



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

CUMASÚ

Empowering through learning

Action Plan for Education 2019

Quarter 2 Progress Report

Prepared by the Department of Education and Skills
www.education.ie

Introduction

Action Plan for Education 2019 sets out the priorities for the Department of Education and Skills and its agencies and aegis bodies for the year. This annual plan is driven by the goals and ambitions set out in our Statement of Strategy 2019-2021.

In March this year we published our Action Plan for 2019. This sets out over 200 actions specifically targeted to achieve our goals:

1. Shape a responsive education and training system that meets the needs and raises the aspirations of all learners.
2. Advance the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage and learners with special educational needs in order to support them to achieve their potential.
3. Equip education and training providers with the skills and support to provide a quality learning experience.
4. Intensify the relationships between education and the wider community, society and the economy.
5. Lead in the delivery of strategic direction and supportive systems in partnership with key stakeholders in education and training.

The Action Plan for Education 2019 highlights the significant strategic reform programme under way in education and training. It recognises the importance of critical business functions to ensure business continuity and quality of service. The publication of an annual plan within a broader strategic framework enables us to respond in an agile way to the demands of the challenging and complex environment in which we operate while maintaining a strategic focus on sustainable reform.

To ensure an informative and transparent process, our progress during the year will be monitored through published quarterly reports. This is the second such report for 2019. It outlines progress made on actions and subactions due for delivery in quarter 2 of 2019. While providing details on the achievements made during this period, the report also provides an update on actions where significant progress has been made, but where it has been necessary to adjust the target date.

Overview

Actions due for delivery by end quarter 2, 2019

The Action Plan for 2019 contained 51 actions and subactions due for delivery by the end of quarter 2, 2019. Of these, 38 have been achieved, giving a completion rate of 75%.

Actions achieved in the second quarter of the Action Plan for Education 2019 include:

- Complete an audit of Traveller history and culture in the curriculum
- Develop a work plan as part of a coordinated response to increase the numbers of females participating in STEM, including the establishment of a females in STEM subgroup
- Complete a scoping paper on implementation of Content Language Integrated Learning in both Irish and Foreign Languages and establish a working group to plan the development of pilot projects
- Launch School Excellence Fund Tranche 3 for DEIS schools
- Inform schools, through the NCSE, of their SNA allocation before the end of the school year
- Review the model for allocating Special Education Teachers to schools by ensuring that data are available and there is engagement with the sector so that school profiles can be updated to enable new allocations to be made for the 2019/20 school year
- Commence an evaluation of certain initiatives funded under the PATH programme

- Begin a review of the 2018 Pilot Support Scheme for those in the Protection System
- Hold a National Forum to engage with stakeholders on issues of teacher supply and demand
- Begin a review of the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme, following a tender process
- Publish the Review of the Youthreach programme
- Assist technological university development by establishing a TU Research Network
- Design a structured process to secure employer input on key expenditure decisions related to the National Training Fund
- Implementation of fund for Teaching and Learning Capacity Building in HEIs
- Implementation of a new research and innovation fund for IoTs and TUs
- Commence Operation of the Payroll Shared Service for ETBs
- Develop Regional Projections of Primary and Post primary enrolments

Other key developments during quarter 2 include:

- A three-year pilot to support the learning of Irish through PE and other subjects was announced. Using the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach, it will be developed in two phases: open to 22 starter schools and early years' settings from September 2019, with the number increasing as the project progresses.
- The Digital Strategy Action Plan 2019 was published on the Department's website
- In a new initiative to provide more certainty for primary schools experiencing staffing shortages, the creation of six substitute teacher panels for schools in urban and rural areas was announced. Up to 90 schools are being targeted in the pilot scheme, to ease supply pressure for substitute vacancies.
- As part of ongoing work to enhance quality and professionalisation in the early learning and care sector, Professional Award Criteria and Guidelines for Initial Professional Education Degree Programmes for the sector were launched.
- The publication of a review into teacher education, "The Structure of Teacher Education in Ireland: Review of Progress in Implementing Reform", shows constructive engagement by the centres for teacher education with the HEA on progressing the programme of change in this area.
- It was announced that almost 800 new special needs assistant posts are being allocated to schools this September, bringing the total number of SNAs supporting and working with children in schools to approximately 15,850 - a record level of investment. This means that approximately 37,500 pupils with additional care needs will be supported by SNAs in the coming school year.
- New provisions began which allowed Leaving Certificate students who suffer a close family bereavement during the state examinations in June to sit alternative papers in July.
- The 2019/20 Student Grant Scheme opened for applications, with a number of improvements made which will benefit some of the most disadvantaged students. There are now two additional income disregards and an increase in the reckonable income threshold for the special rate of maintenance grant. To provide post-Brexit certainty, eligibility remains the same for Irish students studying in UK institutions.
- It was announced that a grant support scheme for asylum seekers in third level education, the Pilot Student Support Scheme, will continue for 2019/20. The scheme was opened for 2019/20 in June so that prospective eligible applicants can apply for and receive their supports in time for the start of the academic year.
- The Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Bill 2018 was signed into law, and will ensure that student-specific accommodation let under licence is included under existing Rent Pressure Zones.
- A new suite of courses under Springboard+ 2019 was launched. This brought the number of courses to 285 and the number of places available from this academic year to over 9,000.
- Capital funding of more than €7.5 million was announced for nine Institutes of Technology and the Technological University (TU) Dublin. The funding forms part of the Government's commitment, under Project Ireland 2040, to increase investment in higher and further education and training and to the modernisation of equipment available for craft apprenticeships.
- A structural remediation programme for 22 schools constructed by Western Building Systems has begun. The timetabling of works and arrangements for contractors to be on site have been designed to ensure all schools can re-open as normal at the end of the summer holidays
- The first set of Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection Reports were published. This inspection model involves focused and in-depth inspections which look at how school boards and staff are fulfilling their legal

responsibilities in relation to the protection and safeguarding of children as required under the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.

- The 41 organisations to benefit from the €100,000 Non-Mainstream Music Education Bursary Scheme were announced. The Scheme provides a means, by way of a small cash grant, to support music education and music initiatives to continue to cultivate the talent of young musicians.

Goal 1: Shape a responsive education and training system that meets the needs and raises the aspirations of all learners

Action/Subaction	Actions/subactions for Quarter 2	Achieved/Not achieved	Comment
3	Support the welfare and well-being of higher education students		
	3.2 Support Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on the implementation of legislation providing for rent predictability measures in purpose-built student accommodation	Achieved	
4	Further development of the Primary Curriculum		
	4.1 Publish a report on coding and computational thinking in the primary curriculum	Achieved	
5	Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle		
	5.1 Publish a review of the optional nature of History under the new Framework for Junior Cycle	Achieved	
	5.2 Scope a longitudinal study of the impact of the changes made as a result of the introduction of the Framework for Junior Cycle	Achieved	
6	Review Senior Cycle and progress the development and implementation of Leaving Certificate subject specifications		
	6.1 Complete an advisory report on the Review of Senior Cycle	Achieved	
	6.2 Commence a review of draft Leaving Certificate subject specifications for Biology, Chemistry and Physics, including a new coursework assessment component	Achieved	
7	Advance actions that cross curricular areas		
	7.1 Complete the report of the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education in the curriculum	Achieved	
	7.2 Complete an audit of Traveller history and culture in the curriculum	Achieved	
9	Progress implementation of the "STEM Education Policy Statement 2017 - 2026" and the Implementation Plan 2017 – 2019		
	9.1 Develop a work plan as part of a coordinated response to increase the	Achieved	

		numbers of females participating in STEM, including the establishment of a females in STEM subgroup		
	9.2	Develop a work plan in relation to the integration of Arts education into all STEM learning experiences	Achieved	
11		Progress implementation of the Education Chapter of the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030 as set out in the 5-Year Action Plan for Irish 2018-2022		
	11.1	Complete a scoping paper on implementation of Content Language Integrated Learning in both Irish and Foreign Languages and establish a working group to plan the development of pilot projects	Achieved	

Goal 2: Advance the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage and learners with special educational needs in order to support them to achieve their potential

Action/Subaction	Actions/subactions for Quarter 2	Achieved/Not achieved	Comment
16	Implement the DEIS Plan in order to close the gap in performance between DEIS and non-DEIS schools, increase retention rates of DEIS students, and increase the progression rates of DEIS students into Higher Education and Further Education and Training		
	16.1	Conduct further analysis to examine other variables known to be strong predictors of educational disadvantage in the context of resource allocation under the DEIS Plan	Not achieved Further research is underway and the data analysis and new identification model are expected to be finalised in Q3.
	16.2	Develop a new resource allocation model for application to all School Support Programme (SSP) schools, to include a more tailored system of resource allocation, within which there are more grades of disadvantage identified and resources allocated accordingly in response to the needs of individual schools	Not achieved The completion of action 16.1 above will allow for the development of a more tailored system of resource allocation. This new allocation model will be developed by the end of Q4.
	16.3	Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to generate data on resource allocation, to ensure that inputs are linked to outputs and outcomes and to share knowledge and successful initiatives to support better practice	Not achieved Work on this action continues, and the completion of action 16.1 above will feed into it.
	16.4	Continue collaboration with Tusla and Traveller Representative Groups on	Achieved

		measures to improve Traveller engagement with education in the context of the "National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy"		
	16.5	Launch School Excellence Fund Tranche 3 for DEIS schools	Achieved	
	16.6	Publish review and recommendations of Out-of School report	Not achieved	A detailed implementation plan, based on the Report's recommendations, is being finalised and is scheduled for completion in Q3.
17		Progress the implementation of a School Inclusion Model to deliver the right supports at the right time to students with additional care needs		
	17.1	Inform schools, through the NCSE, of their SNA allocation before the end of the school year	Achieved	
18		Embed the Special Education Teacher model which provides a unified allocation model for special educational support teaching needs to each school, based on the school's educational profile, to ensure support is available for all pupils who require it		
	18.1	Review the model for allocating Special Education Teachers to schools by ensuring that data are available and there is engagement with the sector so that school profiles can be updated to enable new allocations to be made for the 2019/20 school year	Achieved	
25		Implement strands of the "National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2021", and oversee the delivery of the targets for HEIs so that HE becomes more representative of the population in general		
	25.2	Commence an evaluation of certain initiatives funded under the PATH programme	Achieved	
	25.3	Commission independent research into first time mature and part-time students participation in Higher Education, in order to provide an evidence base for access measures to increase their participation rates	Achieved	
27		Begin a review of the 2018 Pilot Support Scheme for those in the Protection System	Achieved	

Goal 3: Equip education and training providers with the skills and support to provide a quality learning experience

Action/Subaction	Actions/subactions for Quarter 2	Achieved/Not achieved	Comment
31	Manage a programme of School Self-evaluation (SSE) Advisory visits to primary and post-primary schools		
	31.1 Publish SSE updates (for primary and post-primary schools) in order to promote the embedding of SSE in schools and to support the implementation of national strategies such as STEM, Modern Foreign Languages, and Digital Learning	Not achieved	Work is advanced on completing the next update, for publication in Q3, with good practice guides scheduled for publication in Q4.
32	Undertake a planned programme of inspection and advisory visits in schools and alternative education settings		
	32.3 Prepare a composite report on the findings of evaluation reports published in 2018 as they relate to the Resource Allocation Model for pupils with Special Education Needs in mainstream primary and post-primary schools	Achieved	
40	Implement the Teacher Supply Action Plan		
	40.1 Hold a National Forum to engage with stakeholders on issues of teacher supply and demand	Achieved	
45	Review the effectiveness and efficiency of the Teacher Professional Network (TPN) Scheme		
	45.1 Begin a review of the TPN Scheme, following a tender process	Achieved	
46	Provide dedicated professional support to teachers to support the implementation of curricular change and Department policy		
	46.1 Implement the agreed Framework for STEM professional development programmes and teaching and learning resources in the development of new STEM CPD	Achieved	
47	Review the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme		
	47.1 Begin a review of the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme, following a tender process	Achieved	
49	Improve the impact of further education and training programmes and schemes		
	49.1 Publish the Review of the Youthreach programme	Achieved	
50	Strengthen quality of Tertiary Education		
	50.1 Secure Government approval for the publication of the General Scheme of the HEA reform legislation	Achieved	
	50.2 Enact the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Amendment) Bill	Achieved	

Goal 4: Intensify the relationships between education and the wider community, society and the economy

Action/Subaction	Actions/subactions for Quarter 2	Achieved/Not achieved	Comment	
51	Make progress towards increasing the diversity of school type in order to offer parents more choice			
	51.1	Finalise protocols for the Implementation Phase of the Schools Reconfiguration for Diversity process	Not achieved	The protocols are at an advanced stage of development and will be finalised in Q4.
	51.2	Complete the Identification Phase process for the phase 1 pilot of the Schools Reconfiguration for Diversity process and publish the identification phase reports	Not achieved	Phase 1 of the pilot has been completed and the reports will be published in Q4.
	51.4	Complete the Online Patronage Process system for primary schools being established in September 2019 and commence the patronage process for schools to be established in September 2020	Not achieved	The Process for 2019 primary schools is complete and the Process for 2020 post-primary schools will commence in Q3.
53	Introduce a stronger complaints procedure and charter for students and parents			
	53.1	Publish, in conjunction with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC), the Education (Students and Parents) Charter Bill	Not achieved	It is intended to publish the Education (Students and Parents) Charter Bill in Q3.

Goal 5: Lead in the delivery of strategic direction and supportive systems in partnership with key stakeholders in education and training

Action/Subaction	Actions/subactions for Quarter 2	Achieved/Not achieved	Comment	
65	Develop a future funding framework for the TU sector in consultation with the HEA.			
	65.1	Assist technological university development by establishing a TU Research Network	Achieved	
76	Implement the recommendations of the review of the National Training Fund (NTF) in accordance with the published implementation plan			
	76.1	Design a structured process to secure employer input on key expenditure decisions related to the National Training Fund	Achieved	

	76.2	Establish a National Training Fund evaluation framework, including the metrics and approach to data gathering and publish performance criteria	Not achieved	Engagement on the best approach to this work has commenced.
77		Continue reform of Higher Education Funding Model		
	77.2	Implementation of fund for Leadership and Capacity Building in HEIs	Achieved	
	77.3	Implementation of fund for Teaching and Learning Capacity Building in HEIs	Achieved	
	77.4	Implementation of a new research and innovation fund for IoTs and TUs	Achieved	
	77.5	Finalise terms of reference and commence review of the Free Fees scheme (Higher Education)	Not achieved	The European Commission is reviewing policy options for overall higher education funding and this action will be advanced following that work.
78		Continue to develop future funding model for Higher Education		
	78.1	Implement the Human Capital Initiative announced in Estimates 2019	Achieved	
79		Progress a work programme to enhance governance standards and accountability across aegis bodies through the implementation of a Periodic Critical Review (PCR) process and a rolling review process in aegis bodies		
	79.1	Report on the findings of rolling reviews in aegis bodies and develop lessons learnt for all aegis bodies	Not achieved	The reviews and associated documents will be finalised in Q4.
81		Engage with ETB Management and Staff to pursue a revised ETB organisational structure	Not achieved	Work on an ETB revised organisational structure has been advanced and issues arising in relation to the proposed scope of the exercise have been referred to the Workplace Relations Commission. A conciliation process will commence shortly.
87		Review the post-primary school transport system with reference to the growth in concessionary passenger numbers	Achieved	
88		Improve the quality of services across the sector through the introduction of shared services		
	88.1	Begin the transition of the Wave 1 ETBs as part of the phased implementation of Payroll Shared Service for ETBs	Achieved	
	88.2	Develop the Education Shared Business Services Centre in readiness for the commencement of the operation of the Payroll Shared Service for ETBs	Achieved	

	88.3	Commence Operation of the Payroll Shared Service for ETBs	Achieved	
91		Provide greater strategic direction in the Department's governance, management and use of data		
	91.1	Produce Corporate Data Governance and Data Management Frameworks setting out clear roles and responsibilities for using data	Achieved	
92		Improve the interpretation and analysis of the department's data holding and the evidence base for planning purposes		
	92.3	Develop Regional Projections of Primary and Post primary enrolments	Achieved	