IUA Review [10/1] for IUA Meetings
in NUI Maynooth
on 25th January 2010

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1. Research
1.1. Research Policy and Funding Overview

The cuts in R&D expenditure in the Budget were not as drastic as might have been thought. The McCarthy Report recommendations have not been followed as the SSTI is continuing in the context of the Smart Economy, albeit at a reduced level. Also there is no indications of all R&D funding moving to a single funding agency however there is a clear desire on the part of the government to have a more streamlined system.

The announcement of Maire Geoghegan Quinn as the European Commissioner for Science, Research and Innovation should be seen in a very positive light. Bringing Science, Research and Innovation together in the new brief is truly exciting as this is the area that can lay the basis for future European prosperity. In the middle of the current economic crisis it is essential to look to the future of Europe.

While the Commissioner cannot do anything directly for Ireland, her role as promoting investment in R&D and Innovation will undoubtedly have a positive influence on the government's position. We must be aware that there will be continuing pressure on universities academics to increase the levels for non exchequer funding and FP7 will be the main target; it may become mandatory.

A real challenge for the sector will be the implementation of the Research Career Framework (RCF). The first test will be the application of the 5% salary cut to researchers and other research related fixed term staff.

1.2. Researcher Careers.
1.2.1. Researcher Careers Framework [RCF]

The IUA Research Career Group met on the 24th October and agreed to adopt the HERG RCF as a broad framework and the details will be worked out on implementation. The RCF was discussed at HERG again on 28th October and while there was no agreement to go ahead with implementation until the government's budget would be announced in December. The next meeting of the HERG will be held on 27th January. This will be discussed at the IUA VPDOR meeting in NUI Maynooth on 25th January.

1.3. Science Foundation Ireland

The VPDOR group met with Frank Gannon to discuss budget and planning for 2010. In 2009 SFI spent €166m in grants, a reduction of 15% on 2008. FG explained that SFI need €142m just to maintain existing commitments for 2010. They have requested €168m to

include some new grants (note that this would have been €205m under original SSTI plans) and in the budget received a total of €162m**.**

1.4.   Fourth Level Ireland Network Group

1.4.1.   Fourth Level Network Conference

On 10 & 11 November Trinity College hosted the second annual 'Fourth Level Network Graduate Education Conference'**. The Conference sought to provide a forum to identify, promote, discuss and inform the evolving practices and policies in Irish Graduate Education.** The Conference's second day coincided with the first day of the National Academy for Integration of Research, Teaching & Learning (NAIRTL) third annual conference, also hosted by Trinity College.

Keynote address was delivered by Prof. Jon Butler, Howard R. Lamar Professor of American Studies, History, and Religious Studies and Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Yale. Prof. Butler discussed Yale's initiatives to support increased PhD completion rates and timely completions, including its participation in the Council for Graduate School's 'PhD Completion Project'. Further information on the 'PhD Completion Project is available from http://www.phdcompletion.org/.

The conference included presentations and workshops on the graduate student experience; structured PhD programmes; and student development. Conference presentations are available from http://www.4thlevelireland.ie/press/conference-2009.php

1.4.2.   PhD fees and stipends

At a meeting with the IUA VPs Research, SFI announced that from 2010-11 onwards it will award €5,500 per annum for PhD fees. Therefore, it is departing from its commitment to allowing for an annual increase in institutional fees by 3 per cent per annum with 2008-09 forming the baseline. This figure will apply in years one to four, except where universities offer a reduced fee in the fourth year. The figure of €5,500 represents the sectoral average for STEM fees in 2009-10. Its policy regarding the funding of non-EU students remains unchanged.

Recent HERG discussions concerning a coordinated research funders' approach to the payment of PhD fees have informed this decision. Additionally, SFI have proposed reducing the average annual PhD stipend from €18,000 per annum to €16,000 per annum.

1.4.3.   Ireland-Malaysia research seminar

On 11 January the Irish Embassy in Malaysia hosted a seminar to explore collaborative links between Irish and Malaysian HEIs in the research and graduate education spheres. Thirteen Malaysian universities were represented at the event, primarily at Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research level. The Malaysian ministry for Higher Education was also represented. The event involved presentations from Irish universities and institutes of technology, both sectoral and institutional, on Irish HE research strengths and their

potential for collaboration with Malaysian partners. The IUA coordinated the collation and submission of a sectoral research strength portfolio, which helped inform Malaysian HEI delegate selection. The portfolio and schedule can be found as *Appendices 1 (c) and (d)* respectively.

National Malaysian press coverage of the event is available from http://www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/articles/15irel/Article/index_html

It is expected that the event will lead to follow up contact and there have been indications of a possible return visit by a Malaysian HE delegation later in 2010 to pursue definite proposals for collaboration.

1.4.4. ERASMUS MUNDUS II
The Higher Education Authority have organised an information day for potential applicants to EM II. The venue is Wood Quay Venue, Dublin City Council, Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin. The IUA has circulated the agenda and other EM II application details to relevant university officers and those who were attendees of a similar event in February 2009.

1.5. European / International Funding
1.5.1 New Commissioner
The Parliamentary hearings for MGQ took place on Wednesday 13th January. By all accounts it went well and she was well briefed and dealt with all issues. It is now just a matter of time for her formal approval. She has an expanded brief that now includes Science and Innovation.

The European Research Council is now well established and seen internationally as the European premier league of science. This is a new and very successful departure for the Commission, to be seen to be supporting science at the highest level across Europe.

Innovation is viewed internationally as the means to advance the economy and well being of society; it will be a major factor in coming out of recession. The addition of "Innovation" is new and comes with the move of the CIP (worth over €3bn) and Innovation Technology (from DG ENV) to DG Research. It is important to remember that it is people that innovate and researchers are key drivers of innovation. The European Partnership for Researchers as part of ERA can play a key role in this regard. However responsibility for the Marie Curie Programme is moving to DG Education and Culture.

One area of the Lisbon Treaty that did not hit the headlines during the national debate here is the fact that the European Research Area is now a specific objective. Looking to the future there is the exciting opportunity of the new Commission to shape Framework Eight and incorporate Innovation

1.5.2. Seventh Framework Programme / IUA Marie Curie Office

On 1st January Dr Celia Gallagher took on the role as National Contact Point and Alternate National Delegate to the People (Marie Curie) Programme. Celia has been with the IUA since 2003, and is responsible for expertiseireland.com, the all island research portal; the National Research Platform Project which assessed the information requirements to raise the visibility of Ireland's research, preserve it, organise it and crunch it for benchmarking, bibliometric analysis and quality assessment. This highly strategic project will be used to facilitate research collaborations, measure publicly funded research output and aligned with the objectives of the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation of promoting Science, Technology and Innovation nationally and internationally. She obtained her BSc (Hons) from the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, and her PhD from Dublin City University, in the field of organometallic chemistry. Prior to working with the IUA she worked in Industry in the US. Her current research interests are research management/information systems, digital author identifiers, research standards and definitions.

1.5.3. 'People' (Marie Curie) Programme – Participation and results

The results for the IAPP call (Industry Academic Partnerships and pathways) are excellent. In this there was a total of 41 Irish partners in 29 proposals. Of the 29 proposals, there were 22 coordinated by Irish partners. While in 2007 and 2008 only 101 respectively, 141 proposals had been submitted across Europe, the number went up to 357 for this year's call, of which 22 were led by Irish coordinators (compared to 9 in 2008 and only 2 in 2007). First results indicate that about 10 Irish coordinated proposals have been funded and another proposal with an Irish partner has been funded. This means that the Irish success rate as coordinator was almost 50% as opposed to the overall success rate of 22%! Those likely funded include researchers from NUIG, NUIM, TCD, UCC, UCD, RCSI, DIT, DKIT, NCAD, DePuy (Ireland) and Oncomark Ltd. Note that NUIG was ranked 1 in Life Science and NCAD ranked 1 in Social Science (highest ranked of all 357 proposals at 98%)

1.6. EURAXESS Ireland (Irish Researcher Mobility Office) and Web Portal
1.6.1. Funding

Following negotiations with the IUA Research Director and the EURAXESS Office Manger, the Office of Science and Technology (OST) agreed to continue their annual funding of €108,000 for 2010 which is the same amount of funding provided for in 2009. This is an excellent results in a climate of cutbacks and enables the IUA to continue providing the mobility service and managing the Hosting Agreement Scheme. It also ensures availability of funding for developments and maintenance of the Hosting agreement extranet and the national portal.

1.6.2. Statistics

There are now a total of **4,216** registered users on the portal who receive regular updates on job and funding opportunities. A large portion of this statistic is shared between Post Doc and Post Graduate Researchers. This is a dramatic increase of registrations since the previous review. 115298 visits to the portal have been recorded.

The **euraxess.ie** portal operates a research job opportunities and funding advertising facility for academic institutions, research agencies and organizations. Statistical analysis collated prior to the preparation of this report can be summarized as follows:
- 20,850 Job Searches on the portal – a remarkable increase on the last report.
- 338 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 organizations.
- 3080 Organisation profile searches have been made by registered users.

Helpdesk
To date, the help desk has had direct dealings with over 2130 queries. The majority of queries address third country visa requirements and ranged from entry visas for researchers, partners and/or family visas, short term visas to renewal and change in status of visas.

1.6.3.   Hosting Agreement Scheme and Extranet
The office has processed **820** Hosting Agreements to date with a total of **23** accredited organisations including all Irish universities and six Institutes of Technology and three from Industry (LM Ericcson Ltd, Solar Print Ltd and IBM) have received their certificate of accreditation from the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment. 90% of all hosting agreements approved have been issued to researchers employed by the universities. There are currently **510** researchers working on their research projects under the hosting agreement scheme in Ireland.

The top two non EEA nationalities with hosting agreements are from **India and China** issued with **152 and 156** agreements respectively. They are followed by **US citizens** issued with **99** hosting agreements to date. There are **40** researchers with **Russian**; **29** with **Australian**, and **31** with **Canadian** citizenship employed under the scheme in Ireland. The other 57 non EEA countries have a small number of researchers with hosting agreements in Ireland.

To date, **370** researchers have availed of the immediate family unification opportunity and have their dependants with them for the duration of their research projects in Ireland.

1.6.4.   EU Projects

1.6.4(i) ERA-MIND

The ERA-MIND - *European Research Area Mobile Researchers in Industry Project was* developed to improve the quality and coherence of EURAXESS Services to industry organisations and researchers in industry. This is a collaborative project funded by the European Commission with partners from Netherlands, Italy and Turkey.

IUA's involvement is to determine the specific needs and expectations of industry with regard to the services provided by the Euraxess Services network. In addition, it is involved in strengthening the communication and co-ordination between industry stakeholders and the service centres. Lastly, to provide training to Euraxess network partners in order to better respond to the expectations and needs identified.

The project's first Coordination meeting was held in Warsaw in November 2009 and co-ordinated by the IUA in conjunction with a training session to the EURAXESS Poland network. Various representatives from industry and industry associations participated in both session. Numerous information sessions and co-ordination meetings have been scheduled to take place in throughout 2010 including Greece and Italy. A network of 'Industry end users' has been co-ordinated by the IUA and a number of requests have been sent to further identify a large pool from various disciplines and backgrounds to ensure a well represented and balanced network. The project will benefit from this network to develop a common strategy and tools for serving industrial organizations and mobile researchers in industry.

1.6.4(ii) MOREBRAIN

This EU funded project is designed to develop new means of working with the research diaspora. It is a collaboration by the IUA with partners in Israel, Spain and Ireland. IUA is responsible for a key part of this project; a questionnaire that will be disseminated to researchers across Europe and the US through internet survey techniques. The IUA has developed the questionnaire with the aim of better understanding factors influencing researchers' mobility decisions. The GEARY institute of UCD has been chosen through a tendering process, to run the survey and analyse the data. The questionnaire has been completed and the survey is now ready to be accessed online by EURAXESS offices in Europe.

1.7 Research Integrity

On 24 September 2009 the RIA, in conjunction with the IUA, HRB and HEA organised a half-day workshop exploring Ireland's need for institutional and national structures to ensure the research integrity of publicly funded research. The universities Vice-Presidents for Research have indentified the need for such structures.

The outcomes of this meeting will be an event report and an accompanying document outlining potential scenarios of approach to the promotion of research integrity and the prevention and investigation of research misconduct. These documents outline the issues

that a stakeholder group should consider in developing terms of reference for any national structures and concomitant institutional structures.

At a meeting on 25 November, the RIA, IUA and HRB agreed this initiative would require a stakeholder meeting early next year, which should include the Vice-Presidents for Research as one of the principal stakeholders. Other stakeholders include research funders and representatives of industries that collaborate with universities in publicly supported research.

Issues for consideration identified by the meeting that took place in the RIA on 24 September will include:

- Definitions of objectionable and questionable research practices
- Identification of appropriate national and institutional approaches to the prevention and/or investigation thereof
- Research student and staff development and support, including bespoke or 'off the shelf' training
- University structures and their terms of reference, resource implications, governance and interaction with any national structure
- Agreement on consistent application of sanctions that is appropriate to the offence.
- Identification of HEI structures' role in research misconduct prevention and/or investigation
- Drafting of appropriate terms of reference for national and institutional structures that are consistent with each other
- Extant relevant legislation that will influence the development of any research integrity structures

2. Strategic Innovation Fund
2.1. SIF Evaluation Review

In October the HEA and Department of Education and Science initiated an interim evaluation of the progress, results and achievements of all SIF projects. The objectives of the evaluation were to monitor the operation and performance of SIF and to make recommendations regarding the future development of SIF in higher education and particularly in higher education funding policy. The IUA were invited to submit a progress report on each of the sectoral SIF projects by mid November 2009 and an independent external expert, Dr. Gordon Davies met with IUA representatives in December to conduct the evaluation review. We await the outcome of the review.

A number of IUA sectoral projects under the 'Improving capacity for post-graduate research' theme have been selected for review and audit by the C&AG. The site vist takes place on 20th January 2010.

2.2. Full Economic Cost Project

The Full Economic Cost SIF Cycle II project which involves the detailed design and implementation of an FEC model across all universities continues to progress.

FEC Models have now been completed in most institutions and Pilot I has been completed with most institutions having generated preliminary outputs from their models (Overhead % Rate, Teaching Cost per Student Type per HEA Subject Area) based on data used for the pilot.

The National Steering Group (NSG) has agreed to conduct an extensive review on all aspects of the FEC Project (AAP Collection Process, FEC Model Objectives, Financial Basis for Model etc.) prior to proceeding with the next phase of the project. Professor Werner Bruggeman, an internationally renowned academic expert in the field of Activity Based Management and associate of Professor Robert Kaplan has agreed to lead the review with the support of colleagues from B&M Consulting (his consultancy practice) and the review will address the following areas:

- Conceptual Validation of the FEC Template Model
- Review of the AAP Process
- Financial Basis of the Model

As part of the review process a review workshop, facilitated by Prof. Bruggeman will be held on 15th February 2010.

In addition to the 'conceptual' validation a technical validation of the FEC model and software is also being undertaken to verify the integrity of the models. This review is being undertaken by SAS.

Following the completion of Pilot I the next phase of the project will also include a review of "usability"/operational elements of the SAS Model Software and the reporting facility and further training on the SAS Software has been scheduled for FEC Managers in early February in this regard.

2.3. Irish Universities Study

The **Irish Universities Study**[1] is the first comprehensive project to measure student / researchers' experience and outcomes in Irish universities. The project uses state of the art internationally benchmarked web survey methods to interrogate the student and researcher populations in the 7 universities. In the UK, US, Australia and other systems, regular surveys of the student population are part of the institutional set-up for higher education.

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[1] The original SIF project was called "Student Feedback" but as it has evolved this more comprehensive title is now used to reflect the populations interrogated and data gathered.

- The project was part of the HEA SIF Site Visit on 14th December and results to date were welcomed by the reviewer
- Results from the survey of PhD students in round two now clearly show the positive impact of structured PhD programmes on the student experience

- The results of the second round on PhD students were presented at the IUA 4th Level Network Conference in October 2009.
- The third survey (including a longitudinal follow up on sample from second round) is currently in the field and there are over 2000 responses to date.
- The Research Survey is now complete having reached a response of over 700 out of a total of 3,000 researchers, preliminary results are now available at www.iua.ie/ius .

2.4. Equity of Access Project: Update on Developments - Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) & Disability Access Route to Higher Education (DARE)

2.4.1. *Roll out of the HEAR & DARE*

In the autumn 2009 the two supplementary application schemes were successfully rolled out and opened up to all second level schools across the nation. The schemes now have clear identities and strong foundations. The application forms were integrated into the CAO main form which went live on 3rd November 2009. As of 18th January 497 applicants had fully completed the DARE Form and 1,635 the HEAR Form. In addition, 2,648 applicants declared their interest in applying to HEAR and 1,232 have declared that they have a disability or a medical condition.

2.4.2. *Communication Campaign*

An extensive 5 month communication campaign is underway and a comprehensive suite of communication tools have been developed; for details on the communications tools please refer to the Communications Section. A key shift in this area was the move to align the communications work of both schemes thereby creating greater efficiencies. The first of these activities began in January when both HEAR & DARE hosted joint Information Sessions throughout the country. This alignment is part of the move to create more effective structures and ways of working for the schemes.

2.4.3. *Evaluation*

Extensive research was carried out by UL into admittance through DARE in 2009. This research is formative in nature. One key recommendation, based on the learning from the 2008/09 cycle, was to strengthen the communication strategy in order to maximize the return of complete applications. This finding backed-up what was generally understood to have been the case hence the great emphasis on communication from October 2009 through to end of March 2010. The report is with the Admissions Officers for comment. It is intended to produce a summary document for internal circulation; this will be used as a basis for further scheme development.

2.4.4. Overall Structures for HEAR and DARE

Considerable progress has been made on defining new DARE/HEAR governance structures for post SIF (June 2010). The principle aims behind such structures are to facilitate efficient & effective management of the ongoing and development work of HEAR/DARE. This is to be done with particular emphasis on sustainability. On the behest of the Advisory Group a sub-group of the Access Manager/Directors took on the task of scoping out draft structures. The HEAR & DARE Operators were consulted on these developments. They were also brought to a meeting of all 17 participating HEIs. In addition, the proposal was shaped by input from Admissions Officers who are due to give further feedback prior to the proposal being put to the IUA Registrars on 25th January.

2.4.5. Data Management

A contract has been agreed between UL and the participating HEIs on the Data Management of HEAR & DARE. This is an extension of UL's role. In the academic year 08/09 UL took charge of the Data Management for DARE. The aim is to establish system based solutions that meet the requirements of HEAR & DARE with a view to integrating the offers function with CAO and providing the schemes with a firm evidence base. A working group has been established to work with UL on this project. This group includes Admissions Officers, the CAO and the HEAR & DARE Operators.

2.4.6. Legal Advice

The Department of Education & Science has received advice from the AG regarding any potential exposure to legal challenge to HEAR on the grounds of positive discrimination. The advice stated that, in general, HEAR is considered to be legally sustainable although risks may occur around proportionality and equal treatment under EU Law. In the later case any challenge would be most likely to come from those living in Northern Ireland. The DES advises the HEIs to also seek counsel on this from their own legal teams. A collective approach to this issue may be the most effective but any action will be held off until the DES forward an outline of the advice in writing.

3. Funding

3.1. Recurrent Funding

3.1.1. Current Funding

The recurrent funding environment continues to be extremely challenging for universities. The 2010 estimates for public expenditure indicated a reduction in core grant funding in sub-head E4 which includes *Universities and colleges, Institutes of Technology and other designated institutions of higher education* of 4%. We still await the detailed breakdown of grant allocations to individual institutions. The Minister for Finance in Budget 2010 also announced pay cuts for public servants ranging from 5% to 15%. The 4% reduction in sub-head E4 is exclusive of the impact of the public service pay cuts.

3.1.2   Student Services Charge

Following the increase in the student services charge to €1,500 from the start of the 2009/10 academic year there has been renewed interest in the charge and how it is expended within institutions.   Following the Union of Students in Ireland's (USI) appearance before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education & Science in December the Presidents and Provost of Universities and the Chief Executive of the HEA have been summoned to appear before the Joint Committee on 28th January 2010 to discuss the student services charge and its application.

The HEA is also currently undertaking a review of the student services charge and the framework for good practice and has recently written to universities in this regard.

3.1.3   Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (No. 2) Act 2009

As noted under 3.1.1 above the Minister for Finance announced pay cuts for public servants in his budget speech in December. These pay cuts were enacted in the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (No. 2) Act 2009. The pay cuts apply to all public servants employed by public bodies in respect of which a public service pension scheme exists or applies or may be made. The cuts range from 5% to 15% and are expected to achieve savings of approximately 6% on the public sector pay bill.

The application of the pay cuts has raised a number of issues for the sector and the IUA is liaising with the HEA in respect of these issues.

3.2.   Pension Issues

3.2.1   Proposed Transfer of University Pension Schemes

Transfer Orders in respect of the TCD and NUIM pension schemes were enacted in late December and the schemes successfully transferred to the National Pension Reserve Fund. The three remaining funded schemes are due to transfer in early 2010.

3.2.2   Operational Issues Arising from the Transfer of University Pension Schemes

There are a range of operational issues arising from the transfer of the funded schemes to the NPRF and the implementation of model schemes and an IUA working group has been working with the HEA in addressing these issues.

The working group submitted a proposal to the HEA and Department of Finance (DoF) in relation to the accounting and recording of pension related cash flows under the new arrangements and the proposed arrangements have been approved by the DoF.

The working group is also proposing that funding would not be sought for employer pension contributions in respect of staff funded by the Exchequer. The DoF has agreed in principle to this proposal.

3.3. Shared Services

The IUA Shared Services Steering Group continues to meet on a monthly basis to progress initiatives in respect of shared services. The group has been charged with implementing the recommendations contained in the interim report of the IUA Shared Services Working Group produced in April 2009. The steering group has developed a framework for shared services for the sector and is prioritising work in the following areas:-

- Financial shared services
- Job recruitment advertising
- Pension administration
- Procurement
- IT

Significant work will be involved in developing business cases in respect of the above areas.

3.4. Sectoral Procurement Initiatives

As reported previously following a spend analysis review the following high spend areas have been identified as short-term priorities:-

- Electricity
- PC's
- Insurance
- Cleaning/facilities management
- Stationery

Work is progressing in respect of each of these areas. In addition there are a number of additional areas where collaborative procurement is also currently being pursued.

In addition a joint UCFOG/UPCOG working group has been established to consider and advise how collaborative procurement can best be structured and operated and to develop a sectoral procurement strategy for the sector.

3.5. Taxation Issues

As reported previously the sector has continued to engage with the Revenue Commissioners in relation to PAYE issues, however no progress has been made in relation to resolving these issues. This will continue to be pursued through UCFOG.

4. Conference on "Governance in the University Sector"

The Secretaries Group are organising a one day conference on governance, internal control and risk management. It is envisaged that representatives from the IUA Plenary Group, Chairs of Governing Authorities, Deans, Heads of Internal Audit Functions, Audit Committee members and Chairs of Finance Committees would be invited to the conference. The proposed date for the event is Tuesday 30th March 2010 with Croke Park selected as the venue.

Under the broad umbrella of governance, there are three selected themes for the conference.
Theme 1: Moving from compliance/conformance to performance
Theme 2: Innovation and risk management within the governance agenda
Theme 3: Aligning governance and strategy with outcomes and deliverables

Chris Horn, Iona Technologies founder, has been confirmed as a speaker with confirmation of other keynote speakers to be made shortly.

5. Seminar on "Irish Copyright Law"

The Copyright Group organised a seminar on copyright legislation and current requirements for the university sector. This was held on 9th December and was presented by Rob Corbet of Arthur Cox. The following areas were covered by the seminar:

- Overview of Copyright Law in Ireland
- Exemptions Relevant to IUA members
- Data base right
- Collective Licensing Schemes
- The Internet
- Consequences of non-compliance with Copyright Law

6. Leaving Certificate Mathematics

At a meeting of the university Heads with Minister Lenihan of 3 November 2009 on the topic of "bonus points" for Leaving Certificate Mathematics, it was agreed that a small dedicated group, to be organised by the IUA, would be convened with the objective of developing a suite of short to medium term actions which would underpin the objectives of Project Maths and complement the work of the existing Project Maths Implementation Support Group.

This group was convened by IUA on 18 December 2009, to consider the issues and evidence currently available, and to identify areas of potential intervention for further

exploration. The group includes representatives of DETE, Forfas, DES, State Examinations Commission, and IUA (Registrars' group and IUA executive).

A number of relevant documents were tabled by the different participants.

It was agreed that the work of this group should be completed over 2-3 meetings, during which time it would be possible to see what progress can be made. The second meeting will take place at the end of January 2010.

7. National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

7.1. Placement of University Postgraduate Diplomas, Higher Diplomas, and Minor, Special Purpose, and Supplemental Awards on the NFQ

As recommended by IUA Registrars, a working group has been established to address the outstanding issues surrounding the placement on the National Framework of Qualifications of the award formerly titled the Higher Diploma in Education, and currently designated the Postgraduate Diploma in Education. The working group, which is chaired by Prof. Tom Collins of NUI Maynooth, includes representatives of all the universities and colleges of education, as well as the Teaching Council. A joint secretariat is provided by the IUA and the NQAI. A first meeting of the working group took place on 2 December 2009, at which the Terms of Reference and a plan to undertake a technical exercise regarding this placement were agreed. Two further meetings of the working group have been scheduled, for early February and early March 2009; in the meanwhile a technical working group composed of the IUA and NQAI secretariat will examine all relevant programme documentation. The working group will make a recommendation as to the appropriate placement/inclusion of this award to IUA Registrars in March 2010.

7.2. IUA / NQAI Framework Implementation Network

Following its work programme during 2008 and 2009, the joint IUA / NQAI Framework Implementation Network (FIN), chaired by Prof. John Scattergood of TCD, has produced a practitioner-focused publication entitled "University awards and the National Framework of Qualifications: Issues around the Design of Programmes and the Use and Assessment of Learning Outcomes". This publication is composed of three sections, each based on the work of one of the three FIN working groups. These sections cover:

- the technical aspects of designing programmes/awards for inclusion in the NFQ
- discipline specific learning outcomes: some case studies, reference points, issues and insights; and
- a guide to good practice for the assessment of learning outcomes.

The publication is fully available online at http://www.nfqnetwork.ie/, and a number of hard copies are also being produced for limited distribution. The publication will be launched fully by IUA and NQAI once the hard copies are available.

Based on feedback from current FIN members, it is anticipated that 'lifelong learning' will form the overarching theme for the next period of the network's activities. The sub-themes currently identified are listed as follows:

- A review of the legislative and policy developments underpinning Access Transfer and Progression (ATP)
- The placement of legacy awards
- The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and its application
- The use of the Framework award-type descriptors to support lifelong learning.

Consultation with members and Registrars is currently underway to determine these themes, as well as FIN membership for 2010. The next FIN meeting will take place on 24 February 2010.

8. Internationalisation

8.1 Education Ireland

As noted in the IUA Review of October 2009, DES had proposed in August 2009 that Enterprise Ireland would take responsibility for marketing and promotion of the "Education Ireland" brand. This took place in November 2009, with the transfer of two former IEBI staff members to Enterprise Ireland.

The legislation surrounding the establishment of a "quality mark" for the promotion and marketing of Irish education overseas is under preparation as part of the broader legislative reforms needed for the creation of the proposed "Qualifications and Quality Assurance Agency". Heads of Bill for this new piece of legislation were presented in early January 2010 to the Cabinet.

This "quality mark" will be controlled by the new Agency; in the meanwhile the maintenance of the "DES internationalisation register" is in the process of will be transferred from DES to NQAI.

8.2. Proposed New Immigration Regime for non-EEA Students

As noted in the IUA Review of October 2009, the Department for Justice, Equality & Law Reform had published a set of proposals for the reform of non-EEA student immigration and sought public feedback on these proposals. Following discussion with IUA International Officers and IUA Registrars, an IUA submission was made in October 2009. This IUA position has been shared with a number of bodies such as IBEC and SFI. DoJELR has not yet published the various submissions received during this process.

9. EUA

9.1 Exploratory study on University Autonomy in Europe

A new EUA study was published at the end of 2009: "University autonomy in Europe I: an exploratory study".

The changing expectations of universities' contributions to a knowledge-based economy and society over the last decade have transformed the relationship between the state and higher education institutions. University governance and the degree of control exerted by the state have become the subject of much debate. The European Commission and a significant number of European governments have recognised the need for university autonomy. In its Communication "Delivering on the Modernisation Agenda for Universities: Education, Research and Innovation" (May 2006), the European Commission marks as a priority the creation of new frameworks for universities, characterized by improved autonomy and accountability. The Council of the European Union (2007) confirms this approach and makes an explicit link between autonomy and the ability of universities to respond to society expectations. In this framework, university autonomy is not only crucial to the achievement of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), but is also a determining factor in the completion of the European Research Area (ERA), as stated in the European Commission's Green Paper "The European Research Area: New perspectives" (April 2007).

The EUA study specifically looked at the ability of universities to decide on:
• organisational structures and institutional governance – in particular, the ability to establish structures and governing bodies, university leadership and who is accountable to whom;
• financial issues – in particular the different forms of acquiring and allocating funding, the ability to charge tuition fees, to accumulate surplus, to borrow and raise money from different sources, the ability to own land and buildings and reporting procedures as accountability tools;
• staffing matters – in particular the capacity to recruit staff, the responsibility for terms of employment such as salaries and issues relating to employment contracts such as civil servant status;
• academic matters – in particular the capacity to define the academic profile, to introduce or terminate degree programmes, to define the structure and content of degree programmes, roles and responsibilities with regard to the quality assurance of programmes and degrees and the extent of control over student admissions.

A full copy of the report can be downloaded at http://www.eua.be/publications

10.   Communications / Events
10.1. Media Relations
10.1.1. Recent Press Releases
• Budget & Estimates 2010 - Universities will continue to prioritise the student experience and the knowledge society - 10th Dec 2009

- IUA warmly welcomes the selection of Maire Geoghegan Quinn as Commissioner for Research and Innovation - Statement 1st Dec 2009
- University Presidents Surprised by Fees Decision - Statement 13th Oct 2009
- IUA Welcomes Improvements in the standing of Irish Universities in Times Higher Rankings- 8th Oct 2009

10.2. Communications for SIF Projects

10.2.1. Development of Communications for the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR)

Following the successful launch of the scheme on September 8th we have now counted over 35 specific articles on the scheme in national & regional media, both press and radio and many others smaller mentions. The full list of articles can be viewed on accesscollege.ie.

A positive development in media terms is the now systematic mention of the HEAR scheme in articles about the CAO application process and the adoption of the terms HEAR and DARE by the education media.

Google Analytics has been added to www.accesscollege.ie from the start of January to monitor use of the site over the busy application period leading up to the CAO deadline for applications on February 1st.

The HEAR Application Guide and Workbook was produced and distributed to secondary schools nationwide timed for their return to school following the Christmas break. A poster advertising joint HEAR/DARE Application Information Sessions was also included in the mailing.

10.2.2. Development of Communications for the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)

The scheme was launched on 6th October 2009 and to date we have counted over 30 specific articles on the scheme in national & regional media, both press articles and radio interviews. The full list of articles can be viewed on accesscollege.ie.

President Mary McAleese lent her support to the DARE scheme and her comments were included in a following up press release to the launch release. "*DARE initiative gains momentum as President McAleese lends her support*" - 7th Oct 2009

The DARE Application guide was produced and distributed to schools in the first week of January and to date applications in CAO are higher than this time last year.

IUA will now begin the process of moving on from the central role it played with the SIF Access Project and will establish working groups which will operate independently of the

IUA Executive as we prepare for the end of the SIF Access contract in June 2010. A joint HEAR and DARE Communications Working Group will be formed which will be made up of HEAR Operators, DARE Operators, Senior HEI Communications Managers and the IUA Communications Manager will continue on a consultancy basis.

10.3.   Marketing the University Sector and IUA Services
IUA Newsletter October Edition
The IUA online newsletter was distributed on October 20th
Items included:

- IUA Fourth Level Network Annual Conference 2009
- DARE Initiative Gains Momentum as President McAleese Lends Her Support
- EU Commission DG for Research launches Web Portal for Researchers in Ireland
- Code of Practice and Guidelines for Irish Higher Education Institutions
- Higher Education Access Route Extends to All Secondary Schools
- Launch of "Higher Education Access/Foundation Courses – a Research Report"
- Minister Sean Haughey Officially opens NAIRTL's Symposium
- Organisations Urged to Become "Ability Champions"

10.4.   IUA Extranet
At the time of reading this the IUA Review for January 2010 will have been downloaded from the newly launched IUA Extranet.

The purpose of the extranet is to disseminate information among IUA Groups and act as a document store or record of activity. The site will be accessed with a username and password and will contain a record of group minutes, IUA sectoral documents, events calendar etc. This will become the main method of documentation dissemination of the IUA executive.

Council and the 5 standing groups of the IUA are represented on the site and we will look at greater sharing of information over the next few months. It is expected that the extranet will be rolled out to many university management groups.

Full telephone support and training is available through the software supplier and details have been sent to all members.