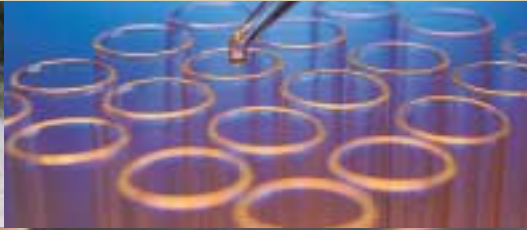


Dublin Institute of Technology Strategic Plan
A Vision for Development 2001-2015



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Foreword



The DIT, in common with higher education institutions worldwide, is facing a period of intense challenge and change resulting from a variety of factors, demographic, technological, social, economic, environmental and cultural.

None more clearly illustrates the nature of the changes than, in the demographic sphere, the extent of the decline taking place in the school-leaving cohort and the need to enhance the student base by seeking out, gaining and effectively catering for new student clientèle, for which new opportunities arise within an emerging focus on lifelong learning. At the same time, profound technological advances are opening up the potential of new learning delivery mechanisms which will be increasingly expected by a highly computer-literate student body reared in a technologically-oriented milieu and by industry seeking the most efficient and effective delivery of programmes and new programme content responsive to its needs. A more caring society is demanding that higher education play a more effective part in addressing inequalities affecting disadvantaged groups, in an environment in which Governments are also becoming less paternalistic, and are seeking cost efficiency, responsiveness to national goals and accountability in return for State funding.

There can be no doubt that the challenges arising from these and other macro-economic and societal changes will intensify competition for students, for high-quality staff, for State funding, for research funds and other non-traditional sources of funds (public and private). The competition and related opportunities will arise, not only in a national context, but internationally in an era of globalisation, where distance is no longer a barrier to face-to-face communication.

The objective for the DIT cannot be that of seeking to maintain the status quo. To prosper, or even to survive, it must embrace the opportunities offered by the new environment and meet the challenges head-on. This is the path that the DIT is embarking on and this Strategic Plan signposts that path.

In the process of developing this plan, the DIT engaged in a scenario-building exercise, undertaken by a Task Force consisting of representatives of the faculties and central services, and followed by a process of consultation on seven sites, as well as with the heads of all operational units. The very comprehensive recommendations and views emerging from that process have been taken on-board by

the Strategic Planning Group and are reflected in the Strategic Plan as set out in this document. I would like to thank and congratulate all concerned for the high quality of the recommendations and views received and for helping to provide a framework within which the DIT can plan its future path with confidence.

Governing Body at its meeting on the 14th March 2001 adopted the Strategic Plan. I will establish a group to advise on the implementation of the Strategic Plan. During the implementation full consultation will be conducted with all staff, including unions, in the spirit of the development of partnership as provided for in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness.

While strategic planning was placed in a 15-year timeframe, the plan will be supported by 3-year operational plans, the preparation of which will start immediately. A physical development plan for the DIT will also be prepared and published when current efforts to acquire a new core campus have been concluded. It is crucial that major progress be made during the first 3-year phase so that the DIT may be positioned to compete effectively, with areas of strength identified and enhanced. I also propose to set up an implementation fund to support special initiatives during the early implementation phase.

The Directorate is fully committed to implementing the Strategic Plan. With the active co-operation and participation of all staff, on whom the success of the plan depends, I am confident that we will position the DIT to successfully meet the challenges which lie ahead. The Plan does not refer specifically to the question or timing of a renewed application for university status for the DIT. It will be recalled that the International Review Group, which reported on the DIT's application for university status in November 1998, stated that it could not recommend rejection of the DIT's application and that it should be established as a university when conditions listed in the report have been met. The recently concluded agreement on the faculty structure, and implementation of key features of the Strategic Plan, will ensure that these conditions can be fully met. At the appropriate stage in implementation of the Plan, therefore, the Directorate will consult with staff on the question of a renewed application for university status for DIT.



Dr Brendan Goldsmith

President

Introduction

In seeking to address the concerns and challenges arising from a changing environment, there are a number of imperatives for the DIT. The first of these is that of establishing a reputation for excellence in all of its activities. It must develop and enhance its status as a 21st century technological institution of the highest calibre offering programmes and undertaking research, in niche areas, at a level comparable with the best available anywhere.

It must at the same time emphasise and build on its unique strengths. One of these is its multi-level nature extending from craft training through post-doctoral, responsive to the needs of students and industry at all education and training levels. There are exciting opportunities available for development at all levels, given a spirit of enterprise, flexibility and responsiveness, in a DIT environment where diversity within the overall policy framework will be actively encouraged and supported. The scope for diversity will facilitate schools or elements of schools in exploiting their individual strengths and extending their activities through funding obtained from new funding sources, with substantial benefits accruing to those generating the additional funding. To facilitate further the process and to underpin its credibility, the DIT must position itself as a state-of-the-art institution, in the vanguard in availing of new technologies, and capable of developing and delivering programmes flexibly, effectively and cost-efficiently, on and off campus. A necessary context will be extended links with industry through co-operative ventures, partnerships, etc.

In responding to these imperatives, the Strategic Plan details a set of objectives, and related goals, within a vision of the future of the DIT under the following themes:

1. Multi-level, Learner-Centred Environment
2. Strong Postgraduate and Research Arms
3. Closely Allied with and Responsive to Industry
4. Reputation for Excellence
5. Flexible Leading Edge Electronic Capabilities
6. Supportive and Caring Ethos
7. Entrepreneurial Institution

These themes, which are encapsulated in the DIT mission statement, are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. They seek to build on existing strengths and initiatives while also responding to new challenges and opportunities within a proposed new environment and operational framework, as set out in theme 7. The goals under this theme, reflecting changes taking place in

higher education world-wide, are designed to facilitate and support a culture of creativity, innovation and adaptability as the essential tools in meeting the challenges ahead. Where the strategic goals under any of these headings have resource implications these will be identified in the 3-year operational plans. A fundamental requirement, however, is that the DIT must establish alternative sources of funding to complement traditional State funding, on which it cannot be entirely dependent. These alternative sources would include State funding available on a competitive basis as well as private funding. As the DIT repositions itself as set out in this Strategic Plan it will be better equipped to compete successfully for such funding. It is important for that reason that the main thrust of the Plan should be achieved at an early date. The implementation team being set up by the President will have achievement of that goal as their focus in the initial 3-year phase.

Two other measures will be undertaken. A professionally-staffed unit will be established, charged with spearheading, supporting and encouraging initiatives aimed at enhancing and diversifying the funding base of the DIT, including building on contacts with alumni and industry links. The vision of the DIT and its strengths will be promoted, using the services of a further appropriately staffed professional unit.

Dublin Institute of Technology Mission Statement

The Institute is a comprehensive higher education institution, fulfilling a national and international role in providing full-time and part-time programmes across the whole spectrum of higher education, supported by research and scholarship in areas reflective of the Institute's mission. It aims to achieve this in an innovative, responsive, caring and flexible learning environment with state-of-the-art facilities and the most advanced technology available. It is committed to providing access to higher education for students of different ages and backgrounds, and to achieving quality and excellence in all aspects of its work. This commitment extends to the provision of teaching, research, development and consultancy services for industry and society, with due regard to the technological, commercial, social and cultural needs of the community it serves.



1. Multi-Level, Learner-Centred Environment

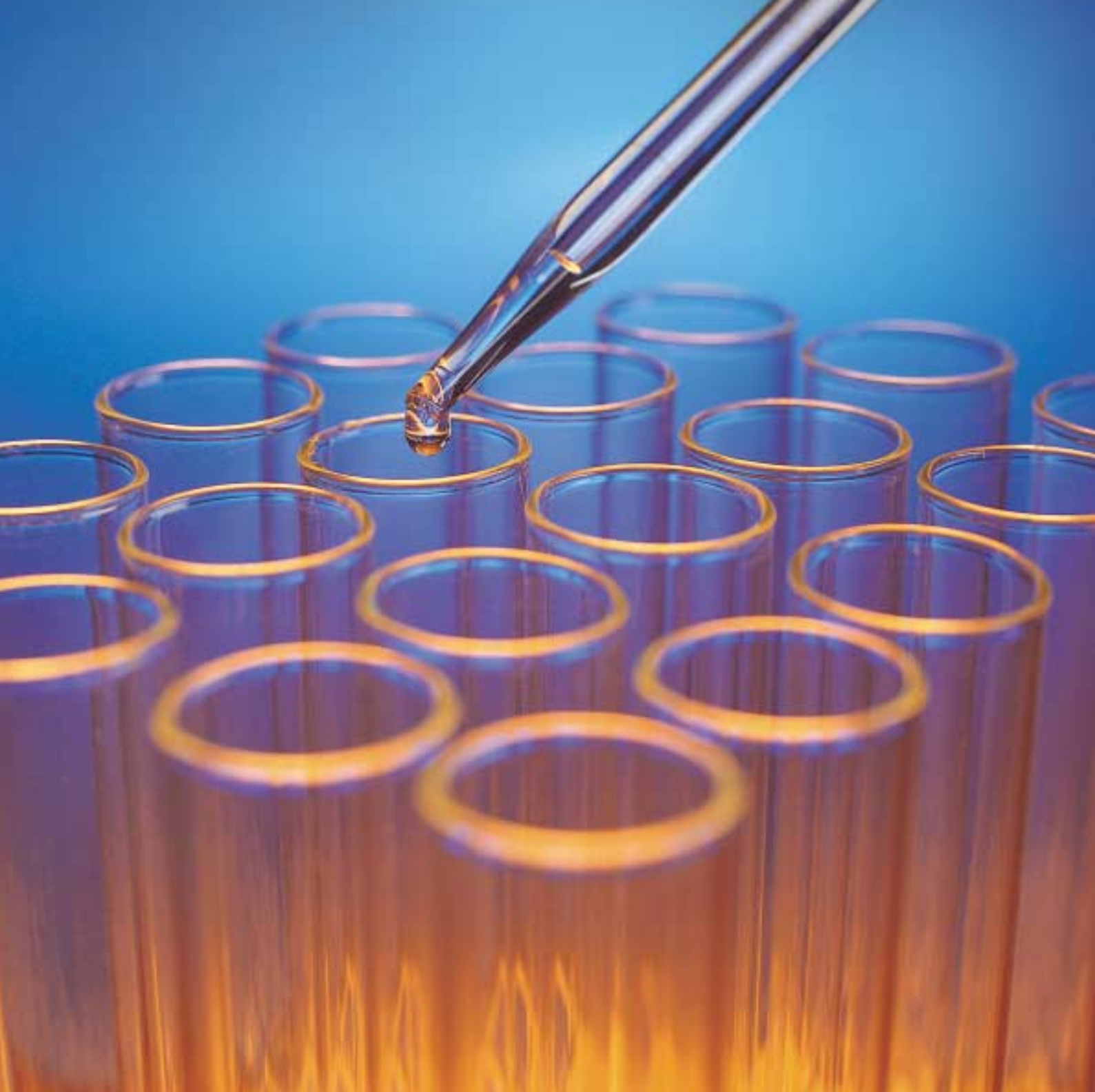
Strategic Objective

The objective under this theme is to enhance the standing and effectiveness of the DIT as a multi-level, technological institution, offering programmes to a broadly-based clientele in a learner-centred environment and which includes a focus on responsiveness to society's lifelong learning needs. An underlying theme is the promotion of the capacity to learn and to reason, and of learning skills, as being of greater importance than the changing nature of learning content.

Goals

The following goals will be pursued for this purpose:

- ▶ respond flexibly, efficiently and at the highest standard to the needs of students, industry and the wider community, as appropriate, at all educational and training levels;
- ▶ evolve and adapt the nature, level and range of programmes over time, consistent with its broadly-based technological orientation, embracing a changing environment and responsive to the labour market and economic and personal development needs;
- ▶ develop areas of comparative strength and divert resources from activities no longer responsive to demand or career opportunities, or no longer appropriate;
- ▶ promote new learning experiences, including project elements, student work experience, staff placement in industry, "whole person" development/career planning/development of communication and other interpersonal skills;
- ▶ develop new learning paradigm with a focus on problem-based and student group self-learning, with academic staff facilitating these processes;
- ▶ develop new interdisciplinary courses and research reflecting what is required by the new knowledge society;
- ▶ establish strategic alliances with a range of agencies in pursuance of its objectives as a multi-level institute;
- ▶ actively develop a student-friendly ladder system to facilitate progression through all course levels with clear and well-publicised guidelines and criteria;
- ▶ develop and expand its leadership role as a major provider in many fields of professional education and training;
- ▶ implement a range of staff development measures crucial to the attainment of the goals of a multi-level learner-centred environment;
- ▶ enrich the learning environment through the encouragement of cultural diversity;
- ▶ úsáid na Gaeilge a chothú agus a fhorbairt i saol, i gcultúr agus i ngnóthaí uile na hInstitiúide.



2. Strong Postgraduate and Research Arms

Strategic Objective

The objective under this theme is to expand the capacity of the DIT in an area which is critical to its future growth and competitiveness, in response to a demanding and increasingly knowledge-based environment, and to foster a culture of scholarship and research within the overall vision for the Institute.

Goals

The following goals will be pursued for this purpose:

- ▶ enhance the postgraduate structure with a strengthened Office of Postgraduate Studies providing advice, co-ordination and support;
- ▶ substantially increase postgraduate numbers with a particular focus on postgraduate research students;
- ▶ develop graduate schools in areas of strength where numbers warrant it;
- ▶ develop trained cadre of postgraduate supervisors;
- ▶ establish an Office of Research, headed by a Dean of Research and with the necessary professional expertise to provide focus, support and co-ordination for faculty research initiatives;
- ▶ develop multi-disciplinary niche research areas, within coherent research strategy and oversight;
- ▶ develop a research strategy which provides particular focus on problem-solving and applied research to include exploitation, application and dissemination;
- ▶ establish research institutes;
- ▶ build alliances with other higher education institutions nationally and internationally in areas of strength;
- ▶ substantially increase income flow from research initiatives;
- ▶ enhance DIT strength in areas of national priority (currently ICT and Biotech) with high-quality expertise contracted in these areas in both teaching and research;
- ▶ establish international links for all schools and major research areas;
- ▶ quality and form of presentation of research proposals to be subject to rigorous review by expert panel;
- ▶ establish expertise and guidelines and provide training in developing research proposals;
- ▶ support publication of research findings in learned journals;
- ▶ support organisation of conferences of record.



3. Closely Allied with and Responsive to Industry

Strategic Objective

The DIT has a distinguished record of collaboration with industry. The objective under this theme will be to enhance this collaboration with a view to extending DIT's student base, the relevance of its programme and the employability of its graduates, and to ensure the effective participation of DIT with industry in supporting economic development. The term industry in this context includes all businesses and agencies associated with economic, social, arts and cultural activities which offer DIT the scope for fruitful collaboration.

Goals

The following goals will be pursued:

- ▶ expand links/strategic alliances/co-operative ventures with industry, including multi-nationals and SMEs, based in Ireland and abroad;
- ▶ deliver programmes, geared to the industry's needs at all required levels, in industry-based outreach centres or on campus;
- ▶ establish a strong industry centre on campus with incubator and near-market units and with links to research initiatives/industry;
- ▶ obtain industry funding under co-operative ventures;
- ▶ develop industry links in programme development and delivery;
- ▶ develop research projects contracted from industry or undertaken jointly;
- ▶ provide development and consultancy services to industry/agencies/development groups;
- ▶ place DIT staff in industry and contract industry specialist staff to DIT;
- ▶ strengthen Industrial Liaison Office to support collaborative initiatives with industry;
- ▶ develop coherent corporate image;
- ▶ establish one-stop information point for industry to facilitate co-operative interaction between DIT and industry.



4. Reputation for Excellence

Strategic Objective

The common objective, in all elements of the Strategic Plan, is the achievement of excellence, through processes of continuous improvement of staff, programmes and facilities. The objectives under this theme are to strengthen feedback in support of improvements to programme development and delivery, to enhance the quality of staff and to promote a culture of excellence.

Goals

The following are the immediate goals:

- ▶ enhance and strengthen the quality assurance system with extended participation both internal and external (academic and industry);
- ▶ increase participation of industry and other relevant interests in advisory boards;
- ▶ periodically review the performance and operation of faculties/schools and DIT as a whole, to include the views of students and employers;
- ▶ obtain external accreditation of Institute qualifications by professional and other bodies, where relevant;
- ▶ develop programmes of support and incentives to progressively raise the qualification profile of staff;
- ▶ continue to improve the staff development and training programmes;
- ▶ recruit high profile staff in support of research/postgraduate initiatives, where required;
- ▶ establish a system of visiting positions to attract staff from other institutions in Ireland and abroad;
- ▶ promote, develop and acknowledge excellence in sporting, cultural or academic endeavours by members of the Institute;
- ▶ support a greater involvement of Institute staff as media commentators.



5. Flexible Leading-Edge Electronic Capabilities

Strategic Objective

The measures proposed under this theme seek to position the DIT as a state-of-the-art institution with the capacity to deliver programmes flexibly, effectively and to the highest standards, using the latest technology, on and off campus to an enhanced student base.

Goals

In pursuance of this objective, the following goals will be pursued:

- ▶ establish a new core campus with broadband electronic capacity servicing:
 - (i) state-of-the-art library, conference centre, multi-media and teleconferencing facilities, virtual classrooms and laboratories, ICT systems, etc.
 - (ii) on campus residential accommodation and facilities
 - (iii) business centre with incubator units, near-market units, development entities, etc.
 - (iv) academic and other developments on campus;
- ▶ establish broadband electronic links with other DIT sites;
- ▶ establish funding and other links with high-tech industry in support of these initiatives;
- ▶ develop a range of outreach centres collaboratively with industry/development boards/agencies;
- ▶ develop flexible web-based course delivery mechanisms, flexible means of entry, new knowledge domains, rapid response to changing needs;
- ▶ implement course modularisation, credit transfer and flexible staff recruitment arrangements;
- ▶ develop modularised e-learning programmes as a feature of a rapid, flexible and cost-effective response capability;
- ▶ forge an alliance with media production company and obtain a dedicated broadcast TV franchise.



6. Supportive and Caring Ethos

Strategic Objective

This element of the Plan seeks to ensure that the DIT operates as a supportive welcoming institution, internally for staff and students and in its external face with the community.

Goals

The following are the goals which the Plan will pursue:

for staff:

- ▶ foster a caring and supportive environment, based on respect and reflected in operational guidelines and equality policy;
- ▶ publish a staff charter, which includes grievance and disciplinary procedures, and implement;
- ▶ establish a sabbatical leave policy for staff;
- ▶ implement and regularly update the staff development policy;
- ▶ provide appropriate accommodation facilities and environment, including creche facilities, for staff;
- ▶ foster career development for staff;

for students:

- ▶ provide a learning environment of the highest quality;
- ▶ publish and implement a student charter;
- ▶ provide an information pack, orientation and other programmes for first year students;
- ▶ provide retention support for students at risk of dropout;
- ▶ prescribe protocols for critical instances and for disturbed students or those at risk;
- ▶ develop an appropriate and effective mentor system;
- ▶ operate well-structured counselling and careers and appointment services;
- ▶ address the social and cultural as well as the educational needs of students as an important part of the DIT culture;
- ▶ implement equality policy and procedures;
- ▶ provide facilitative access arrangements and supportive access programmes for students, from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with disabilities, immigrants, mature students and those from overseas;
- ▶ provide facilities, such as creches, and access at weekends and during normal vacation time, to underpin and support the participation of an enhanced student base, including those at work;

for the community:

- ▶ expand schools and community links in support of the educational advancement of disadvantaged groups;
- ▶ facilitate community access to DIT facilities with particular emphasis on opening the new core campus facilities to the local community;
- ▶ provide leadership and advice to society in areas of uncertainty and controversy in technology, science and development through conferences, publications, interviews, etc.;
- ▶ contribute to the intellectual and cultural development of the city, with particular reference to Dublin's inner-city.



7. Entrepreneurial Institution

Strategic Objective

The Plan has as its objective, under this overarching theme, the creation of an environment and operational structures and practices which facilitate and enhance dynamic and participatory management, while fostering a culture of creativity, innovation, adaptability and autonomy.

Goals

In pursuit of this objective, achievement of the following goals will be sought to provide the necessary underpinning:

- ▶ provide dynamic, facilitative leadership, pursuing the Institute's vision and strategic objectives;
- ▶ obtain devolved authority from the State to the Institute, with accountability and within national policies and allocated budget;
- ▶ develop a diversified funding base;
- ▶ devolve decision-making to the maximum extent to operational units within a structure of accountability, budgetary allocations and policy framework;
- ▶ establish guidelines for the operation of devolved (professional) management responsibilities and accountability;
- ▶ finalise and apply the new resource allocation model;
- ▶ develop flexible and constantly evolving structures to include stand-alone entities, craft training units, graduate schools, research institutes, campus companies, etc;
- ▶ establish an expanded periphery of near-market units;
- ▶ facilitate diversity as a hallmark to permit and encourage academic units to develop their individual strengths;
- ▶ build a human resource division charged with proactively implementing dynamic human resource development policies supportive of the Institute's goals and strategies;
- ▶ rotate senior posts, and develop staff incentives and flexible recruitment arrangements;
- ▶ finalise and implement an effective DIT-wide management information system, including processes to communicate promptly to staff all proposed initiatives/decisions/actions;
- ▶ provide management training of faculty, school and department heads, including management of devolved budgets;
- ▶ train staff generally in change management and the application and opportunities of an autonomous and entrepreneurial culture;
- ▶ equip the DIT and train staff to deliver web-based and other learning programmes to students internally and externally in industry and other out-centres in Ireland and abroad.

Tá cóip den Phlean Straitéiseach seo, as Gaeilge, le fáil ó;

Oifig an Uachtaráin

Institiúid Teichneolaíochta Bhaile Átha Cliath, 30 Sráid Pheibróc Uacht., Baile Átha Cliath 2.

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Copies of this Strategic Plan are available from;

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