Education and Training Sector

Shared Services Plan 2014 - 2016

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS
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1. **Executive summary**

Shared Services refers to the provision of a service by one part of an organisation, where that service had previously been found in more than one part of the organisation. The funding and resourcing of the service is then “shared” and the providing department effectively becomes an internal service provider. The goal of a shared services delivery model is to allow each part of the organisation to focus its limited resources on activities that support the organisation’s goals. Shared Services is a continuous improvement process with no fixed end point, therefore this document sets out the scope and expected deliverables for the Education and Training Sector.

The Department of Education and Skills, under the mandate of *Public Service Reform Plan for 2014 – 2016*, published in January 2014, proposes to not only actively participate in the roll out of Traditional Shared Services in areas such as HR, Payroll, Pensions, Finance, IT and Corporate Services within the Department of Education and Skills, it also intends to investigate all possible opportunities for Shared Services initiatives across the entire Education and Training Sector. These opportunities will be individually evaluated using a standard methodology and should there prove to be a sound business case, the initiatives will be rolled out for the relevant areas of the Sector.

The Department also intends to investigate current diverse Shared Services which exist within the Education and Training Sector, should a strong business case exist, these services may be rolled out to wider groups within the Sector. In drafting this plan, the Department of Education and Skills reviewed International best practice in the Education and Training Sector and compared that publicly available information to the Departments existing initiatives, which compare favourably.

The Education and Training Sector can be broken into four main components –

- Department and its Agencies
- Schools Sector
- SOLAS and Education and Training Boards
- Higher Education Sector.

Shared Service initiatives will be looked at for the Education and Training Sector as a whole and for specific areas within it. Projects with the greatest potential impact will be prioritised for roll out but it may be possible to roll out some smaller impact projects which build on existing services in parallel with larger initiatives.
The Department of Education and Skills expects that these projects will improve efficiency primarily through reducing costs and secure effectiveness gains on a sustainable basis through-

- continuous process improvement
- single deployment of technology
- improved procurement
- improved customer service
- shared knowledge and skills
- Improved cost visibility, internal controls and metrics of back-office operations.

Consequently personnel will be freed up to concentrate on their primary roles and thereby improving performance across the Education and Training Sector as a whole.
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2. Introduction

The Government’s Public Service Reform Plan, published in November 2011 gave a strong mandate for the increased use of shared services across the public sector. This mandate has been reiterated in the most recent Public Service Reform Plan for 2014-16 which was published in January 2014.

The Government mandate for the implementation of shared services is very clear and comes directly from Government policy as articulated in the Programme for Government and in the Public Service Reform Plans. Therefore, public funded bodies across the Education and Training sector will be required to participate in shared service initiatives undertaken across the sector and in the schools, further education and training and higher education sub-sectors where they are shown to be feasible and are supported by a strong business case. All future developments must be considered in a shared service context.

2.1. Vision for Shared Services & External Service Delivery

In line with Government policy, shared services and external service delivery models will be core elements of the Education and Training Sector Reform Programme. The purpose of implementing these delivery models is to deliver cost savings, efficiencies and other benefits to enable resources to be focused on service delivery.

The mission is to deliver value and benefits to our customers in the Education and Training Sector through:

• Customer relationships that are built on quality of service
• People who are skilled, dedicated and enjoy what they do
• Technology that is leading edge
• Optimised business processes
• Focus on delivery of results and continuous improvement

To ensure that this is achieved we have identified a number of design principles that will underpin our approach to shared services:

• Initiatives will be based on robust data (baselining)
• Initiatives will, where feasible, be cross sector / sub-sectors to achieve requisite scale
• Existing initiatives/infrastructure will be leveraged to the maximum extent possible (subject to business case)
• The focus will be on administrative and corporate processes, but opportunities for smaller scale centers of excellence will also be considered
The autonomy of all institutions will be respected (including data confidentiality)
Options assessment will consider all valid scenarios from do nothing through to shared services and external service delivery.

2.2. Governance Structures

In line with the Government’s Public Service Reform Plan, external service delivery and shared services must be considered by all public bodies. Government has mandated that an external service delivery plan and a shared service plan be prepared by each of the four main sectoral Departments (Health, Education, Local Government and Justice).

In the Education and Training sector a dedicated PSR Programme Office has been established to drive the implementation of the reform plan including the use of external service delivery models.

Robust governance arrangements have been put in place to drive, manage and monitor implementation of the reform programme across the Education and Training Sector. An overarching Education and Training Reform Board has been established and is chaired by the Secretary General. The governance arrangements also include a PSR Programme Office in the Department. The PSR Programme Office is the central, overarching, co-ordination function for Education and Training reform. A fulltime Programme Manager and Shared Service Advisor have been recruited and are now in situ.

The Programme Office reports to the Education and Training Reform Board, currently comprising:

- Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General, Chair
- Peter Baldwin, Assistant Secretary General
- Pat Burke, Assistant Secretary General
- Ruth Carmody, Assistant Secretary General
- Mary Doyle, Deputy Secretary General
- Michael Keogh, Assistant Secretary General
- Martin Hanevy, Assistant Secretary General

Given the scale and diversity of the Education and Training Sector, two sub-sectoral governance structures have been put in place for the ETB/SOLAS and Higher Education sub-sectors.

The ETB/SOLAS Programme Board is also chaired by the Secretary General and comprises the following membership:
A dedicated project office has been established to lead on the ETB/SOLAS project with a full time programme manager assigned at Principal Officer level.

A Higher Education Programme Board has been established and is chaired by Mary Doyle, Deputy Secretary General with responsibility for Higher Education. This board will oversee the implementation of this plan in the higher education sector. It has the following membership:

- Mary Doyle, Deputy Secretary General, Chair
- Ruth Carmody, Assistant Secretary General
- Mary Kerr, Deputy Chief Executive, Higher Education Authority
- Christy Mannion, Principal Officer, Higher Education Research and Finance
- Michael Casey, Director, Finance and Operations, Irish Universities Association
- Gearoid Hodgins, Director of HR/IR, Institutes of Technology Ireland
- Ian Mathews, Treasurer, Treasurer, Trinity College Dublin
- Peter McGrath, Financial Controller, Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Brian Norton, President, Dublin Institute of Technology
- Deirdre McDonnell, Principal Officer, Programme Management Office
- Gráinne Cullen, Programme Manager, Programme Management Office
- Marion Edwards, Shared Services Adviser, Programme Management Office
Shared Service initiatives led by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) will fall under the Governance Policy for Shared Services issued on 1st July 2013 by DPER, in addition to the Department of Education and Skills governance model outlined above.
2.3. Implementation

The Shared Services initiatives proposed in this plan for the Education and Training Sector will be implemented on a phased basis over the period of the plan. All initiatives will be coordinated and managed by the PSR Programme Office of the Department of Education and Skills under the Governance model outlined for the Department. They will be reviewed, scoped and benchmarked and only initiatives which have a strong business case will be presented for implementation approval.

A project implementation plan will be outlined for each approved Shared Service initiative and a governance model will be developed to address the future management of Shared Service Centres and their relationships with the Education and Training Sector. The plans will set out the relative roles and responsibilities, performance metrics, services provided and reporting requirements and put in place a Service Management Agreement between the Shared Service Centre and its customers.

As Shared Services is a continuous improvement model, it is expected that further initiatives and improvements will be implemented beyond the scope of this plan.
3. Department and Agencies

3.1. Introduction and context

The Department’s role is to support the educational success of each learner and to drive improvements in the overall performance of the education and training system. We must also ensure that we deliver our day-to-day services efficiently and effectively.

The Department carries out a wide range of activities at all levels of the education and training system, working in collaboration with a number of national agencies. These activities includes policy development; providing funding, services and support for education providers; planning and providing education and training infrastructure and enhancing education and training through co-operation on a North-South basis and through involvement in the activities of the European Union (EU) and other international agencies.

The Department has also been mandated with a specific role in relation to the Residential Institutions Redress Board and a number of related bodies operating under the aegis of the Department.

The Department works with a number of specialist agencies in the sector and these are listed in Appendix 2.

3.2. Operating Environment

The cost of running the Department (including the National Educational Psychological Service) accounted for approximately €89.4 million in 2013 or about 1% of the total allocation for the education and training sector.

The Department’s administrative budget has reduced from €97 million (spend) in 2009 to €89.4 million (allocation) in 2013. This represents a drop of 8%. Some allocations have reduced by more, for instance the overall pay allocation has reduced by 9%, travel and subsistence by 20% and the regional office service by 100%. Overtime pay accounts for about 1% of the Department’s total pay allocation (€630,000 in 2012).

The Department’s staff (including school inspectors) reduced by 121 or 10.5% between March 2009 and December 2012 and there have been virtually no internal promotions in the Department since March 2009.
Despite these, and other challenges, the Department’s staff and agencies are leading on an extensive programme of reform across the education and training. This reform programme centres around four key themes:

**Learning for Life**
We want an education and training system that provides all learners with the knowledge and skills they need to participate fully in society and the economy; one that enables learners to learn how to learn.

**Improving Quality and Accountability**
We want an education and training system that provides high quality education and training experiences for all learners.

**Supporting Inclusion and Diversity**
We want an education and training system that welcomes and meaningfully includes learners with disabilities and special educational needs and those with language, cultural and social differences and supports disadvantaged learners.

**Building the Right Systems and Infrastructure**
We want a modern, flexible education and training system which makes the best use of available resources.

Shared Services are being progressed in the context of the overall reform plan for the sector.

### 3.3. Shared Services

The Department provides a number of back-office services for primary, voluntary secondary and community and comprehensive schools including Payroll, HR and pensions administration. These operations have been baselined and have been shown to be comparatively highly efficient. The services provided to schools by the Department are outlined in more detail in the next section.

In addition, the Department has provided a payroll service for a number of its agencies but generally they operate their own back office functions involving a variety of models including outsourcing ICT support, Internal Audit and payroll.
3.4. Shared Services Plan 2014 - 2016

Civil service shared service projects
The Department and a number of agencies (see Appendix 2) are in scope for Civil Service led shared services projects for payroll, HR, Financial Management and Learning & Development.

Shared services for agencies
As part of this Shared Services Plan, in Q1 2015, the Department will scope the feasibility of implementing shared service solutions for the back-office functions of agencies that are not in scope for civil service led projects. In that regard, account will be taken of the Service Catalogue which is currently being developed by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) and is due be available in the early part of 2014. We will also seek to build on the work that has already been undertaken by the Education Agencies Shared Services Group in recent years.

Procurement Reform Programme
The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) is a major new shared service which impacts on the entire public service including the education and training sector. Under the OGP, an estimated six billion of procurement spend will move to being sourced and tendered centrally, either by OGP itself, or by sector led organisations which will procure specific categories of products and services on behalf of the entire public sector. The education sector led category is outlined under section 6.3 of this report.

Knowledge Management
The Department established a Data Advisory Group in September 2013 to advise the Department and its agencies on the standardisation of the approach to data collection, storage and sharing of data within the further education and training and higher education sectors. The Group is also maintaining a focus on data sharing with other Government agencies and the Department of Social Protection is represented on the Group. The first priority of the Group is to agree the common minimum individual dataset to be collected by all agencies. Draft datasets have been circulated and discussed and this work will be completed by Q2 2014. In addition, the Department is establishing a Knowledge Management and Analysis Unit to maximize the value of data held by the Department, including the primary and post primary databases and to evaluate data held by the Inspectorate. We are also seeking to enhance our analytical and research resources to support Divisions and Agencies and ensure that policy development is evidence informed and objectives led. A scoping exercise is currently underway. This work will underpin the development of related shared services across the sector.
**Continuous Improvement for Shared Services**
The Department’s Shared Services Adviser will lead on the development of scorecards and other tools for management reporting and continuous improvement.

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4. Schools sector

4.1. Introduction and context

In terms of the broader policy for the schools sector, significant reforms are currently underway to ensure that the nature of teaching and learning in our schools is better adapted to needs of all students into the future. The universal provision of pre-school education will now be supported by an increasing focus on the quality of that provision, and the outcomes being delivered.

A multifaceted and coordinated approach to school improvement and better student outcomes is being pursued across teacher education, curriculum, and school assessment reforms. The professional teacher development is being advanced to standards comparable with leading economies with 19 providers being rationalized to create six centres of excellence.

4.2. Operating environment

The school sector in Ireland is made up of over 4,000 primary and second level schools, the majority of which are privately owned and managed by voluntary boards of management. In the region of 20,000 volunteers serve on primary school boards of management at any one time. These volunteers carry out a range of functions related to the day-to-day operations of their schools.

Schools, like all other publicly funded bodies, have been impacted by the required reductions in funding in recent years, although the treatment has been more favourable than many other areas of the public sector. In some areas, schools are also dealing with the added pressure of increasing demand for school places. Enrolment in schools is expected to grow by almost 70,000 between now and 2018. Enrolments are likely to continue to increase towards a peak of 990,000 pupils by 2024.

4.3. Shared services in the schools sector

Service delivery models with attributes of shared services solutions are a well-established feature of the schools sector in Ireland. Such services are generally provided by the following bodies:

- School Management bodies and Patrons
- Education and Training Boards
- Department of Education and Skills
- HEAnet
- Professional Development Service for Teachers
School Management Bodies
The school management representative bodies provide advice and support services to schools on a range of issues including HR, legal and procurement. Along with the Department’s External Staff Relations Unit, the school management bodies negotiate on behalf of their schools on IR related issues. The Department is currently working with these bodies on a number of initiatives to increase the use of centralised procurement to support schools to manage within reducing budget allocations.

Department of Education and Skills

Payroll / HR
The Department is responsible for the payment of salaries and pensions to teaching and nonteaching staff who are, or were, employed in primary, secondary and Community and Comprehensive schools. The Department pays over 95,000 serving and retired teaching and non-teaching staff on behalf of the managerial authorities of schools on a fortnightly basis. This involves 2.4 million transactions per annum. 99.9% of staff paid on the payroll are paid by Electronic Fund Transfer. The Department’s payroll operations were baselined in 2012 and have been proven to be highly efficient.

The Employee Assistance Service and Occupational Health Service for teachers and SNAs have been outsourced to private providers.

Pensions
Pensions Unit based in Athlone administers the pension schemes of teachers, special needs assistants and certain other employees in primary, secondary, community and comprehensive schools, who are members of a public service pension scheme and whose salary is paid through Department of Education and Skills payroll system. Some processes have been computerised but much of the work of checking service history for school staff is done manually by checking paper files. The consolidation of pension’s administration for the sector would provide consistency, efficiencies and more effective use of resources.

The Pensions Unit also provides advice on pension schemes and has a regulatory role in respect of pensions in VECs, Institutes of Technology (IoT), Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), Universities, Colleges of Education and the agencies/bodies under the aegis of the Department.
Shared ICT services
Since 1998, the Department has actively pursued the integration of ICT into teaching and learning and the development of pupils' digital literacy, primarily through its ICT in Schools programme. This Programme has focused on four key areas:

- The provision of essential ICT infrastructure within schools
- The provision of access to broadband connectivity to schools
- Continuous professional development for teachers in ICT
- Integrating ICT within the curriculum and providing curriculum-relevant digital content and software.

Since 2005, as part of the Broadband for Schools Programme, HEAnet has acted as network manager of a centralised Schools Network that connects all Irish primary and post-primary schools to the general Internet and other global Education Networks. Under the Broadband for Schools Programme HEAnet also offer schools a portfolio of network services including: network management & monitoring; IP address management; security & filtering of content; in addition to web hosting and blog services. HEAnet also configure and remotely manage the router located at each school. Schools are required to sign-up to specific levels of content filtering as prescribed by the DES. HEAnet provide a dedicated Schools Network Operations Centre (NOC) which delivers technical support. A first-line Schools Broadband Service Desk is also provided. HEAnet is also leading on the rollout of high speed broadband to all second level schools which is due to be completed in 2014. These school connectivity programmes are leveraging the HEAnet National Backbone with school connections being interconnected at regional Higher Education Institutions (HEI) campus locations.

In terms of shared systems, as well as the payroll, HR and pensions systems, the Department of Education and Skills has recently developed a new system called the Post Primary Online Database (P-POD). The P-POD system is a central database for student and some school data which is hosted by the Department. Post-primary schools are able to access the system using the Department's Esinet secure portal to maintain their students' data. From October 2014, all post-primary schools will be required to make their returns of students known as the October Returns via P-POD. The October Returns data is used in the allocation of teaching posts and funding to schools. Details of entrants for the state examinations provided through the October Returns are shared with the State Examinations Commission. A Primary Online Database (POD) is also being developed to enable the collation of individual pupil data at primary level.
On 02 December 2013, Minister Quinn announced a public consultation process on the use of technology in teaching and learning in primary and post primary schools. It is envisaged that the outcomes of this process will help inform policy making in this area. A Strategy Development Group has been established to draft a new Digital Strategy for Schools. In addition to this public consultation process, the group will consult widely and draw on research from Ireland and abroad.

**Planning and Building**

The Department’s Planning and Building Unit is responsible for identifying the need for school accommodation, setting out the technical specifications for educational buildings, ensuring that standards are maintained, prioritising the allocation of resources and overseeing the delivery of the capital programme for schools and higher education institutions.

**4.4. Shared services plan 2014 - 2016**

A number of priority projects which relate to the schools sector have been identified for progression over the period of this shared services plan. These are:

- The Department is rolling out a new Post Primary Online Database (P-POD) to all second level schools. The database is being pre-populated with existing data held by the Department and went live in Q3 2013. Schools will submit pupil data through P-POD from Q3 2014. In 2015, the Department in consultation with schools and other agencies in the education and training sector will examine additional requirements which P-POD may be able to provide to reduce the administration burden on schools and enhance the quality of data available to schools.

- The Department is also working on a new Primary Online Database (POD) which will enable schools to submit individual primary pupil data for the first time. POD will be piloted in Q2 2014 and full rollout is planned for Q3 2015.

- Continued rollout of high speed broadband to second level schools.

- Development of a Digital Strategy for Schools.

- Work is currently underway to establish a Schools Procurement Unit (SPU) in Q1 2014 to support the coordination and aggregation of procurement across primary, voluntary secondary and community and comprehensive schools. The SPU will be focused on improving procurement practices in schools, encouraging schools to use central procurement frameworks and contracts put in place by the OGP and sectoral procurement functions where appropriate and achieve value for money in the
procurement of goods and services. The SPU will serve on Category Councils and Category Sourcing Teams established by the OGP as required.

- As part of the cost benefit analysis for a payroll shared service for Education and Training Boards, which will commence in Q1 2014, a review of DES Athlone Payroll Division will be undertaken.

- Schools already benefit from a shared Pension administration function and retired teacher payroll which are both based in DES Athlone. The Pensions function in Athlone will be included in a baselining project, scheduled to commence in Q1 2015, and potentially a business case (Q2 2015), for a pensions shared service for the education and training sector as a whole.

- We will continue to assess the potential for centres of excellence to support the operation of the schools sector.
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5. SOLAS and Education and Training Boards

5.1. Introduction and context

Unlike many other OECD countries further education and training (FET) have developed as a twin-track system in Ireland. Programmes have grown organically and in an uncoordinated way over a number of decades. FET programmes have traditionally been provided by many different organisations – FÁS, Vocational Education Committees (VECs), community groups, secondary schools, private bodies etc.

This approach has meant that the FET sector has not realised its full potential as part of both our educational and economic strategies. A major programme of reform is now underway to ensure that FET can play a more dynamic and coherent role to ensure that learners are given educational and training support to progress, whether to employment or other education and training.

5.2. Structural change

Establishment of Education and Training Boards

In July 2013, underpinned by the most significant programme of legislative reform since their establishment in the 1930s, thirty three Vocational Education Committees (VECs) were rationalised and replaced by sixteen Education and Training Boards (ETBs). The ETBs will have an expanded role in delivering an integrated system of further education and training.

In addition, the VECs had a significant role in supporting the delivery of second level education, through the schools they manage in their areas. In recent years, the VECs have also been tasked with taking an active role in the delivery of primary education through the establishment of a number of Community National Schools. This role is set to expand in the coming years. ETBs will continue to deliver these important services to their local communities.

Establishment of SOLAS

In October 2013, Minister Quinn signed a Statutory Order for the establishment of the new further education and training authority, SOLAS. SOLAS will operate under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills. FÁS has now been disbanded and work is underway to transfer the FÁS Training Division to the ETBs. This transfer is scheduled for completion in 2014.
SOLAS, in partnership with the sixteen ETBs, will be responsible for the integration, coordination and funding of the wide range of training and further education programmes involving some 270,000 places available across the sector. SOLAS will not deliver programmes itself – once the restructuring is complete, its key function will be to provide strategic oversight and funding to ETBs. In turn, the ETBs will have responsibility for managing training contracted to private, public and not-for-profit providers, in their catchment areas, to complement and enhance their own provision. The Department will work closely with SOLAS in exploring the options for Shared Services within the sector.

**Further Education and Training Sector**

One of the primary reasons for the restructuring of the FET sector is to contribute more effectively to tackling the high levels of unemployment, especially of a long term nature. A new integrated employment and support service entitled ‘Intreo’ has been introduced, which is being managed by the Department of Social Protection. The services and supports involved were previously provided by three distinct State services.

SOLAS and the ETBs will require strong links with Intreo at national and local level. This will help to ensure that education and training opportunities are closely aligned with the needs of the unemployed and national goals and priorities, supported by robust advice and systems.

In parallel, SOLAS is commencing work on the development of a national five year strategy for further education and training. Delivering services on a shared service basis will underpin the implementation of that strategy and will promote a consistent approach to delivering quality services across the sector. Over time, they will also ensure that the right data on outputs and outcomes is collected so as to facilitate better evidence-based policy decisions.

**5.3. Operating environment**

In terms of the overall operating environment, it is clear from the previous section that Government policy is focused on the need for cooperation, collaboration and coordination between SOLAS, Intreo and ETBs to ensure that appropriate services are delivered. This overall policy framework will support the implementation of shared services across the sector. ETB schools must also link in effectively to the wider schools sector.

Both SOLAS and ETBs are required to operate with reducing budget allocations and reducing staff numbers. The restructuring of the FET sector provides an opportunity to reconfigure the delivery of services and other functions to ensure that we avoid unnecessary duplication and inefficient use of scarce resources.
5.4. **Shared services in the further education and training sector**

At present, the representative body, Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) provides some services to ETBs and these relate mostly to procurement, some legal, HR and IR issues. ETBs themselves provide services to their schools and these vary from ETB to ETB but can include financial management, HR, payroll and ICT.

FÁS had a number of centralised supports for training centres in place and a number of these will continue to be provided by SOLAS for an interim period. This includes procurement, finance systems and ICT functions. There are also shared arrangements between training centres for certain functions.

In addition, a number of the former VECs had joined together to put in place a managed service for a financial management system.

5.5. **Shared services plan for 2014 - 2016**

We have identified a number of priority areas for progression over the course of this plan:

**Payroll Shared Service for Education and Training Boards**

We have commenced work on the development of a cost benefit analysis and implementation roadmap for a payroll shared services in the ETB sector and this is scheduled for completion in Q1 2014. As part of this work, a review will be carried out of the DES Payroll Division in Athlone.

**Payroll Managed Service for five Education and Training Boards**

Five ETBs will have their payrolls moved to an externally hosted Corepay Managed Service in 2014. This project along with the cost benefit analysis project will contribute significantly to the planning and development for payroll shared services across the sector into the future.

**Further Education and Training Data**

There is a critical need to improve the availability of detailed information on the involvement and experience of learners accessing further education and training interventions. SOLAS are working on three elements of a new data system to connect ETBs, SOLAS and Intreo Offices including a national course database, a national course calendar and a national learner database. SOLAS is progressing these projects in collaboration with a representative group of departments and other stakeholders. The first two elements will be completed in 2014.
Financial Management
There are a variety of financial management systems in place in the ETBs, the training centres transferring to the ETBs and SOLAS. As a first step we will baseline the existing financial management landscape in Q2 2014, covering financial and non-financial performance and ICT provision. Subject to the results of the baselining we will proceed to develop a full business case for a financial management shared service in Q3 2014. As part of this work, we will consider the potential to use the new Cloud Service Catalogue being developed by the OGCIO.

Procurement
Representatives of the ETB sector are actively contributing to the establishment of the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) and the work of Category Councils as well as continuing to coordinate and progress procurement initiatives across the ETB sector. This work will continue in 2014.

Information Technology
There is no overarching information technology strategy or plan for the ETB / SOLAS sector and we will seek to address this commencing Q2 2014 with the development of an ICT strategy in consultation with relevant stakeholders. As part of the development of the strategy we will examine the potential to use the new Cloud Service Catalogue being developed by the OGCIO. HEAnet are also planning to provide cloud services for the Education & Research sector in 2014.

Student admissions and registration
There are a number of systems in operation for the processing of student admissions and registration in further education and training. FÁS had developed tracking systems for learners attending training courses and these systems will continue to be used by the training centres following transfer to the ETBs. In addition, the Momentum initiative, which includes further education and training courses, uses an online application system similar to that used for initiatives in the higher education sector. There is potential scope to examine the various admissions systems across the FET and Higher Education sectors (including the system used for the Springboard programme) with a view to leveraging, sharing or developing existing online systems to maximise efficiencies. It is intended to commence work on baselining in Q3 2015.
Learning and Development
Staff training is emerging as an issue of concern across the sector particularly in light of the extensive restructuring programme that is underway. There are a variety of common training needs across the sector including Health and Safety, PMDS and good practice in HR. We will examine options for the future design and delivery of Learning and Development for the sector in Q3 2015.

Quality Assurance
There are a range of internal and external drivers for ETBs quality assurance systems as they relate to further education and training. QA is a possible area where shared services could benefit the learner and the sector. Areas for consideration include:

- Quality Enhancement initiatives including best practise guidelines and codes of practice;
- Programme (course/curriculum) development (national and shared programmes);
- Quality assuring assessment (external authentication);
- Quality of teaching and learning, sharing best practise (upskilling/in service);
- Support for the introduction of new curricula (development, delivery, assessment);
- Appeals mechanism and Certification.

Existing Quality Assurance functions will be baselined in Q1 2015 and subject to positive findings a business case will be developed in Q2 2015.

Legal Services
ETBI currently provides some legal advice service for ETBs in the area of employment law in particular. We are also aware that the OGP are also pursuing the centralised procurement of legal services as part of its work. In that context, we will seek to examine the requirements for legal services for the sector in Q2 2015.

Continuous Improvement
In the context of Shared Services continuous improvement, other services provided in and required by the ETB sector will be considered with a view to establishing the optimal structure for service provision within the sector and additional projects may be identified for progression as the reform programme progresses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transactional Shared Services</th>
<th>Centres of Excellence</th>
<th>Shared Technology and Enablers</th>
<th>Shared Procurement Initiatives</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of Corepay Managed Payroll Service – Stabilising payroll for 5 ETBs</td>
<td>Legal Services shared service baseline and business case.</td>
<td>ICT Strategy for Education and Training Boards</td>
<td>Participation in the Procurement Reform Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Benefit Analysis and Implementation Road Map for Payroll Shared Service for ETBs (including review of DES Athlone Payroll Division)</td>
<td>Quality Assurance for Further Education and Training courses baseline and business case</td>
<td>Development of a national course database, a national course calendar and a national learner database for the Further Education and Training sector</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Shared Service - baseline &amp; business case</td>
<td>Learning and Development shared service baseline and business case</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensions functions will be considered as part of baseline and business case for a pension shared service for the education and training sector</td>
<td>Student applications and admissions for all full time and part time students will be assessed across FET and Higher Education</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Higher Education sector

6.1. Introduction and context

This shared services plan is being developed at a time of significant change in the higher education sector in Ireland. The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030\(^1\), published in 2011, will see significant change in Ireland’s higher education sector over the next two decades, including system reconfiguration, structural change and inter-institution collaboration.

The National Strategy provides for much greater collaboration between higher education institutions at regional level, including eliminating unnecessary duplication, maximising opportunities for collaborations to enhance quality of provision, improving coherence and flexibility of provision. In addition, the Strategy also notes that “There is considerable scope for shared services across higher education and a more systematic use of shared services could help to improve efficiency and reduce costs.”

Implementation of the Strategy is well underway and a new System Performance Framework for the period 2014 – 2016 is now being put in place by the HEA based on key system objectives and indicators noted by Government. The purpose of the framework is to articulate government expectations across higher education and to hold the system accountable for delivery of national priorities.

Within the performance framework, a specific system objective has been included focusing on funding and public sector reform indicators. Related monitoring indicators directly relevant to public service reform refer to shared services, external service delivery, centralised procurement and property management.

Shared services, external service delivery and procurement are identified as enablers for the overall objectives for the higher education sector including the work on future funding policy for the sector.

\(^1\) http://www.hea.ie/sites/default/files/national_strategy_for_higher_education_2030.pdf
6.2. Operating Environment

The marketplace for higher education is now global and covers competition for students in an institution’s home country and for international students, research funding and various other funding streams including philanthropic donations.

The performance of higher education institutions are measured and reported worldwide. Despite widely held reservations about these rankings they have significant currency in the marketplace and can genuinely impact on an institution’s ability to attract students and staff. The challenges presented by increasing competition are augmented by the changed funding environment and the structural changes within the sector.

Between 2007/08 and 2012/13 whole-time equivalent student numbers increased by over 24,000 or 15% and are projected to increase by a further 9,000 by 2015/16 based on DES/ESRI projections— a total increase of 33,000 or 21%, while over the same period staff numbers declined by 1,900 or 10%. While overall staff numbers have declined by over 10%, HEIs have as far as possible minimised reductions to academic or front line staff numbers. Over the period academic staff numbers have declined by c.9% and non-academic staff have declined by c. 13%.

Between 2007/08 and 2010/11 the overall break-down of Exchequer versus non-Exchequer funding across the sector has moved from 73% Exchequer to 67% Exchequer 2. This percentage will have decreased further in the last two years. These proportions in some of the universities are now close to 50/50, Exchequer/non-Exchequer.

HEI’s acknowledge that these challenges should also motivate institutions to examine the best opportunities to reduce the cost and increase the efficiency of delivering ‘commodity services’ e.g. those services that are not considered to differentiate them from their peers or provide competitive advantage. In that context, Shared Service initiatives can help HEIs to redirect resources to their core functions and mission and provide quality services to students and staff.

2 These proportions relate to the combined university and IoT sectors.
6.3. Shared services in the Higher Education sector

Although there is competition between institutions for student recruitment, staff recruitment and for research and other funding, the higher education sector in Ireland has a strong tradition of collaborating and sharing resources. Large scale examples of existing initiatives include:-

- The Central Applications Office (CAO), established in 1976, which now processes nearly 80,000 applications for over 1,300 undergraduate courses at NFQ levels 6, 7 & 8 in 45 higher education institutions.

- HEAnet, established by the universities in 1983, provides internet and network services for over 65 clients across the wider Education and Skills sector, at least 40 of whom are participating institutions in the higher education sector. HEAnet also provides internet connectivity services to all primary and second level schools in Ireland.

- An Chéim, established in 2000, procures and supports management information systems for Institutes of Technology e.g. IT applications related to students, library, finance, timetabling and HR/Payroll.

- The Education Procurement Service (EPS), established in 2008, has expanded from providing procurement services for four higher education institutions to twelve in 2013 with a further seven HEI’s currently in the process of transitioning to EPS. The EPS is now being reconfigured by the sector as the procurement hub for the education and training sector as part of the Government’s Public Procurement Reform Plan.

- SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland), is the single Awarding Authority for all student grant applications in Ireland. City of Dublin Education and Training Board operates SUSI on a national basis and replaces the service previously run by 33 different VEC’s and 33 different local authorities. It is a comprehensive source of information on student grant schemes and provides a handy step-by-step guide to eligibility and the grants process. The online application system provides students a quick, user friendly way to apply for grants. SUSI is managed under a Management Framework Agreement with strict Performance Measurement Metrics. This initiative is now meeting its Key Performance Indicators and it may be possible to broaden its scope and build on its success under the Shared Services mandate from Government. This experience holds out valuable lessons for other major reform projects and it is important that this learning is captured in a systematic way. The Department now proposes to identify and disseminate this learning in a structured way in 2014.

A list of other shared services in the higher education sector is provided at Appendix 1.

As noted in the previous section, there is an extensive range of shared services and sharing of resources across the Higher Education sector which provides a strong base for the further development of shared services in both the Higher Education sector and the wider Education and Training sector. All existing initiatives will be considered with a view to further developing their scope of service should the business case support such an initiative.

In addition, relatively recent work on shared services in the university sector has indicated that universities are operating on a lean basis as regards headcount however as regards best practice the study found variations across the sector. In response to the findings the institutions have agreed that there should be concerted action to adopt a more structured approach to sharing experience and where possible harmonising business systems and processes in the interests of improving quality and saving money.

The baselining and assessment of traditional Shared Services initiatives (payroll, HR, training and research etc.) on a whole of sector basis will take place in the context of different structural configurations now emerging and against the backdrop of the other challenges facing the sector.

The following shared service projects are underway or will be prioritised over the period of this plan:

**Education Procurement Service**

The Education Procurement Service (EPS) will become the Education and Training Sector led procurement shared service hub as part of the establishment of the Office of Government Procurement. EPS will be the lead procurer for research laboratory and diagnostic equipment and veterinary and agriculture supplies on behalf of the entire public service. The establishment and resourcing of the EPS in this context will be delivered in 2014.

**Finance**

The university Finance Directors have developed a comprehensive plan for moving progressively to shared leading practice in respect of financial management services. The plan includes:

- a review of leading practice opportunities (across the full range of finance sub-activities)
- sharing of leading practice within the sector (through workshops)

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3 IUA commissioned Bearing Point Shared Services Review – April 2013
- piloting procure to pay initiatives for E-catalogues / marketplace portals, E-invoicing and invoice capturing technologies (OCR/scanning etc.)
- a review of all planned finance system/process developments across universities with a view to deepening collaboration.
- pursuing initiatives with research funding agencies in relation to a more co-ordinated and streamlined approach to audit, reporting and accountability requirements associated with research grant funding (note this is not something the sector can drive itself alone and requires buy-in from funding agencies which has been difficult to achieve to date. An initiative is currently being pursued with SFI & HRB which it is hoped will become a pilot that could be rolled out to all funding agencies).

In the Institutes of Technology sector, financial systems are already delivered on a shared technology platform. There is also standardisation across some business processes and documentation including internal and external audit, funding, reporting, budgetary processes and other initiatives undertaken in cooperation with the HEA.

**Financial Management Shared Services**

It is intended as part of this shared services plan to conduct a baselining of financial management services across the Universities and Institutes of Technology in Q1 2015 and subject to positive findings from baselining, proceed to the development of a business case for financial management shared services in Q2 2015.

**HR and Payroll**

(a) University e.recruitment system

Under the aegis of the IUA HR Directors Group (HRDG) the universities have been developing and testing a new e.recruitment system. Such a system is necessary to streamline the advertising of university vacancies and present a unified face to the market for global talent. It is the intention that all vacancies for both academic and non-academic positions will be advertised on the new platform – www.universityvacancies.com. Work is underway and the system will go live by the end of year with a formal launch in March 2014. A review will be conducted after the first year of operation to determine potential for expansion to other institutions.

(b) HR / Payroll shared services

Universities are maximising employee self-service opportunities and a more harmonised approach to engagement with the service provider (CORE) with a view to moving all institutions to a common version platform and securing improved services and pricing from the provider. This engagement has already commenced. Thirteen IoTs use a common version of CoreHR which is hosted on a managed service provided through An Chéim. We will baseline
HR and payroll operations across the HEIs in Q2 2014 and subject to positive findings we will proceed to develop a business case in Q3 2014.

(c) **Workload allocation**
The HEA is currently undertaking a review of existing practices in HEIs in relation to the operation of workload allocation models. The outcome of this review should inform further development in this area.

(d) **Pensions**
Pensions functions will be considered as part of baselining and business case for a pension shared service for the education and training sector.

**International Student Recruitment**
The IUA International Education Office will pilot the roll out of the CSF Irlanda central applications and placement system into other key international education markets including the Middle East and Malaysia. The system will go live in Q1 2014 and will be rolled out to the US market by end Q1 2014. Subsequent rollouts will be assessed post March 2014. This application system is used by all universities, IoTs, DIT and a number of private colleges.

**Researcher Recruitment**
A working group established under the IUA International Education Office has been established to upgrade and improve the current PhD/Science Without Borders section on the Irish Euraxess portal. This portal allows individuals to search and apply for research jobs in Ireland and also provides information on admission requirements for Doctoral Programmes. The official launch of the section is expected in Q1 2014. This service is used by all Universities, 13 Institutes of Technology, Dublin Institute of Technology, Griffith College Dublin, Dublin Business School and National College of Ireland.

**National Forum for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning**
The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* identifies key objectives for the advancement of the teaching mission at institutional and sectoral levels. The establishment of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning provides the key, system-level infrastructure for the support of the implementation of the *National Strategy* in respect of the teaching mission of higher education. The forum will lead on the benchmarking and development of national frameworks for digital capacity for e-learning and distance learning and professional development for the Higher Education sector in 2014.

**Sharing of Learning Resources**
Academic Libraries Co-operating in Ireland (ALCID) scheme currently allows postgraduate students access to reading rights in other institutional libraries – see Appendix 1 for further
details. A scoping exercise is proposed to consider how this scheme might be extended to undergraduate students and work on this will commence in Q1 2014.

**Online systems for the support and administration of volunteering programmes**
In support of their mission to engage with the community and to support students in the transition to work through work placement and service learning, there has been an increase in HEI’s developing volunteer programmes and both internal and external volunteering opportunities. These developments have created a requirement to be able to develop online systems to support and manage the administration of volunteering programmes. Campus Engage is now coordinating the development of a cost effective, regionally focused, universal national system for all HEIs and rollout will be completed by Q3 2015. Opportunities for this Campus Engage initiative to be closely linked (including at a technical level) with the portals of bodies such as Volunteering Ireland are currently under examination.

**Student applications and admissions**
There are a number of systems in operation for the processing of student admissions and registration in higher education which include:

- the CAO which processes applications for undergraduate programmes for 45 HEIs.
- the Post Graduate Applications Office which processes applications for a number of universities and Institutes of Technology.
- a shared online application system which has been used to process applications for over 15,000 participants on part-time/flexible higher education courses via Springboard and the ICT skills conversion initiative.

As noted earlier, there is potential scope to examine the various admissions systems across the FET and Higher Education sectors with a view to leveraging, sharing or developing existing online systems to maximise efficiencies. It is intended to commence work on baselining in Q3 2015.

**Research infrastructure**
The HEA recently approved and circulated guidelines to govern access to items of research infrastructure hosted within publicly funded institutions. The policy includes existing infrastructure supported wholly or in part by Exchequer resources, which should be available for use by other researchers regardless of which Higher Education Institution (HEI) or other research body hosts it. As part of this shared services plan, the HEA will scope the requirement for a centralised access model to ensure timely access to research infrastructure and to maximise the use of existing infrastructure while at the same time seeking to address the costs associated with the use of these resources.
Information Technology

Many HEIs have relatively complex IT requirements with a range of specialist IT services required by different groups of students and staff particularly in relation to research. Institutions have to provide end-user services to thousands of users over a variety of delivery channels. Larger institutions tend to have economies of scale and resources to manage services given the number of students and staff that they have. Smaller institutions have to spread the costs of similar services over a smaller number of staff and students. This would appear to suggest there may be opportunities for sharing or outsourcing of some services.

The University IT Directors have agreed a collaborative framework to guide future developments in the sector. This framework will ensure that future ICT developments will be objectively assessed to determine if initiatives can be progressed on a collaborative basis thereby avoiding duplication of effort and cost, and ensuring where it makes strategic sense to do so that there is commonality and standardisation across universities. Collaboration options will include sharing of research into technologies, identification of best practice, shared procurement and full shared services (across specific groups or clusters, the sector or indeed the wider public sector). HEAnet would expect to participate in this framework as required, underpinning new services with the pre-existing shared network & services. In addition, the IT Director’s group will review future strategic investments in IT, for example, e.learning with a view to ensuring a collective approach in the design and specification of these systems. We will seek to leverage the existing ICT infrastructure in place across the higher education sector in all future shared service developments.

We will seek to build a consolidated ICT infrastructure which will support the implementation of shared services on a sector wide basis and also support the standardisation and rationalisation of existing ICT systems over time. In addition, we will seek to leverage the existing ICT infrastructure in place across the higher education sector in all future shared service developments for the Education and Training sector where this is supported by a robust business case.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Shared Technology and Enablers</th>
<th>Shared Procurement Initiatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline and business case for HR &amp; Payroll Operations for HEIs (including review of ICT infrastructure)</td>
<td>National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>International Student Recruitment for HEIs</td>
<td>Reconfiguration of Education Procurement Service as sectoral sourcing hub and participation in Procurement Reform Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Shared Service baseline and business case</td>
<td>Learning and Development for HEIs</td>
<td>Researcher Recruitment for HEIs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pensions functions will be considered as part of baselining and business case for a pension shared service for the education and training sector</td>
<td>Recruitment system for HEIs</td>
<td>Online system for the administration of volunteering programmes in HEIs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to Research Infrastructure in HEIs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing of learning resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assess the future potential of existing initiatives in the new Shared Services Landscape (eg. SUSI)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leveraging existing ICT infrastructure in all future shared service developments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time and part-time Student Applications and Admissions will be assessed across FET and Higher Education</td>
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### Education and Training sector wide initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Proposed Actions</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Estimated Investment Required</th>
<th>Expected Benefit/Saving</th>
<th>Senior Responsible Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Procurement**| - Onboard 7 new partners to EPS and finalising work plan for 2014.  
- EPS will procure research laboratory and diagnostic equipment on behalf of the entire public service. The establishment and resourcing of the EPS in this context will be delivered in 2014.  
- Nominees from the sector will serve on Category Councils established by OGP.  
- Coordination of procurement reform for the ETB / SOLAS sector  
- Establish Schools Procurement Unit. | Underway   | Q1 2014         | €75,000 set up costs €250,000 recurrent costs | - Target to achieve €500 million savings from the entire Procurement Reform Programme. | Ruth Carmody                |

- Detailed spend data not available for schools but recent electricity competition for approx. 1,700 schools has potential to yield €1 million on existing annual costs.  
- Improved procurement practices in schools.  
- Increase in centralised procurement for schools.
### Pensions Shared Service

- Baselining of pensions functions across the education and training sector (excluding the Single Public Service Pension Scheme which should be administered on a public sector wide basis)
- Subject to positive findings from baselining, proceed to development of business case for pension administration for the sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Q1 2015</th>
<th>Q1 2015</th>
<th>Subject to Business Case</th>
<th>Subject to Business Case but should include:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q2 2015</td>
<td>Q2 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Improved pension administration</td>
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<td>• Reduction in court cases being defended</td>
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Pat Burke
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<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Proposed Actions</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Estimated Investment Required</th>
<th>Expected Benefit/Saving</th>
<th>Senior Responsible Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participate in Civil Service led HR Shared Service</td>
<td>DES and SEC to migrate to Peoplepoint.</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>Q2 2014</td>
<td>Led by D/PER</td>
<td>Staff and IT savings arising from common process and technology platforms. Streamlined services for staff.</td>
<td>Michael Keogh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in Civil Service led Payroll Shared Service</td>
<td>DES and SEC staff payroll, including T&amp;S, to migrate to shared payroll services hub in D/Finance Tullamore.</td>
<td>Q2 2014</td>
<td>Q3 2014</td>
<td>Led by D/PER</td>
<td>Staff and IT savings arising from common process and technology platforms. Streamlined services for staff.</td>
<td>Michael Keogh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in Civil Service led Financial Management Shared Service</td>
<td>DES, SEC and NCSE financial management systems (FMS) to migrate to shared FMS hub.</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>By end Quarter 3 2018.</td>
<td>Led by D/PER</td>
<td>Staff and IT savings arising from common process and technology platforms. Less IT-related risk. Improved and modernised financial processing, management and reporting systems.</td>
<td>Michael Keogh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in Civil Service led Learning and Development Shared Service</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>Led by D/PER</td>
<td>Subject to business case</td>
<td>Michael Keogh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Shared Services for DES agencies outside the scope of Civil Service led shared service projects | • Baseline existing back office functions in relevant agencies.  
• Subject to positive findings from baselining, proceed to develop business case for shared corporate service for agencies. | Q1 2015 | Q1 2015 | Subject to business case | Subject to business case | Ruth Carmody |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department and agencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Establish Knowledge Management and Analysis Unit</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Complete scoping exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To maximize the value of data held by the Department, including the primary and post primary databases and to evaluate data held by the Inspectorate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We are also seeking to enhance our analytical and research resources to support Divisions and Agencies and ensure that policy development is evidence informed and objectives led.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Carmody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
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<td>------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Post Primary Online Database (P-POD) | • Pre-population of P-POD database by DES.  
• P-POD go live to all second level schools.  
• Second level schools submit pupil data through P-POD.  
• The Department in consultation with schools and other agencies in the education sector will examine additional requirements which P-POD may be able to provide to reduce the administration burden on schools and enhance the quality of data available to schools. | Q3 2013  
Q4 2013  
Q3 2014  
Q1 2015 | Q4 2013  
Q4 2014 | Cost to develop €575K (€320K - 2012 & €255K - 2013) | • Allows for the secure transfer of data to the Department and State Examinations purposes.  
• The information will be ‘live’ and will allow for data to be updated throughout the year. | Martin Haney  
Michael Keogh |
| Primary Online Database (POD) | • Pilot POD will be piloted in selected schools Q2 2014.  
• Full rollout of POD to over 3,000 primary schools. | Q2 2014  
Q3 2015 | | Estimated development cost €250K approx.  
Spend to date (€65K - 2013 & €25K to date in 2014) | • The information will be ‘live’ and will allow for data to be updated throughout the year.  
• The National School Annual Census forms will no longer have to be completed and returned to the Department.  
• Schools will also be able to use POD as a management information system. | Ruth Carmody  
Michael Keogh |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>We will continue to assess the potential for centres of excellence to support the operation of the schools sector</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consult with relevant stakeholders on scope and requirement for new centres of excellence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Subject to positive findings from consultation, assess feasibility of establishing at least one new centre of excellence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **High speed broadband to second level schools.** |
| • Completion of rollout of high speed broadband to second level schools. |
| Ongoing | Q4 2014 | The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) is funding all of the capital costs of this project, estimated to be approximately €11m, as well as contributing some €10m in current costs for the years 2012 to 2015. The Department of Education & Skills (DES) will fund the remaining current costs (estimated to be some €20m up to 2015). DES will also fund the on-going costs on an annual basis into the future. |
| Will enable teachers and students to use ICT in the learning and teaching process; to share and collaborate online; to use video conferencing, Skype and other online communications tools. | DES, D/CENR, Heanet |
### SOLAS and Education and Training Boards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Proposed Actions</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Estimated Investment Required</th>
<th>Expected Benefit/Saving</th>
<th>Senior Responsible Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Payroll stabilisation project for 5 ETBs</td>
<td>• Establish Corepay Managed Service for 5 ETBs.</td>
<td>Q4 2013</td>
<td>Q3 2014</td>
<td>€338,250 implementation costs 2013/14</td>
<td>Reduction of business risk as current solutions not stable or fit for purpose</td>
<td>Ruth Carmody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payroll Shared Service</td>
<td>• Establish Payroll Project Team to lead on payroll shared service.</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>Q1 2014</td>
<td>Subject to business case</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ruth Carmody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Development of a cost benefit analysis and implementation road map for a payroll shared service.</td>
<td>Q1 2014</td>
<td>Q2 2014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Development of a national course database which will provide a repository of FET programmes.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Q4 2014</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>There is a critical need to improve the availability of detailed information on the involvement and experience of learners accessing further education and training interventions.</td>
<td>Peter Baldwin, Paul O’Toole (SOLAS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Development of a national course calendar which will provide current information on scheduled FET programmes.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establish national learner database.</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Education and Training Data</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Q4 2014</td>
<td>Q4 2014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## SOLAS and Education and Training Boards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Management</th>
<th>• Baseline existing Financial Management functions.</th>
<th>Q2 2014</th>
<th>Q2 2014</th>
<th>Subject to business case</th>
<th>Subject to business case</th>
<th>Ruth Carmody</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Subject to positive findings from baselining, proceed to development of business case for a Financial Management shared service for the sector.</td>
<td>Q3 2014</td>
<td>Q3 2014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Development</td>
<td>• Baseline existing Learning and Development functions.</td>
<td>Q3 2015</td>
<td>Q3 2015</td>
<td>Subject to business case</td>
<td>Subject to business case</td>
<td>Ruth Carmody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Subject to positive findings from baselining, proceed to development of business case for Learning and Development shared service for the sector.</td>
<td>Q4 2015</td>
<td>Q4 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
<td>• Baseline existing Quality Assurance functions for FET.</td>
<td>Q1 2015</td>
<td>Q1 2015</td>
<td>Subject to business case</td>
<td>Subject to business case</td>
<td>Ruth Carmody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Subject to positive findings from baselining, proceed to development of business case for Quality Assurance shared service for the FET sector.</td>
<td>Q2 2015</td>
<td>Q2 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Services</td>
<td>• Baseline existing legal services used by ETBs.</td>
<td>Q2 2015</td>
<td>Q2 2015</td>
<td>Subject to business case</td>
<td>Subject to business case</td>
<td>Ruth Carmody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Subject to positive findings from baselining, proceed to development of business case for Learning and Development shared service for the sector.</td>
<td>Q3 2015</td>
<td>Q3 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Proposed Actions</td>
<td>Start Date</td>
<td>Completion Date</td>
<td>Estimated Investment Required</td>
<td>Expected Benefit/Saving</td>
<td>Senior Responsible Owner</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Student applications and admissions** | • Baseline student admissions and registration processes and systems in FET and Higher Ed.  
• Subject to positive findings from baselining, proceed to development of business case for Quality Assurance shared service for the FET sector. | Q3 2015   | Q4 2015         | Subject to business case     | Subject to business case | Higher Education Programme Board and ETB / SOLAS Programme Board SRO - TBC |
## Higher Education sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Proposed Actions</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Estimated Investment Required</th>
<th>Expected Benefit/Saving</th>
<th>Senior Responsible Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| HR/Payroll Shared Service | • Development and rollout of e.recruitment system and use of [www.universityvacancies.com](http://www.universityvacancies.com) for all universities.  
• Review operation of new system and assess feasibility of rollout to other institutions.  
• Baselining of HR/payroll operations across the higher education sector (including a review of existing ICT infrastructure in higher education to support shared service developments over the period of this plan)  
• Depending on the outcome of baselining proceed to preparation of business case. | Underway | Go live Q4 2013 | €14k funded by IUA | • Administrative efficiencies from easy to access portal, greater visibility of university jobs. Depending on success of portal, potential to reduce recruitment advertising spend. | IUA HR Director’s Group |
| | | Q3 2014 | Q1 2015 | Subject to business case | | |
| | | Q2 2014 | Q2 2014 | Subject to business case | | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senior Responsible Owner</th>
<th>IUA HR Director’s Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| SRO -TBC | Tom Boland, HEA |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Estimated Investment Required</th>
<th>Expected Benefit/Saving</th>
<th>Senior Responsible Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Q2 2014**

**Q1 2015**

**Q2 2014**
# Higher Education sector

<p>| National Forum for Teaching and Learning | • Commencement of the work of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning | Q1 2014 | Ongoing | Existing investment in teaching and learning being channelled through the Forum | The National Forum is the key system-level infrastructure for the enhancement of teaching and learning in Irish higher education, and for the implementation of the recommendations of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 in this area. | National Forum Board |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------| Various – SRO’s |
|                                        | • Publication of report on sectoral consultation.| Q1 2014 | Q1 2014 |                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | |
|                                        | • Review of the digital capacity of Irish higher education. | Q2 2014 | Q2 2014 |                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | |
|                                        | • Publication of roadmap for implementation of national digital learning framework. | Q2 2014 | Q2 2014 |                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | |
|                                        | • Initiation of development of Professional Development Framework for Higher Education | Q3 2014 | Q3 2014 |                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | |
|                                        | • Inaugural national conference and Learning Impact Awards ceremony. | Q2 2015 | Q2 2015 |                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | |
|                                        | • Finalisation of Professional Development Framework. | Q2 2015 | Q2 2015 |                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | |
| International Student Recruitment      | • Rollout of CSF Irlanda application system on a pilot basis to other markets including the Middle East and Malaysia. | Q1 2014 | Q1 2014 for US market | €10k for US rollout – funded by the universities. | Easy to use application system for US students to apply to Ireland’s Start PG Programmes being promoted by Education in Ireland. Service improvements for students who avoid | IUA International Directors |
|                                        | • Subsequent roll outs will be assessed post March 2014. | Q1 2014 | Q1 2014 for US market |                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | SRO - TBC |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher Education sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>International Researcher recruitment</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • Complete review and upgrade of PhD/Science Without Borders section of the Irish Euraxess PhD Portal and launch new section. | Underway | Q1 2014 | €20k funded by the universities and / or Euraxess programme | • Effective and clear representation of all available PhD projects in Ireland open to government funded Brazilian students. Improved quality of service to students. | IUA Deans of Graduate Studies Group  
SRO - TBC |
| **Online systems for the support and administration of volunteering programmes** |
| • Development of a cost effective, regionally focused, universal national system for HEIs | Underway | Q3 2015 | Campus Engage initial investment of €15k. Further €5k investment for each institution buying into service. | • Significantly more cost effective approach. Estimated savings in the region of €10k per institution (up to 17 participating institutions). | Campus Engage Steering Committee  
SRO - TBC |
| **Access to research infrastructure** |
| • Scope the requirement for a centralised access model to ensure timely access to research infrastructure and to maximise the use of existing infrastructure. | Q1 /Q2 2015 | TBC | TBC | • Maximise use of research infrastructure in publicly funded institutions | Tom Boland, HEA |
| **Learning and Development (excluding pedagogic training)** |
| • Baselining of learning and development functions across the higher education sector.  
• Depending on the outcome of baselining proceed to preparation of business case. | Q2 2015  
Q4 2015 | Q3 2015  
Q1 2016 | Subject to business case | Subject to business case | Tom Boland, HEA |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher Education sector</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharing of learning resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The ALCID scheme currently allows postgraduate students access to reading rights in other institutional libraries – see Appendix for further details. A scoping exercise is proposed to consider how this scheme might be extended to undergraduate students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Baselining of financial management operations across the higher education sector.  
• Subject to positive findings from baselining, proceed to development of business case for financial shared service for the sector. | Q1 2015 | Q1 2015 | Subject to business case | Subject to business case | Tom Boland, HEA |
APPENDIX 1 Existing Shared Services in the Higher Education Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared Service description</th>
<th>Organisation availing of shared service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Applications Office</strong></td>
<td>45 HEI’s including all universities, IoT’s, Colleges of Education, RCSI and private institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Central Applications Office (CAO) is the organisation responsible for overseeing and processing first year undergraduate applications in the Republic of Ireland. Its primary mission is to centrally process applications in a fair, transparent and efficient manner. Established in 1976 by the Irish universities the first students processed through the system commenced courses in 1978.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Central Admissions Service (CAS) was introduced independently by the Regional Technical Colleges and in 1991 the CAO and CAS combined their admissions procedures with two systems effectively running in parallel covering approximately 21 HEI’s. In 1998 the CAS was subsumed within the CAO system. At present there are 45 institutions within the CAO system catering for 77,000 applicants offering 1,380 courses at NFQ levels 6, 7 &amp; 8.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HEAR/DARE Schemes</strong></td>
<td>All universities, all Colleges of Education, NCI, AIT, DIT, CIT and Pontifical University Maynooth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The seven universities, Dublin Institute of Technology, Athlone Institute of Technology and the National College of Ireland have collaboratively developed and rolled out the reform and extension of third-level access schemes for students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and for students with a disability. Since 2010, the number of participating HEIs has increased from the initial 8 (all universities and DIT) to 18.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding from the HEA’s Strategic Innovation Fund, through a project managed by the Irish Universities Association, has been used to improve the previous schemes on offer to these students, while also greatly increasing administrative and other efficiencies in their delivery, for both students and colleges.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In doing so, the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) (aimed at school leavers from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds) has been extended from 305 to all 730 secondary schools in Ireland, while the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is now based on a more transparent use of assessment criteria, has a more streamlined application process and is more student friendly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both HEAR and DARE aim to greatly increase the numbers of students from these two target groups applying for college by offering quotas of places (an average of 5% for each scheme across all academic areas) on a reduced Leaving Certificate points basis. Students who secure one of these places are also offered a range of academic and personal supports while at college.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A key reform element has been the full integration of both these schemes into the online CAO application process. A dedicated website <a href="http://www.accesscollege.ie">www.accesscollege.ie</a> has also been developed to provide full details of the schemes and assist students in making their application, and full communications campaigns across schools and target groups have been rolled out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HEAnet

HEAnet is Ireland’s National Education and Research Network or NREN and is part of a global network of NRENs.

In 1983, HEAnet was established as a collaborative initiative of the Universities to provide national and international network services for the sector. HEAnet was formally constituted as a limited company in 1997, owned and managed by its members. At present there are over 65 participating institutions.

HEAnet provides Internet connectivity alongside essential e-Infrastructure and ICT related services to third level institutions (including all of the Universities and Institutes of Technology), Primary and Post-Primary schools, to the HEA, the CAO & the PAC and a number of other research and educational organisations in Ireland.

The range of services has expanded over the life time of the company, to include new developments where ICT can effectively share resources and exploit economies of scale.

Examples of recent developments include:
   1) Inclusion of software licence procurement (formally CHEST Ireland) within the HEAnet service
   2) Development of video conferencing, video streaming and related multimedia services
   3) Full integration of the University and IoT network services under HEAnet
   4) Edugate, the Irish Education Identity Federation www.edugate.ie
   5) Provision of 24 x 7 service and monitoring
   6) 100Mb Post-primary Broadband roll-out
   7) Edustorage – Cloud storage service

The HEAnet Board and its member Institutions actively review the potential for further sharing of services and the transition of these services to the HEAnet framework.

Postgraduate Applications Centre

The Postgraduate Applications Centre (PAC) is a shared service for postgraduate applications and is currently used by UCC, NUI Galway, NUI Maynooth, DCU, CIT and WIT, as well as for students applying to postgraduate programmes offered under the 3U consortium of DCU, NUI and RCSI.

Established in 1998 by the NUI universities to provide a common applications process for their Postgraduate Diploma in Education (formerly Higher Diploma in Education) programmes, activities and participating institutions have been expanded in recent years with the introduction of an online postgraduate application system for other postgraduate programmes, both taught and research.

From an initial base of 2,456 applicants for the Education programme, PAC in 2009 processed 20,281 applications over a wide range of
postgraduate programmes. PAC is now an important tool for the promotion of Irish postgraduate education internationally.

Further expansion of PAC services is planned and it is hoped that over time PAC will become a common point of application for the university sector, in respect of all programmes not covered by the CAO, both at postgraduate level and in other areas (lifelong learning, continuing education), and that the potential it offers as a common portal for the university and higher education sector can be further exploited.

Targeted skills initiatives (Springboard, ICT Skills Conversion)
Springboard and ICT Skills Conversion are targeted skills initiatives managed by the Higher Education Authority on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills.

Springboardcourses.ie is the online applications management system for Springboard. Springboard provides higher education and training courses persons who have lost their job as a result of the recession and require additional skills to gain employment in areas of the economy where there are jobs including ICT, high-end manufacturing, internally-traded services and international financial services. Courses range from awards between Level 6 and Level 9 on the NFQ.

In 2013, 38 higher education providers offered a total of 223 courses under Springboard. Providers include universities, institutes of technology and commercial/not-for-profit private providers.

The website provides both content and application functions. It is a centralised source of information for prospective learners on each approved Springboard course. It enables learners to make a single online application to multiple higher education providers for up to ten courses. Offers and acceptances are managed by the providers through the site. In addition, the system is used by providers to return data to the HEA on academic and labour market outcomes for participants and is therefore a critical source of data for monitoring and evaluation of Springboard.

Springboardcourses.ie is based on the Bluebrick technology platform. Since the establishment of Springboard, in 2011, 23,000 applicants have submitted an application through the system, with 15,500 learners enrolling in courses.

The ICT Skills Conversion initiative offers Level 8 Conversion Programmes, in collaboration with industry partners, providing graduates from other skills areas with the opportunity to up-skill or re-skill through a 1 year full time H.Dip. conversion programme in core computing/programming, software and data analysis. Course information and applications for courses under this initiative is managed on a dedicated website, www.ictskills.ie. Around 15 higher education providers currently participate in the measure.

IRIS Electronic Information Services Limited
Irish Research e-Library (IReL), a nationally funded electronic research library is an initiative of the IUA Librarians Group. Through IRIS Electronic Information Services Limited, a company owned by the universities, it procures and provides quality peer-reviewed online research publications journals, databases and index & abstracting services, as well as ebooks - direct to the desktop of researchers and 7 Universities, RCSI & for a limited number of resources IoTs also.
wherever they are located. Work is underway to merge the functions of IRIS into HEAnet.

**National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning**

Announced in November 2012, the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning ([http://teachingandlearning.ie/](http://teachingandlearning.ie/)) is the key system-level infrastructure for the enhancement of teaching and learning in Irish higher education, and for the implementation of the recommendations of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 in this area. Through the establishment of a national digital platform for teaching and learning resources and research outputs, the National Forum will build on the key online teaching and research resources that have been developed for the sector in recent years, as well as on the collegiality that has supported these.

This online platform will provide a one-stop-shop and showcase for teaching excellence in Irish higher education that unlocks collective approaches to addressing common challenges. The National Forum strives to ensure that all students have the best environment in which to learn, and that academics have the tools to provide excellence in teaching.

The key priority theme that will be advanced through the inaugural work-programme of the National Forum in 2013–2014 is ‘teaching for transitions’. Key dimensions of this work-programme include:

- The comprehensive review of digital platforms and capacity across the entire sector, and of professional development activities for teachers and managers supporting teaching and learning;
- The establishment of a student-led teaching award programme which will link with an evidence-based professional award fellowship system;
- The establishment of a series of research and dissemination activities in the form of scholarships, reports, insights, talks and co-ordinated events;
- Engagement in continuous, sectoral dialogue with students, teachers and managers in all higher education institutions in order to shape the future directions of the National Forum’s work.

**EURAXESS Ireland**

Designated by The Office of Science and Technology (OST) in 2004, the Irish Universities Association hosts EURAXESS Ireland (formerly known as the Researcher Mobility office) which provides a centralised dedicated support and advisory service to researchers moving to Ireland particularly in the Higher Education Sector. The office manages the Researcher Hosting Agreement Scheme which has standardised procedures for the immigration of non EU researchers.

The scheme enables approved research active organisations to recruit researchers from outside the EEA to carry out research in Ireland without the need for a Green Card or Work Permit, thus eliminating huge significant administrative costs for universities, Institutes of Technology and public and private research active organizations. There is no fee for accreditation of organisations or administration of hosting agreements in Ireland thereby saving institutions significant costs on work visas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning</strong></th>
<th>All universities &amp; IoTs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EURAXESS Ireland</strong></td>
<td>All universities, IoTs and a range of other public &amp; private research active organisations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The office is the government appointed central processing house for hosting agreements and plays a key role in the official accreditation and immigration process. Further information is available from http://www.euraxess.ie/Page.aspx?SP=110

EURAXESS Ireland Web Portal
This portal is dedicated to providing practical information for researchers moving to and from Ireland. This includes detailed information on the fast track immigration scheme and signposting users to information on practical issues including schooling and taxation. The portal is linked directly to the European EURAXESS portal and includes the following facilities:

- **Shared Job Opportunities and Funding facility**
  The euraxess.ie portal operates a research job opportunities and funding advertising facility for academic institutions, research agencies and organizations. This free service is co-funded by the DEJI and the IUA and delivers significant efficiencies and cost savings to individual institutions. Any job advertised on this site is automatically uploaded (and vice versa) to the EURAXESS Europe site and NatureJobs, free of charge. Further information can be accessed at http://www.euraxess.ie/Page.aspx?SP=105

- **EURAXESS PhD Portal**
  This service is designed to act as a central information point for prospective PhD students coming to Ireland and is an important tool to promote PhD education in Ireland to potential candidates. For example, in order to promote the Brazilian "Science without Borders" scheme to bring PhD students from Brazil to Ireland the IUA developed this site to provide detailed project information for universities and institutes of technology. Over 2,000 potential PhD projects for Brazilian researchers have been uploaded to the portal. http://www.euraxess.ie/phd/default.aspx

- **EURAXESS Business Portal**
  This service is designed to act as a dedicated service to promote EURAXESS to business and industry in Ireland. It focuses on the key services of fast track visas, job opportunities and CV database of researchers. It also has a unique search facility enabling a company to carry out a comprehensive search for funding opportunities (including business development, awards, venture capital, R&D funding from Irish and European sources). http://www.euraxess.ie/business/

EURAXESS Network
Since the establishment of the EURAXESS Office, the national support network has brought together representatives, specifically in the Research and Human Resources departments within the seven Irish universities and IOT’s with the aim of strengthening and developing expertise within all aspects of mobility. The network has since grown
beyond the university sector to incorporate other research-active organisations, academia and industry and their representatives.

**Bibliometric Analysis (InCites)**
This is a service that enables a detailed bibliometric analysis of publications using the Thomson-Reuters state of the art tool, InCites. This followed on from a highly successful SIF project that was mainstreamed in 2013. The partners continued to work together and formed a consortium to purchase a further subscription to InCites for the next four years at a significantly market reduced rate. The consortium shares expertise and enhances the ability of all the universities. This has been used in the past to support HEA/Forfas in carrying out a bibliometric analysis as part of the National Research Prioritisation Process.

**Irish Marie Curie Office**
The Irish Marie Curie Office is jointly operated by the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and the Irish Research Council. The office is hosted by the IUA and supports Irish researchers and research-active organisations to secure funding from the Marie Curie Actions, a European Commission Funding programme which supports researchers at all stages of their careers, across all research disciplines and in all employment sectors.

The office has operated throughout the Sixth and Seventh Framework Programmes (2003 – 2007, and 2007 – 2013) and will be part of the overall National Support Network for Horizon 2020: The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014 – 2020). The office provides advice and support on preparing applications for Marie Curie funding and the management of Marie Curie awards. It is run by the Marie Curie National Contact Point for Ireland under the guidance of the Marie Curie National Delegate. The office has a close working relationship with EURAXESS Ireland.

**International Education Office**
The IUA International Education Office is a shared service for the development and promotion of International Education in Irish HEI’s. The development of international education is of key strategic importance to universities but also to the Irish higher education sector as a whole.

Although there is a clear competitive element to international education universities recognise that there are benefits and efficiencies to be delivered from a co-ordinated approach to this also. In light of this and in order to maximise efficiencies and deliver maximum value for money, rather than investing resources individually universities have agreed to a shared approach to the marketing of Irish universities and to the development and implementation of a sectoral strategy for the expansion of international education. This will not only ensure the most efficient use of resources but will also deliver long term benefits in terms of expanding income from non-Exchequer sources thereby maximising value to the Exchequer.

**Ciencia sem Fronteiras Irlanda**
CSF Irlanda is a central application and placement system designed and implemented by a higher education working group led by the IUA and IOTI for Brazilian students to apply to Ireland at undergraduate level. It is used by all 7 Universities, 13 Institutes of Technology, Dublin Institute of Technology, Dublin Institute of Technology, Griffith College

| All universities, DIT, RCSI, HEA, SFI | All universities, IoT’s and a range of other public & private research active organisations, including indigenous and FDI enterprise. | All universities | All Universities, All Institutes of Technology, Dublin Institute of Technology, Griffith College |
of Technology, Griffith College Dublin, Dublin Business School and National College of Ireland.

It is an important tool to promote the undergraduate study abroad experience to Brazilian students who potentially might study at a higher education institution in Ireland. It has processed and placed more than 1,300 Brazilian students in Ireland at undergraduate level in just 6 months. This central service is expected to place a further 2,000 Brazilian students in 2014. The domain name www.csfirlanda.ie is owned by the IUA.

**Campus Engage**

Campus Engage is the national network for the promotion of civic engagement activities in Irish higher education. It is an initiative funded by the Irish government, through the HEA Strategic Innovation Fund.

In 2012, steps were taken to broaden the institutional base of an existing network for civic engagement, Campus Engage, moving it from an initial start-up phase of five universities (NUI Galway, UL, UCD, DUC and NUI Maynooth) to a National Network, driven by a Steering Committee with representatives from 17 higher education institutions in Ireland (all universities and most IoT’s and Colleges of Education as at Autumn 2013).

The Network exists to strengthen the relationship between higher education and wider society through promoting and grounding civic engagement teaching, practice-based learning and research initiatives in the communities they serve; to support and increase volunteering and student-led engagement initiatives in higher education.

The Network aims to work in a cost effective manner, facilitating the development and delivery of national capacity building services, tools and resources (such as a national online HEI volunteering promotion and management facility), sharing knowledge of what works, and supporting working partnerships between HEI and community organisation, including voluntary and private enterprise.

In 2013 further steps were taken to migrate a collaborative network into a more formalised working shared service with the appointment of a Campus Engage National Network Coordinator, based at the Irish Universities Association. The Coordinator manages the delivery of Campus Engage national action plans and budgets, 2013-2015; promotes research and publications around civic engagement to create an ‘Irish model’; shares knowledge and tools online and offline, and synchronises work with other SIF projects – including innovation hubs REAP and ACE.

**Irish Survey of Student Engagement**

The Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) (http://studentsurvey.ie/wordpress/) was developed in response to the recommendation of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 for the establishment of a comprehensive and anonymous student-feedback system for Irish higher education that is coupled with structures to ensure that action is taken promptly in relation to students’ concerns.

Based on the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE), the ISSE was piloted nationally in 2013 with participation by more than 12,700 students and 26 higher education institutions. It is the first national survey of student engagement in Ireland and the first system-
A wide survey of its kind in Europe. Co-sponsored by the HEA, the IOTI, the IUA, and the USI, the ISSE is an online survey of first-year undergraduates, final-year undergraduates, and postgraduate students through which information on student-engagement is collected. The Survey asks students about their experience of higher education in the areas such as academic challenge, active learning, student–staff interactions, and work-integrated learning, as well as about their learning outcomes, career-readiness, and overall satisfaction. The results of the survey will inform institutional and programme management, as well as national policy-making and quality assurance processes.

Following the 2013 pilot, which tested a number of alternative technical and other options, preferred technical and communications solutions have been recommended for 2014, for use by all HEIs. This shared procurement of a student-survey instrument, adds value at both institutional HEI and national levels, as well as feeding into broader Quality Assurance and student-feedback processes. It therefore, represents a significant gain for those HEIs which did not previously have a student survey mechanism before, and offers a more streamlined and integrated system for those HEIs which were using an in-house mechanism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Irish Universities Association</strong></th>
<th>All universities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Irish Universities Association was established by the 7 Irish universities in 1997 to foster and support collaboration across the university sector. Through the IUA universities have collaborated to develop and influence policy and planning at a national level and have also collaborated on an extensive range of sectoral projects including recent projects such as the development of a Full Economic Costing system and the Incites research citations project. Such a sectoral approach maximises efficiency and ensures maximum value for money.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In addition universities share experience and disseminate good practice across a wide range of areas as well as engaging specialist/expert advice where necessary on a sectoral basis across a range of areas of common interest thereby avoiding duplication and delivering significant cost savings.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Procurement Shared Services</strong></th>
<th>UL, UCD, TCD, NUIG, NUIM, DCU, MI &amp; IoT's</th>
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<tr>
<td>EducationProcurement Services (formerly Shannon Consortium Procurement Network) is the procurement shared service for the HE sector. Operating out of UL it was established under the HEA’s Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) and initially included UL, Mary Immaculate College, IT Tralee and Limerick IT. The consortium has subsequently expanded to include 6 universities and all IoT’s.</td>
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<td>The decision has also been taken in the context of the overall Office of Government Procurement (OGP) plan that the EPS would become the HE sector procurement hub with responsibility for procuring laboratory and diagnostic equipment on behalf of the public sector and work is currently underway to establishment that.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>An Cheim</strong></th>
<th>IoTs</th>
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<tr>
<td>An Chéim (Collaborative Higher Education Information Management) was established by the Department of Education and Science (DoES) along with the Institutes of Technology and Tipperary Institute.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chéim encompasses the management of Student, Library, Finance, Timetabling and HR information in the Institutes of Technology and Tipperary Institute. Systems supported include:</td>
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</table>
| - Agresso - Financial Management  
- Banner - Student  
- Core - HR/ Payroll  
- Millennium - Library Records Management  
- Syllabus Plus - Timetable Package  |

| ALCID is a co-operative access scheme between the Academic Libraries in Ireland.  
ALCID enables access to the collections of each of the participating libraries, without formality, on production of an ALCID membership card. This card is available to full-time academics, academic-related staff and registered students reading for postgraduate degrees both taught and research.  
ALCID cards DO NOT provide borrowing rights in other institutions.  
| DCU, DIAS, DIT, NCAD, NUIG, NUIM, RCSI, RIA, TCD, UCD, UCC, UL, MIC, Mater Dei Library, Saint Angela’s College, Saint Patrick’s College. |

| Rian  
The RIAN portal ([www.rian.ie](http://www.rian.ie)) was created by the IUA with funding from the HEA’s SIF. It is a national online portal providing open access to the research outputs held in the repositories of the 7 Irish universities. These include over 12,500 documents—peer-reviewed articles, research papers, theses, and books. The RIAN portal has made publicly funded Irish research freely available worldwide, increasing its international visibility. |
| Seven Universities |

| Institutes of Technology Ireland (IOTI)  
IOTI is the representative body for 13 of Ireland’s Institutes of Technology and it also acts as a co-ordinator of a wide range of support activities and shared services for its members. |
| 13 Institutes of Technology |

| IOTI Support Services  
The Institutes of Technology have a network of committees including Registrars, Secretary/Financial Controllers, HR Managers, Finance Managers, RDI, Estates Managers, Librarians etc as well as Heads of Schools of Business, Engineering and Science. These groups meet regularly to share information and best practice as well as co-ordinating shared activity and policies. |

| IOTI Shared Services  
IOTI provides a human resources/industrial relations support function at national level for IOTs. In this regard, work is ongoing in relation to implementation of the Haddington Road Agreement, superannuation, and recruitment/selection in Institutes of Technology.  
A proposal has been put to the Department of Education and Skills for the Institutes to be brought under the Commission on Public Service Appointments (CPSA) remit which will allow for the quality assurance of IOT recruitment/selection and for the greater use of the Public Appointments Service (PAS) shared service. |

| Seven Universities |
In conjunction with DIT, IOTI has been co-ordinating a pension policy group for the last two years. An information portal has been developed on the DIT website to provide practical information to pensions administrators across all IoTs.

IOTI has also been active in liaising between the newly established Office of Government Procurement and the Institutes of Technology.

The IOTI Academic Affairs Office has also been co-ordinating activity in relation to academic affairs and a shared service project to deliver a Technological Universities Quality Framework (TUQF) Project has been in place for over a year. On 21 June 2013, IOTI published on behalf of the 14 Institutes of Technology a document entitled Principles of Internal Quality Enhancement for Technological Universities, the first module in TUQF. It sets out ten high level principles which will underpin the internal quality cultures of Technological Universities, and which will inform the further development of TUQF.

The TUQF project aims to produce a quality framework that will assist and facilitate those institutions who intend applying for Technological University designation, and which may also be used by, and benefit all institutions within the Technology sector. TUQF is being developed on an incremental and modular basis and will comprehend but will not necessarily be restricted to the following areas:

- Principles of internal quality assurance and quality enhancement;
- Quality Assurance of research provision, including the organisation of PhD programmes;
- Quality Assurance of taught undergraduate and postgraduate provision, including validation, monitoring and review of programmes;
- Quality Assurance of collaborative provision (national and international);
- Quality Assurance of education provided to international students, including requirements relating to the International Education Mark.

Internal Audit services have been provided on an outsourced shared service basis to Institutes of Technology for nearly a decade. Deloitte is the current holder of the contract. This shared service leads to the sharing of good practice and the development of common policies.

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<tr>
<th>IOTI International Office</th>
<th>13 Institutes of Technology</th>
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The IOTI International Office provides a shared service on aspects of Institutes’ International Education activities, particularly where international partners favour system to system agreements. The development of international education is of key strategic importance to the higher education sector.

One example of this shared service in action is the conclusion of a sectoral agreement with Colleges Ontario in Canada for Ontario students to complete their degrees in Ireland. This agreement was signed in November 2011 and the first Canadian students to benefit from this programme arrived in the Institutes in September 2012.
IOTI also agreed the renewal of a Memorandum of Understanding with Malaysian Technical University Network in 2012 which provides for a range of co-operation in education and research services.

On Wednesday 12th September 2012, IOTI signed an agreement in Dublin with Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) which is intended to lead to students from Wisconsin coming to Ireland from 2014 to study in Irish Institutes of Technology.

On 28th September 2012, the ten-member Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education (PCHE) and the 13-member Institutes of Technology Ireland (IOTI) entered into an agreement to strengthen, promote and develop co-operation in education, training, research, and innovation among the member institutions.

IOTI has also participated for the first time in 2013 in the Brazilian Government “Science without Borders” scholarship programme. Over 600 students have arrived in IOTs from Brazil during the academic year 2013-14. IOTI has worked closely with the IUA on this project and applications are processed through the CSF Irlanda system.

**IOTI Research, Development and Innovation Office**

IoTs have come together to share services around Research, Development and Innovation via a dedicated support office based in IOTI with the following remit:

- To provide a range of services to the Institutes of Technology to support their research, development and knowledge transfer activities, in line with the National Strategy for Higher Education.
- To provide a communications and representation function to build a mutually beneficial interface between Institutes, their staff and key stakeholders.
- To provide a policy analysis and development function and undertake lobbying and advocacy activity with key policy and funding stakeholders on research, development and innovation issues on behalf of the IoTs.
- To facilitate access to European and international collaboration and funding opportunities to support RDI activities across the Institutes.
- To develop and implement appropriate governance and management arrangements to ensure the Office of Research, Development and Innovation retains the trust and respect of its main stakeholders.

Specific achievements under this remit have included:

- Procurement of e-journal resources across the IoTs for the first time in partnership with the universities.
- Delivery of sectoral support programmes to encourage take-up of Research Council, Marie Curie and other opportunities, including a full pre-evaluation service and access to a sectoral panel of expert mentors.
- Developed, established and managed sectoral postgraduate funding initiative across 11 participating IoTs, providing postgraduate support worth over €500k to IoT postgraduate projects.
- Shared sectoral RDI promotional website developed with searchable research centre database and industry case studies to promote IoT RDI activities to industry and other potential partners www.ioti.ie/RDI
- Sectoral case studies developed as a promotional tool on IoT RDI impact
- New sectoral approach to quality assurance of research provision developed as part of wider TUQF process
- Sectoral support programme to facilitate access to European framework programmes in partnership with Enterprise Ireland, generating around €15 million of additional EU funding in last 4 years
**APPENDIX 2  Bodies under the aegis of the Department**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aegis Body</th>
<th>In scope for civil service shared services</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chomhairle um Oideachais Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)</td>
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<td>Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (CICA)</td>
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<td>Education Finance Board (EFB)</td>
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<td>SOLAS</td>
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<td>Grangegorman Development Agency (GGDA)</td>
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<td>Higher Education Authority (HEA)</td>
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<td>Irish Research Council</td>
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<td>Léargas - The Exchange Bureau</td>
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<td>National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)</td>
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<td>National Council for Special Education (NCSE)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)</td>
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<td>Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB)</td>
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<td>Residential Institutions Review Committee (RIRC)</td>
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<td>Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board</td>
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<td>Skillnets Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Examinations Commission (SEC)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Teaching Council</td>
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APPENDIX 3 International review of shared services in education and training systems

A short review of shared services in education and training systems internationally was undertaken to inform the development of this shared service plan. This review focused on shared services in the UK, US, Australia, Finland, Canada and Northern Ireland.

Education and training systems are delivered in different ways in different countries. For example, Ireland is quite unique among developed countries in that there has been no intermediate tier between the Department of Education and Skills and the vast majority of schools with the exception of schools under the aegis of the Education and Training Boards (formerly Vocational Education Committees). In some other jurisdictions, schools tend to be run by local authority or regional education type structures and this influences how support structures and functions are delivered.

We found that shared services are also a feature of further education and higher education systems in these countries with a variety of different models being employed at both national and regional level.

Indeed, similar structures and functions have been developed to those that exist in Ireland. Examples include the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) in the UK which provides similar services to the CAO; JANET which provides similar services to HEAnet and various procurement organisations which provide similar services to the Education Procurement Service here in Ireland. NRENs (National Research & Education Networks) exist in the majority of countries around the world. Further information on European NRENs can be obtained in the Terena Compendium - http://www.terena.org/activities/compendium/.

A 2008 report4 on shared services in further education and higher education in the UK found that the top ranked drivers for shared services was continuity and resilience of service, followed by quality of service, cost savings and releasing staff for customer facing activities.

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A short summary of shared services we reviewed are provided below:

**Australia**

- In Victoria, Australia, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides services to other government departments, students, parents and teachers through it’s eduPass service.\(^5\)

- Australia’s NREN, AARNet, provides some similar services to HEAnet.

- In Western Australia, the Education and Training Shared Services Centre commenced operations in October 2005 with Department of Education and Training (DET) as the pilot agency. ETSSC now provides HR and Finance services to:
  - Department of Education (Central Office, District Offices and Schools)
  - Department of Training and Workforce Development
  - State Training Providers (Regional and Metropolitan)
  - School Curriculum and Standards Authority
  - Department of Education Services

**Canada**

- In British Columbia, Canada, the Ministry for Advanced Education is leading on an Administrative Service Delivery Transformation Initiative, the first wave involved an Opportunity Assessment Phase which ran from June 2012 to February 2013 and was undertaken with assistance of external consultants.\(^6\) This study focused on procurement, facilities / capital, IT, HR, ancillary services, library services and finance. The Implementation Phase initiated in March 2013, is currently underway and involves the development of detailed business cases to support implementing selected opportunities.

- Canada’s NREN, Canarie, provides some similar services to HEAnet.


Finland

- In Finland, a shared service organisation called Certia (www.certia.fi) provides HR, Finance and some IT services to nine universities and polytechnics.
- Finland’s NREN, FUNET, provides some similar services to HEAnet and also connects into the pan-European GÉANT network.

UK

- The UK Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has led on a Shared Schools Recruitment Project for the delivery of e-recruitment into 24,000 schools in England. DCSF have linked in with the Association of Colleges in the Eastern Region (ACER) to replicate this approach and encourage a wider take up so that it can be used nationally by any further education college.  

- In the UK, there are a number of national and regional shared services operating across higher education. Examples include the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) processes over 2.5 million applications every year, for some 650,000 prospective students seeking to enroll in more than 340 UK universities and colleges. UCAS also runs a number of specialist application services – GTTR (Graduate Teacher Training Registry), UKPASS (UK Postgraduate Application and Statistical Service) and CUKAS (Conservatoires UK Admissions Service). UCAS also carries out research, consultancy and advisory work for schools, colleges, careers services, professional bodies and commercial businesses.

- The JANET education and research services network provides and develops a network infrastructure for the research and education communities across the UK. It connects the UK’s research and education institutions to each other, as well as to the rest of the world through links to the global Internet. The Janet network connects UK universities, FE Colleges, Research Councils, Specialist Colleges and Adult and Community Learning providers. It also provides connections between the Regional Broadband Consortia to facilitate the DfE initiative for a national schools’ network. Over 18 million end-users are currently served by the Janet network in the UK. JANET connects to other European National Research & Education Networks via the pan-European (and EU funded) GÉANT network. HEAnet also connects to the GÉANT network.

- The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), is funded by the subscriptions of the HE providers from whom they collect data and it also provides an information service for the procurement of expertise, analysis and bespoke information. HESA collects a range of data

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National Learning and Skills Council, Shared Services Further Education Centric, March 2010, www.aoc.co.uk
every year UK-wide from universities, higher education colleges and other differently funded providers of higher education. This data is then provided to UK governments and higher education funding bodies to support their work in regulating and funding higher education providers. In addition information derived from the data is published as official statistics and in many accessible formats for use by a wide range of organisations and individuals for a variety of purposes, including HE providers, academic researchers, students, prospective students, private companies, professional bodies and the press and media.

- The M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries is a collaborative organisation that works to improve library and information services within the M25 region and more widely across the East and Southeast of the UK. The Consortium has 57 member institutions which includes a range of universities, colleges, libraries and museums. Its aim is to provide services and resources for the benefit of learners and researchers.

- The London Universities Purchasing Consortium (LUPC) who’s core membership is made up of universities and colleges of higher education in and around London. LUPC also includes not-for-profit, public and other higher education organisations. LUPC is one of the four higher education purchasing consortia in England that together constitute English National Purchasing (ENP), the national body working to improve collaboration across the regional purchasing consortia and other sector purchasing organisations.

- Advanced Procurement Universities & Colleges (Scotland) is a procurement consortium which includes nineteen Universities and forty three colleges.

- The UK Shared Business Services established by the UK Research Councils provides HR, finance, procurement, IT, grants and property services to its member organisations.

- The Universities Superannuation Scheme Ltd administers a pension scheme for universities, university colleges and other employers.

- In addition, the Higher Education Funding Council for England has carried out a number of feasibility studies for shared services in a range of areas including libraries, research management, HR, estates, student experience, teaching & learning, legal services and general administration.
United States

In the United States, many universities are moving to shared service models for functions such as payroll, HR, ICT etc. These include:

- The ARM shared service centre in UC Davis provides shared services for Facilities Management, HR, Payroll, ICT (Desktop support and system administration), Accounts Payable and Purchasing across 4 colleges and 6 professional schools. It includes a Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, school of medicine and a school of nursing.

- The University System of Georgia has a shared service facility which processes HR, Payroll and Benefits for 31 higher education institutions.

- The University of Michigan is currently implementing shared services for Finance and HR. The project is focused on supporting the university’s cost-containment efforts and providing high-quality customer service. Savings goal of approximately $17M annually.

- Yale as a shared services centre for schools and departments which provides transactional processing across procurement, accounting, accounts payable, client accounts as well as finance management functions.

- Internet2, the US NREN, provides trans-continental services similar to GÉANT, while smaller, regional networks provide connectivity on a state-by-state basis. Services similar to those provided by HEAnet are provided across these organisations.

Northern Ireland

- The Association of Northern Ireland Colleges (ANIC) manages the supply of Corporate Information Services to the country’s six large multi-site further and higher education colleges (following the merger of 18 colleges). These services include ICT, student systems, payroll, HR and finance.