



IUA Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills (Interim)

(maternity cover, October 2025 – December 2026)

The Irish Universities Association (IUA), the representative body for Ireland's leading universities, invites applications for the role of Interim Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills (maternity cover), for a fixed term contract to end 2026.

About the IUA:

The Irish Universities Association (IUA) is the representative organisation for Ireland's research intensive universities including DCU, MU, TCD, University of Galway, UCD, UCC and UL.

IUA acts as the sectoral 'voice' of its university members and is committed to:

- clearly and publicly articulating the importance and value of university education
- acting as an advocate for the university system
- providing effective liaison and dialogue with the State and its agencies
- ensuring the system is resourced and prepared for the challenges of the future
- developing sectoral policies and strategies
- maximising the contribution of higher education in all its dimensions to society and the economy.

About the Interim Head of Skills and Lifelong Learning role:

Reporting to the IUA Director for Learning, Teaching and Academic Affairs, the Interim Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills will lead the development of an integrated approach to skills and lifelong learning, including upskilling and reskilling, across the range of IUA's advocacy and project work.

Specifically, the role holder will:

- Assemble key datasets to support IUA's advocacy regarding the central role of universities in meeting national skills needs across a wide range of enterprise sectors, including health and education.

- Represent IUA interests with key stakeholders in the public service and enterprise on the core skills brief, to find sustainable solutions to skills and lifelong learning needs;
- Liaise with key employer and employer representative stakeholders in skills development, including micro-credentials, such as Ibec, Enterprise Ireland, the IDA, the Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME), Regional Skills Forums and Skillnet Ireland, to ensure effective collaboration with and uptake by enterprise partners;
- Liaise with key stakeholders in the Higher Education Authority; the Dept. of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science; QQI; and other relevant state bodies, in pursuit of the above.
- Represent IUA on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) HCI project Steering Group
- Represent IUA on the National Apprenticeship Alliance and advise the IUA regarding engagement with apprenticeship system and relevant work-based learning developments.

Key Attributes and Abilities:

This is a high-impact leadership opportunity to shape and advance the Irish university sector's strategic engagement in skills, upskilling/reskilling, lifelong learning, and enterprise collaboration. The Interim Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills will drive alignment between university offerings and national workforce needs. The ideal candidate will bring a powerful combination of vision, sectoral knowledge, stakeholder engagement, and delivery expertise.

Key attributes and abilities include:

- Exceptional leadership and programme management skills, with a proven ability to lead large-scale initiatives involving cross-sectoral collaboration, particularly within higher education and/or skills development settings.
- Demonstrated experience in stakeholder engagement, including working with government departments, state agencies, employers, and employer representative bodies, ideally in the context of skills policy, lifelong learning, or enterprise-focused education initiatives.
- Strong understanding of the Irish higher education and skills policy landscape, including familiarity with current developments in micro-credentials, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), apprenticeships, and other flexible learning models.
- Excellent advocacy and communication skills, both written and oral, with a capacity to persuasively represent IUA interests to senior public service, enterprise, and education stakeholders, and to foster collaboration between diverse partners.
- Strong analytical and data literacy skills, with experience in sourcing, managing, and interpreting data to support policy development, advocacy, and reporting.
- Proven ability to work independently and proactively, with sound judgement, strategic insight, and a high level of personal initiative.

- Familiarity with digital transformation and its role in delivering flexible, learner-centred education, particularly in professional and lifelong learning contexts.
- Appropriate academic and/or professional qualifications, ideally in a field relevant to education, skills development, or public policy.
- Willingness and ability to travel across Ireland regularly to attend in-person stakeholder meetings, events, and forums as required.

Desirable:

- Experience working on or managing national or sectoral-level initiatives related to professional education, workforce development, or lifelong learning.
- Experience in managing or contributing to communications and engagement strategies targeting employers, adult learners, and sectoral stakeholders.

Contract details:

The position of Interim Head of Lifelong Learning and Skills (maternity cover), is offered on a 15 month fixed term contract, commencing October 2025 and subject to a period of probation and meeting on-going performance requirements. The role will require domestic travel and possibly European travel. From time to time you may be required to work outside of normal office hours to fulfil the duties of the role.

The IUA operates a flexible working model, and this role can be partially fulfilled through remote working. However, the role will require some in-office working at our office on Merrion Square, Dublin 2, especially in the early stages, as well as regular face-to-face engagement with key stakeholders as required.

A competitive salary commensurate with experience will be offered. Annual leave entitlement is 25 days (not including bank holidays) per annum.

A secondment arrangement for existing public-sector employees may be possible, subject to concluding an appropriate agreement between the IUA and the candidate's current employer.

Application Details: Please forward a detailed but concise CV and cover letter (max 500 words), demonstrating the competencies and experience listed above, by email by 23:59 10th August 2025 to: marguerita.lardner@iua.ie Tel. 01 6764948.