–8 years is not sustainable. Fourth Level Ireland is about innovative research led teaching, learning and supervision in our universities to create a new type of PhD graduate. The new PhD graduate will have developed as an independent thinker who will be ready for employment equally as a researcher and in other professions to sustain the knowledge based society. The IUA participated in a Forum on Graduate Schools

organised by the HEA and were pleased to find that the conclusions of the workshop coincide with those of the universities.

The universities, while fully committed to graduate schools, will only proceed in the context of the Strategic Innovation Fund and the National Research Plan. As a consequence the IUA wrote to IRCSET and IRCHSS in February to indicate that they would not participate in the IRCSET/IRCHSS graduate schools call for proposals.

### **2.1.3. Collaborative Projects**

With a view to undertaking preparatory work for formulating collaborative projects under SIF in anticipation of a HEA call for proposals, two IUA Working Groups are being set up in respect of each of the following actions proposed in the IUA position paper on SIF –

- Reform of management and governance such as the implementation of restructuring and reform of academic and administrative systems, improved performance management involving staff training/retraining and reprofiling of staff in light of new needs. While each institution will have its own distinctive approach some Human Resource issues could be addressed at a sectoral level
- Development of enabling strategies for integrated information management and flow. While each institution may be at different stages of development, there is strong case for all institutions to ensure that their systems are capable of delivering information in a comprehensive and timely manner and that the processes are in place to use the information effectively. A strong sectoral dimension would be desirable

### **2.2. National Development Plan**

The Director made a presentation on the National Development Plan on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2006. It was agreed that IUA, as a “concerned interest group” should insist on being consulted in the preparation of the National Development Plan. The main challenge identified for the universities was to formulate proposals for the sector which could win the increased recurrent and capital investment required over the period 2007-2013 to deliver on the strategic objectives for the sector. It was agreed that a Working Group on funding to be chaired by Dr. I. Ó Muricheartaigh would also consider the development of an appropriate funding model as a key aspect of making the case for increased funding under the NDP. The need for consultations with the IUA on the NDP has been raised with DES Secretary General and HEA Chairman.

### **2.3. OECD Economic Survey**

The OECD Economic Survey Ireland, published in March 2006, highlighted the need for education reform, increasing investment in higher education and research. Some relevant extracts follow –

- Boosting competition will be important for meeting the productivity challenge, as will improving the education system and strengthening the research framework
- Reforms at all levels of the education system are needed

- Fees could improve access and provide additional funding for tertiary education. Funding is an issue in the tertiary sector. This makes it harder to undertake research, attract staff from abroad and retain graduate students. It may also worsen human capital bottlenecks. One option is to re-introduce tuition fees but back them with an income-contingent loan scheme.
- If the government is unwilling to do this, it will have to find the required funding from other areas of the budget.
- Public funding for R&D remains well below the OECD average, and research funding per student and per faculty member is much less than in similar universities elsewhere.
- Despite the role played by the PRTLTI, infrastructure deficits persist and will be exacerbated the closer the government gets to achieving its long-term target for R&D spending.
- While public funding for research increased sharply in the National Development Plan for 2000/06, it has not kept pace with the growth of the economy. The government needs to improve the science framework. The plethora of funding agencies poses risks for the efficiency and coherence of the system. Co-ordination among the granting agencies will have to improve and in particular infrastructure spending should be more closely tied to the other funding streams.
- Research in universities is probably under-funded, making it harder to attract top international talent, even though the 2006 Budget foresees increased funding for doctoral programmes. It is also important that resources should not be spread too thinly. The government may not be able to afford the luxury of having research centres in all regions; it may be better to concentrate resources on a few world-class centres of excellence.
- Below-average investment in tertiary education is unlikely to be sufficient to sustain strong labour productivity gains
- Another cause for concern with the higher education system is the low level of research budgets in universities and institutes of technology,
- Give the universities the means to increase their resources and the incentive to be more responsive to students' needs by –
  - levying fees that students (including part-time students) repay from their subsequent earnings
  - ensuring that fee income is not offset against a pre-determined level of public funding
- The suggested changes to the funding of higher education institutions should go a long way towards helping would-be adult students to find programmes that suit their needs better. Publicly-funded training programmes should be limited to the most vulnerable groups.
- If a general move towards fee-based financing of higher education institutions proved impossible, at least a level playing field should be established between full and part-time students regarding fees and funding.

### 3. *Funding*

#### 3.1. *Current Funding 2005/2006*

Grant allocation letters in respect of 2006 were issued to individual universities from the HEA in early February. Details of grant allocations are summarised below:-

##### University Grant Allocations 2006

	2006 €000	2005 €000	% Increase
UCD	118,580	112,508	5.40%
UCC	74,223	69,939	6.13%
NUIG	55,650	51,537	7.98%
NUIM	25,795	24,150	6.81%
TCD	86,940	81,871	6.19%
UL	39,600	37,252	6.30%
DCU	30,475	28,607	6.53%
Total	431,263	405,864	6.26%

The total grant allocation of 6.3% is less than the 7% increase announced under the estimates process. €8m in funding has been withheld by the HEA on the instruction of the Department of Education & Science. €4m of this has been earmarked to meet the costs of implementation of the Fottrell Report, it is unclear what the remaining balance relates to.

These are the first grant allocations under the revised HEA recurrent funding allocation model. The impact of the new model on individual universities is significant in some cases and the full impact is being phased in over a three year period.

#### 3.2. *Funding Model*

A presentation on the revised HEA funding mechanisms was made to the Plenary on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2006 by M. Casey, IUA. An IUA working group, chaired by Dr. I. Ó Muirheartaigh was established to consider funding issues for the sector. Part of the terms of reference of this group is to examine the HEA revised funding allocation model and make recommendations as appropriate. The group met on 14 February 2006.

Arising from the meeting it was agreed that there were two key elements to the terms of reference of the group

1. To ensure that the sector obtains a level of funding appropriate to its needs
2. To examine the HEA proposed allocation mechanism and make recommendations as appropriate.

In respect of point 2 above it was agreed that the Registrar's and Finance Officers would examine the issues arising from the allocation mechanism in relation to student numbers and financial data respectively with a view to ensuring that there were clear and consistent rules and definitions in respect of all data inputs to the mechanism.

IUA Registrars, together with representatives of the University Financial Officers, have been working with the HEA towards an agreed approach to counting student numbers. The new financial allocation model requires this, together with an associated audit of student data in each university.

IUA has proposed that the new method for counting students should be on the basis of ECTS credits, 60 ECTS credits representing a full-time undergraduate student. Modules of several credits – usually around 5 – can be considered the basic unit into which an FTE can be broken down. Modules can likewise be attached to different price groups, etc.

Following meetings within IUA and then with the HEA on 6 March, agreement in principle has been secured regarding many of the issues. The HEA has undertaken to clarify its position on a small number of remaining issues arising from the IUA proposals. The HEA Executive will meet again with IUA Registrars on 10 April in order to finalise these issues by 21 April.

A meeting of a Finance sub-group has been arranged for 6<sup>th</sup> April to address finance related issues arising from the allocation mechanism. The Group will also consider the impact of moving to a harmonised undergraduate tuition fee, which the HEA is currently considering. It is anticipated that this group will have an agreed position shortly.

In respect of point 1 above it was noted that the development of a funding model as opposed to an allocation model could have a key role to play in making the case for increased funding. Such a model would have to be outputs based and should be based on a standard bill of costs per student which have been benchmarked internationally. The IUA executive is researching this at present and has been in contact with HEFCE in this regard.

### **3.3. Capital Funding**

A presentation was made to the Plenary on 30 January, 2006 by the Director on the challenges facing the university sector following the Minister for Finance's Budget announcement that €900m would be made available for the third level sector in the education capital envelope for 2006 - 2010 and the subsequent announcement by the Minister for Education & Science that only 7 of the 35 approved third level projects related to universities.

The IUA Council met with Brigid McManus, Secretary General of the Department of Education & Science on 1 February to discuss the implications of the above announcements for the capital programmes of the universities. Arising from that meeting it was agreed that the IUA would forward to the DES a priority list of capital requirements for the sector that are ready to commence. The list was to exclude those projects which had been approved under the Kelly report and subsequently approved for funding by the government and was also to exclude any research projects that could be funded under the National Research Plan. The list was also to include the annual investment requirements of the sector for equipment renewal and minor works. The priority list of capital projects was submitted to the DES on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2006. A response is awaited from DES in relation to this submission.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006 Minister Hanafin T.D. announced a further €14m in funding to the IoT's for minor capital works in 2006. This funding added to the IoT's 'take' from the €900m capital envelope, particularly as this is intended to be an annual provision. This announcement adds to the perception that DES regards the IoT's as a higher priority for capital funding for than the universities.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2006 the DES held an information seminar on PPP's for those universities that have had projects approved for funding under PPP arrangements.

### **3.4. Pension Issues**

The HEA Working Group on Pensions continues to consider the range of pension issues facing the sector at present. The group met on 9<sup>th</sup> March last and for the first time a representative from the Department of Finance attended the meeting and gave an indication of the types of approaches being considered by the Department of Finance. It was clear that no decisions had been made at this stage.

Some of the key points to note are as follows:-

- Arising from the IORP Directive it is likely that funded university pension schemes could no longer be exempt from the funding standard
- It is likely that approval would only be given for new model schemes to operate on a pay-as-you-go basis
- It is highly unlikely that approval would be given for any defined contribution schemes
- Options being considered for dealing with deficits on existing schemes include
  - lump-sum grant
  - the State to take over the assets and liabilities of the funds
  - the State to provide support for schemes by effectively underwriting the liabilities with agreed contributions and benefits

The Department of Education and Science and the Department of Finance had raised concerns about the added years provisions of existing university schemes and in particular the extent to

which added years have been awarded more extensively in the university sector than elsewhere in the public sector. The HEA had recently written to universities requesting action to bring added years provisions in existing schemes into line with those in the model scheme.

### **3.5. *Fixed Term Work Act***

Following the recommendations of the IUA Working Group on Pensions it appears that a number of differences have arisen between universities in respect of the implementation of the Act. It is essential that all universities act consistently and cohesively in relation to this or universities run the risk of being ‘picked off’ by funding agencies. The sectoral position has been further complicated by indications from the Department of Finance that defined contribution schemes will not be approved. This remains an urgent issue for the sector and there are an increasing number of cases going to the Rights Commissioner or similar bodies. The IUA, through the pensions working group will continue to pursue this matter.

SFI is persisting with its stance on not providing funding for pension and similar costs arising from the Protection of Employees (Fixed Term Work) Act. The IUA has written to SFI seeking a meeting with SFI, HEA, DES and DETE to discuss this issue further and SFI have now indicated a willingness to do so. However, the matter has now come to a head in respect of the Research Frontiers Programme and the IUA President has proposed that the universities adopt a sectoral position on SFI contracts.

### **3.6. *Nursing – Transfer of Midwifery and Nursing Education to Third Level***

The HSE has been in contact with individual universities in relation to the early payment of 75% of the capital costs associated with the transfer of undergraduate midwifery and children’s nursing to third level. This payment is to allow universities to commence preparations for the transfer in advance of the commencement of undergraduate programmes in September 2006. Some outstanding financial issues remain to be resolved including final agreement of capital requirements and whether temporary facility monies are required. The HSE will be following up such issues with individual universities.

Representatives from the IUA, which included Heads of Nursing, HR officials and Finance Officers, met with officials from the Department of Health & Children, HSE and INO on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2006 to consider a number of HR/IR issues relating to the transfer of staff to third level institutions. The issue of the transfer of post-registration courses is under review by the National Implementation Group.

## **4. *Review Body on Higher Remuneration in the Public Sector***

### **4.1. *Heads, Registrars, Secretaries and Bursars Submissions***

In response to an invitation from the Review Body on Higher Remuneration in the Public Sector, the IUA made two submissions – one relating to the University Heads, and the other for

the posts of Registrars, Secretaries and Bursars. The IUA established a working group and engaged Athrú Consulting to assist in the formulation of the universities' submissions.

#### **4.2. *Review of Professors' Remuneration***

The Review Body on Higher Remuneration in the Public Sector has invited the IUA, as the sectoral body representing the professors' employers, to make a submission on the review of professors' remuneration that the Body has been requested by the Department of Finance to carry out with the agreement of the relevant trade unions. The IUA convened a Working Group of university nominees to commence the preparation of the IUA submission and has engaged Athrú Consulting to assist in the task.

### **5. *HEA***

#### **5.1. *Code of Practice for the Governance of Third Level Institutions***

As reported in the January IUA Review it was proposed that an independent expert would be appointed to develop a joint HEA/IUA Framework for the Governance of Universities. A working group under the chairmanship of Mr. Dermot Quigley has now been set up to progress this and the HEA also proposed that Mr. M. Kelleher, former secretary/bursar UCC should be a member of the group. A further expert may be appointed and the IUA Secretary's group has suggested that a representative from the UK system with direct experience of University governance issues would be a useful addition to the group.

In order to assist in progressing this matter the IUA Secretary's group has reviewed and redrafted a code, based on the DES draft Code of Practice, which universities would be in a position to accept. This draft is currently under review by the Secretary's Group.

#### **5.2. *Consolidated Financial Statements***

The HEA wrote to university Chief Finance Officers on 28 February 2006 in relation to a number of issues raised by the Comptroller & Auditor General following from a recent meeting of the C&AG and the HEA. The C&AG expressed serious concern in relation to the delay in finalisation of university consolidated financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2003. Similar concerns have been raised previously by both the Department of Finance and the Department of Education & Science and there is now an urgent need to finalise and publish details of consolidated accounts for universities.

Consolidated accounts are prepared on a different accounting basis to the university harmonised accounts or funding statement. There is huge potential for misinterpretation of surpluses arising in consolidated accounts as highlighted in the *'Report of the Working Group on The Financial Position of Irish Universities'*. In order to minimise the potential for misinterpretation the IUA University Chief Finance Officers Group has agreed with the HEA that –

1. All universities would publish consolidated accounts at the same time
2. Universities would publish at least two years accounts together rather than have one year in isolation

In addition it was agreed that the HEA/IUA would jointly prepare an explanatory note to accompany consolidated accounts which would endeavour to explain the key differences between consolidated and harmonised accounts and address the potential for misinterpretation.

### **5.3. Job Evaluation Schemes**

The HEA has also written to universities about Job Evaluation Schemes relaying DES concerns about the operation of such schemes by the universities. Issues raised were –

- adherence by universities to a principle governing the procedures for existing schemes that – “the HEA, and in turn the Departments are notified of the number of applications, and, at a later stage, the number of upgradings if any”,
- that a convincing case has to be made on whether Review Committees have the necessary expertise, experience and knowledge to take account of the wider developments and changes in jobs in the Public Sector generally and that schemes reflect current accepted practices in relation to evaluations.
- the need for institutions to seek prior approval in all circumstances before such schemes are activated for any purpose,
- that new schemes should not be introduced in any circumstances or for any purpose in the absence of specific prior approval from DES.

## **6. Medical Education**

On 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2006 that Tánaiste and Minister for Health and Children, Mary Harney, T.D. and the Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin, T.D. announced details of a €200 million Government initiative for major reform of medical education and training from undergraduate level through to postgraduate specialist training. The announcement was made at the publication in Dublin of two reports on the reform of medical education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. *The Report of the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Group*, chaired by Dr. Jane Buttimer and the *Report of the Working Group on Undergraduate Medical Education and Training*, chaired by Prof. Pat Fottrell.

The following is a summary of Actions proposed by government on the reports:-

- Increase the overall annual intake of Irish/EU medical students from 305 to 725 over a four year period. This represents an increase of 238% on the existing intake.
- Increase to 485 the number of Irish/EU undergraduate places available. An additional 70 places will be provided in September 2006. A further 40 places will be provided in 2007 with a further 35 in each of 2008 and 2009.

- Introduce a graduate entry programme to medical education which will provide 240 additional places per annum, on the basis of 60 places being provided per year over a four year period.
- The Higher Education Authority to issue a competitive call for proposals to provide graduate entry programmes, with a view to a start on entry to this programme being made in 2007.
- An Expert Group to be established (by the Higher Education Authority) to develop an objective standardised selection test to evaluate suitability and aptitude for entry to graduate medical education.
- The Expert Group responsible for developing a selection test for graduate entry will also be asked to develop a new entry mechanism for undergraduate medical entry in line with the Fottrell Report recommendation that entry should no longer be based exclusively on Leaving Certificate performance. The Group will draw on its work in devising and assessing suitable selection systems for the graduate entry programme and will take account of the need to reward strong academic performance. To allow sufficient notice for students there will be no revised undergraduate selection process before 2008.
- Additional multi-annual funding for curriculum developments will be made available. Additional academic clinicians will be recruited to facilitate this – commencing with the recruitment of 8 new academic clinicians in 2006.
- An Inter-Departmental Steering Group involving the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Health and Children, the Higher Education Authority and the Health Services Executive is to be put in place to plan medical education policy. A National Implementation Committee, representative of the wider stakeholders is also to be appointed to oversee the programme of reform and expansion and to assess current infrastructure and future requirements.
- €4 million is being made available by Minister for Education and Science in 2006 for increases in the number of places, curriculum reform and appointment of academic clinicians. The Estimated overall cost of the programme of reform set out in both reports is over €200m

## **7. Access**

### **7.1. Who Went to College in 2004?**

The HEA published the Report - *Who Went to College in 2004? – A National Survey of New Entrants to Higher Education*. The key points are –

- Participation in higher education in Ireland has increased by 11% since 1998 and is now 55%.
- All socio-economic groups have benefited. This is particularly so for the Skilled Manual Group which has almost doubled their participation in higher education to a range of 50-60% compared to 32% in 1998. The Semi and Unskilled Socio-Economic Group has

also made a considerable advance - from 23% to between 33-40% over the same period. At 71%, Sligo is the county with the highest rate of admission to higher education and there has been a 13% increase in the rate of admission for Dublin. Seven out of every 10 (68.3%) of those who sat the Leaving Certificate entered some form of higher education.

- When entrants to higher education institutions in Northern Ireland are included, the national figure for participation in higher education reaches 56%; and rises further to close to 60% when entrants to Colleges in Great Britain are added.
- participation has gone from 20% in 1980 to nearly three times that figure in 2004
- regarding targets set by the Government following the publication of the McNamara Report on Access in 2001 - the target for the unskilled group of 33% by 2006 has been surpassed and the number of mature entrants at 9.4% has almost reached the target of 10% set for 2006.

## **7.2. *Evaluation of Access Programmes***

An evaluation of access programmes in all universities and IoTs by the HEA's National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education (NAO) is still ongoing. The self-evaluation phase was completed by individual institutions in late February/early March 2006. The external analysis of these reports by the HEA consultant, Cynthia Deane of Options Consulting, is now taking place and a first discussion of preliminary findings will take place with IUA Registrars on 10 April.

## **7.3. *Higher Education Access Route***

In parallel, the IUA Access Officers Group has been considering changes to the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) programme for socio-economically disadvantaged students, and has prepared a draft proposal. This will also be discussed with IUA Registrars on 10 April. It is expected that the IUA access officers will also publish a brief report on the first years of the HEAR programme, highlighting the many successes of this and the lessons learned in terms of policies and practice.

## **7.4. *Access Students/Revised HEA Funding Mechanism***

As part of the proposed new approach to student numbers for HEA grant allocation purposes, the NAO produced a set of proposals in February 2006 concerning data collection and allocation of additional funding for under-represented students. These proposals were discussed with IUA Registrars and Financial Officers, and also with the NAO advisory group. Many comments were made regarding both the data collection and funding allocation proposals. Comments were also received from IUA access officers. The HEA and NAO are to revise these proposals in the light of comments made so far.

## **8. Internationalisation**

### **8.1. Sectoral Collaboration**

Following on previous work undertaken by the IUA international officers and registrars, further steps were taken during the first 3 months of 2006 to promote the internationalisation efforts of IUA universities in line with a Council decision to press ahead with a sectoral internationalisation strategy. IUA has been following up initial actions with Enterprise Ireland (EI), the International Education Board of Ireland (IEBI) and the Department of Justice. Progress with EI has not been satisfactory, relating essentially to the positioning and labelling of different categories of educational bodies on EI trade missions, despite formal acceptance by EI of IUA's requests. Discussions have intensified with IEBI regarding the joint presence of all IUA universities at the NAFSA international education fair in Montreal in May 2006 – this will be the first time that the universities have organised a stand jointly under the IUA banner, and a number of issues have had to be negotiated with IEBI. A detailed response was received from the Department of Justice to the IUA letter of December 2005, to which IUA must now respond substantively.

IUA has prepared a brochure on the Irish university system aimed at international partners, this is currently at press and will be tested by each university in the EI mission to India at the end of April 2006.

### **8.2. Report on India**

The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education has published a report on the entry of foreign education providers in India. The Report "*Foreign Education Providers in India: Mapping the Extent and Regulation*" is by Professor Sudhanshu Bhushan, Head of the Higher Education Unit at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), India.

The past decade has seen a rapid increase in the number and diversification of private and foreign players in India, with limited mission co-ordination, data collection or quality assurance mechanisms in place. Based on the findings of a survey undertaken by the National Institution of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), this report provides quantitative and qualitative analysis to gauge the present extent and regulation of foreign education providers in India. The Report offers an 'insider's view' on foreign educational activity in India.

### **8.3. European Baccalaureat**

IUA has received a number of representations from the Department of Education and interested parent groups regarding university admissions procedures for students holding the European Baccalaureat. Concern has been expressed that the procedures in place do not give these students the same opportunities as Irish Leaving Certificate holders. The IUA admissions officers have been briefed on this issue and will discuss it again at their next meeting.

## **9. National Framework of Qualifications**

### **9.1. Placement of Awards within the Framework**

In December 2005 IUA Registrars agreed a procedure with the NQAI for the placement of minor, special purpose and supplemental university awards on the National Framework of Qualifications. On 13 April 2006, IUA will meet with NQAI to inform it of how these awards are now being handled by each university.

### **9.2. Access, Transfer and Progression**

A revised version of the report by McIver Consulting on “transfer and progression into undergraduate programmes leading to university awards” was considered in January 2006 by the NQAI, IUA and HEA project group. A new draft has now been prepared. The focus of the report is on entry into honours bachelor degree programmes in the university sector through transfer from HETAC awards, through progression from FETAC or equivalent awards, and entry from UK further education and higher education awards. The report is expected to provide considerable assistance to IUA universities in establishing guidelines and frameworks for such transfer and progression.

### **9.3. Recognition Issues**

Within its mandate regarding the recognition of qualifications, in 2005 the NQAI established Recognition Ireland to act as the Irish national academic recognition information centre (NARIC), as part of a Europe-wide network of such centres. Dr. Attracta Halpin represents the universities on the advisory board of Recognition Ireland. A brochure on the Lisbon Convention, the Europe-wide legally binding convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region, (ratified by Ireland in 2004) has been produced. A working group has been established to help develop a national action plan for recognition, which is one of the elements each country should put in place as part of the Bologna Process. Lewis Purser currently represents IUA on this working group, which should produce a draft plan by late 2006.

### **9.4. Building Control Bill 1995**

The IUA contacted DES and HEA in February 2006 about a number of provisions in the Building Control Bill which was going through the Oireachtas. The Bill provides for registration of architects and the establishment of the RIAI as the registration body. The Bill includes a provision that, in regard to degrees in Architecture “the Minister [must be] satisfied that the course provided by the body leading to the award or conferral of the degree, diploma or other qualification provides the requisite instruction in the discipline of architecture.” (*Section 11(4)*) - and that “for purposes of the Minister satisfying himself or herself on the foregoing matter, the Minister shall consult with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.”

These are very unusual provisions. The IUA pointed out to DES that it was usually the role of a professional body or registration council to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of a third-

level qualification as a training for professional practice and to accredit them for that purpose. Furthermore the provision regarding the NQAI would be the only instance where the NQAI would be given a statutory role in the accreditation or validation of a university degree and is outside the remit and purpose of the NQAI under its Act

Amendment to these provisions was proposed so as to provide that the function and role of the RIAI would conform to the normal practice of professional bodies in accrediting university courses and in their relationships with universities in that regard. Put simply the accreditation of degrees should be stated as a matter for the registration body.

IUA also stated that while the Bill dealt with a number of Building related professions the Government and the Department needed to view the specific provisions highlighted above in the wider context of the general practice for the accreditation of degree courses by professional bodies for professional practice and the role of the NQAI. In this regard the development proposed would be regarded by the universities as completely undesirable.

It appears that the Department of the Environment did not consult with DES, HEA or NQAI in the preparation of the Bill. DES undertook to take up the matters raised with the Department of the Environment.

## **10. Lifelong Learning**

In the current Social Partnership talks it is understood that ICTU is placing much importance on lifelong learning. In its submission on the next NDP Congress is urging greater and more co-ordinated investment in education and in supporting strategies aimed at upskilling the existing workforce, with the emphasis on those who have had least educational and training opportunities.

The IUA Registrars Working Group on Lifelong Learning is organising a high-level meeting with relevant bodies to look at the role universities can play in labour market upskilling and conversion. This is being co-ordinated with possible HEA action to promote such activities. The half-day meeting will take place on 2 or 3 May 2006.

## **11. Quality Assurance**

### **11.1. *EUA review of QA Procedures.***

The majority of the universities have now published progress reports on (a) the implementation of recommendations contained within their individual university report and (b) the response within individual universities to the recommendation contained within the sectoral report. These reports are available on the quality office websites of the individual universities and may also be accessed at: [http://www.iuqb.ie/IUQB\\_EUA\\_Review\\_Reports.html](http://www.iuqb.ie/IUQB_EUA_Review_Reports.html)

The second 6-monthly report will be sent to the HEA following the IUQB meeting of the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2006 following on from the IUAQC meeting of the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2006.

## **11.2. IUQB**

### **11.2.1. Change of Chair**

Judge Bryan McMahon completed his term of appointment as Chair at end January 2006. He set out his views on the future development of IUQB in a letter to IUA Council Members. The Honourable Mrs Justice Catherine McGuinness was appointed Chair of the IUQB from February 2006 by joint nomination of the IUA Council and the HEA.

### **11.2.2. Appointment of New Board**

All 17 Board Members of the new Board have now been appointed.

### **11.2.3. Incorporation of IUQB**

IUQB was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 21 February 2006. IUQB has a 17 member Board of Directors and the CEO of IUQB will act as secretary of the company.

### **11.2.4. IUQB Launch and Meeting Dates**

IUQB will be launched with its new corporate identity at a reception in the IUQB offices on Lower Mount St. on Monday 24 April 2006, following the first meeting of the new Board earlier that day. The second of the IUQB good practice guides on *'Good Practice in the Organisation of Student Support Service in Irish Universities'* will also be launched at the reception.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the IUQB Board has been scheduled for Monday, 26 June 2006.

### **11.2.5. Sectoral Projects**

**Student Support Services:** The guidelines of *'Good Practice in the Organisation of Student Support Services in Irish Universities'* will be launched on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

**Teaching and Learning in Mathematics:** A meeting of a sub-group of the original organising group took place on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2006. The group assessed and updated the information collated to date and a short interim report is being drawn up. The key data that is required for this project was clarified. Some of this will be required from the Registrar/Senior Lecturer office and will be submitted to them accordingly. Other data will be collected at the local departmental level. This data will be collated centrally and incorporated in to the interim report. A national meeting will be called of the key stakeholders with a view to finalising recommendations for inclusion in the booklet of good practice to be published in September 2006.

**Strategic Planning in Academic Departments:** Work on the booklet of best practice is to commence in April 2006.

**Improving Teaching and Learning:** The project team leader Professor Áine Hyland, with the help of her team in UCC, compiled a synopsis report of seven reports submitted to her in January 2006. This report is now under consideration by the organising group. The individual reports reviewed the current status of teaching and learning under the broad heading of: *context at the institutional and the national level; links with the university strategic plan; structures in place; supports in place; activities, initiatives and actions undertaken by the unit; collaborative work; evaluation; quality assurance and other review findings*. The overall report is now being reviewed in the context of how these matters are covered. Some areas may have to be revisited for further clarification.

**Institutional Research:** Based on a template drawn up following the IR meeting of November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2005 each university and the DIT were invited to hold a local workshop with key internal stakeholders. These are to be completed by the end of March 2006. A report, outlining the findings of the workshops, is requested for the end of April 2006 to be submitted to the IUQB Programme Manager. An interim report, using the findings from the national meeting of the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2005 and from the individual workshops, together with observations and recommendations taken from the quality assurance Review Group Reports and other quality assurance reviews undertaken in the sector, will then be drawn up. It is envisaged that a further meeting will be required with key stakeholders in June to finalise the recommendations after which the guidelines of good practice will be finalised for publication in the autumn.

**Academic Workloads:** The initial one day forum for this project is scheduled for the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2006 in UCC. Each university, through its Registrar/Senior Lecturer, has been invited to nominate their teams comprising the Registrar/Senior Lecturer, 2 Deans (one each from the Humanities and the Sciences), 2 Heads of Departments (one each from the Humanities and the Sciences) and the Quality Officer. The meeting will commence with presentations from key international experts followed by guided workshop sessions in the afternoon. The findings from this meeting will be used to formulate a template for the workshop sessions that will take place at the local level with key local stakeholders.

A key international expert from the US has been invited. This will complement the expertise of Keith Sullivan (NUIG) who has experience with the New Zealand model. Efforts are still being made to include a speaker from the UK.

The expert from the US is Michael Middaugh, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning from the University of Delaware who has wide expertise in the area of workloads and in university management and planning matters in general. An example of his work is with the Delaware Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity which he directs. This

is a national data sharing consortium that embraces nearly 500 four-year institutions across the United States. It collects detailed information of faculty teaching loads, instructional costs, and externally funded research and service activity, all at the academic discipline level of analysis. The study has recently expanded the data collection to include selected measures of out-of-classroom faculty activity, understanding that what faculty do outside of the classroom (advising, scholarship, service, etc.) can profoundly impact the magnitude of teaching loads and associated instructional costs.

Professor Keith Sullivan previously worked in New Zealand and has published in the areas of education policy and administration. He dealt specifically with academic workloads in his monograph ‘What should count as work in the ‘Ivory Tower’: Determining academic workloads in tertiary institutions, a university case study’.

*‘Student Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms in Quality Assurance’ and ‘Promoting Student Engagement in Learning’.* The IUQB submission for funding to the HEA in 2005 for these projects was limited to €20,000. It had been expected that the balance of funding for the projects would be ratified by the end of 2005. However, these discussions are still ongoing. In the meantime it has been decided to commence some preliminary work on the first of these projects i.e. ‘Student evaluation and feedback mechanisms in quality assurance’. An initial meeting will be convened in May with student union representatives from the Irish universities to identify means of involvement of students in the QA process. Student representatives from overseas will also be invited to contribute.

## **12. EUA**

### **12.1. Mission and Strategy**

The 5<sup>th</sup> EUA General Assembly was held on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2006 in Hamburg. The EUA Board proposed the adoption of a strategic policy document. The document addresses the role of the EUA as a strong voice for European universities and in relation to university funding, quality assurance, research and the European Research Area, the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area.

### **12.2. Doctoral Programmes Project**

Following the European Ministerial meeting in Bergen 2005, EUA was asked by the Bologna Follow-Up Group [BFUG] to prepare a report on the further development of the Salzburg basic principles for doctoral programmes. EUA has therefore been preparing various activities which include: two workshops focused on specific aspects of doctoral programmes; a working group on the funding of doctoral programmes and doctoral candidates at the conference “A Researchers Labour Market – a Pole of Attraction” on 1-2 June, 2006 in Vienna; and a final Bologna Seminar. The main objectives of these activities will be to share examples of good

practice from universities across Europe and to disseminate the results of the EUA Doctoral Programmes Project and the Salzburg recommendations.

The first workshop was held in Brussels, 23-24 March, 2006 focused on two aspects of doctoral programmes; the supervision, monitoring and assessment of doctoral programmes; and generic (transferable) skills training and its relation to learning outcomes and employability.

The second workshop will also take place in Brussels on 12-13 October, 2006 and will focus on: the organisation of graduate/doctoral/research schools and their place in the global competition; the link between Master and Doctoral levels; and the European dimension and mobility.

The final EUA Bologna Seminar on doctoral programmes will be hosted by the University of Nice in December 2006. It will bring together all the main actors to draw conclusions, look at policy implications and prepare recommendations for the Ministerial meeting in London in 2007.

### **12.3. *European Forum for Quality Assurance***

EUA is organising with ENQA, ESIB and EURASHE a Forum entitled “*Embedding Quality Culture in Higher Education*”. The Forum will be hosted by the Technische Universität München, and will take place from 23-25 November, 2006. The main objective of this event is to bring together the higher education and QA community to discuss, at European level, how internal QA procedures should be adapted to the changing higher education environment and the implications this development holds for external evaluation procedures.

### **12.4. *Universities’ Contribution to the Competitiveness of Europe***

EUA President Professor Georg Winckler addressed the informal Education Council in Vienna on 16 March 2006 to outline the contribution universities can make to enhancing Europe's competitiveness as a key part of the renewed Lisbon strategy. Drawing comparisons with the US and China, Professor Winckler stressed the need for investment both in R&D and higher education in order to narrow the 'severe funding gap' which currently exists, and backed the increase to 2% of GDP spending on higher education proposed by the European Commission.

The European Ministers of Education adopted a Communiqué entitled "Strengthening Education in Europe" in which they explored ways to support education by enhancing its contribution to the re-launched Lisbon Agenda for growth, employability and greater social cohesion in Europe. EUA's contribution was specifically acknowledged as it was recognised that the Lisbon objectives can only be realised through strong and socially responsive higher education institutions.

## **13. Communications/Events**

### **13.1. News/Media Updates**

Current and archived news articles regarding Higher Education in Ireland are available on the IUA website in the News/Events section ([http://www.iua.ie/news\\_events/iua\\_news.html](http://www.iua.ie/news_events/iua_news.html)). Updated daily, this section includes articles on the university sector in Ireland and the UK as well as features on science, technology and research.

### **13.2. International Affairs**

The IUA office has been working closely with the International Officers Group on a range of issues including marketing of Irish Universities abroad, branding, student visas. Specific developments follow -

#### **13.2.1. International Brochure**

In order to strengthen the marketing effort of the seven universities on the international stage a 24 page joint international brochure was produced by the IUA for use by the international officers at student fairs and in other promotional activities. As well as general information pages on higher education in Ireland, each university has its own double page spread giving an overview of the university and its faculties. A Contact Section at the back of the brochure gives detailed information to students wishing to apply. Copies of the brochure have been sent to India as part of the Enterprise Ireland Higher Education Mission and will be distributed to students in five cities at student fairs. Feedback on the brochure will be relayed to the IUA and any revisions or additions necessary will be made in time for the NAFSA conference in May.

#### **13.2.2. NAFSA - 21<sup>st</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> May 2006, Montreal, Canada**

The IUA will support the international officers at this important Education Fair, report on how the universities are represented at international fairs, compared to competing universities from other countries and make recommendations for improvements. The IUA have also worked closely with Education Ireland to ensure the overall Education Ireland Stand at NAFSA provides the highest quality representation for the seven Irish Universities.

#### **13.2.3. International Branding**

Artwork is in development for a range of display equipment that individual universities will carry with them to student fairs. While each university will have their own easily carried display stand, a number of such stands grouped together will have a unified look and feel. This approach is very flexible and avoids giving one university the responsibility of transporting a large stand for all seven.

### **13.3. IUA/IBEC Conference Proceedings**

The proceedings of this joint IUA/IBEC Conference in November 2005 will be distributed amongst those who attended the conference and other university and industry contacts. These published proceedings will become one of a set of three based on the major conferences organised by the IUA in 2005. As part of a pack, the IUA will provide an overview of all three conferences with regard to their relevance to the National Research Plan.

### **13.4. Expertiseireland.com Promotional Flyer**

This double sided A4 promotional flyer will be used by Expertiseireland.com to disseminate information on the portal. The flyer was produced in time for the AAAS conference held this year in St Louis, USA and will also be sent out to a database of target industry and academic experts. The flyers will also be sent to the Research offices of each university for information purposes.

### **13.5. Reintegration Research Grant Email and Poster**

This poster (and email version) was produced to promote the EU Commission's Reintegration Research Grant. This grant has a 90% success rate for researchers who are returning to Europe following a five year research career in the US or other non European countries. The poster was distributed to the research officers for display in each of the universities.

### **13.6. Events**

#### **13.6.1. Ireland and South Africa R&D Collaboration Day**

**21<sup>st</sup> March 2006, IUA, 48 Merrion Square, Dublin 2**

The IUA & ESASTAP (European South African Science and Technology Advancement Programme) held a workshop to explore potential research synergies between Ireland and South Africa. This event was co-funded by Enterprise Ireland. ESASTAP is a Specific Support Action, implemented by the South African Department of Science and Technology and funded by the European Commission under the Sixth Framework programme to facilitate networking between European and South African scientists.

The event was well attended by Researchers and Research Officers from across the universities and delegates also attended from RCSI, DIAS and DIT. Speakers were drawn from DETE, ESASTAP, Enterprise Ireland, the Dept of Agriculture and Food, Sustainable Energy Ireland, and IUA's Expertiseireland.com and Researcher Mobility Office.

#### **13.6.2. Procurement – The Future**

**IUA, 48 Merrion Square, Dublin 2**

The seminar was planned for 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2006 to provide a strategic overview of the advances and changes that are currently taking place in public procurement but had to be postponed due to a low response rate from the universities. The event is to be rescheduled for a later date in 2006

and the Procurement Officers will work on promoting the importance of this seminar in order to achieve a better representation from the universities for the next event.

### **13.7. IUA Website**

#### **13.7.1. Secure 'IUA Group' Sections on [www.iua.ie](http://www.iua.ie)**

This is a pilot project carried out in conjunction with the Procurement Officers Group. The group approached the IUA with a need for information sharing among the seven members. A home page for the Procurement Group has been created in the Finance section of the IUA website and we are currently developing a password protected section for the officers where they can download tender documents and share pricing and other information. For a trial period information will be uploaded centrally through the IUA. In time, editing control may be passed over to the officers themselves. If this project is successful the service may be extended to other interested IUA groups.

### **14. Copyright**

As reported previously, following a meeting with representatives of National Newspapers of Ireland in January 2006 in relation to a newspaper copyright licence it was agreed that the IUA would obtain a licence which would cover all universities and the licence fee was to be negotiated between the IUA and Newspaper Licensing Ireland.

Following negotiations it has been proposed that NLI would issue a licence to the IUA, which would cover all 7 universities for any scanning or copying done by their staff from all the Irish national and regional newspapers covered. NLI can only licence for analogue copying in respect of the UK newspapers and the Irish editions of those newspapers as the newspapers in question have not assigned their digital rights to NLI.

### **15. IBEC/IUA**

The Director is engaged with IBEC in an informal review of the effectiveness of the Joint Council in serving the respective needs of IBEC and IUA. While it was noted that meetings of the Council had become more infrequent there had been a heightened level of joint IUA/IBEC engagement on strategic issues for both organisations. Significant progress has been made on a number of joint initiatives where added-value through collaboration was foreseen. In the research area, a number of strands are being followed and implemented: Research Careers and Mobility, EU funding support and dissemination of the Expertiseireland Portal:

- On research careers, the jointly held conference “*Careering Towards the Knowledge Society*”, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2005, the Helix, DCU explored the challenges facing industry and academia in creating sustainable research career pathways. Similarly, the IUA and the Irish BioIndustries Association in IBEC will hold a joint event in September 2006 on International Recruitment of Researchers in Biosciences,

- In the area of Research Mobility, the IBEC is represented on the Irish Mobility Network, co-ordinated by the IUA,
- On EU funding support, the IUA, as National Contact Point to the Marie Curie Programme, and IBEC jointly held a workshop on “*Managing and Administering Marie Curie Contracts*” – the first of its kind to be held in Europe. Many joint events promoting the Marie Curie Programme to IBEC members have been held. The IUA and IBEC are developing a joint position on the National Support Structure for Framework 7, currently being proposed by Government.
- The IUA is arranging to partner with the Sectoral representative bodies in IBEC to disseminate the Expertiseireland.com portal to their members.