DIT Strategic Plan to 2019

Towards TU4Dublin Designation

2017
Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) is a leader in higher technological education in Ireland. With a history of over 130 years, it has developed and evolved to meet the ever-changing challenges of higher education and currently has a student population of over 20,000. It has a significant track record in delivering career-oriented education, research & innovation, and community/civic engagement, and is now poised to address the current and future needs, challenges and opportunities of a complex modern knowledge society. Key drivers in the higher education environment have been identified and these have helped inform the development of priorities within this DIT Strategic Plan to 2019.

Working with partner Institutes of Technology, Blanchardstown and Tallaght, DIT intends to create a Technological University for Dublin, one of the first of these new types of universities in Ireland. With designation to be achieved under statute, the Technological University for Dublin (TU4Dublin) will deliver an enhanced cohesive offering of relevant technological education in the Greater Dublin region, at all levels of higher education. The TU4Dublin provision will comprise career-oriented teaching, learning, and research & innovation promoting engagement and exchange that contributes meaningfully to individual, cultural, community and societal development, and that supports enterprise creation and growth and economic progress in the region.

The second area of focus of this Strategic Plan up to 2019, is to progress the development of the Grangegorman Campus, that will facilitate 300,000m² of knowledge-intensive activity in the heart of Dublin city. Incorporating leading edge design, educational innovation and technology, and enabling the consolidation of DIT from 30 buildings to a single urban campus, the Grangegorman facility will support an enhanced learner experience for the DIT /TU4Dublin community and will contribute to urban regeneration and regional development for the city region.

The third element of strategic focus will be to maintain and enhance the academic enterprise and the effectiveness of operations so as to deliver high-quality learning that supports individual, societal and economic needs.

The DIT Strategic Plan to 2019 is based around 8 major themes, and a set of goals and objectives have been developed under each of these. The strategic themes centre on:-

- Providing a distinctive, high quality, experiential student experience
- Ensuring flexibility & diversity in provision to provide a range of learning opportunities and address regional skills needs
- Being a force for research and innovation
- Being a truly international institution
- Promoting an innovative workplace, with ‘people at its heart’ that nurtures and supports colleagues
- Having organisation arrangements that are effective in delivering the dynamic, entrepreneurial and innovative environment of a Technological University; with an appropriate balance of resources and efficient systems to underpin streamlined operations and create an outstanding learner experience
- Being a truly engaged institution, working closely with and communicating effectively with internal & external stakeholders
- Creating graduates that have positive impact on the economic, social, cultural and environmental fabric of the region, nationally and globally

Ownership of the DIT Strategic Plan to 2019 lies with all colleagues in DIT and every colleague has a role to play in its success. Implementation will be supported and guided by the President and the Senior Leadership Team, with individual academic and professional service areas developing and delivering their own related action plans around specific goals. Regular monitoring and reporting will be conducted to ensure progress and the Strategic Plan will form the basis of discussions with and reporting to the Higher Education Authority in respect of DIT strategic priorities.
Higher education institutions (HEIs) have always had a central role in society going back to their origins in 12th century Europe when the first universities were established. Over time that role has evolved and changed and today it centres broadly on five main strands:-

- Transferring knowledge through the education and development of graduates
- Ensuring a repository of knowledge for society
- Generating new knowledge through research
- Disseminating knowledge to society through publication and other means
- Contributing to socio-economic progress through technology transfer, enterprise development and support for job creation and community and civic goals.

Increasingly HEIs worldwide are being called upon as major contributors to a region’s social, civic, cultural and economic development. National policy agendas for higher education are now driven not only by the goal of providing excellent standards of and access to education for its citizens but by, the demands for higher levels of knowledge and workforce skills to tackle the economic challenges; the impact of increased global educational and enterprise competition; and the need to prepare for the rapid changes brought about by technology and societal and environmental impacts. As such, expectations upon HEIs have risen generally and these expectations exist in an environment of limited resources, increasing student numbers and more diverse student populations. This global trend is reflected in the strategic plans of most HEIs, particularly those that are publicly funded. Some commentators, recognising the challenges are nonetheless calling on Higher Education to act boldly to embrace the opportunities that such changes bring.

The previous DIT Strategic Plan was set primarily within the context of the overall Irish higher education landscape, a landscape that has effectively been shaped by the Hunt Report (or ‘National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030’). This report and the Action Plan from the Department of Education and Skills reflect the key drivers for Irish higher education. Today, the main drivers include:-

- Increased demands for undergraduate places due to demographics – the number of new entrants into higher education from the school leaver cohort is projected to continue to grow to 2020 and beyond.
- Financial challenges arising from the economic downturn that resulted in reductions in HEI budgets and consequent restriction on resources. Uncertainty about the ultimate funding of higher education will remain until decisions on the recommendations from the Cassells report are taken and worked through.
- Calls on higher education have issued from the Hunt report, the Action Plan for Education and others, to widen participation and provide flexible education opportunities & progression pathways to address issues of access for those most affected by unemployment and economic and social difficulties and to underpin the needs of the labour market generally. In addition, enriching graduate attributes is required, so as to equip citizens with a balance of domain-specific and essential generic skills to help them realise their full potential in society and in the new economy.
- Opportunities in internationalisation - international student numbers worldwide doubled in the period 2000 to 2011 to the level of 4.5 million. This growth is projected to continue and it offers prospects for HEIs to attract diverse student cohorts that add richness to the overall student experience, whilst diversifying sources of income for the institute. In addition, international partnering in teaching & learning and research collaboration is growing in order to expand portfolios, networks and capabilities and to enhance positioning. BREXIT, the decision of the UK to withdraw from the European Union will no doubt have a significant impact on Ireland. The full implications for Irish higher education are still being assessed, but there is likely to be a range of opportunities and challenges involved.
- Research and innovation is a central strand of a HEI’s activity – national policies are increasingly looking towards higher education as lead players in the knowledge society and as major contributors to economic development, with expected increases in capacity, capability and output, and deeper engagement with the wider society.
- There is increased attention on enhancing the student experience and improving retention rates, sometimes driven by (a) ‘value for money’ requirements from government and also (b) from increased expectations from students, as they provide increasing contributions towards their own education.
- Challenges in attracting and retaining talent exist amongst all categories of staff, due to increased competition in higher education and beyond, both nationally and globally. In addition, all organisations are striving to improve meaningful engagement and communication with staff, in an age where electronic interaction is prominent.
- Student voice – in some ways reflective of society generally and the expectation for responsiveness from providers, capturing and understanding students’ concerns and input are seen as increasingly important.
- Impact of digital technologies – students and staff alike, today operate in a digital world and expect the teaching and learning experience to be heavily technology-enabled. Not alone that, but all aspects of higher education including professional and support services, are increasingly affected by advances in technology development - strategic choices are needed as to where investment should be made if a HEI is to remain current and competitive.
- Structural changes in the sector to support the goals of achieving diversity, coherence and critical mass, have resulted in the introduction of ‘technological universities’ in Ireland along with the framework of ‘regional clusters’.

1 National Strategy for Higher Education 2030
3 Projections in Demand, 2015-2029 - DoES - Nov 2015
6 Education at a Glance, Indicators – OECD - 2014
7 Innovation 2020 - Enterprise 2025
8 HEA Report on system reconfiguration, inter-institutional collaboration & governance - April 2013
• Societal and environmental issues such as crisis immigration or climate change, are areas where public HEIs can and are expected to have significant contributions to make in developing and supporting national and global solutions.

• Rankings and performance measurements – despite debates over methodologies and questions in respect of the motivation and objectivity of their providers, it is accepted that university rankings are a permanent feature in today’s higher education landscape. In addition to global rankings, national processes that set out to measure aspects of HEIs’ performance (such as the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Strategic Dialogue process and the national surveys of Students and Employers) have had an impact on the workings of a HEI, not only in growing benchmarking activity but also in increasing the awareness of the importance of its public profile and how this can be effectively managed.

The framework for the HEA’s Strategic Dialogue process is informed by the set of national priorities for higher education set by Government, as recommended from the Hunt Report. The current priorities are: (a) Participation & Access; (b) Teaching & Learning; (c) Research & Innovation; (d) Engagement with the wider society; (e) Internationalising higher education; and (f) creating a Coherent Higher Education Framework (including establishing technological universities). Each HEI is expected to contribute to the delivery of these priorities and the Performance Compact (comprising a 3-year cycle) reflects each HEI’s objectives under these priorities, drawn from its own strategic plan and in line with its mission. The objectives are measured annually to assess and fund performance against agreed targets.

Within the current DIT Performance Compact, two major initiatives were identified: the creation of the Technological University for Dublin (TU4Dublin) and progress of the Grangegorman campus. These initiatives remain as strategic priorities for DIT over the coming years and support institutional consolidation & the development of provision and facilities to further enhance the student experience.

As a public HEI, DIT is cognisant of the need to respond to national objectives whilst taking on the significant challenges and opportunities that exist in an increasingly competitive and global higher education world. The DIT Strategic Plan to 2019 is designed to build on its substantial strengths; to provide the focus to address the complexity of drivers in the higher education landscape; and to enhance its overall positioning in the environment.

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9 Higher Education Authority
10 HEA Strategic Dialogue Process
11 Irish Survey of Student Engagement
12 National Employer Survey
13 DIT Performance Compact 2014
14 TU4Dublin
15 Grangegorman Campus
Building on our Strengths

As an independent higher education institution DIT has retained a unique place in the Irish Higher Education landscape since its foundation and it has responded and evolved to meet the every-changing challenges in higher education. Its positioning and performance over many years provides DIT with a robust platform from which to launch and deliver its new strategic plan. Many of its strengths are given here:-

1. DIT has been a leader in higher technological education in Ireland, with history going back 130 years
2. DIT has had full degree awarding powers (NFQ\(^{16}\) levels) up to PhD level, since 1992
3. DIT is the only Irish multi-level HEI to appear in global university rankings = top 3-5% of world universities (Times Higher & QS); in the top 50 youngest universities; and with strong performance in U-Multirank
4. DIT is a member of European University Association
5. DIT continues to support and deliver its model of practice-based and research informed education
6. DIT quality programme provision is recognised in accreditation by the relevant academic discipline bodies
7. DIT has recognised quality in programme provision through accreditation by professional and statutory bodies
8. DIT current student population, across NFQ levels 6-10, is 20,751 (academic year 2016/17); over 27,000 for the combined TU4Dublin
9. DIT Graduate Network has almost 100,000 members world-wide with highly successfully careers in Ireland and abroad
10. DIT is the only national provider, or one of two providers, in a number of areas of programme offering
11. DIT has a strong established track record in widening participation
12. DIT research strengths are in a number of key fields including:- Environment, Energy & Health; Information Communications & Media Technologies; New Materials & Devices; and Society, Culture & Enterprise
13. DIT is proud of its research publications and citations success
14. DIT has highly successful and award-winning activity in technology transfer and new venture creation
15. DIT is the largest provider of corporate education in Ireland
16. DIT is renowned for its extensive community and civic engagement
17. DIT has commenced, and is committed to completing, the development of Grangegorman that will provide 300,000m\(^2\) of state-of-the art facilities in a modern 21\(^{st}\) century campus, in the heart of Dublin city.

In moving forward, DIT also recognises the strengths of working with partner Institutes of Technology, Blanchardstown and Tallaght (ITB & ITT) to form the Technological University for Dublin. The TU4Dublin will become a new type of university for Dublin and will be built on an already significant higher education profile. The profile\(^{17}\) of the TU4Dublin Alliance includes -

- 28,000\(^{\circ}\) students , including 13% of higher education students nationally and 1 in 4 in the Greater Dublin Region (GDR), with undergraduate provision across the major disciplines as shown here

- TU4Dublin supports 10% of the research students in (GDR) and 40% of research students in the Institute of Technology sector
- Over 1 in 3 of new entrants in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) in GDR are registered with TU4Dublin and over ¼ of NFQ Level 6&7 students
- More than 1 in 5 of new entrants in TU4Dublin are in nationally-targeted socio-economic groups, with almost 15% of new entrants as mature students
- There are currently 2,300 staff within TU4Dublin , of which 1,300 are Academic
- TU4Dublin will continue to operate across its 3 main campuses , plus developing an enhanced Digital Campus
- TU4Dublin is a leader in lifelong learning and executive education opportunities

\(^{16}\) National Framework of Qualifications
\(^{17}\) Based on data from 2015/16 academic year
Our Focus - Strategic Intent

Cognisant of developments and drivers in the external environment and building on the strengths, successes and opportunities of DIT and its TU4Dublin Alliance partners, ITB and ITT, the focus for DIT up to the end of the academic year 2018/19 will be threefold:

1. With the ultimate goal of operating a new type of university that serves the evolving needs of the Greater Dublin region, DIT will work with partners ITB and ITT to implement the plan to create and achieve designation for a Technological University for Dublin. The aim of TU4Dublin is to deliver an enhanced cohesive offering of relevant technological education from NFQ levels 6-10, that supports career-oriented teaching, learning, research & innovation; that promotes engagement and exchange that contributes meaningfully to individual, cultural, community and societal development; and that supports enterprise creation and growth and economic progress in the region. The key characteristics of the TU4Dublin are provided in the Figure 1 below. For further details see: www.tu4dublin.ie

![Figure 1 – TU4Dublin Characteristics](image)

2. Working with the statutory body (the Grangegorman Development Agency), DIT will advance the development of Grangegorman as a world class integrated campus in line with its approved master-plan18, providing a flagship within Irish higher education that supports an enhanced learner experience for the DIT /TU4Dublin community; that incorporates leading edge design, educational innovation and technology; and that contributes to urban regeneration and regional development. The campus will enable the consolidation of DIT from 30 buildings to a single urban campus, accommodating up to 30,000 students & staff, producing 5,000+ new jobs and delivering 300,000m² of knowledge-intensive activity in the heart of Dublin city. The main elements of the development are captured in Figure 2 below.

![Figure 2 – Main elements of the Grangegorman campus](image)

3. DIT will ensure successful delivery and enhancement of the academic enterprise and the effectiveness of its operations, continuing to provide high quality purpose-driven and practice-based learning to support individual, societal and economic needs, whilst delivering the major change initiatives of TU4Dublin and the new Grangegorman campus.

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18 [http://ggda.ie/the-masterplan](http://ggda.ie/the-masterplan)
The DIT Strategic Plan to 2019 is based around 8 major themes that support the overall strategic intent and are anchored by DIT’s core feature of providing ‘purpose-driven and practice-based learning’. The themes are set out below in Figure 3

Figure 3 – Strategic Themes

The Strategic Themes are articulated as follows:-

1. **Distinctive Student Experience** - Academic excellence in professional programmes with a distinctive practice-based, research-informed learner experience
2. **Flexibility & Diversity** – Opportunities & Skills Needs - Providing flexible learning options to a diverse student population with ‘elevators of opportunity’ and addressing regional skills needs
3. **A Force for Research & Innovation** - creating useful knowledge and addressing real challenges in new and innovative ways
4. **International Institution** - A truly international institution providing global perspectives and global opportunities
5. **Great People in an Innovative Workplace** - A modern workplace, that recognises ‘people’ as its key asset and provides the ethos and systems to nurture and support colleagues
6. **Effective & Efficient Organisation, Operations and Systems** – An organisation that facilitates flexibility, agility and governance accountability; supports dynamic and entrepreneurial endeavour and the innovative environment of a Technological University; and ensures efficient use of resources, to create of an outstanding learner experience.
7. **Engaged Institution** - A borderless university embedded with its stakeholders, with high quality engagement and communication, and creating impact and influence
8. **Highly valued Alumni** - Purpose-driven education for life and work in the 21st century, creating a new type of university graduate that achieves positive impacts in the region, nationally & globally

The key goals and objectives associated with each Strategic Theme are provided in the next section
# Our Key Goals & Objectives

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<th>Strategic Theme</th>
<th>Key Goal</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
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| Distinctive Student Experience       | 1. Maintain academic excellence in professional programmes whilst promoting and further building on the Institute’s practice based model | 1.1 Ensure a high-quality, enriching successful student experience as part of a community, with a diversity of opportunities for student development to support career and life success and fulfilment  
1.2 Develop the Digital Campus to provide a modern and responsive academic and service experience for all students, supporting appropriate transformation of learning |
|                                      |                                                                          | 2. Provide multi-level educational opportunities with clear pathways and diverse of modes of delivery to ensure global competitiveness for our graduates |
|                                      |                                                                          | 2.1 Enhance access and ensure clearly articulated entry and progression pathways and distinctive offerings at levels 6-10 of NFQ, to grow participation rates in Widening Participation cohorts and to support life-long learning  
2.2 Develop the Digital Campus to support flexible on-line, blended learning and part-time provision  
2.3 Extend practice/ work-based/ apprenticeship education across all undergraduate levels |
| Flexibility & Diversity – Expand Educational Opportunities |                                           | 3.1 Build capacity in Environment, Energy & Health; Information Communications & Media Technologies; New Materials & Devices; and Society, Culture & Enterprise  
3.2 Achieve sustainable growth in research & innovation outputs in designated research fields |
| A Force for Research & Innovation    | 3. Build research & innovation capacity in a number of targeted fields, creating useful knowledge, enhancing the Institute’s profile and addressing real challenges in new and innovative ways | 4.1 Contribute to the quality of the education provided and ensure that internationalisation embraces and supports all activities of the Institute providing opportunities for staff and students to engage in international activity.  
4.2 Promote the recruitment of international students (all categories) in line with the scale and mission of the Institute  
4.3 Seek opportunities to extend the Institute’s reach internationally and continue to develop and grow targeted international partnerships that align with the Institute plan, including education and research initiatives |
| International Institution            | 4. Advancing the institution to be a truly international institution providing global perspectives and global opportunities | 5.1 Attract, recruit, develop and retain the highest calibre of staff, to build a multidimensional diversified and inclusive workforce reflective of the wider community  
5.2 Ensure equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion  
5.3 Ensure a community of fully informed and fully engaged colleagues |
| Great People in an Innovative Workplace | 5. Develop and Implement a ‘People Strategy’ to empower staff to fulfil their potential within a challenging and stimulating environment, with learning and development opportunities that are flexible, relevant and accessible to every staff member within an engaged, innovative, diverse and high performing workforce | 6.1 Review, revise and implement organisation structures, including decision-making pathways and reporting relationships, to underpin academic development across the disciplines and to ensure responsiveness and accountability  
6.2 Ensure that the organisation has a suite of policies and procedures, processes and systems that meet quality requirements and are fit for purpose.  
6.3 Implement appropriate arrangements in preparation for TU designation  
6.4 Ensure the overall financial sustainability of DIT  
6.5 Enable our students to access services in a way and at a time of their choosing and allow our student services and academic administration staff to leverage the functionality provided by digital technologies to better support our diverse student body.  
6.6 Implement the Estates development plan to ensure best facilities are available to enhance the learner experience and that environmental sustainability targets are met (including achievement of the Green Flag) |
| Effective & Efficient Organisation, Operations & Systems | 6. Put in place organisational structures, operations and systems that facilitate flexibility, agility and governance accountability; support dynamic and entrepreneurial endeavour; and ensure efficient use of resources, to create of an outstanding learner experience | 7.1 Achieve meaningful engagement with key stakeholder groups to deliver impact in the region  
7.2 Build on DIT’s presence, enhancing its identity and be a valuable, pro-active & progressive influence in Irish society |
| Engaged Institution                  | 7. Maintain the Institute as a borderless university, embedded with its stakeholders, with high quality engagement and communication, and creating impact and influence | 8.1 Support and promote the seamless transition of learners to the workplace, ensuring work-ready graduates that embrace life-long learning skills and that provide positive impact  
8.2 Promote and support the network of DIT graduates |
| Highly valued Alumni                 | 8. Reinforce the Institute’s purpose-driven education designed for life and work in the 21st century, to create a new type of university graduate that achieves positive impacts in the region, nationally & globally | 9. Achieve meaningful engagement with key stakeholder groups to deliver impact in the region  
10. Build on DIT’s presence, enhancing its identity and be a valuable, pro-active & progressive influence in Irish society |
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