

IUA Review [10/4] for IUA Meetings in Trinity College Dublin on Monday, 11th October 2010

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1. Research

1.1. Research Policy and Funding Overview

Responsibility for R&D in the context of SSTI and the Smart Economy has moved to the Department of Enterprise Trade and Innovation (DETI). Note that the implementation of PRTLTI will remain within HEA. HERG had its first meeting on 30th September 2010 (since January) and it was clear that there is now a strong move towards the single funding stream under the responsibility of DETI.

National Funding

1. HEA analysis on SSTI human capacity forecasts

Cumulative increases based on the 2005 as the base year.

2010 = €600m. 2009 = €650m, back to 2006 levels

PRTLTI has been funding less and less PhDs due to greater focus on infrastructure.

Overall there is a shift in funding away from human capital to infrastructure.

2. PRTLTI Cycle 5 Outcomes

There was an overview of the results and a focus on the structured PhD programmes.

It will be a challenge to go from pump priming to mainstreaming given the budget downturns. It will be possible to deliver some elements in the long term (e.g. life cycle and modules) and others not (e.g. lab rotations).

3. Health Research Board

The HRB is close to completing a number of mid-term reviews on the Scholars programme. They emphasize the need to create sustainable research career paths as part of funding planning process. HRB is also planning a series of new initiative (including Clinician Scientist programme).

The HRB, SFI and Wellcome Trust announced a joint program where Irish researchers will be eligible to apply for Wellcome funding. Successful applicants will be funded up to 50% by Wellcome and with matched by HRB / SFI.

4. Large Items of Research Equipment Survey

The HEA is planning a major equipment survey including access for other organisations and related details (charging for access, running costs etc.). The target is to complete this by the end of this year but realistically it will be the first quarter 2011 before it is achieved, and will cover in the region of 300 items.

5. Research Prioritisation Project

Forfás / HEA are planning a major project on prioritisation of research areas. They will target areas where Ireland has built scale and focus on these over the next ten years for continued investment. It is expected to take a year to complete and will be done through the Steering Group and Research Funders Group (RFG). This group will work with the Steering Group (to meet every 4 to 6 weeks) over the next year, RFG will meet only when required. There should not be more than 20 areas and the bulk of funding will go to these. It will build on elements of the previous foresight exercise but will have similarities. Thematic working groups will be formed probably after Christmas.

1.2. Researcher Careers

The pay cuts in the public service have been applied to contract researchers working in the public HE sector. The situation stands that we have received no response from the IUA submission to DES and DoF concerning Marie Curie researchers.

1.3. Fourth Level Ireland Network Group

1.3.1. Graduate Education Forum

As a declared outcome of the SIF 1 project, ‘Fourth level support network’, the IUA is organising a national graduate education forum. This forum will take place at Newman House St. Stephen’s Green on 22 November and will be entitled ‘transforming graduate education: how far have we progressed?’ It will address progress to-date, and address challenges and priorities that will influence its further development. The forum will specifically address the student experience and their careers and employment opportunities. It will also explore resource requirements and the challenge of achieving educational and economic objectives with diminishing resources. Finally, it will consider Irish developments in the European context. European policy makers and various representative bodies, including the EUA Council for Doctoral Education, are increasingly interested in Irish developments, especially concerning structured programmes and interaction with employers. The event will accommodate between fifty and seventy participants who are senior figures responsible for the development of graduate education policy and practice, both within and outside universities.

1.3.2. Doctoral Education Review and report on an IUA/HEA Meeting on 20 July

In June the HEA communicated to the IUA its intention to conduct another review of doctoral education. On 20 July Dr Westley Forsythe (IUA), Dr Pat Morgan, Deans of Graduate Studies, NUI Galway, and Dr Honor Fagan, NUI Maynooth met Dr Gemma Irvine and Ms Sheena Duffy of the HEA. The generally positive meeting involved a wide ranging discussion of Irish graduate education developments. The universities’ representation emphasised the necessity to look beyond any strict interpretation and application of the structured PhD definition to assess the success of graduate education developments since 2005. The HEA accepted this and sought guidance on how to assess wider developments beyond those associated with explicitly named, funded and thematic

structured programmes. The Irish Universities Study could provide evidence of these wider developments and influence the review's methodological approach, which currently envisages a questionnaire, site visits and focus groups. It appeared apparent that any external experts would be integrally involved in the review process, rather than considering things through a HEA prism, which the universities' representatives outlined as a very significant flaw in the 2008 review.

IUA Structured PhD Definition

Other outcomes of the meeting include the HEA declaration that it intends to amend the IUA structured PhD definition. Specifically the modified definition will declare that professional doctorates are not excluded from consideration as structured doctorates, and where appropriate, placements can form part of structured programmes. The IUA emphasised that placements can occur in all disciplines and apply to industry in its widest sense; and finally the amended definition will declare 'that to support the original research activity, the following elements *must* be included', It currently reads 'are included' and then outlines the three specific elements that characterise a structured doctorate; these three elements will remain unchanged.

Data Collection

The IUA representation communicated to the HEA executive that the submission of comprehensive data on completion rates and times to completion would be problematic. SIF and other funding initiatives rejected calls to support the development of comprehensive data collection, management and retrieval of the raw data that would allow extrapolation of such trends. Additionally, where universities might now have very recently secured internal resources to facilitate this, it will be a number of years before this data will become available for the first cohort associated with its introduction. Furthermore, in the absence of automated ICT systems it will be very difficult, but perhaps not impossible, to provide completion rates and times data. However, the employment control framework is having a negative effect on the recruitment of the human resources necessary to mine such data in the absence of a properly resourced ICT system.

HEA Guiding Principles, the ASC Report and Wider Developments

The HEA executive has drafted a new set of suggested guiding principles for graduate education to help inform Research Taskforce's consideration of review terms of reference. The Advisory Science Council report on PhDs in the smart economy particularly influence these draft principles. The IUA representation outlined its very significant concerns with the ASC report and stridently argued that anything that informs a suggested re-assessment of the 2006 HEA Key guiding principles of graduate education should be cognisant of other Irish and European reports/initiatives in this area, including the Innovation Taskforce report, the EUA Council for Doctoral Education Salzburg II initiative the EUA DOC Careers project, the US Council for Graduate Schools *The Path Forward* and others. The IUA agreed to forward to the HEA executive the Deans' 9

March 2010 letter to the ASC concerning the *PhDs in the Smart Economy* report and documents relevant to the other European initiatives that have informed Irish doctoral education developments. The HEA executive representatives accepted these concerns and stressed they were not supporting any recommendations but rather providing the taskforce with an overview of policy developments and expected that the Research Taskforce would not uncritically accept any recommendations. On foot of the meeting of 20 July the Deans of Graduate Studies wrote a letter to the HEA Research Taskforce outlining their opinion concerning an appropriate approach to a review of Irish graduate education.

1.3.6. SIF 1 project ‘Attracting international graduates’

This project has disbursed all SIF funds owing to universities in accordance with the numbers of Chinese Scholarship Council supported Chinese research students recruited, either on a one year placement or a full-term PhD. Each student had associated with them a single payment of €7,215, to support the student’s registration and study at the university. Fifty-four places were available at €7,215 each per student. Each university was initially entitled to support associated with seven students. Where institutions recruited less than seven CSC students, the shortfall could be used by those institutions who recruited in excess of their initial entitlement of seven. The scheme was oversubscribed by six and sixty students were recruited with CSC support.

University participation in ‘Attracting international graduates’

	2009-10	2008-9	2007-8	Total
NUIG	2	2	1	5
UCD	12	8	4	24*
TCD	0	1	0	1
UL	3	2	0	5
DCU	3	7	2	12
UCC	4	1	6	11
NUIM	1	1	0	2
	25	22	13	60

* UCD received support associated with eighteen of the twenty-four students recruited with CSC support.

1.4. European / International Funding

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

Following the death of Celia Gallagher, the National Contact Point, C. O’Carroll has taken on this role. There is a reduced service but all efforts will continue to ensure

maximum support to applicants. The planned Research Officers meeting in Brussels in April 2010, that was postponed will now be held in November.

1.4.2 ‘People’ (Marie Curie) Programme – Upcoming Calls and Deadlines

The next calls for the Marie Curie actions according to the draft work Programme for 2011, which will be finalised in July 2010, are as follows:

Marie Curie Action	Deadline
Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways (IAPP)	December 9, 2010
Initial Training Networks (ITN)	February 10, 2011
International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES)	February 17, 2011
CoFunding of Regional, National and International Programmes	February 17, 2011

An information day organised for the IAPP and ITN programmes was held on 29th September in the Royal Irish Academy (RIA).

1.4.3. PeopleNetwork Project

The IUA had been leading a work Package in an EU led project entitled Trans-national co-operation among National Contact Points for Marie Curie Actions (PeopleNetwork). The IUA has reduced significantly its participation in the project. Our involvement will now be limited principally to analysing the results of the survey of researchers.

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

1.5.1 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. To date **118,814** 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.
- 3308 Organisation profile searches have been made by registered users.

Helpdesk

To date, the help desk has had direct dealings with almost 3000 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.

1.5.2 *Hosting Agreement Scheme and Extranet*

The office has processed a total 955 Hosting Agreements for non EEA researchers from 66 countries with 26 accredited organisations including all Irish universities, eight Institutes of Technology, six other research institutions and four from Industry (LM Ericsson Ltd, Solar Print Ltd, Global Business Registered Ltd and IBM). 90% of all hosting agreements approved have been issued to researchers employed by the universities. There are 501 researchers working currently on their research projects (with live agreements) under the hosting agreement scheme in Ireland. A total of 332 agreements have expired while 93 have been cancelled since introduction of the scheme in late 2007.

The top two non EEA nationalities with hosting agreements are from China and India issued with 184 in total (108 live) and 182 in total (101 live) agreements respectively. They are followed by US nationals issued with a total of 115 hosting agreements to date (with 55 currently live agreements). A total of 23 Russian and 20 Canadian nationals are currently employed under the scheme in Ireland. Other nationalities with relatively high number of researchers currently working in Ireland are the following: Australians and Pakistani (14 live agreements); Bangladeshi (11 live agreements); New Zealanders, Turkish, Japanese, Mexicans and Vietnamese (with 7-8 live agreements).

To date 204 researchers have availed of the immediate family unification opportunity and have at present their dependants with them for the duration of their research projects in Ireland. The H.A Extranet, containing constantly updated details of agreements issued to all researchers under the scheme, has been regularly used by immigration officers from Irish embassies in Beijing, New Delhi, Moscow and Abuja.

1.5.3 *EU Projects*

1.5.3(a) *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. An online survey that investigates the reasons why researchers move or remain abroad has been developed with the support of the UCD Geary Institute. The European and the USA based EURAXESS offices have been involved in promotion action of this survey. The preliminary data of the MOREBRAIN questionnaire, based on over 2,500 valid responses from respondents of 51 different nationalities, were analysed and a preliminary report on the survey findings was finalised and submitted to the project coordinator. The MOREBRAIN results to date were presented at an international conference in Cyprus in June and at 8th European Urban and Regional Studies Conference in Vienna in September 2010. The results for respondents in Ireland were correlated with the SIF Irish Universities Study (IUA) results.

The survey remains open online until November 2010.

1.5.3(b) 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. Following the successful Bridgehead Organisation (BHO) Workshop held in Brussels on 23rd June, the IUA further defined the training needs of the network and prepared the content for the second project workshop to be held in Zagreb from 29th November to 3rd December. The workshop, scheduled for three days, is planned to take place in Zagreb and will be attended by EURAXESS Services Centres (ESCs) and Local Contact Points (LoCPs) personnel. The design of content for the winter workshop has benefited from the outcomes and satisfaction surveys from the BHO workshop. The agenda has been carefully structured to take into account the suggestions and recommendations made in the Evaluation and report on the results of training in the BHO workshop. With the design of both of these annual training workshops, IUA is now recognised for its leading expertise in researcher mobility issues.

1.5.3.(c) ERAMIND

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.

The project's second coordination meeting was held in Trieste, Italy on the 27th May 2010 and was co-ordinated by the IUA in conjunction with a training session to the EURAXESS Italy network. Various representatives from industry and industry associations participated in both sessions. Numerous information sessions and co-ordination meetings have been scheduled to take place in throughout 2010/2011 including Madrid, Estonia and Austria. 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. The ERAMIND team will participate in the EURAXESS TOP Project in Zagreb and are responsible for a lot of the Industry Session.

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. Sinead O'Brien the IUA Project Manager is currently on maternity leave and Grace Dempsey has taken over the role as project manager in Sinead's absence.

As reported previously the NSG has agreed to adopt a parallel approach to completing the project over the coming year and a revised project plan has been agreed. This will involve two major tracks of work:

- Track 1: Completion of FEC Pilot 2 (this is the current FEC Model) which will be run with 08/09 financial data.
- Track 2: Implementation of a number of the B&M Recommendations on the FEC Model which will be run with 09/10 financial data.

The original timelines for Track 1 have been revised due to delays encountered and this phase of the project is now scheduled for completion by the end of October. Detailed institutional project output reports have been developed together with a suite of sectoral comparison reports to facilitate benchmarking. In addition a separate suite of sectoral reports which will form the basis of reporting to the HEA has also been designed. The project team met with the HEA to outline the format of these reports that would be submitted to them in June 2011 and no significant issues were raised by the HEA.

FEC models have been technically validated in 6 of the 7 universities and most universities have now produced outputs from pilot 2. A sectoral comparison and benchmarking of the outputs is currently being undertaken as part of the quality assurance process. This process involves FEC Managers, UCFOG and the National Steering Group. This process is due to be completed by the end of October.

Track 2 of the project involves the implementation of some the recommendations of the B&M review and any issues that may arise from the benchmarking process. Once track 2 is complete the FEC model will be finalised and the outputs in respect of 2009/10 which will be published in June 2011 will be based on this model.

There remain some issues with AAP data collection given that IFUT has still not clarified its position in respect of the Croke Park agreement. The NSG hope to address such issues as a matter of urgency.

The Full Economic Cost Project received some prominence in the recent report of the Comptroller & Auditor General on *'Irish Universities – Resource Management and Performance'*. Some concern was raised at the lack of up to date cost data within the sector and the delays in implementing the project. There was also some concern raised in relation to AAP collection issues. The importance of an FEC model which would provide consistent and comparable information across all universities was noted.

The Chair of the National Steering Group also presented on the Irish experience of FEC at an EUA funded workshop in Turkey in September as part of a national approach to the development of FEC in Turkey.

2.2. Irish Universities Study

The **Irish Universities Study**¹ came formally to an end in July. IUA is continuing to work with UCD Geary to analyse the data in great detail and produce publications.

2.3. National Citation Index (NCI)

The aim of this project is to acquire a powerful tool for the analysis of research publications. The InCites tool from Thomson-Reuters has been purchased and the first Training Session along with Steering Group meeting were held on 24th September in IUA. The project is led by the IUA with project leader, Niamh Brennan TCD. The partners are the seven universities, DIT and the HEA. Negotiations are underway for the inclusion of two other interested parties.

3. Funding

3.1. Recurrent Funding

The recurrent funding environment continues to be extremely challenging for universities and the funding outlook for 2011 looks very bleak. The public finances remain in a perilous state with Ireland's deficit for the year now expected to hit 32% of GDP and the Minister for Finance indicating that the proposed €3bn in cuts which had been widely touted would have to be increased and a 'significant consolidation' in public finances achieved in 2011. In addition the Minister for Education & Skills has ruled out an increase in the student charge or EU full time undergraduate tuition fees for 2010/11.

In advance of the beginning of the Estimates process the IUA made a submission to the Minister in July outlining the impact of the cutbacks in recent years on the sector.

3.2. Pension Issues

There are a range of operational issues arising from the transfer of the funded schemes to the NPRF and the implementation of model schemes. Such issues include:-

- Accounting for pension inflows and outflows post transfer.
- Funding arrangements in respect of the cost of employer pension contributions for research and similar externally funded staff.
- Arrangements in relation to staff in respect of whom the costs of employer pension funding was not received.
- Model scheme contributions to be refunded to the HEA.

An IUA working group is continuing to work with the HEA in addressing these issues. Proposals have been developed in respect of a number of these issues and an urgent

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.

meeting is being sought with the Department of Finance and relevant government departments to agree an approach.

3.3. Shared Services

Work has been progressing in respect of the shared services initiatives identified by the IUA Shared Services Steering Group. Key developments include the appointment of an IUA International Education Manager to develop an IUA International Education Office and associated plan. The plan will, within the overall ambit of the national strategy, establish a framework and actions to market the universities strategically, increase the number of international students in Ireland, enhance the student experience and generally consolidate and build on the efforts of the universities in this sphere.

Progress has also been made in respect of financial shared services. As reported previously Deloitte were appointed to develop a business case and project roadmap for financial shared services for the sector. It is intended that this would also form the template for developing shared services in other areas.

Deloitte have now concluded their baseline analysis, high level cost benefit analysis and options assessment. One of the key points emerging from their work is the need for a clear strategic direction in respect of shared services. A strategic vision for shared services for the sector has been developed and will be considered by IUA Council at their meeting on 11th October. Such a long-term strategic vision will form the basis and context for progressing the shared services agenda and subject to approval by IUA Council a detailed project plan for the implementation of shared services will then be developed.

The HEA held a workshop on ‘Shared Services, Procurement and other Efficiency Gains’ on 22nd September 2010. The theme of the workshop was ‘Achievements to date – potential for future initiatives’. The IUA was asked to make a presentation on initiatives undertaken within the university sector. There were also presentations on the Shannon Consortium Procurement Network, An Chéim and HEAnet.

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 also been considering a strategy/framework for procurement for the sector. It is anticipated that this will be completed in the coming weeks.

3.5. C&AG Report on Irish Universities - Resource Management & Performance

The report of the Comptroller & Auditor General on ‘*Irish Universities – Resource Management & Performance*’ was published on 17th September. The report examined

issues relating to funding and accountability, costing and quality assurance, remuneration matters and discretionary pension awards across the sector.

The Report was also the subject of a Dáil Public Accounts Committee meeting on 23rd September at which the seven university Presidents/Provost, the Chief Executives of the IUA and HEA and representatives from the Departments of Education & Skills and Finance attended. Many of the issues raised and recommendations made in the report and subsequent discussions at the PAC have already been addressed or are in the process of being addressed by universities and the sector will continue to pursue and address these as a matter of urgency.

3.6. Nursing Funding

The HSE wrote to universities in late June detailing reductions in the capitation fee for undergraduate nursing degree programmes of 4.75% in respect of 2009/10 and 9.5% in 2010/11. The HSE had sought to apply the reduction equally to the state grant element and the fee element of the capitation fee however following a submission from the sector the HSE subsequently agreed to apply the full required reduction to the state grant element only thereby leaving the undergraduate fee unchanged. This was important in terms of avoiding potential further losses in revenue in respect of fee paying students.

3.7. Research funding and administration

The IUA Research Accountants Group met with representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in September to discuss and resolve issues of mutual interest. A number of issues relating to the grant claims and payment process were discussed and a number of actions were agreed by both parties to address these.

The Research Accountants Group also considered a number of other issues relating to a range of funding agencies.

3.8. US Federal Family Education Loan Program (Stafford Loan Schemes)

The US Department of Education is in the process of reviewing and amending the regulations governing the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP). Proposed changes include a requirement that institutions that certify Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) funds of US\$3m or more, would have to translate accounts into US GAAP. This has significant implications for institutions in terms of cost and administration. The US Department of Education invited submissions in relation to the proposed changes and the IUA made a submission on behalf of the sector. The regulations are due to be published in final form on 1st November 2010 and will be effective from 1st July 2011.

4. Governance Codes

The Higher Education Authority, in its letter dated 8th June 2010, requested proposals on how the requirements of the 2009 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies would be taken on board within the University sector. Many of the 2009 code obligations, updating the predecessor 2001 code, had already been incorporated in the 2007 HEA/IUA code but some new areas had been emphasised. The statutory provisions of the Universities Act 1997 and other legal obligations cover many of the key areas within the code. In these situations, the legislative provisions take precedence although there are situations where the intent of the codes obligations are respected and incorporated, even if not statutorily provided for.

The Secretaries Group agreed to undertake a comparative review of the codes, to outline areas for updating or inclusion and to present the findings of a comparison between the 2009 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies ('State Body Code') and the IUA/HEA Universities Code (2007). It is expected that the review would be complete for circulation within universities by the end of October 2010.

5. Leaving Certificate Mathematics

As reported in the IUA Review June 2010, the universities, DIT and IoTI all received a letter dated 23 April 2010 from Mary Coughlan, the Minister for Education and Skills, with a request that bonus points be reintroduced for Leaving Certificate honours maths. During the summer months, a number of universities took internal decisions to do so in principle, but wished to operate a common scheme with any other universities willing to do so. At their meeting in June, IUA Registrars requested university admissions officers to explore various options for such a scheme, and to make proposals. Admissions officers met on 5 August and produced a report to Registrars. Following further consultation, a formal decision regarding such a scheme is expected to be taken on 11 October 2010 at IUA Council.

The universities which have agreed to implement such a scheme have made it clear that offering bonus points for honours maths will not, by itself, be sufficient to increase the numbers of LC students sitting maths at honours level. A major improvement in the quality of maths teaching in secondary schools is urgently required. To this end, IUA continues to engage with DES and other interested stakeholder groups, including IBEC, in broader discussions on the topic, including regarding the proposed follow-up work of the DES-led Project Maths Implementation Support Group.

In this context, a meeting also took place on 15 September 2010 between representatives of IUA Registrars and the Teaching Council, regarding the need for professional recognition by the Teaching Council of the postgraduate conversion courses in Mathematics currently being proposed by universities in order to upskill existing teachers of maths in the school system. This initial meeting will

6. National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

6.1. IUA / NQAI Framework Implementation Network

As noted in IUA reviews March and June 2010, the joint IUA / NQAI Framework Implementation Network (FIN) has been working since early 2010 on the topic of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). 2 case study visits were undertaken during the summer months to TCD and NUIG to look at specific programmes, or groups of programmes, with experience in using RPL. It is planned to undertake a third visit to UL in the near future. In parallel, all universities and other FIN members are completing an institutional questionnaire regarding RPL. These inputs will be collated and analysed with the intention of producing a set of working guidelines for RPL in the universities, touching on issues such as programme design, assessment methods and quality assurance, and identification of principles for managing, organising and communicating RPL. This small publication is expected to be available in early 2011.

6.2. Merger of NQAI, HETAC, FETAC and taking over functions of IUQB

Following the creation of an interim board for the proposed new “Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland” agency, composed of the chairs of the boards of each of the four existing bodies, a recruitment process was launched to recruit a Chief Executive Designate for the new body. It has recently been confirmed that Dr. Pdraig Walsh, currently Chief Executive of IUQB, has been appointed to this role. Dr. Walsh has also been appointed Chief Executive of NQAI, since this position was vacant at that body.

According to DES, legislation regarding the creation of the new agency is still with the parliamentary draftman’s office, with publication expected in early 2011. This legislation will also include statutory provision for a new “Quality Mark” for Irish HE providers which recruit international students, building on existing quality assurance measures and the IHEQN’s voluntary Code of Practice for the provision of pastoral care to International Students.

7. Internationalisation of Education

As mentioned in previous IUA Reviews, the government has established a High Level Group chaired by DES to draft an Irish International Education Strategy 2010-2015. The universities were represented on this group by Lawrence Taylor (NUIM, VP International) and Louise Tobin (UCC, Director International Office). This national strategy was published by government on 22 September 2010. The full text may be downloaded at www.educationireland.ie.

On the same day, government also published a revised immigration regime for full-time non-EEA students. In a related move, the government also launched, on 16 September 2010, a new Inter-cultural Education Strategy 2010-2015. This document may be downloaded at

<http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=10856&ecategory=51881&language=EN>

These moves mark the start of a concerted new approach by government to increase Ireland's share of the international education market, with a focus on both quality and overall quantity. There is also an explicit focus on greater coherence and integration between various government agencies, and on linking international policy initiatives for both higher education and the English language sector. The strategy includes provision of a new "Quality Mark" for Irish HE providers which recruit international students, which will build on existing quality assurance measures and the IHEQN's voluntary Code of Practice for the provision of pastoral care to International Students.

In this new context, it will be important for the universities to engage constructively with these initiatives, but also to ensure that their own institutional strategies and behaviours are well communicated and understood by government agencies. There is an apparent underlying naivety in these national documents, which does not appear to understand the key importance of higher education institutions and the central roles they must play for any successful implementation of these new national goals and objectives.

As part of this new approach, the universities have been engaging with Enterprise Ireland, which now manages the Education Ireland, regarding various promotional events in the United States, and an accompanying marketing campaign. The impact of these initiatives will be monitored closely over the coming months.

7.1. IUA Recruitment of International Education Manager

In order to support the universities' role and strategic development in this new context, and following on the request from IUA Council for greater collective strategic support in this area, the IUA has recruited an International Education Manager, a new new 2 year position to lead the development and implementation of a sectoral strategy. Details regarding the appointment, which will begin on 1 November 2010, will be released shortly.

8. Communications / Events

8.1.1. Development of Comms for the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)

A combined press release was issued on the schemes on August 31st and good coverage was achieved in 2 of the national dailies as well as local papers. We will be following up with individual scheme press releases showing final acceptances figures before CAO opens on November 3rd.

An article for the Institute of Guidance Counsellors "Guideline" magazine has also been written.

Marketing materials have been produced for both schemes for entry in 2011 and new application guides and student flyers will be mailed out to schools in the last week of September. The website accesscollege.ie has been updated to reflect the new entry year and the social media sites are progressing well (www.facebook.com/accesscollege and www.twitter.com/accesscollegeie)

8.1.2. *Launch date for Rian.ie*

The Librarians Open Access Project officially closed at the end of March and the portal went live on June 8th. The portal will be officially launched on Wednesday October 20th and the opening address will be given by the Minister for Education. Invites will be sent out on Sept 22nd. This event will coincide nicely with OPEN ACCESS Week. A brochure will be produced for this event which will be used throughout open access week to publicize RIAN.

8.2. Marketing the University Sector and IUA Groups

8.2.1. *International Officers Group*

The IUA International officers are preparing for two US student fairs to be held in Boston and Chicago in advance of the NACAC conference. A brochure was produced by IUA for the 7 universities particularly aimed at American undergrad students and 1000 copies sent for distribution at the 2 fairs. IUA is also in discussion with Enterprise Ireland on development of a plan which will see a combined university/EI budget of \$40k being spent on US targeted communications. This is a year-long plan and will be centrally co-ordinated in the States by PR specialist Linda Evans Ryan.

8.3. IUA Extranet

Membership of the IUA Extranet has now been extended to the Access Managers/Director's Group.