

**PROPOSALS BY GRIFFITH COLLEGE AS TO PRIVATE COLLEGE INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS HIGHER  
EDUCATION POLICY AND THE PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT**

**8 JUNE 2016**

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1: ADDRESSING THE CASSELLS PROJECTED INCREASE IN DEMAND AND COSTS  
THEREOF**

**Appendix 2: TACKLING DISADVANTAGE BY ENSURING SOCIAL INCLUSION IN HE**

**Appendix 3: A PILOT SCHEME TO ASSESS TRUE COST OF MAINTENANCE GRANTS AND  
REGISTRATION FEE FOR PRIVATE COLLEGE STUDENTS**

**Appendix 4: TRAINEESHIPS – FOCUSING ON POSITIONS NOT CURRENTLY FILLED BY IRISH  
NATIONALS**

**Appendix 5: UPSKILLING**

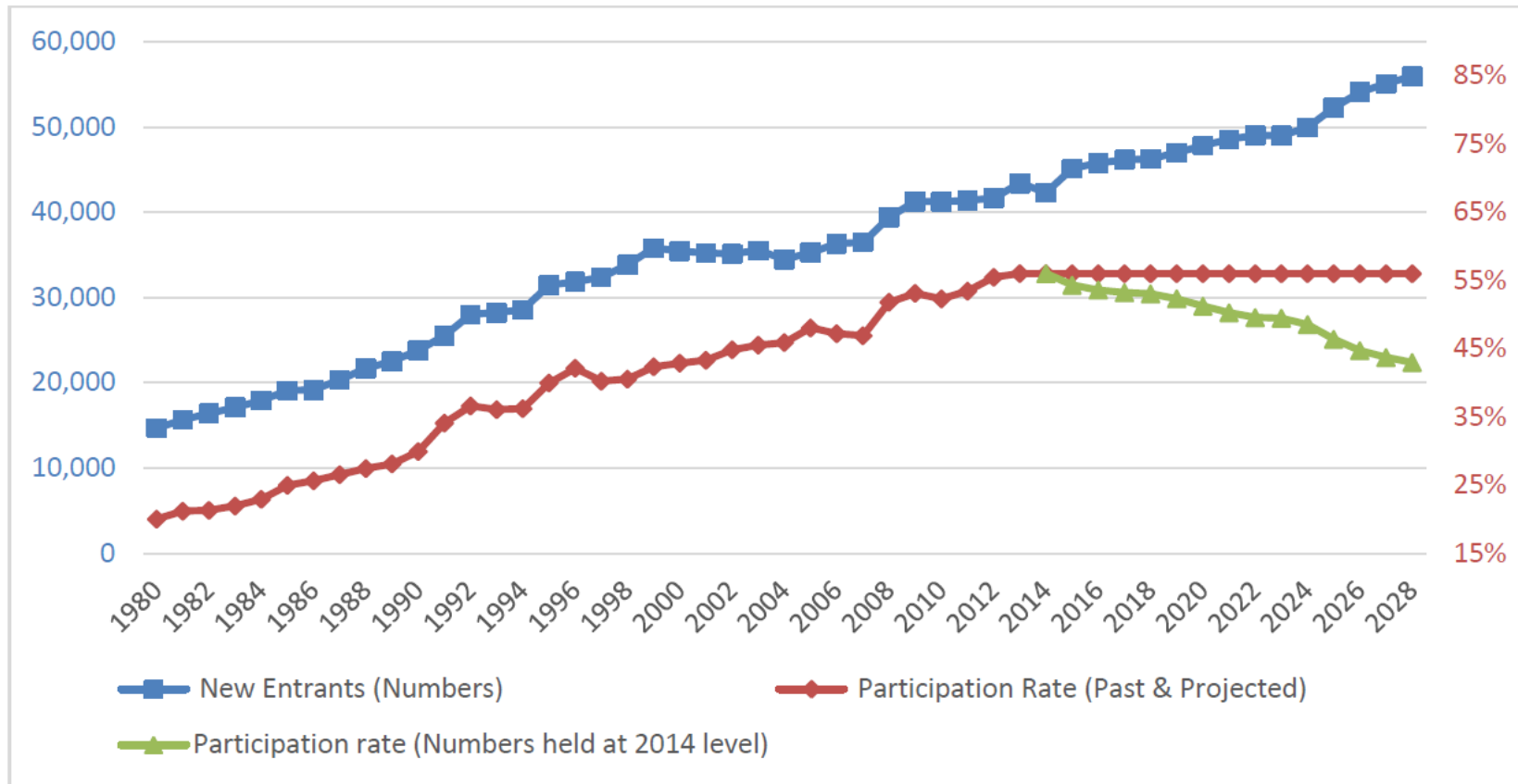
**Appendix 6: AN EFFICIENT LOAN SCHEME MODEL**

**Appendix 7: PROMOTING CREATIVITY AND ENTREPRENEURIAL CAPACITY IN STUDENTS**

Appendix 1:

ADDRESSING THE CASSELLS PROJECTED INCREASE IN DEMAND AND COSTS THEREOF

Figure 5: New Entrants to Higher Education



## **Appendix 2:**

### **TACKLING DISADVANTAGE BY ENSURING SOCIAL INCLUSION IN HE**

This appendix reflects an updating of information previously presented by the College to the HEA (Providing Pathways for Further Education Graduates into Higher Education and Employment – May 2014) along with additional information under each of the four goals identified by HEA in relation to its national plan, as outlined below:

- Goal 1: To promote access for disadvantaged groups to higher education.
- Goal 2: To put in place coherent pathways from second level education, from further education and other non-traditional entry routes to higher education.
- Goal 3: To increase completion rates by target student groups
- Goal 4: To support evidence-based policy formulation

The College contends that coherent pathways currently exist for students completing second level education who seek admission and progression to higher education on the basis of their Leaving Certificate results. Using this group as a benchmark of existing best practice, allows the access opportunities for other groups to be considered and evaluated. This submission concludes by making a number of specific recommendations which it believes would serve to address existing inequities faced by currently disadvantaged groups.

The report starts by addressing the challenges faced by FE students, the largest of the non-traditional learner cohorts seeking access to higher education.

#### **Background to Inequity of Demand (FE Students)**

At present, there is considerable unsatisfied demand from FE students who wish to progress into higher education. Figures for 2013 indicate that while 15,767 applicants with FETAC qualifications applied for places through the CAO, there were only 3,033 acceptances. This represents a progression rate to higher education of 19.24% or fewer than one in five applicants. The corresponding rate for Leaving Certificate applicants is 70.49%.

The relative scarcity of HE places for FE students has a direct de-motivating effect on FE learners throughout their programmes of study, with the uncertainty they face in respect of their future prospects presenting them with additional and unequal obstacles to their educational attainment and progress. For many FE graduate applicants to HE, the unavailability of progression opportunities results in a cessation, and often a complete termination of their formal education, which may lead directly to their persistent under-employment or unemployment.

Since 1995, there have been various initiatives and developments directed at facilitating the progression of FE students to HE. These have included original 'links' or pathway programmes between specific FEIs and HEIs; admissions systems ensuring guaranteed places; quota systems by programme; scoring systems based on eight FE subjects with a maximum of 50 points for distinctions; FE subjects with 25% additional weighting; scoring systems limited to 400 points; scoring systems using alternative metrics based on the Common Award System (CAS)<sup>1</sup>; quota systems based on individual arrangements between particular FEIs and HEIs, and ad hoc systems depending on the specific discipline, FEI, HEI and prevailing demand levels.

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<sup>1</sup> The Higher Education Links Scheme (HELS) introduced for CAO applicants in 2013

As a result of these many changes and often uncoordinated responses from different HEIs, FE students are faced with greater complexities and structural barriers in their progression to HE than those faced by Leaving Certificate students. In short, much of the original intention of providing guaranteed progression paths for the FE students who wish to continue their formal education to HE has been lost.

### **FE Learner Profile**

A central focus of further education is to provide applied education and training to assist learners in their preparation for the workplace. For the majority of FE students and graduates, their priorities and interests lie in securing employment. However, as the 2013 CAO information confirms, a considerable number (15,767) are interested in continuing their education by progressing to higher education programmes.

When the progression rate for FETAC applicants of 19.24% is contrasted with the 70.49% rate for non-FETAC applicants, it is clear that FE students face unequal barriers to those faced by their Leaving Certificate counterparts.

GC has been in detailed discussions with the FE sector at all levels for the last 18 months in order to provide improved access for FE students to the College's HE programmes. These detailed discussions with FE College principals, ETB directors, FE lecturers, students and other stakeholders confirm the following:

- i) FE students come disproportionately from socially disadvantaged sectors of society
- ii) FE students can be standard bearers for their family / community, often being the first in their generation to progress beyond second level education
- iii) The majority of FE students qualify for maintenance grants
- iv) FE students often have lower levels of confidence and self-esteem than their peers in HEIs. This can arise particularly where students enter FEIs following their Leaving Certificate having failed to secure their choice of HE programme on their first attempt.

Completion rates by students on FE programmes can be low for a variety of reasons: positive outcomes can arise where learners leave to take up meaningful employment; negative reasons arise where learners leave for financial reasons or where their social circumstances cannot sustain their ongoing participation

- v) FE students making the progression to higher education could benefit from targeted supports, for example: identifying the most appropriate choice of programme for them to pursue; facilitating their orientation into higher education norms and expectations; and general confidence building.
- vi) There is a case for increasing the academic support for FE students as they progress to higher level stages within their HE programme (e.g. NFQ 6 to 7; 7 to 8, etc.)

While there is an absence of national comparative performance statistics on the relative academic performance of FE students who progress to higher education compared to their counterparts from other sources, the following points are generally accepted:

- i) FE students have an advantage over Leaving Certificate students having completed a wider range of assessment modes, for example: action research, projects, presentations, portfolios, etc.,
- ii) FE students who progress to HE generally perform at least as well as their Leaving Certificate counterparts with similar CAO points levels, particularly in the case of HE programmes with an applied focus.
- iii) FE students often have a greater maturity and life experience than school leavers, entering the higher education programme following greater personal reflection and deliberation.

- iv) Retention rates for FE students who progress to HE are strong where programmes link directly to employment and have an applied focus
- v) Non-completion rates by FE students in higher education more often result from financial and social circumstances rather than academic reasons.

### **Addressing the Situation:**

There is a general willingness within the HE sector to support the progression of FE students into appropriate programmes. However, in many cases the HEIs face significant constraints which limit their ability to do so. For example, most HEIs have physical capacity constraints in relation to their teaching space and are currently operating at or near full capacity. In this regard, for every FE student admitted by a HEI, another non-FE student must be rejected.

The FE points system presents particular challenges for the HEIs. Most significantly the maximum point score for FE graduates is set at 400 compared to the 600 to 625 maximum point score set for Leaving Cert candidates. This has the direct effect of precluding FE graduates from entry to many HE programmes, particularly those at level 8 leading to honours degree awards.

The distribution of FE students' results is also negatively skewed with many students achieving a maximum of 400 points. If left unchecked, this could result in programmes at NFQ level 6 and 7 programmes becoming relatively unavailable to Leaving Certificate students with lower point scores. However, to avoid this potential imbalance, HEIs have adopted a quota system with respect to the admission of qualifying FE candidates.

A further rationale for the quota system arises from the considerable variation that can exist in the content, learning outcomes and educational experience of FE students from different FEIs, even within the same programme or discipline of study.

The net result of these constraints and different admission policies is that students wishing to progress to HE have a less than 1 in 5 chance of admission as an FE graduate, as opposed to a higher than 7 in 10 chance otherwise. Key stakeholders in the FE sector hold the view that these significantly different progression statistics can have a direct and considerable demotivating effect on FE students throughout their studies.

Given the willingness within the HE sector to facilitate FE students, particularly if it can be achieved without excluding others, many of the current restrictions faced by FE students could be readily addressed through the provision of additional HE places. Providing these extra places raises the matter of institutional resource capacity, both physical and human.

### **Mature Students: (Full-time)**

Mature students in Ireland are defined as learners who have reached the age of 23 on January 1<sup>st</sup> in the year their programme commences (i.e. typically September). This contrasts with the age limit of 21 more commonly applied in other jurisdictions. For students who fail to meet HE admission criteria on their first attempt at Leaving Certificate, and who are not inclined to repeat the Leaving Certificate, it can result in a period of up to six years of exclusion from HE progression. By this time, their likelihood of a learner enrolling in HE is very considerably reduced.

Consideration should be given to redefining 'maturity' for access to HE programmes to 21 at time of commencement, in order to reduce the 'lost time' for students to three years.

The students who do apply on the basis of mature entry are typically considered by HEIs under their RPL / RPEL (Recognition of prior / experiential learning) procedures. Typically such applications are few in number and require individual consideration with places often limited by quotas if available at all.

If mature learners are to be encouraged to progress to HE and reassured that such progression is 'normal' then clear, commonly understood and well publicised pathways are required. The recent Springboard and Momentum initiatives, supported by extensive 'normalisation' through print, radio and online media campaigns have been hugely positive in facilitating attitudinal change amongst potential learners.

### **Mature Students: (Part-time)**

The vast majority of HE programmes offered in Ireland are not available to learners on a part-time basis, either in the evenings, on weekends, on a block-release basis or via blended learning. Given the requirement to support career development throughout the working life of the learner, the absence of such provision results in many employees having their education terminated once they take up full-time employment.

In addressing these deficits, greater consideration might be given to providing programmes in modular format as envisaged under the ACCS scheme (Accumulation of Credits and Certification of Subjects) schemes. These might offer an alternative to the traditional schedule of requiring learners to take 60 ECTS per year, by allowing learners to accumulate ECTS in line with their capacity to manage work and study commitments.

For example 60 ECTS top-up level 7 and level 8 programmes could be provided on a part-time evening basis over a number of years with the delivery schedule extending beyond the traditional academic calendar of September to April. Extensive use should be made of online / blended learning options to facilitate learners distant from HEI providers.

### **Immigrants / Refugees / Asylum Seekers / Other Non-Traditional Learners**

Ireland could greatly benefit from the rich pool of talent present amongst its immigrants / refugees / asylum seekers and other non-traditional learner cohorts. While each group may require customised services and supports, the benefits arising from their greater inclusion in HE, both for the learners themselves and the other learners with whom they would interact are considerable. Direct benefits include the greater internationalisation of Ireland's HE curricula through the increased accommodation of global perspectives and related opportunities for development.

It can be anticipated that language support may be required to assist the integration of certain particular learner groups. Supports, such as those provided to Springboard and Momentum students are also likely to be required in order to 'normalise' the expectation that such learners and their children would benefit from HE.

Clear access routes, entitlements and available support services should be made available to each of the above groups. These should be communicated on publicised websites and through the related support offices.

The benefits arising from such provision can be expected to include economic return on their learning through their subsequent employment, and more particularly the considerable savings, both financial and human arising from their more complete integration into Irish society. The College actively engages with bodies representing each of the above learner cohorts.

## Cost Considerations

The most recent HEA report<sup>2</sup> provides the following information regarding higher education costs

	HE Average	IOT Average
Total Expenditure per Student (RGAM <sup>3</sup> )	€12,996	€10,491
Total Expenditure per Student (SRS <sup>4</sup> )	€10,243	€9,415

Costs relating to re-training students years later, for example through current government initiatives such as Springboard and Momentum typically average around €7,000 per student per 60 ECTS programme. Most of these students would also be in receipt of social welfare payments.

Certain students who do not secure access to their chosen course in Ireland elect to study in the UK. For the year ended 2012/13, SUSI maintenance grants to students attending higher level education courses in the UK totalled almost €2m. (Great Britain €1.53m; NI €465K)

While the above costs are considerable, the costs of not providing educational and training opportunities for students and their resulting under-employment or unemployment can have a significantly greater negative impact on society, both economically and socially.

## Statement of Interest:

Griffith College wishes to provide tuition for FE and other non-traditional learners seeking to progress to higher education.

Griffith College is a registered QQI provider and has been delivering higher education programmes since 1990, initially under the auspices of the University of Ulster, with the first of its NCEA (later HETAC, now QQI) programmes commencing in 1994. Currently the College provides a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in business, computing, media, design, law and other disciplines. College programmes are offered on a full-time day basis; on a part-time basis in the evening or at weekends; and where appropriate, on a blended or online basis. The College has three locations in Ireland for full-time delivery, in Dublin, Cork and Limerick,

For non-traditional learners, the cost of commuting to HE can present a significant barrier to their participation and continuing engagement. In this regard, Griffith's city locations in Dublin, Cork and Limerick provide low-cost commuting opportunities for large populations of city based students. In the case of FE colleges, it is worth noting that 14 of the largest 20 FE Colleges nationally are well within 10 miles of Griffith college locations, with these FE Colleges teaching over 13,200 learners in 2013/14. (Ref. Annex 1)

QQI has approved Griffith College's quality assurance procedures and practices in respect of all its academic programmes, and its institutional review of the College was very positive. QQI's confidence in Griffith College is evidenced by devolving to the College the authority to manage its own validation sub-processes. Significantly, Griffith College is the only private College to have been afforded this devolved responsibility<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> HEA Publication: Towards a Performance Evaluation Framework: Profiling Irish Education - December 2013

<sup>3</sup> Total expenditure per FTE student excluding research and depreciation with pension adjustments, based on weighted RGAM numbers incl. access adjustment.

<sup>4</sup> Total expenditure per FTE student excluding research and depreciation with pension adjustments, based on unadjusted SRS numbers.

<sup>5</sup> NCI – The National College of Ireland – a public / private provider is the only other QQI registered institution to have been afforded devolved responsibility for its own validation sub-processes

Since 1974, when the College first began preparing students for professional accountancy examinations, the College has established a track record of providing effective training and education at affordable costs for students. This success is continually evidenced in the achievement of its learners in national and international awards, and in the number of learners who choose to attend the College for their career and personal advancement.

The specific details reflect GC's commitment to advancing the education and careers of learners by means of current, employment-focused preparation for applied disciplines. This deliberate focus directly targets Ireland's prevailing social and economic imperatives, namely the need to increase ease and equity of access to higher education for previously under-represented groups<sup>6</sup> and the Minister for Education and Skills'<sup>7</sup> commitment to providing pathways for adult learners to meaningful employment.

### **Specific Proposal:**

The specific details of the proposal being advanced are as follows:

- i) Progression paths for FE and other non-traditional learners (ONTL) will be offered and promoted to the relevant learner cohorts
- ii) Clear admission and progression entitlements will be communicated to each learner cohorts and their representative institutions and support groups.
- iii) In the case of FE students, detailed mappings of FE programmes will be provided outlining the precise admission and progression entitlements arising from particular performance levels (e.g. eight distinctions at level 5 will guarantee access to the first year of a HE programme at level 6, 7 or 8). These will be communicated to FE providers nationally.
- iv) The admission and progression entitlements for ONTLs will be clearly outlined and communicated, reflecting the application of the College's QQI approved arrangements for RPL / RPEL
- v) Progression paths for FE & ONTL will be offered in applied disciplines. These will reflect existing institutional strengths in areas currently yielding high employment opportunities, such as those targeted and supported by the HEA under its Springboard and Momentum initiatives. The discipline areas include:
  - Business (e.g. to include focus on sales, digital marketing, etc.)
  - Computing (e.g. to include web development, software testing, data analytics, etc.)
  - Media (e.g. to include applied skills in content development for online productions, layout and design, multimedia, etc.)
  - Law (e.g. legal executive roles, administration, file preparation and management)
  - Pharmaceutical Science and related business / manufacturing processes.

*(All of the above programmes enjoy strong links to direct employment.)*

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<sup>6</sup> HEA: How Equal?: Access to Higher Education in Ireland: Research Papers (Nov 2013)  
[http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/conference\\_publication.pdf](http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/conference_publication.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> 05 March, 2014 - Reforming Education, Building a Better Future - Speech by Ruairí Quinn, T.D. Minister for Education and Skills –  
<http://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Speeches/2014-Speeches/SP14-03-05.html#sthash.0sbP6AK5.dpuf>



- vi) The programmes will be managed exclusively in accordance with GC's quality assurance procedures and practices.
- vii) All programmes will involve a comprehensive learner preparation process to ensure the matching of suitably qualified FE & ONTL applicants onto programmes appropriate to the learners' capabilities and interests.
- viii) Learners will be selected and admitted on the basis of their suitability for the programme, with all applicants being met and interviewed in advance to facilitate informed decision-making by all concerned.
- ix) FE candidates who meet the entry requirements having completed their FE programme in one or more sittings will be considered. So too will candidates who meet the matriculation requirements through a combination of their learner attainments at both Leaving Certificate and FE.
- x) ONTL candidates warranting admission on the basis of RPL / RPEL will be considered under the College's QQI approved QA procedures.
- xi) In addition to the general supports provided for learners, FE & ONTL students will be supported throughout their studies by means of specific induction, small group tutorials, and ongoing mentoring and review of their individual performance on a one-to-one basis by a dedicated member of the academic teaching team.
- xii) Programmes will be offered at level 6, 7 and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and delivered on a full-time, part-time or blended learning basis as appropriate.
- xiii) All programmes will lead to NFQ awards.
- xiv) On successful completion of each (60 ECTS) stage of their programme, students will be in a position to secure and sustain meaningful employment in the sector in which they've studied.
- xv) On programme completion, graduates may seek progression into related advanced programme of their choosing in any HE institution. Equally, should they so choose, they will be given guaranteed progression into advanced related programmes at GC where such exist, leading to Higher Certificate or degree awards at level 7 and 8, or postgraduate awards at level 9.
- xvi) Subject to demand, programmes will be delivered in GC at its constituent campuses and college locations in Dublin, Cork and Limerick.
- xvii) The maximum number of FE and ONTL learners admitted into any cohort will be 25, with such students integrated into programme cohorts of no more than 50 in total.
- xviii) It is proposed to initially limit the overall number of FE and ONTL student places to 250 in the first year in order to ensure the careful and successful management of the programme from the outset. It is understood that these students would consist of many cohorts distributed across five applied disciplines with programmes delivered in Dublin Cork and Limerick.

- xix) In the case where an FE or ONTL applicant's circumstances would require them to make a student contribution of €2,750, the additional funding sought by GC from the HEA in respect of each student is €3,000
- xx) Where the government determines that the FE or ONTL applicant's circumstances warrant a waiving of their student contribution, the funding sought by GC from the HEA in respect of each student is €5,750
- xxi) (Goal 3): In order to support the retention and further progression of FE and ONTL learners to more advanced HE qualifications, it is recognised that additional services and supports will be required. Accordingly, it is suggested that the following additional annual contributions would arise in respect of candidates completing major awards.
  - a. Higher Certificate €1000
  - b. Degree (Level 7 or 8) €2000

In accordance with incentives used on Springboard and Momentum programmes the College proposes that a percentage of the funding provided (e.g. 10%) would be linked to the students' satisfactory completion of the programme and their placement in industry or their commencement of more advanced HE qualifications.

- xxii) The costs outlined in the above sections relate to the delivery of full-time programmes. It is anticipated that overall costs in respect of part-time or blended provision would be lower, with the precise split between student and HEA funding requiring further determination regarding rates and completion requirements.
- xxiii) **Note on Griffith's Private Status:**  
As a private provider, GC has successfully delivered Springboard programmes with funding directly provided by HEA. The College also has a history of government funding of its computing science programmes dating back to 1996. Accordingly, the direct funding of GC by the HEA is not new.
- xxiv) (Goal 3): To ensure the success of the programme, it is essential that students who would otherwise be eligible for SUSI grants would not be precluded as a result of GC's private status.  
  
(Similar funding of students, along with SUSI eligibility is currently available to other private providers, for example BIMM (British Institute of Modern Music; Sound Training College and Setanta).
- xxv) It is proposed that FE and ONTL students who successfully complete the programme and choose to progress their studies directly with GC, would continue to be eligible to government funding support on a similar basis to that provided to them in respect of their first year.
- xxvi) If deemed to be successful by the HEA, it is proposed that GC would seek approval for the proposal to be continued, subject to annual reviews taking on board any improvements that might be suggested

- xxvii) (Goal 4): As a learning organisation, GC is committed to identifying and pursuing best-practice that is evidenced-based. It is proposed that this GC initiative would be subject to separate ongoing reporting to the Higher Education Authority, in accordance with HEA determined monitoring arrangements.
- xxviii) It is proposed that this project would be used as a basis for undertaking considerable action research in order to better understand the issues involved in FE to HE progression. This educational research will be published and made freely available in order to inform and improve the specification, delivery and management of future HE programmes in terms of completion rates, learner satisfaction and overall economic benefit. (Goal 4)

**Annex 1: Ireland's 20 largest FE Colleges**

		<b>Enrolments</b>
<b>College</b>	<b>ETB</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Cork College of Commerce	Cork	1,743
Ballyfermot College of FE	City of Dublin	1,456
Cavan Institute	Cavan Monaghan	
Limerick College of FE	Limerick Clare	1,209
Colaiste Dhulaigh	City of Dublin	1,191
Galway Technical Institute	Galway Roscommon	
St John's Central	Cork	1,150
St Thomas Community College	Kildare Wicklow	
Colaiste Stiofan Naofa	Cork	883
Senior College Dun Laoghaire	Dublin Dun Laoghaire	868
Inchicore College of FE	City of Dublin	801
Carlow Vocational school	Carlow Kilkenny	
Liberties College	City of Dublin	764
Waterford College of FE	Wexford Waterford	
Sallynoggin College of FE	Dublin Dun Laoghaire	710
Dun Laoghaire FE Institute	Dublin Dun Laoghaire	680
Crumlin College of FE	City of Dublin	666
Ballinode College	Mayo Sligo Leitrim	
Colaiste Ide	City of Dublin	562
Rathmines College	City of Dublin	530
		<hr/> 13,213 <hr/>

### **Appendix 3:**

#### **A PILOT SCHEME TO ASSESS TRUE COST OF MAINTENANCE GRANTS AND REGISTRATION FEE FOR PRIVATE COLLEGE STUDENTS**

##### **Background**

The proposal to extend registration fee support and maintenance grant support to students of private colleges from low income families has strong political support on the basis of fairness to the students involved particularly as other students are receiving this support to attend private for profit colleges run under the aegis of institutes of technology. It is proposed to remove this restriction and disadvantage for students by creating urgently needed additional places and making better use of education assets within the community – two of the eight priorities in the call for consultation by Minister Richard Bruton TD.

The difficulty from a policy point of view is to assess the likely incremental cost to the State of extending this support. In particular two areas of uncertainty hinder a precise estimate of such costs (1) the number of students likely to avail of this support and (2) what savings would accrue to the State as a result of students sacrificing other supports. Further information would be quickly available in respect of both variables from a pilot scheme targeting a minimum number of students.

It is proposed to run a limited Pilot Scheme to facilitate students' progression to higher education. The Pilot would measure the cost and demand for the support if offered nationally. The Pilot would be confined to QQI courses offered by private colleges with proven track records of academic institutional capacity and quality provision (e.g. established over 10 years, provision up to NFQ level 9, research-active staff, capacity of over 1,000 learners). The pilot scheme would be delivered with immediate effect – starting in 2016/17.

A similar scheme was undertaken in respect of asylum seekers in 2015.

##### **Scope of the Pilot Scheme**

The pilot scheme will be confined to a maximum of 250 students from the three colleges involved in the Wake up Susi campaign Griffith College, Dublin Business School and The Irish College of Humanities and Applied Sciences. First-year second-year and third-year students will join the pilot which will have to run for four years to allow for fee support and grants payable over the four years of their course for any first-year students participating in the pilot. Students will receive the equivalent support in terms of registration fee and maintenance grants payable to their counterparts attending public sector institutions. As there is likely to be very short notice as to the availability of grant and fee support the number of students availing of it is likely to be low.

##### **Data to be collected under the Pilot Scheme**

It is likely that in later years the number of students availing of fee support and grants will be greater as they will have longer notice of this availability. Firstly in relation to variable (1) each college participating in the scheme will be requested to prepare a five year forecast of the numbers likely to avail of support and of their likely backgrounds to facilitate assessment of the likely savings in other supports -variable (2). Each student participating in the scheme will be asked to indicate had they not received the pilot scheme fee support what alternative status would have applied under the following headings:-

- (1) unemployed
- (2) attending an Irish public-sector HEI
- (3) attending a UK public-sector HEI
- (4) employed at approximate salary
- (5) other

From this data will be calculated the outcome for this group of students in terms of net cost to the State of the availability of fee and maintenance support.

### **Estimate of likely numbers of private college students to avail of fee support**

Applying to the five year forecasts prepared in respect of the three colleges participating in the pilot scheme the ratio of total student numbers in the private sector to total student numbers in the three colleges it will be possible to estimate the total private sector demand for the support should the Department decide to extend this support sector wide.

### **Savings to the State from Students Sacrificing Other Supports**

The extension of grants to students of private colleges from low income families is unlikely to give rise to significant incremental cost to the Exchequer. For learners whose formal education would cease as a result of continuing the current restriction, any initial savings must be offset against the longer term costs of unemployment-related social welfare entitlements and underemployment.

Unlike public institutions, the Pilot would not require state support in respect of teaching and infrastructure costs (currently averaging approximately €6,000 per annum).

Savings will accrue to the State from students sacrificing other supports as follows: –

- (1) unemployment benefit in respect of student otherwise unemployed
- (2) maintenance grants and fee support of attendance at public sector institutions where students would otherwise do so.
- (3) maintenance grants in respect of students who would otherwise go to UK public sector institutions.

Against these savings have to be set the cost of a PAYE and social insurance lost had the student otherwise been in employment. For this category of students a calculation can be made from the estimate of income which they would provide when indicating their alternatives that are under (4) above.

### **Consultation with key stakeholders**

In preparing this submission we have had broad consultation over the past twelve months with a number of key stakeholders in this sector including the following:

- Progression Officers in all Cork city FE institutions, Limerick College of FE, Bray Institute of FE and several colleges in Dublin including Coláiste Dhúlaigh, Rathmines FE, Inchicore FE, Sallynoggin, Killester, Crumlin etc.
- HECA – Higher Education Colleges Association [www.heca.ie](http://www.heca.ie)
- Parents, students and career guidance counsellors at secondary schools adjacent to the private colleges
- IBEC
- Members of Working Group on Future Funding of Higher Education
- Members of Dail Éireann
- Higher civil servants and designated public officials at DES and DEPR
- Communications Office at SUSI
- Current students involved in the ‘Wake Up SUSI’ campaign

## Appendix 4:

### TRAINEESHIPS – FOCUSING ON POSITIONS NOT CURRENTLY FILLED BY IRISH NATIONALS

This appendix focuses on positions not currently filled by Irish nationals by:

1. Seeking to identify available figures of jobs that cannot currently be filled by Irish nationals due to skills shortages; and
2. Addressing an approach to close the skills and training gap in the short, medium and long-term.

#### Current situation

Detailed below are the number of working visas awarded to non-EU nationals in 2015 split by industry and the top ten sponsoring entities.

Industry	Total	Top 10 Companies	Total
Medical & Nursing	2,793	Health Services Executive *	1,573
Service Industry	2,491	Google Ireland Limited	286
Industry	1,419	Infosys BPO Ltd.	118
Entertainment	255	Amazon Data Services Ireland Ltd	114
Catering	161	Wipro Outsourcing Services (Ireland)Ltd.	106
Education	55	Wipro Technologies	106
Agriculture & Fisheries	37	HCL Technologies Ltd	99
Sport	22	IBM Ireland Limited	97
Domestic	19	Accenture	91
Exchange agreements	12	Infosys BPO Limited	76
	<b>7,264</b>		<b>2,666</b>

*\* Estimate 2,126 working across frontline healthcare including the amount for the HSE above*

Although the current information is not available, this number most certainly grows when including EU nationals or students who can work 20 hours per week. For the purpose of this document the numbers above are used to illustrate the industries that would benefit from creating an employee base in Ireland to fill these positions.

#### Industries highlighted with requirements to hire non-nationals

The main areas highlighted by these numbers include (i) medical and nursing – frontline and pharmaceutical demands; (ii) service industry – including ICT and financial services; (iii) industry – including specialist knowledge on industrial machinery and the production process; and (iv) other industries including retail, catering and education.

#### Immediate gaps identified in the Irish economy

It is key to the Irish economy to create generations of talent in order to fill the current demand as well as preparing the economy for the expected future growth. Suggestions for specific industries include:

- Use the apprenticeship model to develop a pathway for basic healthcare workers (Level 5) to progress to a full nursing qualification with the Open University;
- ICT: Focus on the progressing students within the ETB's and provide industry-specific training;
- Expand education programmes to lower skilled workers in financial services in order to provide a more progressive career path;
- Retail management traineeships in larger stores; and
- Catering and leisure traineeships.

### **Plan to tackle the training and education deficit**

The steps involved in tackling the training and education deficit are as follows:

1. Expand the above study of industries and companies employing non-nationals to identify the jobs potentially available to Irish nationals;
2. Engage with industry-led panels that will highlight the skills needs for specific industries and companies that cannot currently be filled by Irish domiciled individuals;
3. Identify the key training requirements necessary to be fulfilled in order to take roles in specific industries.
4. Devise a number of career paths for individuals that would provide educated and trained Irish nationals to these key industries in the short, medium and long-term. These career paths may be one of the following:
  - Education apprenticeship – immediate provision of courses that are designed in conjunction with industry whereby the companies identify candidates with the characteristics to enter the industry. Depending on their background a number of education programmes will be undertaken whilst working to bring them up to a level by which they can take advantage of progression opportunities within their respective companies, creating new positions.
  - Re-skilling apprenticeship – identification of those industries with declining demand for labour that share key characteristics with the expanding industries. Again, the intention would be to put in place a training programme to re-skill people who are already highly-skilled in their field and also have significant work practice experience to allow them to make the industry crossover beneficial to the employer.
  - School-leavers apprenticeship – an offer of a graduate recruitment programme across all demand industries whereby candidates with the correct characteristics join the programme directly from school. As part of the programme, the candidate enters into an industry-specific training path that includes at least a degree-level qualification. This not only creates a young educated workforce in the demand industries but also provides a real career alternative to the CAO. This allows candidates enter the workforce at a much earlier age whilst also guaranteeing an education. This will also set a precedence for future school leavers as there will be cohorts of programme graduates available to share their experiences with future groups.



## **Appendix 5:**

### **UPSKILLING**

Upskilling initiatives aim to improve the skills of current or potential employees, usually through training, so that they will be better at their jobs and/or available for promotion. This aim is primarily achieved by teaching an employee additional skills pertinent to their area of employment. The skills taught can be either generic or specific in nature.

The upskilling of employees provides an opportunity for those employees to seek promotion, while their previous position becomes available for new entrants.

Upskilling can be provided in a number of ways, either through in-house training, part-time external training programmes or a structured programme combining training and work. One option available is the introduction of a collaborative scheme between the State and employers within specific industries, for the upskilling of employees.

#### **Collaborative Scheme**

A viable option for upskilling the labour force would be a collaboration between the State and employers within specific predetermined industries/sectors.

The collaboration would facilitate an agreement between the parties where the State would provide training to an employee, and on that employee's promotion the vacant position would be filled by a new entrant.

In order to ensure the feasibility of such a collaboration a number of elements require consideration, for example;

#### **1. Identify relevant industries**

In order to successfully progress such a collaboration, the industries which would most benefit from the upskilling of employees must be identified and included in all discussions regarding the development of the scheme.

Research indicates that employees in certain fields are upskilling in order to pursue a new field of work, with Math 28%, Engineering 28% and IT 26% employees being the most likely to upskill. Employees in Science 18%, Healthcare 19% and Education 22% are the least likely to upskill in order to pursue a new field, but instead upskill to secure promotion in their existing field.<sup>8</sup>

#### **2. Identify and engage with employers**

It is essential that the employers who would be open to such a collaboration and have the resources available to ensure the programmes needs are met, are engaged in the development of the programme and their views obtained in respect of the scheme. Engagement with a panel from the relevant industries or a number of industry specific panels may prove most beneficial in agreeing the terms and conditions of the programme, agreeing the skills gap to be filled.

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<sup>8</sup> Kelly Global Workforce Index – Released April 2013  
[http://www.kellyservices.ie/uploadedFiles/United\\_Kingdom\\_-\\_Kelly\\_Services/4-Knowledge\\_Hub/Articles/KGWI\\_2013/KGWI%202013%20TOPIC%201%20REPORT.pdf](http://www.kellyservices.ie/uploadedFiles/United_Kingdom_-_Kelly_Services/4-Knowledge_Hub/Articles/KGWI_2013/KGWI%202013%20TOPIC%201%20REPORT.pdf)

Even with millions of job openings in the United States, companies cannot find employees with the right skills, training and credentials to fill them. In fact, four out of ten employers report difficulty filling open positions with skilled employees. But upskilling is helping employees of all ages earn postsecondary credentials so they can advance into better, higher-paying jobs. Upskilling is proving popular because it promises to deliver a pool of skilled labour that can help employers fill open positions and stay competitive. Companies like Walmart, McDonald's, Starbucks, Gap Inc. and CVS Health have introduced upskilling programs to help their employees move into new roles within the company and prosper. Unlike traditional workforce training initiatives that focus on mid- or senior-level employees, upskilling initiatives are designed to help entry-level employees.<sup>9</sup>

### **3. Identify the Skills required within specific industries**

Once the relevant industries have been identified and panels established it is through working with these panels that the skills required in a particular industry can be determined. These skills may be generic and/or specific in nature depending on the industry, sector and employees role.

For the most part, employees feel they are proficient in the most critical soft skills. When asked to nominate the skills they really need to develop, the most striking is Bilingual skills, nominated by (64%), followed by Leadership/initiative (41%), and Creativity/innovation (37%).<sup>10</sup>

The intriguing question is whether employees, in general, are truly proficient in the most critical soft skills, as they suggest, and whether some of the training effort is actually being misplaced.

### **4. Seek employee feedback**

After receiving the feedback from industry, feedback from potential participants in the programme is also an important consideration. Ultimately, without participants the collaboration will in itself be unsuccessful.

It is worth noting that 60% of employees globally are either actively seeking further education/training, or are considering it.

For training to be meaningful it needs to be relevant and practical—not “training for training’s sake”. In an era when employees are embracing the notion of self-directed training and continuing education, there is a new focus on providing the most appropriate type of training. Employees seem to possess an inherent understanding of what works best in terms of the development of their skills. For the majority of employees, the most desirable training is that provided by their employer, training that is centred on the real and practical elements of the job at hand.

Therefore it is essential that the training provided meets not only the skills gap identified by the employer but also the needs of employees.

According to research carried out in 2013, employees upskill for a number of reasons, the main reason, accounting for 57% of those surveyed, being promotion with their current employer.

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<sup>9</sup> Gibbons, Jim (President and CEO of Goodwill Industries International)

A Win for Businesses and Workers: ‘Upskilling’ Programs That Help Workers Earn Postsecondary Credentials Sweeping the Nation , published 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jim-gibbons/a-win-for-businesses-and\\_b\\_8805814.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jim-gibbons/a-win-for-businesses-and_b_8805814.html) (accessed 8th June 2016)

<sup>10</sup> ibid 1.

This is followed by 47% of employees who upskilled in order to facilitate advancement at another company, 42% who upskill to enter a new field of work, 20% who wish to become an entrepreneur/business owner, while 9% have another reason to upskill.<sup>11</sup>

## **5. Develop suitable programmes**

There are a number of options available in respect of the collaboration, for example the creation of a specific programme to be attended on a part-time basis or a structured programme comprising training and work.

- The creation of programmes of an interdisciplinary nature with a broad practical base aimed at long term claimants on the live register. Nearly half of those unemployed are long term claimants. 141,000 claimants have been on the live register for more than one year. An interdisciplinary programme would provide participants with a wide skills base, and provide opportunities to pursue further studies or alternatively employment in an area of particular interest moving the financial burden from the State.

ISME CEO, Mark Fielding said: "It is time to look at those remaining on the Live Register, especially the 141,000 long-term unemployed, and examine the reasons that are preventing them from entering full-time work. Skills gaps must be addressed."<sup>12</sup>

- The introduction of a structured programme of education and training is another option. This programme should endeavour to remove the misapprehension which exists regarding apprenticeships and JobBridge. The material covered, programme objectives and learning outcomes would be agreed with representatives of the relevant industry in advance. Individuals completing the programme would spend a number of days at their place of employment and a set number of days attending the designated upskilling programme. The weekly payment made to participants would be at an agreed rate, and funded partly by government and partly by the employer.

In addition employers employing new recruits as part of the new structured training programme could receive a grant / tax incentive recognising their collaboration with the new initiative through the provision of onsite training.

It is evident from research that people are prepared to complete training programmes (apprenticeships), however, it is essential that the new training programmes go beyond the traditional construction sector. Ireland's apprenticeship system until the bust was mainly related to construction and had almost 30,000 participants. In recent times the number has fallen to about 7,000, showing an opening in the market for a new training programme, which allows participants the opportunity to develop skills in alternate sectors.

Global research also indicates that the most valued forms of skill development are continued education combined with training (58%), on the job experience (70%), seminars and webinars (26%). These figures indicate an openness on the part of employees to engage in structured programmes which combine education and training as proposed in the collaboration scheme.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid 1.

<sup>12</sup> Irish Independent. Published 8<sup>th</sup> April 2016

<http://www.independent.ie/business/jobs/nearly-half-of-unemployed-are-longterm-claimants-34609097.html>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid 1.

Additional considerations would be the upskilling of prospective employees to fill the roles, for example;

- An initiative to provide funded upskilling opportunities for employees across additional sectors beyond ICT, which would also be available for those on the live register so that they would be in a position to take up positions as they became available.
- The provision of post Springboard funding to allow participants to pursue mixed degrees and also wider postgraduate access, whether the Springboard graduate has moved into employment or is on the live register. Allowing graduates this opportunity to continue their development ensures their continued upskilling, and the opportunity to enter niche areas. This also ensures that employees do not become stagnant, and opens up opportunities at entry level.

### **The Role of Private Education Providers**

Private education providers afford the opportunity of speed and flexibility in the creation and delivery of solutions to upskill or reskill people to meet skills deficits in the labour market. In the UK, the policy of the Department of Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) is a model that has worked well in the past where providers successfully tendering for funding were awarded a block of funding but without being restricted to specific skills, as long as those provided were within certain skills deficit parameters. This enabled the provider to work with employers on meeting specific skills deficits in a company, a sector or a region, while providing the government funder the assurance that the funding would be utilised to best effect in meeting the needs of business. The BIS policy also dovetailed with that of the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) which also provided funding on block to providers to enable the employment of people who were unemployed.

### **Funding Opportunities**

In Ireland, the broad skills areas identified by the EGFSN could form a clear basis for funding from DES, e.g. Hospitality, Marine, Logistics, ICT, Data Analytics, International Trade, International Financial Services, Entrepreneurship, Innovation and others. It could be envisaged that broad funding would be made available within the parameters of these skills areas with successful education providers then working closely with businesses or representative groups to define specific programmes of education and training that can be developed. Depending on the skills needs and available programmes, a fast-track process for programme validation may be required. Outcomes could be further assured, and risk to the state minimised, through the provision of a payment-by-results (PBR) model, in operation in the UK for some time.

### **Further collaborations**

Collaboration amongst current education providers, both private and publicly-funded, could also be encouraged to ensure the broadest range of provider capacity is available. The Irish market has many high-quality providers delivering strong programmes but it is unlikely that any one provider can meet all the needs of employers in terms of specific hard skills and more general softer skills for work. Collaborations, possibly managed through one provider with others as partners or supply-chain sub-contractors would provide the best opportunity for the state to meet the labour market skills gap, minimise funding and provision risk, and maximise outcomes for the state, employers and individuals.

## **Appendix 6:**

### **AN EFFICIENT LOAN SCHEME MODEL**

#### **Background**

The proposal to establish a student loans scheme is fraught with considerable political difficulty in the current Irish political context. It is felt unlikely that it will be possible to introduce increased fees supported by loans in the short to medium term. Accordingly it might be beneficial for the Department to launch a voluntary scheme along the lines proposed by Griffith College for its students. Griffith's proposal is based upon a loan scheme run for many years by TAR College in Malaysia and supported by its alumni. The key advantage of this scheme is that it does not suffer from the same high rate of loan default experienced by most Government administered loan schemes.

#### **Structure of the Proposed Griffith Scheme**

The Griffith loan scheme which is to be initially funded by a benefactor will be set up under a charitable trust. Donations to the scheme would be tax-deductible. Because the scheme will be established on a charitable basis Griffith College will pay back into the loans scheme the average rate of profit arising on each student funded by the loan scheme. The scheme will initially focus on supporting students from disadvantaged areas within the College's hinterland. While these students will hopefully qualify soon for maintenance grants and payment of registration fee the balance of the fee will have to be supported by the loan scheme.

#### **Support of Alumni, Mentors and Trustees**

Because of the element of charitable support undergraduate students benefiting from the loan scheme will be asked during their undergraduate studies to support and mentor secondary students from local schools. Local industry will be asked to support the graduates in terms of work placement. Graduates will be asked to act as mentors to undergraduates and to assist them in turn with their work placement. To ensure ownership of the scheme by the alumni, selected graduates will be asked to act as trustees of the scheme. It is hoped that this system of mutual support will ensure a high level of loan repayment by graduates.

#### **Growth of the Fund**

It is expected that further benefactors will be found. It is hoped that in addition there will be alumni and corporate donations because of the attractiveness of tax relief. If Government were to see advantage in this scheme providing a pilot for wider application to HE institutions it might wish to make additional funding available directly to the scheme.

#### **Loan Interest and Administrative Costs**

It is hoped that the loan scheme would not suffer the same high rate of loan default experienced by Government administered loan schemes. It is proposed to charge interest on the loans in order to encourage timely repayment and to ensure that the capital value of the loan scheme fund is protected against inflation. However the interest rate should be kept as low as possible and should not in any event exceed 5%.

It is expected that the voluntary element of the administration by trustees will keep administrative costs to a minimum. The donation from Griffith College back to the loan scheme should be more than adequate to cover any residual administrative costs. It is also hoped that this annual donation will cover any default costs.

### **National Application of this Scheme**

Features of this scheme applied on a national basis might include:-

1. Government donations to the scheme matching private donations
2. Government support of the scheme to cover repayments of unemployed persons during the period of their unemployment
3. Matching Government support for schemes to the level of loan repayment to encourage HE institutions to ensure work placement of their graduates and to leverage high repayment from their alumni.
4. Gradual substitution of loans for grants as the individual college funds build up.
5. Deductibility of loan repayments from gross salaries for tax purposes.

## **Appendix 7:**

### **PROMOTING CREATIVITY AND ENTREPRENEURIAL CAPACITY IN STUDENTS**

#### **Defining the skills to be promoted**

- What is 'creativity, innovation, Intellectual Property and entrepreneurship'? How can they be incorporated in existing degrees or could a degree focused on these skills specifically be developed?
- Consider the 'creative and cultural economy' and its needs
- A key topic is the entrepreneurial skill set sought by employers and how those skills might be identified and incorporated into existing and new qualifications.
- Another key topic is the reengagement of the 'inactive youth' aged between 18 and 24 and how the introduction of training programmes may provide an opportunity for reengagement.

#### **Obtaining industry input into skills definition and participation in the learning process**

- Employers should engage in the development of entrepreneurial skills in programmes and also placement of students.
- Develop a partnership enterprise which facilitates work and study, possibly in a blended format.
- Co-ownership of programmes with industry, ensuring they input at the initial formation stage of programmes.
- Incentivise employers to provide relevant, structured in-house soft skills training (critical thinking, problem solving, creative thinking) for FE and HE students by extending the research/knowledge box tax credits to such courseware development.
- Increasing the credits by 50% where this courseware is made freely available.
- Establish a spatial strategy for the Irish third level sector to clearly define locations/areas of excellence on the island of Ireland (e.g. Pharma for Cork, IT for Dublin, Aviation for Shannon/Mid-West etc.).

#### **Proposed entrepreneurship programmes**

- A second level transition year entrepreneurship programme (for school leavers or transition year).
- Implement workshops in areas such as coding and entrepreneurship to develop these important business skills.
- Develop 'authentic assessment', where soft skills such as networking, confidence and a CV-building portfolio of experience
- Introduction of languages as a mandatory skill particularly on international programmes