

IUA Review [07/1] for IUA Meetings in TCD on 29th January, 2007.

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1. Research

1.1. National Research Policy

1.1.1. *Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation 2006-2013*

The SSTI will be overseen by two key groups, the Higher Education and Research Group (HERG) and Technology Ireland. The IUA is represented on HERG along with delegates from the key funding agencies and government departments, and the Group is chaired by the Department of Education and Science. The IUA has made a formal submission to the Group stressing the need to focus on the sustainability of funding (research career paths, long term senior posts), meeting the full costs of research and developing realistic and appropriate performance indicators. Following the first meeting on 10th January, 2007 the HERG will pursue its terms of reference through a series of working groups. The IUA CEO has written to DES in respect of the following nominations to the HERG Working Groups: Research Careers - Conor O'Carroll; High Level Indicators – Michael Casey; Capacity Development – Siobhan Harkin.

1.1.2. *Appointment of Chief Scientific Advisor*

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment announced the appointment of Professor Patrick Cunningham to the office of the Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government (19th December, 2006). Professor Cunningham is Professor of Animal Genetics at TCD. He will be responsible, via the Interdepartmental Committee for Science Technology and Innovation (STI), to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on STI, and will work with the range of implementation and oversight structures being established to advance the recently-published Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation (SSTI 2006-2013).

1.1.3. *Advisory Science Council – Towards Better Health: Achieving a Step Change in Health Research in Ireland*

Following wide consultation, the Advisory Science Council published a report [*“Towards Better Health: Achieving a Step Change in Health Research in Ireland”*] that identifies a number of issues that need to be resolved in order to ensure that science, technology and innovation make their maximum contribution to the Irish health care system, to the population as a whole, and to health-related industry operating in Ireland¹. The ASC Working Group tasked with developing the report was chaired by Prof. Tim O'Brien, NUIG. The IUA made an extensive submission to this process through a group of university representatives chaired by Prof. Michael Murphy UCC.

¹ Full report http://www.sciencecouncil.ie/reports/acsti061123/forfas061123_acsti_health_research_full_report.pdf

1.1.4. Co-ordination of Research Audits

We await a response from the Standing Committee of Research Funding Bodies in relation to the IUA proposal submitted in respect of the co-ordination of research audits, as reported in the October IUA Review.

1.2. Higher Education Authority

1.2.1 PRTL I Cycle 4

Cycle 4 of PRTL I has been launched with a value of €190m; this is considered as a bridge between the NDP (2000-2006) and NDP (2007-2013). This is a three year programme with €82m capital and €109m recurrent funding from summer 2007 to 2010. The focus in this call is on building national collaborative initiatives across the HE sector and, in particular, forging strong links with Northern Ireland. The process is divided into two steps with an initial expression of interest (deadline 16th March, 2007) and full proposal for 4th June, 2007. It is expected that the results will be announced in mid-July.

1.2.2. Research Infrastructure Report

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Forfás have undertaken an assessment of the research infrastructure in the higher-education sector in Ireland. The review, which was steered by an international group of experts, will be instrumental in the establishment of a needs package for the development of platform infrastructure(s) in the higher-education sector. The full report is available at www.hea.ie. It is important to note that this review will be used to assess research infrastructure elements of PRTL I Cycle 4 proposals.

1.3. Science Foundation Ireland

1.3.1. New Funding Initiative

SFI has indicated it is considering a new funding initiative as part of their strategy to deliver SSTI. The Stokes Professorships and Lectureships will be five year senior appointments to enable universities to attract academics and researchers from abroad.

1.3.2. Science Foundation Ireland

As reported in the IUA Review [06/4], SFI had written to university Presidents/Provost advising universities of a number of changes to the grant claims process and related payment cycle, and in relation to an 'overpayment' of research overheads arising from the transition from the old overhead funding basis to the OIP. Arising from this correspondence a joint meeting of UCFOG and Vice-Presidents/Deans of Research was held to consider the issues arising. It was agreed that a position paper be prepared and a meeting has been sought with SFI to discuss the various issues arising. The meeting took place on 1st December, 2006 and arising from that meeting it was agreed that an IUA working group be convened to liaise with SFI in relation to the issues arising. A meeting is currently being organised with SFI to progress these matters.

1.3.3. DETE Value for Money Review

DETE has written to IUA inviting it to become a member of the Steering Committee for a Value for Money [VFM] review which it is conducting in 2007. The review is one of a new series and forms part of the Minister for Finance's Value for Money initiative aimed at ensuring greater transparency and accountability in public expenditure. C.O'Carroll will represent IUA on the Steering Committee.

1.4. Irish Researcher Mobility Office and Web Portal

1.4.1. Funding 2007

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment has secured an additional €40,000 for Year 3 of the CAIRDE project; this funding will go towards further developments of the research job opportunities function on the portal and further survey and statistical analysis of researcher experiences that commenced in 2006. As this is the final year of full EC funding for the project alternative sources of finance from SIF and SSTI will be explored.

1.4.2. Statistics

Following the launch of the job opportunities facility on researchcareersireland.com in July, statistical analysis collated until the end of December 2006 can be summarized as follows:

- 3,143 Job Searches on the portal
- 37 Job Applications made directly via the portal application facility but this does not reflect the large number of applications that have been made directly to the organisation
- 598 organisations profile searches have been made by registered users.

There are now almost 1000 users registered on the portal and this number is continuously growing. Users can be categorised as follows:

- Early Stage Researchers (Post-graduates) 327
- Experienced Researchers (Post Doc) 273
- Senior Researchers 152
- Undergraduates 27
- Other 62

1.4.3. Mobility Network

A Mobility Network meeting took place on 17th January, 2007. This included an introduction for new members in the continuously expanding network. A representative from the Visa office and the work permit office were present to conduct an information session and answer any queries. A training session on the Employment Permits Act 2006 which will come into force early 2007 was delivered.

1.5. EU Sixth Framework Programme

1.5.1. FP6 Drawdown

The total to-date of **Ireland's Provisional Drawdown** from Framework Programme 6 is **€206,074,366**, with 68.5% of the total Irish figure attributable to the HE sector. In percentage terms, this represents a slight improvement of the FP5 drawdown. However, the leverage targets in the SSTI will mandate an improved performance under FP7.

Programme	Total Budget (€bn)	Irish Drawdown (€bn)	Success Rate (%)
FP4	12	183	1.5
FP5	15	160	1.1
FP6	17.5	206	1.2

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 now approximately €60m representing ~30% of the total Irish take from the FP.

1.6. EU Seventh Framework Programme

1.6.1. FP7 Launch in Ireland and National Support Structure

The official launch of FP7 took place in Dublin on the 15th November, 2006. The FP7 work programmes were officially adopted on 21st December, 2006. The FP7 calls are now available on CORDIS at the following URL: <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls/>. The Department of Enterprise Trade & Employment (DETE) had established a National Support Structure for FP7 based in Enterprise Ireland. There is a National Director (Dr. Imelda Lambkin) and network of national contact points. This structure is in place to promote FP7 and to support applicants. The IUA Research Officers Group will be working closely with this grouping to ensure maximum support for researchers in the universities.

1.6.2. Role of IUA in FP7

The IUA is aware that the universities are expected to be highly active in FP7 as this will be part of leverage for SSTI. It should be noted that both the HEA (under PRTLI Cycle 4) and SFI are now including participation and success in FP7 as part of their evaluation criteria. This will undoubtedly extend to all funding agencies.

The IUA will represent Ireland on three different programmes in FP7 and will work with all sectors (higher education, industry and public research) to ensure maximum participation and success for researchers in Ireland. The role of the IUA is as follows:-

People (Marie Curie)

Ideas (European Research Council)

National Delegate, National Contact Point

National Expert

Capacities (Research Potential)

National Delegate, National Contact Point

The IUA is currently in the process of recruiting a new staff member who will act as National Contact Point for Marie Curie/Research Potential and be involved in other European/International activities (e.g. through the SIF).

1.7. *expertiseireland.com*

Continuation funding for the maintenance of the *expertiseireland.com* portal has been secured until July 2007 from Enterprise Ireland. The current strand of funding from InterTradeIreland is due to cease in February 2007. There is a real need to aggressively pursue additional funding for the redevelopment of the portal and its integration into the Research Infrastructure, if it is to be successful.

However, there are concerns with the quality of the information on the portal. Currently there are two aspects to this. The first is the updating of the individual expert profiles and the second is the updating of the Institutional information. Reports will be provided per Institution on the updating of the expert profiles. Updating of the Institutional information can be achieved in one of two ways. The first involves allowing each Institution access to the administration site, where the Institution’s information can be updated. The second involves sending this information in a specified format to the *expertiseireland.com* team, who will then update the information.

expertiseireland.com, in conjunction with the Researcher’s Mobility Portal, will have a stand at the American Association for the Advancement of Science Conference in San Francisco, in February 2007, where all Institutes will be promoted.

The number of experts contributing information to the portal stands at 5,180 as of 17th January, 2007. The breakdown is as follows:

University of Dublin, Trinity College	776
University College Dublin	658
Dublin Institute of Technology	642
University of Ulster	613
Dublin City University	498
University College Cork	491
National University of Ireland, Galway	473
Queen's University Belfast	409
University of Limerick	295
National University of Ireland, Maynooth	260
Athlone Institute of Technology	27
Waterford Institute of Technology	19
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	15
Institute of Technology, Tallaght	<u>4</u>

Total

5180

Table 2: A Comparison of the average annual statistics for year ending December 2005 vs. year ending December 2006

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Average duration per visit	2869	16	-99.4%
# Page Impressions	301,588	310,337	2.9%
# Searches	26,720	20,621	-22.8%
# Visits	29,697	30,883	3.9%
News articles viewed	1,652	2,305	39.5%
# Expert Profiles accessed	36,279	38,915	7.3%

The negative change and minimal positive changes in the annual statistics can be linked to the decline in marketing activities during 2006. Marketing of the portal must be pursued aggressively during 2007, but this needs to be cemented with the commitment of the third level sector on the island. The broader strategic issue in respect of the future approach to *expertiseireland.com* requires consideration.

2. University Reform

2.1. Strategic Innovation Fund [SIF]

2.1.1. SIF Cycle 1 – University Sector Collaboration Proposal

The IUA sectoral proposal, under SIF Cycle 1, submitted on 15th September, 2006, was evaluated by an independent international panel and funding totalling €3.45 million was approved for all projects. Follow-up discussions with the HEA indicated that the budget cut of 25% related, in the main, to a 30% overhead being allocated to SIF, as opposed to the 45% rate sought by the university sector. It has proved possible to address this shortfall by reworking the timelines and scale of the projects. Negotiations on the IUA proposal and attendant costs were conducted with the HEA in December 2006, and the IUA received payment in respect of Year 1. Negotiations on the project entitled “*Widening the base for high quality student recruitment*” are progressing with the HEA.

The SIF funding will cover nine sectoral projects in three main themes – Creating a World Class 4th Level Ireland; Reform and Innovation at 3rd Level; and Enabling Initiatives, which are aligned with corresponding sections of the IUA Strategy as set out in the pre-Budget submission to Government “*Reform of 3rd Level and Creation of 4th Level Ireland, November 2005*”. The projects are:

Creating a World-Class 4th Level Ireland

- 1 4th Level Support Network
- 2 Attracting International Graduate Students
- 3 PhD Quality Assurance
- 4 Open Access to Research Output

Reform and Innovation at 3rd Level

- 5 Widening the Base for High Quality Student Recruitment

Enabling Initiatives

- 6 Towards a Full Economic Cost Model
- 7 Strategic Planning and Decision Support
- 8 Student Feedback System
- 9 Towards a HE Leadership Academy

2.2. National Development Plan

Following a request from IUA a meeting took place on 14th November, 2006 between the University Heads and Ministers for Finance and Education & Science on the forthcoming National Development Plan. The report entitled “*University Infrastructure Investment – a National Priority*”, prepared for the IUA by consultant Dr. Tom Higgins, was presented at the meeting and the IUA undertook to bring forward a worked out proposal on the possible use of private placements [bonds] as a means of securing funds to invest in infrastructural development. Such an approach will need careful consideration as part of the development of a sustainable funding model for the universities.

3. Funding

3.1.1. Current Funding 2006/2007

The estimates of public expenditure published in November 2006 provided for an 8% increase in the recurrent grant in aid for universities and other HEA designated institutions. The increase, however, includes €6 million additional funding earmarked for medical education reform and we await confirmation from the HEA in relation to whether any further earmarked expenditure has been included in the grant allocation. The ‘real’ increase, therefore, in the underlying core recurrent grant is likely to be closer to 7% at best. This increase, together with an approved increase in the undergraduate tuition fee of up to 6.5% for the academic year 2006/07, falls somewhat short of the increase required to cover the cost of known unavoidable cost increases in respect of 2006/07, calculated by the University Chief Finance Officers Group, to be in the region of 8.4%.

Actual university recurrent grant allocations are expected to be issued by the HEA in late January 2007.

3.1.2. Tuition Fee Increase Submission 2007/08

In December 2006 the University Chief Finance Officers Group made a submission to the HEA in respect of the required increase in tuition fees for 2007/08 noting that the increase required to cover the cost of known unavoidable cost increases was 7.0%. The DES and HEA have committed to notifying universities of the approved fee increase before the end of March 2007.

3.1.3. Recurrent Grant Allocation Model

The phasing of the HEA's revised recurrent grant allocation model (RGAM) continues in 2007. Arising from the outputs of the new and old funding models, 10% of the funding differences were applied in respect of 2006 grant allocations. Grant allocations in 2007 will reflect 55% of the funding differences. However, in late December 2006, arising from a sensitivity and risk analysis undertaken by the HEA, the HEA informed universities of the introduction of a 'moderating mechanism' which is to be applied to the RGAM. This mechanism will limit the impact of changes in recurrent grant funding levels in respect of any institution in any one year to $\pm 2\%$ of the overall percentage increase in grant funding available for allocation. This will have a significant impact on grant allocations and the University Chief Finance Officers Group have sought an urgent meeting with the HEA to discuss this issue.

3.2. Capital Funding

As noted in Section 2.3 above IUA Council members met with Ministers Cowen and Hanafin in November 2006 in relation to the capital infrastructure needs of the sector. Arising from the meeting the universities agreed to submit a proposal to DES and the Department of Finance detailing how private placements could be used by the sector as a means of securing funds to invest in infrastructural development. FTI Finance Ltd was engaged to prepare a paper detailing the process and issues to be addressed in pursuing such an option.

The IUA Council at its meeting in October considered some funding alternatives for universities to raise the substantial funding required for campus infrastructure programmes.

3.3. Pension Issues

As reported previously the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Finance have proposed that the new model superannuation schemes would operate on a pay-as-you-go basis. In addition, the HEA Pensions Working Group has proposed that existing university pension schemes be taken over by the State and that the funds be transferred to the National Treasury Management Agency. The IUA does not object in principle to this proposal subject to the necessary robust guarantee being provided. The proposal has been approved by the Minister for Education and Science and has been forwarded for approval to the Minister for Finance.

3.4. Nursing – Transfer of Midwifery and Children’s Nursing Education to Third Level

Discussions are continuing in relation to the proposed transfer of post-registration midwifery programmes to third level. It is intended that these programmes would transfer effective from the 2007/08 academic year. However a number of issues remain outstanding, in particular there are issues relating to the duration and delivery of these programmes, which are the subject of ongoing negotiations with the HSE and Department of Health & Children.

The latest position is that the Department of Health & Children (DoHC) require that these programmes be delivered over 18 months, as opposed to two years, and also require that the programmes run on a ‘back-to-back’ basis. This creates significant difficulties for universities from an operational perspective. The HSE/DoHC have agreed that teaching space would be made available in the hospitals in recognition of the lack of capacity on campus arising from the non-provision of capital funding for the undergraduate midwifery and post-graduate children’s nursing programme. The fee proposed by HSE/DoHC for the programme is €11,539 p.a. (€17,309 per 18 month programme). It is proposed that a review of providing the programmes on a ‘back-to-back’ basis would be undertaken after three years at which point universities would have the option to cease running the programme on a ‘back-to-back’ basis. The IUA representative leading the negotiations on behalf of the sector has recommended that the sector accept the HSE/DoHC proposals on the basis set out above.

The IUA has also been asked to nominate a representative to participate in a forum established to prepare a comprehensive strategy for the development, delivery and evaluation of future post-registration nursing and midwifery education.

3.5. Taxation Issues

The IUA is continuing to clarify a number of issues arising from the correspondence received from the Revenue Commissioners in relation to PAYE related issues as reported in the October 2006 IUA Review.

4. HEA/Department of Education & Science

4.1. Cost of Access Programmes

The HEA has appointed Mazars consultants to undertake a survey of the Costs of Access Programmes on their behalf. The review relates to the premium of 0.33 of an FTE adopted (from the UK) under the HEA grant allocation model in respect of each student enrolled who is a member of a group currently under-represented in higher education. The purpose of the review is to ascertain the nature and level of costs associated with such students in an Irish context. The survey is being confined to six higher education institutions including NUIG and NUIM. A meeting was held with the HEA on 18th January 2007 to commence the review. The review is to be completed by late spring 2007.

4.2. Entry Mechanisms to Medical Education

Following the IUA submission to the HEA Expert Group on Entry mechanisms to Medicine of 9th August 2006, a meeting was held on 17th November, 2006 and the HEA Expert Group wrote to members of the IUA medical schools and RCSI on 8th December, 2006. Following various exchanges in December and early January, the IUA responded to the HEA on 18 January on the issue of graduate entry to medicine. An announcement by the Minister for Education and Science is expected during the last week of January. The medical schools will respond on the issue of undergraduate entry to medicine in February.

4.3. Data Collection

Meetings continued between the IUA working group and the HEA during September and October on the issue of data collection regarding socio-economic, disability and access conditions for all students, in order to identify student FTEs to which the 1.3 RGAM weighting should be applied. Considerable progress has been made since the HEA's original proposal for data collection, and many of the universities concerns have been met. Final agreement will depend on further feedback from the CAO and the Data Protection Commissioner regarding the feasibility of using the CAO as the data collection mechanism. Issues surrounding the coding of data into socio-economic groups also remain to be fully clarified.

A final meeting is planned for 23rd January, 2007 which will also involve representatives of the Institutes of Technology.

4.4. Governance of Irish Universities

As reported previously, a HEA working group under the chairmanship of Mr. Dermot Quigley was set up to develop a joint HEA/IUA Framework for the Governance of Irish Universities and was liaising with an IUA working group comprising representatives of Secretary's and Finance Officers. A final document entitled '*Governance of Irish Universities*' has now been agreed and the HEA will be issuing this document to universities for approval by Governing Authorities/Bodies at their February meetings. The IUA working group recommends that all universities accept, approve and adopt the provisions set out in the document.

4.5. Consolidated Financial Statements

Good progress has been made in relation to the finalisation of university consolidated financial statements and the IUA has been liaising with the HEA in relation to this matter. A number of universities now have audited consolidated financial statements available for each of the years 2002/03 to 2004/05. It is anticipated that all universities will shortly be in a position to publish consolidated financial statements on their websites.

4.6. DES Assistant Secretary

Ms. Ruth Carmody has been appointed Assistant Secretary in the Department of Education & Science with responsibility for Higher Education.

5. Remuneration Process

5.1. Review Body on Higher Remuneration in the Public Sector

5.1.1. Professors

The Review Body has carried out reviews of the role of Professor in the universities and has interviewed seven professor posts on which Hay Consulting is conducting a job sizing exercise on behalf of the Review Body.

5.1.2. University Heads and Senior Officers

The Review Body has carried out reviews of the role of University Head, Registrar, Chief Financial Officer and Secretary for evaluation by Hay Consultants. Oral hearings on the review of salaries for University Heads and Senior Officers were held by the Review Body on 1st December, 2006.

5.2. Benchmarking

The Benchmarking Body selected a number of academic posts in each of the universities and these have been evaluated by Hay Consultants. The Benchmarking Body held the oral hearing on the review of the salaries of these grades on Wednesday, 22nd November, 2006. The IUA, along with the DES and the representative Unions were represented at the Hearing.

6. Communications / Events

6.1. Marketing the University Sector and IUA Services

6.1.1. *Second Issue of IUA Newsletter*

Following the successful launch of the IUA News in September 06, the second edition was distributed by email on 13th December, 2006 to over 1000 recipients. Dr Iggy O’Muircheartaigh gave his final address as IUA President for 2006. Feature stories included the announcement of SIF Results, the hiring of Ned Costello as Chief Executive of IUA and the Launch of FP7.

6.1.2. *IUA Advertisement for HEA Yearbook 2007*

HEA Yearbooks for 2007 have now been distributed and the IUA advertisement is prominently and effectively positioned on the inside front cover. The advertisement contains general information on the IUA as well as the Researchers Mobility Office, *expertiseireland.com* and the Irish Marie Curie Office.

6.1.3. *Advertisement for Two Strategic IUA Positions*

A recruitment advertisement was designed to advertise the positions of Network Co-ordinator for Fourth Level Ireland and National Contact Point for Marie Curie in FP7. This advertisement was then sent to the Irish Times, Irish Independent and the Times Higher Education Supplement for inclusion in the 8th December, 2006 issue.

6.1.4. *Website Development*

Content of the IUA Website will be given a general overhaul during the first month of 2007 to keep it fresh and relevant. The recently added section on Fourth Level Ireland will be developed further, removing it from the IUA site and creating a stand alone website with the URL of www.4thlevelireland.ie. Some of the early design work will begin in advance of the appointment of the Network Co-ordinator for Graduate Schools.

6.1.5. *Meeting with TCD*

The IUA Communications Manager, is continuing with a series of meetings with the communications teams of each of the universities. Information will be gathered on a range of topics to be discussed at a joint communications meeting where the new CEO of IUA will be introduced. The agenda for this meeting will be prepared jointly by IUA and TCD who hold the presidency of IUA for 2007 and will be the Chair for any sectoral communications meetings throughout the year.

Communications projects requiring cross university involvement being discussed include:

- Fourth Level Ireland
- Branding of Graduate Schools and other 4th Level initiatives
- Branding of Access Programmes
- Marketing the Universities Internationally

6.2. Press/Publicity and Media Relations

October 06:

Following the issue of an IUA Press Release on the hiring of Ned Costello as Chief Executive of IUA the following articles appeared in National Papers and online news sources.

October 28th Irish Independent University Body Gets New CEO

October 28th Irish Times Costello Appointed by IUA

October 31st Silicon Republic Ned Costello, IUA

Following the issue of an IUA Press Release on the conference Humanities and Social Sciences in 21st Century Ireland the following articles appeared in a National Broadsheet.

October 24th Irish Independent Arts Graduates are the overlooked bedrock of our knowledge economy

November 06:

A 1500 word feature article on the IUA Conference was written by the IUA for publication in Inside Government Magazine Oct/Nov edition.

Oct/Nov 06 Inside Government The Future for Humanities and Social Sciences in 21st Century Ireland.

December 06:

The IUA facilitated journalist John Marcus, US Higher Education Correspondent for Times Higher Education Supplement, who was writing an article for an American Higher Education Publication. The angle taken was the connection between Irish economic success and changes over the last decade in the Irish higher education system. The IUA recommended a number of key figures as interviewees including John Hegarty, Brigid McManus and the new CEO of IUA, Ned Costello.

6.3. International Affairs

6.3.1. IUA Proposal to Ministry of Education, Saudi Arabia

The communications office at the IUA assisted the International Officers in putting together proposal to the Ministry of Education, Saudi Arabia for participation in the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Student Scholarship Scheme. The Saudi government has plans to send up to 10,000 students overseas under the scheme every year. The decision of the Saudi authorities to include Irish universities and institutes of technology in the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Student Scholarship scheme was confirmed to the Minister of Education and Science, Mary Hanafin on 15th January, 2007 during her visit there.

6.3.2. *International Advertisement for Five Universities*

A full page advertisement entitled “The Irish Post-Grad Advantage” was designed by the IUA for inclusion in the publicity for the World Grad School Tour of India. Five of the seven universities took part in this tour. The ad was also featured in the ThinkGrad Magazine.

6.3.3. *Display Equipment for NAFSA 2007*

Once again the planning of NAFSA has commenced. The first planning meeting will take place in DCU on 26th January, 2007. The IUA will again be assisting Education Ireland in the design of the NAFSA stand. This year all nine universities on the island of Ireland will be taking part.

6.3.4. *Translation of IUA International Brochure*

The joint international brochure produced by the IUA has been translated into Chinese and printed. The finished brochure will be distributed through the Enterprise Ireland network and through university representatives in China. At the request of the international officers the brochure will also be made available on-line on the IUA website for prospective students and their parents to download.

6.4. Events

6.4.1. *IUA Humanities and Social Sciences Conference: October 2006*

The IUA Conference -*The Humanities and Social Sciences in 21st Century Ireland - Delivering the Knowledge Society* - took place in the Royal College of Physicians, Kildare Street on 23rd and 24th October, 2006. The conference explored the role of Humanities and Social Sciences in the development of the knowledge economy. Opening and Closing speeches at the conference were given by Dr Hugh Brady, Dr John Hegarty and the Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin. Proceedings from the conference have been written up and will be published in brochure form for distribution in February 2007.

6.4.2. *Launch of FP7: November 2006*

FP7 was formally launched on the 15th November, 2006 at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham and was attended by over 500 delegates. Marie Curie success in Ireland was featured by the IUA along with displays from *expertiseireland.com* and the Researcher’s Mobility Office. Two new IUA Marie Curie publications were distributed in the delegate packs.

6.5. Publications

6.5.1. *Marie Curie Success in Industry & HSS Brochures*

Two publications on Marie Curie were produced in October in time for distribution at the IUA HSS Conference and the National Launch of FP7. The new Marie Curie promotional leaflets focusing on the success of **Social Sciences** and **Industry** and encouraging applications for FP7 will be distributed to our industry partners and to all HSS departments in the seven universities. A more comprehensive “*Marie Curie Success for Ireland*” brochure looking back over the last five years of funding successes achieved will be completed in January 2007.

6.5.2. *University Infrastructure Investment – A National Priority*

The IUA engaged Dr. Tom Higgins to provide an independent overview of the university sector's strategic third level infrastructural needs. This report, which will help to inform discussion and decision-making on the provisions for investment in university infrastructure in the National Development Plan, was produced in late November 06 for a meeting between the IUA and Minister Brian Cowen. The report has since been widely distributed to all universities, Government Ministers, TDs, Senators, MEP's, the HEA, Department of Education and Science.

6.5.3. *Fourth Level Brochure for American Association for the Advancement of Science Exhibition*

In advance of the hiring of an IUA Network Co-ordinator for Graduate Schools, an interim brochure will be produced on the 4th Level Ireland concept for distribution at the AAAS exhibition in San Francisco, 15th – 22nd February, 2007 and also at a Graduate Fair in Mexico City in March 2007. The brochure style will be based on the IUA international brochure but will have a Graduate focus and will be used as a test publication to gauge reaction and track increased contact with Graduate Offices at the universities resulting from the brochure distribution at these events.

7. Quality Assurance

7.1. IUQB Matters

7.1.1. *IUQB Meetings*

A meeting of the IUQB Board took place on 23rd October, 2006. At the meeting, it was agreed to establish a nine member IUQB Management Committee which would meet in the interval between Board meetings. The first meeting of the IUQB Management Committee took place on 12th January, 2007. The next meeting of the IUQB Board is scheduled for 26th February 2007.

7.1.2. *IUQB Budget 2007*

Due to the increased compliance workload on the office post-incorporation, increased management of the sectoral projects and commitments at international level, the proposal for the 2007 Budget will contain a request for an increase in IUQB staff from 4 (3.8 WTE) to 7 (6.5 WTE) persons. This proposal will be put to the IUQB Board at its next meeting on 26th February 2007, at which time it is expected that the HEA contribution to IUQB core funding will have been agreed. The cost of university subscriptions to IUQB will then be submitted to IUA Council for approval.

7.1.3. *Review of IUQB by the HEA*

At its meeting of 23rd October, 2006 the IUQB Board agreed to request the HEA to commission an external review of IUQB. This is in keeping with the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (the Bergen standards) which requires an external quality assurance agency such as IUQB to submit itself to a five-yearly review of its operations. Respecting the principle of subsidiarity, such reviews should normally

take place at national level. The management of any such review must be outside of the agency itself and the external panel must be selected independently of the agency.

It is also a requirement of becoming a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) that an agency has undertaken or has commenced the process of undergoing an evaluation of its operations to verify their compliance with the Bergen standards described above.

In December 2006, the HEA agreed to this request and noted the IUQB request that the review be completed by the end of 2007. The HEA further requested that the review be extended to include an evaluation of HEA funded QA projects undertaken by the IUQB.

7.1.4. External Reviews of University Quality Assurance by IUQB

Following consultation with the universities, under the auspices of the Irish Universities Association Quality Committee (IUAQC), at its meeting on 23rd October, 2006 the Board of IUQB agreed to the following schedule of future reviews of quality assurance at institutional level:

Thematic Review (consultation and terms of reference to be completed in 2007 with site visits and publication of reports in 2008)

- A review of the implementation of the *IUQB National Guidelines of Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD programmes in Irish Universities* (published in 2005). This will involve the preparation of a self-evaluation report by each university, site visits by expert panels including international peers and the publication of a report in respect of each university.

Review of the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance Procedures under Section 35(4) of the Universities Act, 1997 (site visits to be completed in 2009 with publication of reports in 2010)

- Following the successful reviews in 2004-05, a second cycle of quinquennial reviews of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures in each university will take place in 2009-10. This review will be an audit of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures in place in each university including the quality assurance provisions agreed by a university for any linked college, recognised college or other higher education institution where a university makes awards or agrees quality assurance procedures. This will involve the preparation of a self-evaluation report by each university, site visits by expert panels including international peers and the publication of a report in respect of each university.

In November 2006, IUQB wrote to the chief officers of the universities to inform them of the above timetable of reviews. In December 2006, IUQB wrote to the HEA in relation to the

aforementioned reviews of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures, as part of the consultation process required under Section 35(4) of the Universities Act (1997).

7.1.5. Sectoral Project Activities

- The recommendations from the quality review reports from all seven Irish Universities are collated and categorised for all projects. Completed December 2006.
- Analysis of the quality review report recommendations pertaining to ‘Strategic Planning in Academic Departments’, together with analysis of departmental strategic plans and feedback received from departments by means of questionnaires has been undertaken. This is now informing the writing of the booklet of good practice which is underway.
- A national workshop on ‘Student Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms in Quality Assurance’ took place on the 13th November 2006 with national and international presentations on current practices. The speakers included **Bill Harvey**: Deputy Director, Learning and Teaching, Scottish FE and HE Funding Council; **Lyndsay Anderson**: Training Advisor, Student Participation in Quality Scotland (SPARQS); **Anne Mikkola**: Member of Secretariat, Educational Affairs, National Union of Students in Finland and member of the Bologna Process Committee of the National Union of Students in Europe (ESIB); and **Jim Gosling**, Director of Quality, NUI Galway. The meeting was attended by Quality Officers and had student union representation from the universities and from USI.
- Collection of data on ‘Mathematics, Teaching and Learning’ from 6 of the universities was completed in December 2006. This will now be used to inform the preparation of the booklet of good practice.
- Collation and categorisation of the quality review report recommendations relating teaching and learning is completed. Reports from 3 local workshops, which incorporate the associated student workshops, on ‘Quality Improvement in Teaching and Learning’ are completed. 2 more are due for completion by end January 2007. All of this information will now be used to inform writing of the good practice booklet, together with recommendations extracted from the 2004/2005 EUA Reviews of Irish Universities; information collated from each of the seven Irish Universities web sites and previous reports submitted from the Teaching and Learning Centres/units.
- Seven out of eight local workshops on ‘Institutional Research’ were completed by November 2006. Using these reports and recommendations from quality review reports and from the 2004/2005 EUA review of Irish Universities work on preparation for the booklet of good practice can commence.
- Further work on the ‘Academic Workloads’ project was deferred to 2008 following the last IUAQC meeting of October 2006.

7.1.6. IUQB Nationally

The CEO made an invited presentation at the Bologna Promoters Conference *Student Involvement in Quality Assurance* organised by the HEA in December 2006.

7.1.7. IUQB Internationally

The Programme Manager, as a member of the pool of evaluators for the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme, acted as secretary of the team that visited one of the higher education institutions participating in the system review of higher education institutions in Portugal.

The CEO made invited presentations at the Bologna Promoters Training Seminar in Munich in November 2006 and the European Quality Assurance Forum in Munich in November 2006.

IUQB hosted visits by (i) a delegation of parliamentarians from Kosova and (ii) the Director of QAA Scotland in December 2006.

7.1.8. IUQB Publications

In October 2006, due to increased demand for copies, IUQB republished (using the updated brand identity) the *National Guidelines of Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Universities* (first published in January 2005).

The 2nd edition of *IUQB News* will be published in February 2007.

7.2. The Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN),

The Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN), which brings together all actors in quality assurance in Irish HE, hosted its first conference on 17th October, 2006 to explore the links between Quality Assurance and Professional Accreditation/Recognition. Presentations were made on European directives, national regulatory developments, quality assurance and professional accreditation. Participants included large numbers of small professional bodies in Ireland which had previously not been involved in mainstream discussions regarding quality assurance, the National Framework of Qualifications, etc. A report is currently being finalised and will be available at www.iheqn.ie. Follow-up activities are expected to take place during 2007.

7.3. Guidelines for Pastoral Care of International Students

A subcommittee of the IHEQN has begun work drafting a set of guidelines for pastoral care for international students coming to Ireland. The draft will be circulated to relevant IUA groups as soon as these are available. These guidelines will fill an existing need in Irish HE institutions, and should also serve as a pre-cursor for the pastoral care standards which should be set by the new statutory body for promoting Ireland as a destination for international students - Education Ireland - once this is established. It is hoped that this new body will be created later in 2007.

8. National Framework of Qualifications

8.1. Placement of Awards within the Framework

Following the December 2005 IUA / NQAI agreement on the process for placing minor, special purpose and supplemental university awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and further work in this area during 2006, each university has prepared a list of its awards in these categories and their proposed placing on the NFQ. The universities are currently in the process of comparing these lists to ensure their coherence etc, before submitting them formally to the NQAI. Given that DES funding for student support, free fees, tax relief, etc will become conditional on the awards in question being formally included in the NFQ, it is vital that each university respect the agreed IUA/NQAI process and formally inform the NQAI during the early months of 2007.

The IUA and NQAI have agreed to establish an informal working group for ongoing exchange of information between universities and the National Qualifications Authority, and as a first step, are planning to meet with the Heads of Education from each university and representatives of the Teaching Council to discuss teaching awards.

9. DIT Conference

IUA has agreed to support a conference organized by the Dublin Institute of Technology on the theme of “*Higher Education in the 21st Century – Diversity of Mission*”, to be held in Dublin on 25th-27th June, 2007. Other institutions backing the conference include the OECD’s Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education, the HEA, and the International Association of Universities. Dr. John Hughes will speak at the conference, and a session on “Valuing and Funding Diverse Missions” will be chaired by Ned Costello, IUA CEO. Most other speakers will be international. It is expected that the conference will provide significant input on the theme of diversity of mission, which is becoming increasingly relevant in Irish HE. Full details can be found on the DIT website at www.heconference.dit.ie

10. EUA

10.1. EUA Issues

10.1.1. IUA representation on EUA Council

Dr. John Hughes, President NUI Maynooth, has agreed to replace Prof. Roger Downer as the IUA representative on the EUA Council. Prof. Hughes will attend the EUA Council meeting of 26th January, 2007 in Vienna and will report briefly back to the IUA Council. The EUA Council agenda includes issues related to a review of EUA statutes, the work programme and budget 2007-08, EUA’s position concerning various elements of the Bologna Process, inter alia.

10.1.2. Seminar on Doctoral Programmes

The conclusions from the EUA Bologna Seminar on Doctoral Programmes, held in Nice from 7th-9th December 2006, are now available on the EUA website at http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Nice_doctorates_seminar/final_recommendations_in_EUAtemplate.pdf.

These cover the various roles of the higher education institutions in establishing and delivering graduate programmes, including issues linked to structures and organization, career perspectives, access and admission, and internationalization. They also look at measures to improve the quality of these programmes, including diversification, supervision, monitoring and assessment, and transferable skills. There is also a set of recommendations regarding the status, conditions and funding for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers. It is expected that this text will provide important input into the Bologna Process Communiqué currently being prepared for adoption by Education Ministers of all 45 Bologna countries in May 2007, fully integrating the doctoral cycle into the Bologna Process.

10.1.3. EUA Convention

The 4th EUA Convention of European Higher Education Institutions will be jointly hosted by the universities of Lisbon from 29th-31st March, 2007. Confirmed speakers include **José Manuel Barroso**, President of the European Commission; **Fotis Kafatos**, Chair of the Scientific Council of the European Research Council; **Jan Figel**, European Commissioner for Education, Culture and Multilingualism and **David Ward**, Director of the American Council on Education.

Building on the Glasgow Convention and Declaration of 2005, in which EUA highlighted the importance of strong, autonomous and accountable universities if the ambitious policy goals set for Europe are to be met, the Convention in Lisbon will be the opportunity for European university leaders and partners to take stock of progress made since then and articulate their own vision for the future beyond 2010. The Convention will result in a Declaration targeted at EUA members, governments and other stakeholders, to be presented to the next Bologna Ministerial meeting in London and widely disseminated to policy makers at national and European level. It will form the basis of EUA's agenda for the coming years but more importantly as the title suggests, set out how European universities view their development post 2010.

The focus of the convention will not only be on major issues facing universities from a European perspective but also on balancing cooperation and competition internationally, thus reflecting both latest developments in the Bologna Process and at EU level, as demonstrated, for example, by the launch of the European Research Council and the proposal to establish a European Institute of Technology.

Some of the main questions to be addressed will be:

- How to respond to global competition while maintaining a commitment to access and social cohesion?
- How to balance increased mission diversification, an emphasis on excellence and greater competition with enhanced inter-institutional cooperation based on a shared commitment to quality?
- How to work towards more sustainable institutional funding by exploring more diversified funding streams, in particular through combined public/private funding and the development full economic cost models?
- How to adapt governing structures, improve leadership and management competence so as to increase efficiency, but also creativity and innovative capacity?

Full details can be found on the EUA website www.eua.be.

10.2. Bologna

Along with all other countries participating in the Bologna Process, Ireland submitted a national implementation report in December 2006 to the Bologna Secretariat. This report was drafted and coordinated by DES. These national reports will be published and are currently being used to feed into a stocktaking report to Ministers who will meet in May 2007 in London. This official stocktaking report will be complemented in London by an EUA Trends report on the implementation of Bologna, based on data supplied by universities across Europe through questionnaires and site visits.

11. International

11.1. International Students

As part of the implementation of Sustaining Progress and the Partnership talks, DETE is planning to introduce a work permits system for all non-EEA international students in Ireland. This is of serious concern to IUA universities and other HEIs. A letter dated 11th January, 2007 was sent by the new IUA CEO to Minister Micheál Martin on this issue.

12. IUA Issues

12.1. New CEO

Mr. Ned Costello was appointed IUA Chief Executive Officer and took up his position on 8th January, 2007. He replaces Mr. Michael McGrath who is retiring after 10 years with the IUA. Ned was previously Assistant Secretary General at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment where he was Head of the Office of Science, Technology and Innovation.

12.2. New Staff

The IUA are currently recruiting for two new positions; a Fourth Level Ireland Network Co-ordinator, and a National Contact Point for FP7 Marie Curie and Capacities programmes. The network co-ordinator position will be funded from the Strategic Innovation Fund