IUA Review [10/2] for IUA Meetings
in University College Dublin
on 29ᵗʰ March 2010

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1. Research
1.1. Research Policy and Funding Overview

The impact of the cuts in R&D across the various government departments is now quite clear. There is a 7% reduction on the overall funding available for the SSTI in 2010 compared to last year. The reduced budget will mainly affect the number of new awards that research agencies can support in 2010. The following is a brief outline of the position:

SFI	There has been a reduction of 8.5% in total allocation to €152 million. Note that €142 million is already committed to fund existing contracts. This leaves only €10 million for new awards in 2010. About 220 Research Frontier grants will expire in 2010 and only 40 can be renewed. This will result in the loss of 400 – 500 researchers, from a total SFI community of some 2,200 researchers. SFI hope to make 27 PI awards, renew funding to 2 CSETs and award 1 new SRC in 2010.
Enterprise Ireland	their focus in 2010 will be on the industry led programmes (e.g. Competency Centres). Activity under the Commercialisation Fund will be significantly reduced.
Health Research Board	There will be calls under all schemes (except postdoctoral fellowships) but the number of awards will be reduced. They will award a small number (4 or 5) of Marie Curie postdoctoral grants, subject to EU approval.
IRCSET	There will be a reduction in PhD awards. The Council estimates that they will make 150 PhD awards and between 60-70 Enterprise awards in 2010 – this is a net reduction of 50-60 awards on 08 levels. They expect over 1,000 PhD applications this year. The number of companies seeking partnerships on the EPS awards has increased to 90. There will be awards under the postdoctoral schemes but no details yet.

PRTLI	The funding under cycle 4 of the PRTLI is committed. Funding being provided in 2010 is allowing projects to proceed. Still no news of Cycle 5 (assessment process complete and awaiting final DES decisions).
IRCHSS	The Council is not running its academic fellowship schemes and there is going to be a significant reduction in the number of PhD awards available. There will be awards under the postdoctoral schemes.

There is a 4% reduction in the overall core grant in 2010 in addition to the reduction of 5.5% that will apply as a result of the Budget pay cut. This is happening at a time when both undergraduate and postgraduate student numbers are increasing. There is no information yet on the McCarthy proposal to place all research funding into a single agency. It is still not yet clear what the implications will be of creating a single funding stream for research.

Another issue is the reduction in researcher remuneration as a result of the emergency legislation. The legislation following the recent budget means that pay by a public service body to its employees, irrespective of funding source or employment status, is to be reduced in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Emergency Measures Act. The resulting funds are to be paid back to the sponsoring funding agency who will in turn give this back to the Exchequer. This measure is applied to all researchers regardless of funding source. In particular, this is causing serious problems with contracts under the FP7 Marie Curie programme as reducing pay is a breach of contract (see *1.2.2* for further details).

The EU Research Commissioner spoke in NUI Galway on 19th March. Much of her policy focus is a continuation of past directions, e.g. the 'grand challenges'(climate change, energy security, food security and the ageing population), 3% target free movement of knowledge (European Research Area) and joint programming. After mid-term review of FP7 she intends to plan for the next Framework Programme (2014-2020). All of the former have been in place for a number of years and she does not seem to have the intention to change these (of course this will change after the mid-term review). She is marking out the area of innovation under the heading of a 'Single Market for Innovation.' (i-economy) as the area where she intends to have a real impact. This is not surprising as it is the new remit of the Commissioner to coordinate innovation activities across the Commission.

There has been an increased focus on the FP7 by the universities. The VP/Deans of Research Group is developing a sector wide strategy. Following the highly successful visit of the group to Brussels in May 2009, the Research Officers will meet with

Commission staff in Brussels on 21st / 22nd April. The purpose of the visit is to identify methods for greater successful participation by researchers in FP7 and related EC funding.

1.2.   Researcher Careers

1.2.1.   *Revised IUA Researcher Salary Scale*

In order to advance the implementation of the Research Career Framework agreed through HERG the universities are revising the IUA Researcher Salary Scale guidelines. This has been agreed following collaboration between the VP/Deans of Research and the HR Directors. In the longer term the plan is to introduce a proper scale that is linked to research career progression along with performance evaluation. However, given the current economic situation the VPDOR group believe it important to take immediate action. The revised scale will be effective from 2nd April.

1.2.2.   *Pay Cuts and the FP7 Marie Curie Programme*

The pay cuts in the public service have been applied to contract researchers working in the public HE sector. This also applies to those on non-exchequer funds. IUA is in direct consultation with the Department of Finance with a view to have this reversed, particularly for Marie Curie funded researchers. The European Commission is crystal clear on this issue; pay cuts are not acceptable and breach the terms of the contract. Universities have already been told that if they have cut pay, then they will receive no further payments from Brussels.

1.3.   Open Access to Research Output and PubMed

The IUA Libraries National Research Portal (http://www.irel-open.ie/) is approaching completion and will be launched in April. This will make Irish research output freely available to the global research community by creating repositories of research papers within each University. The **National Portal** will act as a single point of access to national research output and contain content harvested from individual university Research Repositories. It will include statistical data-sets associated with research. It will also facilitate a range of value-added services, which will include links to university Research Support Systems, enhanced searching through indexing of full-text content, the analyses of content and indicators of research output and the identification of research trends. The National Portal will also provide for the long-term preservation of research papers and output and for the establishment of standards of description and maintenance.

Both HRB and SFI are insisting that researchers place their output on the UK PubMed repository. We do believe that the national repository should be the primary location for all research output. We will be meeting with SFI and HRB on 31st March to discuss.

1.4. Fourth Level Ireland Network Group

1.4.1. *Inter-Institutional Agreement*

On 25 January the Network considered a proposed inter-institutional collaborative agreement for 'for the purpose of enabling module delivery, student mobility and credit exchange in collaborative graduate programmes across universities in the Irish republic.' UCD's graduate studies office composed the initial draft, which the DRHEA's agreement significantly informed. Following incorporation of changes agreed by the Network on 25 January, the Network Chair circulated the draft agreement to the Registrars/Vice-Provost and Vice-Presidents/Dean of Research groups on 5 February. This agreement will be on the agenda for a joint convention of Deans of Graduate Studies and Registrars/Vice-Provost on 29 March.

1.4.2. *Advisory Science Council Report the Role of PhDs in the 'Smart Economy'*

The Deans of Graduate Studies have provided a response to the ASC on *The role of PhDs in the 'smart economy'*, complimenting the ASC on the collection of valuable data concerning this increasingly important cohort of graduates, but also emphasising that all PhD graduates have a potential role in the development of the 'smart economy' irrespective of discipline or whether they are directly involved in research and development in the private sector or otherwise.

1.4.3. *HETAC Research Degree Programme Policy and Criteria*

HETAC have sought direction from the IUA on universities' opinion of its draft 'research degree programme policy and criteria'. On 12 March the IUA executive communicated to HETAC that universities might have concerns regarding the implied move from the award of PhD being dependant on the thesis explicitly evidencing an original and significant contribution of new knowledge and understanding to the discipline to the requirement that the thesis demonstrates that a candidate possesses the learning outcomes as per level ten of the National Framework of Qualifications. Furthermore, the IUA cautioned against the implied use of the IUA PhD skills statement as assessment criteria for modules associated with structured PhD programmes. HETAC have responded with a request to discuss these concerns with the relevant IUA groups. The Deans of Graduate Studies and Registrars will discuss this issue on 29 March.

1.4.4. *SIF Review Outcomes*

On 25 February the HEA released the results of the recent review of SIF activities. The Fourth Level Ireland Network received a favourable result and received a '1' rating, which indicated that 'these are excellent projects contributing key outcomes of benefit to all of higher education or to one of the sectors (most are completed or almost completed SIF 1 projects). They should be mainstreamed and the outcomes should be disseminated sector- or system-wide.' Consequently, the Network is giving consideration to its operation beyond SIF 1 funds

1.5.   European / International Funding

1.5.1. *Seventh Framework Programme / IUA Marie Curie Office*

The last few months since the previous IUA review have been very quiet in terms of calls for Marie Curie Actions. The CoFund Action closed on February 18, 2010 to which SFI submitted a proposal. The first deadline for the Reintegration Grant was March 9, 2010, under which a number of Irish proposals were submitted. Apart from hands-on assistance to researchers preparing proposals for those schemes and ongoing support to contractors and fellows in Marie Curie projects in general, the National Contact Point and National Delegate (Dr. Conor O'Carroll) also contributed to a number of events related to the Marie Curie Actions programme:

> ➢ National University of Ireland, Maynooth FP Strategy meeting in January 2010.
> ➢ UCD Humanities Institute FP7 Funding meeting February 2010.
> ➢ Ireland-India Science and Technology Forum, DCU, February 2010.

A meeting was held with the Research Officers to discuss an FP7 meeting in Brussels on April 21, 2010, hosted in conjunction with Enterprise Ireland. The agenda for this meeting is currently being discussed with the Enterprise Ireland R&D Liaison Manager in Brussels, Catriona Ward.

1.5.2. *'People' (Marie Curie) Programme – Participation and Results*

The results for the Initial Training Networks (call deadline December 22, 2009) should be available after a consensus meeting on March 28, 2010. Preliminary information shows a total of 124 Irish participants.

In terms of the Intra-European Fellowship (IEF) with a deadline of August 18, 2009 deadline the Irish (Ireland as the host country) success rate (20.4%) was slightly less than that of the EU (24.07%). The International Incoming Fellowships had 27 submissions with Ireland as the host country and only a 3.7% success rate, dramatically differing from the 14.8% average success rate. The most successful fellowship action for Ireland as the host country was the International Outgoing Fellowship with a success rate of 31.25% compared to the average of 20.3%.

Marie Curie Action	# Irish submissions	# Funded
Intra-European Fellowship (IEF)	49	10
International Incoming Fellowship (IIF)	27	1
International Outgoing Fellowship (IOF)	16	5

1.5.3. **'People' (Marie Curie) Programme – Upcoming calls and Deadlines**

The next calls for the Marie Curie Programme are as follows:

Marie Curie Action	Deadline
International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES)	March 25, 2010
Intra-European Fellowship (IEF)	August 17, 2010
International Incoming Fellowship (IIF)	August 17, 2010
International Outgoing Fellowship (IOF)	August 17, 2010
Reintegration Grants	September 7, 2010

There has been much interest in the fellowships and reintegration grants, and a number of speaking engagements will be organised to highlight the calls and generate further interest and participation.

1.5.4. PeopleNetwork Project

This project is to promote greater impact of the European network of National Contact Point office through cooperation. The IUA is leading a work Package in an EU led project entitled Trans-national co-operation among National Contact Points for Marie Curie Actions. PeopleNetwork aims to develop and implement a coordination mechanism for stimulating closer cooperation among National Contact Points for the PEOPLE programme in the Seventh Framework Programme. It will facilitate an improvement in the overall quality of NCP services across Europe in the area of mobility and increase the transparency of EU fellowships and training opportunities to ensure equal access for all.

The objectives of Work Package 5 is primarily
- to collect information on the reception by the end users of the different measures within the People programme in a systematic and comprehensive way,
- to obtain more general input from the research community on their needs regarding programmes supporting geographical or intersectoral researcher mobility, and
- to make this information available to the Commission.

The result at programme level will be:
- an early identification of recurrent problems in the implementation of the scheme, allowing for timely measures to address these problems,
- an improved level of information on stakeholder views, and ultimately a better correspondence between the design of the programme and its rules and the needs of the research community.

The IUA is leader of Task 5.2 under this work package, which involved interaction with Marie Curie fellows and collection of their feedback. This is be conducted using a short, web based questionnaire concerning both the application process and the implementation of the fellowship at an individual level. Suggestions for solutions to any problems will also be requested. The survey exercise is to be conducted on a bi-annual basis and the NCP will host face-to-face meetings with Marie Curie fellows. These meetings will be

arranged in conjunction with Marie Curie conferences, monitoring events or similar meetings attracting a large number of Marie Curie fellows. Funding for participation in six such events has been provided. The findings of this task will be summarised and fed into bi-annual reports for the commission. The large volume of work involved will mean that the Marie Curie NCP will be spending a minimum of 60% of her time on this project in accordance with the project agreement. Biannual and midterm project reports have been submitted to the commission in January 2010.

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

1.6.1. *Network Meeting*

A network meeting was held on 10th March and to provide the network with updates and information on the Hosting agreement scheme, the job opportunities facility on the national portal euraxess.ie and to welcome new members to the network. The meeting was attended by research and HR representatives from each of the universities, WIT, DIT, RCSI, RIA and some industry organisations, Key personnel from the Office of Science and Technology, DETE, Employment Permits, DETE and from INIS were also in attendance and actively participated in the session.

1.6.2. Statistics

There are now a total of **4,361** 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. 118814 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:
• 24,457 Job Searches on the portal – a substantial increase since the last report.
• 346 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.
• 3142 Organisation profile searches have been made by registered users.

Helpdesk

To date, the help desk has had direct dealings with over 2215 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 **850** 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 **508** 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 **158 and 159** agreements respectively. They are followed by **US citizens** issued with **102** hosting agreements to date. There are **40** researchers with **Russian**; **29** with **Australian**, and **32** 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(a) 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.

Coordination meetings for 2010 have been scheduled, the first of which will take place in Thessaloniki, Greece in April. The meeting has been co-ordinated by the IUA in conjunction with a training session for services centres from Greece, Romania, Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia and Turkey. 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(b) MOREBRAIN

This is an FP7 funded project to investigate the reasons that promote and hinder international mobility of researchers. It is collaboration with partners in Israel, Spain and Iceland, all countries with large research diasporas. The IUA had completed the development of an internet based survey with the support of the Geary Institute UCD. Over the next 2 months the survey will go into the field in all 35 countries involved in FP7 through the national mobility offices.

1.6.4(c) EURAXESS T.O.P

Funded by the European Commission for 18 months, the aim of this project is to reinforce the quality, effectiveness and coherence of the services provided by the EURAXESS Services Network. The project kicked off in January with 11 partners and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Germany are the co-ordinators. As well as participating in the project, Conor O'Carroll is a member of the Project Steering Group. The IUA are responsible for developing content for two workshops which will take place in June and December.

Most of the activity and IUA resources for this task have been required in the first four months of the project. A working meeting was organised in January in preparation of this task and numerous members of the project attended the two day event in Dublin. The Proposal for the June workshop will be completed by mid April. This has involved enormous input from the IUA EURAXESS office, with extensive discussion and involvement with the project partners. The project is currently pending the completion of training needs analysis. Based on the results of this TNA, a priority list will be created for the content of the Training Workshops to be held in June.

2.   Strategic Innovation Fund
2.1.   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.

As previously reported, the FEC Models have been completed in most institutions and preliminary outputs from Pilot I have been produced based on data used for the pilot. As agreed previously due to concerns in relation to the robustness of the data used for Pilot I, which was primarily concerned with validating the mechanics of the model, these outputs will not be externally published.

Following completion of Pilot I it was agreed by FEC National Steering Group that an extensive review on all aspects of the FEC Project (conceptual review, technical review and operational review) would be undertaken.

The conceptual review was undertaken by Professor Werner Bruggeman, an internationally renowned academic expert in the field of Activity Based Management and

covered all aspects of the model (AAP Collection Process, FEC Model Objectives, Financial Basis for Model etc.). Prof. Bruggeman was assisted by a colleague from B&M Consulting, Mr. Kris Moreels. The reviewers met with representatives from the universities in early February and facilitated a review workshop on the 15th February before issuing their recommendations. The FEC NSG will consider the recommendations at the FEC NSG meeting scheduled for Friday 26th March where decisions on the implementation of these recommendations will be made.

In addition to the Conceptual Review a technical validation of the models is currently being undertaken by SAS consultants. The purpose of the technical validation is to assess the integrity of the models. The final element of the post pilot review relates to 'usability'/operational elements of the model and this has been addressed through workshops facilitated by SAS and also through extensive training on the SAS system which was provided to all FEC Managers in early February.

As reported in the January IUA Review the HEA undertook an evaluation of SIF projects in December 2009. The final evaluation report which has recently been issued noted that FEC is a very important project for the sector but also noted that progress has been slow due to internal resistance and the complexity of the work involved.

2.2. Irish Universities Study

The **Irish Universities Study**[1] received a very positive review in the SIF evaluation carried out by the HEA. The project received the highest rating possible and was considered an excellent project contributing key outcomes of benefit to all of higher education. It should be mainstreamed and the outcomes should be disseminated sector- or system-wide. Under the highlights of SIF achievements the reviewer, Prof Gordon Davies stated;

"The development of the student feedback system as an IUA project for the first time enables institutions to collect valuable information from students. It should be adopted by all universities and institutes, and then expanded to collect feedback from staff, and from external observers of higher education"

The Third and final round of the survey is almost complete. Our next objective in the remaining months of the project is to analyse the data with a focus on specific issues including international students and PhD students.

2.3. Equity of Access Project: Update on Developments - Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) & Disability Access Route to Higher Education (DARE) March 2010

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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.

2.3.1. Applications to HEAR & DARE

2010 was the first year that the HEAR form was integrated into the CAO application form and the second year for DARE. Reports to date indicate that both forms were very well received by the applicants and by the guidance counselors supporting them. The feedback indicated that the Application Guides produced by the HEAR & DARE Operators were of great benefit to those applying.

As of 19 March 2,254 applicants had fully completed the DARE form (1,636 applicants completed the Supplementary Information Form in 2009) and 6,831 had completed the HEAR form (3,008 in 2009). 401 applicants applied to both schemes. The applicants are due to send in their supporting documents by 1 April 2010. Assessment will be carried out during April/May and applicants will be informed of the outcome regarding eligibility after the leaving Certificate results.

2.3.2. Sustainable Management Structures

To date the proposed sustainable management structures have received the support of the seven Universities, DIT, AIT, NCIR, CICE, Froebel College of Education and Coláiste Mhuire. Responses from St Patrick's College, Marino Institute of Education and Mary Immaculate College are due shortly; they required the additional time to put the proposal to the appropriate forum. It is planned to hold the first meeting of the Inter-Institutional Management Group in early May.

2.3.3. Data Management

The establishment of the joint HEAR/DARE Data Management Working group is one of the key elements of the new management structures. This group has met three times since January. Under the leadership of UL it has focused on the development of a systems based approach for all stages of the HEAR/DARE application cycle. This cycle begins at the application stage and takes in the screening of applications, communications with applications, management of the review (appeals) process and closes with the offers stage. This system also produces regular reports and analysis and supports the work of quality assurance e.g. trial screening for HEAR & DARE that took place in March. These two functions facilitate the continual improvement of the schemes.

2.3.4. Communications

The joint HEAR/DARE Communications Working Group which forms part of the overall new structures will be established in April. The CAO and the IUA Communications Officers have been approached to participate in this group. In the meantime the focus has been on establishing the effectiveness of the materials developed. In March HEAR & DARE took out a stand at the Annual ICG Conference where a survey aimed at the guidance counselors was launched. An evaluation will be carried out among the Operators, in addition 200 DCU students will be polled to get their feedback.

2.3.5. Developments

A request has come from DES for HEAR to make a presentation to the DEIS Identification Group on the use of the Deprivation Index (Geo-coding). Information sharing on the HEAR experience of the Deprivation Index has also taken place with the NAO (HEA). Meetings have taken place with NEPS on how the requirements for DARE and the work of NEPS could be more closely aligned. Finally, the NUI is working with DARE on aligning the NUI requirements for the language waiver and the criteria for DARE.

2.3.6. Legal Advice

The legal advice sought from the AG on any potential exposure to legal challenge to HEAR on the grounds of positive discrimination has been outlined in writing from the Department of Education & Science. This letter has been circulated to the participating HEIs. A collective approach is being taken on this issue; this is to be tabled at a meeting of the IUA Registrars. In addition HEAR has been informed that the enquiry opened by the Ombudsperson for Children on behalf of a 2009 applicant has been satisfactorily closed.

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%. The 4% reduction in sub-head E4 is exclusive of the impact of the public service pay cuts announced by the Minister for Finance in Budget 2010. When the impact of the pay cuts are taken into account the total reduction on the final 2009 outturn is 9.4%.

The impact on the core grant has been significantly greater than 9.4% however. The increase in student numbers within the sector has meant that there has been a significant increase in the grant in lieu of fees in 2010 (which is a first call on the grant). When the grant in lieu of fees is top sliced from the overall grant the core recurrent grant available for distribution is 27% less than 2009 and the standard resource under RGAM has now fallen to €2,459.

Notwithstanding the fact that the decrease in funding arising from the pay cuts is effectively budget neutral and that there has been an increase in the grant in lieu of fees to reflect increased student intakes the significant variability and reduction in the recurrent grant, which should represent the 'core' funding source for institutions, is a grave concern to universities.

3.1.2 Recurrent Grant Allocation Model

The moderating mechanism within the RGAM was increased from 1% in 2009 to 1.5% in 2010. It is intended that the moderating mechanism will increase to 2% in 2011.

It is also intended that Access funding to institutions, which is currently allocated independently of RGAM, will be incorporated and allocated within RGAM effective from 2011 also.

3.1.3 *Student Services Charge*
The Presidents and Provost of Universities and the Chief Executive of the HEA appeared before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education & Science on 28th January 2010 to discuss the student services charge and its application. At the meeting the Presidents noted that following the increase in the student charge, services which previously were being subsidised by the core grant were now being met by the charge and that in their opinion the student charge is a fee, which the universities are entitled to charge under the Universities Act. The President's also noted that they favoured the introduction of student fees through an income contingent deferred loans system.

The minister for Education & Science is due to appear before the Joint Committee later this month in relation to this issue.

The HEA is also currently undertaking a review of the student services charge and this is due to be completed within the coming weeks.

3.2. Pension Issues
3.2.1 *Proposed Transfer of University Pension Schemes*
The UCD, UCC & NUIG pension funds are due to transfer to the National Pension Reserve Fund on 31st March 2010. Transfer orders will be required in respect of each of the pension schemes and the universities are currently working with the DoF, HEA and the National Treasury Management Agency in relation to the transfer.

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 DoF has recently requested further details in relation to projected pension cash flows over the next 5 years with a view to assessing the future funding requirements.

The working group is also proposing that funding would not be sought for employer pension contributions in respect of staff funded by the Exchequer. We are awaiting formal approval from the DoF in relation 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 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

A number of working groups have been established and are charged with progressing work in respect of the various work streams.

3.4. Sectoral Procurement Initiatives

Reporting to UCFOG the Procurement Working Group continues to meet on a regular basis to progress work in relation to sectoral procurement initiatives. The working group has developed a framework for collaborative procurement and is developing a sectoral procurement strategy for the sector. As part of its work representatives from the working group have recently undertaken site visits to procurement consortia in Scotland and London. Representatives of the group have also met with the NPPOU in relation to procurement initiatives.

The working group is also tasked with progressing the collaborative procurement of a number of high spend areas including the following:-

- Electricity
- PC's
- Insurance
- Cleaning/facilities management
- Office supplies/stationery
- Advertising
- Photocopiers
- Lab supplies

Work is progressing in respect of each of these areas.

3.5.   Comptroller & Auditor General Review of the Third Level Sector
The C&AG is doing a report on the third level education sector and has advised that it will cover the following issues:-

- arrangements for the funding of the universities and for public accountability (covering recurrent grant, RGAM including treatment of tuition fees, universities internal resource allocation models, capital (including S.843), SIF, research etc.
- progress in providing better cost information by universities (including review of FEC project and the limitations of the old unit cost model) and the arrangements for quality assurance.
- matters examined in the course of audits relating to remuneration and pensions.
- matters inquired into in the course of the audits of other third level institutions and the result of those enquiries.
- Audit arrangements – including adjustments required to current practices to comply with audit legislation, 'without prejudice to my right to carry out a full external audit'.

4.   Conference on "Governance in the University sector"

The Secretaries Group are organising a one day conference on governance, internal control and risk management. Representatives from the IUA Plenary Group, Chairs of Governing Authorities, Deans, Head of Internal Audit Functions, Audit Committee members and Chairs of Finance Committees have been invited to the conference along with representatives from funding bodies and government departments. The date for the event is Tuesday 30th March 2010 with Croke Park selected as the venue.

Good governance has implications for leadership and management within Universities, the control environment and control culture, risk management arrangements, stewardship of public money and ultimately the achievement of expected performance outcomes. The legal and regulatory compliance requirements provide a necessary context within which the institutions operate, but effective performance and delivery require much more than that. Increasingly, Universities and individual staff need to be innovative and to seek creative opportunities and possibilities and, in the process, face risks. Good governance is also about managing that risk and exploiting the opportunities.

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

The initial addresses cover the three key governance themes, with presentations from:

Michael Shattock: Visiting Professor, Centre for Higher Education Studies, Institute of Education, University of London, and founding Director of the MBA in Higher Education Management. He also chaired the OECD review of Irish Higher Education in 2003-2004.

Chris Horn: Co-founded IONA Technologies and is a current member of the Innovation Taskforce, an advisory group established by the Taoiseach.

Thomas Esterman: Head of the Unit Governance, Autonomy and Funding at the European University Association

Those addresses are followed by the presentation of a research paper prepared by the Institute of Public Administration on international developments in relation to University governance and will be followed by three workshops focusing on the practical challenges of implementing the evolving governance agenda. This format will allow for full participation in a rich debate and challenging discussion, as well as charting possible ways forward in the coming years. The conference format also affords an opportunity to meet peers carrying out similar governance and leadership roles and to share knowledge, insight and good practice.

5. Copyright - Irish Copyright Licensing Agency

Irish Copyright Licensing Agency (ICLA) is Ireland's reproduction rights organisation. In Ireland, copyright law is contained in the Copyright & Related Rights Act, 2000. A Licence is now mandatory for any educational establishment wishing to make multiple copies of a variety of copyright-protected works.

The ICLA have recently issued invoices to all universities, for the period October '09 – September '10, and are requesting a payment of €5.10 per student. Representatives from the Secretaries Group met with the ICLA in June 2009 and had understood that the 2009/10 charge had not been agreed and was to be negotiated. The Secretaries have decided to arrange a meeting with the ICLA to discuss this in greater detail. In the interim they have advised that it may be prudent to delay the authorization of the 2009/10 ICLA invoice until such a time as a meeting takes place and agreement is reached on what the charge should be.

6. Leaving Certificate Mathematics

As reported in IUA Review January 2010, following a meeting between university Presidents and Minister Conor Lenihan, a small dedicated group has been brought together by IUA 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 Project Maths Implementation Support Group (see below).

This IUA group, which includes representatives of DETE, Forfas, DES, State Examinations Commission, and IUA (Registrars' group and IUA executive), has met twice since December 2009 and has identified a number of possible options. It is currently developing the pros and cons of the various options identified, in the context of promoting the broader issue of maths and science literacy, the objective of want more students undertaking and succeeding in LC higher level maths, and promoting STEM subject choices in higher education.

A third meeting is expected to take place in April 2010, with the conclusions of the group being published afterwards.

In addition to the IUA group mentioned above, DES has convened a Project Maths Implementation Support Group with a wide-ranging membership, including IBEC, various professional bodies in the STEM areas, different DES sections, NCCA, Forfas, Discover Science and Engineering, representatives of secondary schools and teachers, IoTs and universities. This group is chaired by Frank Turpin, ex-Intel, and is mandated to report to Minister DES with proposals in three areas: promoting positive attitudes to maths, encouraging more students to do Higher Level maths and adding value to Project Maths. University representatives on the group include John O'Donoghue of the UL National Centre of Excellence – Maths Science Teaching and Learning, Jim Robinson of UCC representing Engineers Ireland, and Lewis Purser of IUA. The group has met twice and is due to report to Minister DES by end of April/early May.

The Report of the Innovation Taskforce, launched on 11th March 2010 made a recommendation aimed at ensuring that the Irish education system promotes education and creativity: *At second level we need to raise levels of competence and attainment in maths and sciences substantially such that they feed into STEM disciplines at third and fourth levels. We believe that* **mathematics attainment is crucial in this regard and suggest additional measures to improve this including incentives such as the awarding of CAO bonus points to those taking higher level mathematics** *for Leaving Certificate.*

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 a Terms of Reference and a plan to undertake a technical exercise regarding this placement were agreed. This technical exercise has since taken place, with detailed examination of programme and module documentation, including assessment documentation, from all 10 different PGDE programmes. A technical report regarding each programme was provided to the relevant institution/s, and bilateral meetings to discuss these reports were held in early March with all institutions which requested such a meeting. The full overview report from the technical sub-group, containing a clear recommendation to Registrars as to the appropriate NFQ placement/inclusion of this award, was presented to a plenary meeting of the working group on 19 March and approved in full. This report, accompanied by a letter from the Chair of the working group, is being considered by IUA Registrars on 29 March 2010.

7.2.   IUA / NQAI Framework Implementation Network
Following on from the publication by the joint IUA / NQAI Framework Implementation Network (FIN) of the outcomes of its work during 2008-09, "University awards and the National Framework of Qualifications: Issues around the Design of Programmes and the Use and Assessment of Learning Outcomes" (available online at http://www.nfqnetwork.ie/), the network has reconvened to consider the broad theme of 'lifelong learning' and how the NFQ can serve to advance this policy area.

The first 2010 FIN meeting took place on 24 February with a number of external speakers invited to discuss various aspects of Lifelong Learning. FIN members then considered how best the network could be used to address issues of concern and relevance to the universities and Colleges of Education.

8.   EUA
8.1   Trends 2010 Report
A new EUA Trends report was published in March 2010, analysing the implementation of the Bologna Process and its impact over the last decade on higher education across Europe in the context of broader reform processes affecting European higher education.

Based on questionnaire responses from 821 universities, 27 National Rectors' Conferences, and site visits to 16 countries, the report was presented in a special meeting at the University of Vienna to mark the official launch of the European Higher Education Area and the end of the first phase of the Bologna Process.

The report is placed in the context of changes to the European higher education landscape over the last decade due to a variety of factors including demographic change and pressures related to globalisation as well as to policy changes at the European level (not only through Bologna, but also the Lisbon strategy and the EC modernisation agenda). There have also been major policy changes at the national level as most countries have

introduced multiple reform policies alongside the Bologna Process within the last decade.

The Trends 2010 report analyses of the implementation of the Bologna 'tools' in universities (e.g. new degree structures, credit transfer and accumulation systems, and diploma supplement) and progress towards the underlying aims of the Bologna Process, such as improving quality of teaching, graduate employability, and mobility of students and staff.

The report also identifies challenges for the decade ahead, in particular: sharpening the profile of the bachelor, doing more to focus on promoting vertical mobility between different degree cycles, and improving lifelong learning provision.
A full copy of the report can be downloaded at http://www.eua.be/publications

9. Communications / Events
9.1. Media Relations
9.1.1. Recent Press Releases & Articles
- University Heads defend Quality of Graduates - 4th March 2010

- Irish Universities – The Possibilities are Endless - The Indian Express - 17th March 2010A

- Closely Examining the Structure - Irish Times Postgraduate 2010 - 9th March 2010

- Reading Between the Right Lines - Irish Times Postgraduate 2010 - 9th March 2010

9.2. Communications for SIF Projects
9.2.1. Development of Comms for the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)
As part of the process of moving on from the central role IUA played in the SIF Access Project a joint HEAR and DARE Communications Working Group has been formed and is made up of 3 HEAR Operators, 2 DARE Operators, a senior executive of the CAO, the IUA Comms Manager and Access Project Manager. We are also awaiting confirmation of a volunteer from one of the communications offices of the HEI's involved.

Recent group activity includes:
1. Attendance at the Institute of Guidance Counsellors Annual conference.
2. Online Surveys of Students, Access Operators and Guidance Counsellors.
3. Planning for the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools Annual Conference in April.

Recent IUA Comms activity on the project includes:

The production of a **Communications Manual & Review 2009/2010** for both the HEAR and DARE projects. The reviews aim to capture the HEAR and DARE Communications Campaigns from May 2009 through to March 2010.

Every task, brochure, event, advert of this year long campaign will be logged and assessed. This will provide a step by step guide for HEAR & DARE Operators and lead to an in-depth understanding of the scope and nature of the project from a communications point of view. It is an historic document out of which recommendations will be made for work to be carried out from March 2010 to March 2011. Based on the viewpoints of the communication working group as well as feedback gained from surveying operators, students and guidance counsellor recommendations will be made on the communications tools to be used for the 2011 campaign. In making recommendations we will also be mindful of the new budget situation in the absence of SIF funding and will only include communications tools that will be cost effective yet have the greatest impact.

For example:
- o We may retain the student flyers as they are cheaper than a full brochure to print.
- o We will combine the brochure with the application guide but produce it in time for the new school term in September.
- o We will video a typical schools presentation and make it available for viewing online and produce dvd versions which can be sent to schools (particularly non link).
- o We will co-ordinate the dissemination of HEAR & DARE materials with the posting calendars of the CAO or the Admissions offices of the HEI's to cut down on significant postage costs.

9.2.2. *Launch Event for Rian.ie*
The official close of the Librarians Open Access Project is end March by which time they will have launched **Rian.ie** – the national open access research repository. In line with recommendations of the recent HEA SIF Review we are planning the marketing strategy of this important site and will begin with an official launch of the project in mid April. We will await any Cabinet reshuffle before inviting a Minister to launch the portal. You will receive more information and an invitation to this event by email in due course when arrangements are finalised.

9.3. **Marketing the University Sector and IUA Groups**
9.3.1. *International Officers Group*
With budget from the SIF Chinese Scholarship/Attracting International Students project it is intended to carry out the following work:
- Addition of IUA International Officers Group to the IUA Extranet
- Updating IUA Electronic Undergrad Brochure & production of hard copies

- Translation of IUA Electronic Undergrad Brochure into 3 languages
- Participation in a new international web portal being produced by Enterprise Ireland. The portal will display all electronic marketing brochures as well as links to the social media sites of the Universities, IOT's and a number of private colleges.
- Production of two new International Display Stands

9.3.2. *Communications Officers Group*

The Group met on February 17th and discussed the following topics:
- SIF Access Project
- Innovation Taskforce
- Technology Transfer PR Campaign
- HE Strategy
- Joint Oireachtas Committee and PAC
- University use of Social Media

9.4.   IUA Extranet

The IUA Extranet was launched in January and membership is now being extended to various IUA working groups including FEC, Deans of Graduate Studies and Procurement Officers. The intention is to obtain additional membership to give access to the IUA International Officers Group, the IUA Communications Officers Group and other groups as the need arises.

The site is accessed with a username and password from the IUA Homepage. Full telephone support and training is available through the software supplier and details have been sent to all members.