Education and Training Sector
Shared Services Plan 2017-2020

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS
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Education Shared Business Services

Mission

What is the role of Shared Services in the Sector?
To provide high quality shared business services to the Education and Training Sector

Vision

What is our aspiration for the future?
To be a customer-focused provider of leading practice shared business services, developing existing and new initiatives for the benefit of the Sector as a whole

Goals

What are our strategic goals?
Delivering value and benefits to our customers 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
- Supporting the implementation of the Education and Training Sector’s vision

Values

How will we support achievement of our vision?

- Delivering on our promises
- Building trust, confidence and respect
- Fostering a service culture
- Enabling our people to excel
- Respecting the autonomy of Institutions (including data confidentiality)
1. Executive summary

The Department of Education and Skills (DES), under the mandate of *Public Service Reform Plan for 2014-2016*, published its first Shared Services plan for the Education and Training Sector in 2014. The plan for 2014-2016 set out a schedule of initiatives which actively investigated the roll out of traditional Shared Services in areas such as HR, Payroll, Pensions, Finance, IT and Corporate Services within the Department and the wider Education and Training Sector. Such opportunities as were identified were individually evaluated using a standard methodology and where there proved to be a sound business case, work moved to the next phase of planning and rolling initiatives out for the relevant areas of the Sector.

This *Education and Training Sector Shared Services Plan 2017-2020* aims to further progress the initiatives identified in the *Education and Training Sector Shared Services Plan 2014-2016*.

Under the initial plan the Department developed its knowledge and understanding of how Shared Services would be delivered in the Education and Training Sector. This growth in understanding has helped form the Shared Services strategy which underpins this Plan. Therefore the plan for 2017-2020 not only includes plans for traditional Shared Services initiatives (such as HR, Payroll, Finance etc) but also includes the plans and approach for Alternative Models of Service Delivery (AMSD), External Service Delivery (ESD) and the plans for the development of organisational structures necessary for the operation of Shared Services in the Education and Training Sector.

In drafting both this, and the previous iteration of the 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.

Shared Service initiatives were looked at for the Education and Training Sector as a whole and for specific areas within it under the previous plan. A series of key projects with the greatest potential impact were agreed and prioritised for roll-out, and it is those projects that will be the focus over the course of this plan:

- Payroll Shared Services for the Education and Training Boards (ETBs)
- Finance Shared Services for the Education and Training Boards
- HR/Payroll Shared Services for the Higher Education Sector
- Finance Shared Services for the Higher Education Sector
- Upgrade of School Employees HR/Payroll to full Shared Services
- Pension Shared Services for the Education sector
- Procurement Shared Services for the Education sector

- In addition to these key projects, a number of other initiatives will be assessed and progressed including: Development of Centres of Excellence – such as the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU) support for all schools or a central Legal Support Unit for ETBs in Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)

- Alternative Models of Service delivery – such as a Payment in Schools solution

In the 2014-2016 plan, the Department committed to further developing existing Shared Services initiatives within the sector, such as Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI), HEAnet
and EduCampus. The 2017-2020 plan will continue this approach, seeking to leverage existing technology and structures where appropriate.

Over the course of the 2017-2020 plan, the Department intends to develop the organisational structures necessary to manage its diverse range of Shared Service solutions. This will be achieved through a phased movement from individual projects to an overall Education Shared Business Services (ESBS) organisation. In parallel with developing the Shared Services initiatives, the Department will proceed over the course of this plan with the necessary administrative and legal measures to establish this organisation. When fully functioning, the ESBS will be multi-functional and will service the sector as a whole, while complementing existing Departmental structures. While it will operate under a single management and governance structure, the individual functional areas may be sited at different locations.

The Department intends to continue its systematic approach to the evaluation and development of Shared Services in the Sector under this plan. Each initiative will only be advanced after a base line has been established and a Business Case developed setting out the relevant options and assessing their benefits and impacts. The Department expects that these Shared Service initiatives once fully operational, and managed under the auspices of the Department’s ESBS, will improve efficiency primarily through reducing costs and securing effectiveness gains on a sustainable basis through:

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

Consequently, a range of personnel will be freed up across the sector to concentrate on their primary roles, thereby improving performance across the Education and Training Sector as a whole.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Transactional Shared Service Projects</th>
<th>Shared Service Operations Development, Leveraging Existing Structures and Technology</th>
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<tr>
<td>Implement Payroll Shared Services for ETBs</td>
<td>Develop the management structures, governance and supports for Shared Service in the Education and Training Sector</td>
<td>Develop and strengthen the existing education procurement supports</td>
<td>Roll out of Financial Services Support unit (FSSU) to primary school sector</td>
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<td>Implement Financial Management Shared Service for ETBs</td>
<td>Leverage existing ICT infrastructure and solutions in all future Shared Service developments (e.g. HEAnet and EduCampus)</td>
<td>Integrate the existing sectoral education procurement supports into one organisation within the Shared Services structures</td>
<td>Develop Legal Services for ETBs</td>
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<td>Upgrade HR/Payroll for schools employees to Shared Service standards</td>
<td>Procuring and deploying common corporate technologies across all Shared Service initiatives</td>
<td>Drive participation in the Procurement Reform Programme and Office of Government Procurement (OGP) structures</td>
<td>Pilot project for Schools Payments, including electronic and proximity payment options</td>
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<td>Further develop HR/Payroll Shared Services for Higher Education</td>
<td>Assess the future potential of existing initiatives in the new Shared Services landscape (e.g. SUSI)</td>
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<td>Assess the potential for new centres of excellence or AMSD or ESD to support the operation of the Education and Training Sector</td>
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<td>Evaluate Finance Shared Service for Higher Education</td>
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<td>Evaluate Pensions Shared Service for the Education and Training Sector</td>
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<td>Support the Departments participation in Civil Service FMSS including Shared Service readiness projects</td>
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1 This table categorises the Shared Serviced Plan initiatives under the broad headings above. The placement of the initiatives does not construe a relationship between it and other initiatives in the table.
2. Introduction

The Government’s initial *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 subsequent *Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016* and underpins the Education and Training Sector’s approach to Shared Services.

The *Education and Training Sector Shared Services Plan 2014-2016* proposed to 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 and across the entire sector. The plan set out the context for Shared Services, as well as detailing the range of Shared Services offerings already in existence in the Education and Training Sector. The plan also identified a range of Shared Services projects to be explored over the life of the plan.

This *Education and Training Sector Shared Services Plan 2017-2020* will focus itself on the key Shared Services projects currently progressing within the Education and Training Sector, building on the Department’s overarching Shared Services Strategy and elaborating on the wider Department and sectoral context.

2.1. Culture and Context

The Education and Training Sector can be broken into four main areas:

- Department and its Agencies
- Schools Sector
- Further Education and Training Sector
- Higher Education Sector.

The sub sectors, and the institutions within them, have varying degrees of autonomy and in many instances compete against each other for resources and often for learners too. The reporting lines often do not follow a traditional hierarchical model and services can be duplicated within the sub sectors and across the entire Education and Training Sector. This is because services have been provided and evolved based on historical need.

Business services in the Education and Training Sector have developed on an as-needed basis in the sub sectors over time. Therefore the Department has a centralised payroll service for school employees from Athlone but this does not include staff in the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and each individual Higher Education Institution (HEI) has developed its individual HR/payroll solutions.

In other areas the sub sectors have come together to create initiatives such as CAO (Central Applications Office), SUSI (Centralised Students Grants Administration), and HEAnet (Education Network Services provider), which are non-profit entities entirely funded by the public sector and which are established to provide a Shared Service across various parts of the public sector. These initiatives are currently managed by various organisations and structures.

Under the *Education and Training Sector Shared Services Plan 2014-2016* initiatives were identified for exploration for each of the sub sectors. This plan will concentrate on driving these projects and initiatives forward while acknowledging that each sub-sector has
undergone and is undergoing major reforms in its own right. These broader reforms in the Education and Training Sector are covered by the Integrated Reform Delivery Plans and the *Action Plan for Education 2016-2019*, and can be reviewed on the Department of Education and Skills web site.

### 2.2. Education and Training Sector Shared Services Plan 2014-2016

The *Education and Training Sector Shared Services Plan 2014-2016* was the first comprehensive documentation of Shared Services throughout the Education and Training Sector. It actively investigated the roll out of traditional Shared Services in areas such as HR, Payroll, Pensions, Finance, IT and Corporate Services and the spread of other Shared Service initiatives, within both the Department of Education and Skills, and the wider Education and Training Sector. This plan aims to progress these agreed initiatives.

Under the 2014-2016 plan the sector formally gathered data, compiled base line assessments and developed business cases for the initial projects identified for assessment:

- Payroll Shared Services for the ETB sector
- Finance Shared Services for the ETB sector
- HR/Payroll Shared Service for the Higher Education Sector

On the basis of these business cases, multi-annual ring-fenced funding has been negotiated and project teams with full time qualified project managers are established.

These teams work with sectoral stakeholders and with the relevant public sector stakeholders in order to develop the detailed approach for each project. They have documented the current processes and developed detailed requirements in order to procure the relevant technological solutions to underpin each initiative.

In addition to the progress made on the individual key projects, progress has also been made on a common ICT strategy which works across Shared Service projects in the sector. This approach has been agreed with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) and allows the sectors key projects benefit from the use of common wrap-round technologies for customer relationship software (CRM), business intelligence software (BI) and other common platforms.

The Department has also developed its overarching Shared Services Strategy which sees all Education and Training Sector Shared Services initiatives coming under the umbrella of a centralised Shared Service organisation over a period of time. Known as Education Shared Business Services (ESBS) it will initially encompass the projects that are operational.

This approach is in line with international best practice and is similar to the approach which the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) has adopted for its National Shared Services Organisation (NSSO). It allows the individual initiatives to develop in line with the business cases but brings longer term benefits from common central supports.

The business cases for the ETB Shared Services projects for Payroll and Finance concluded that a co-located site for both payroll and finance for ETBs would bring additional economies of scale and lease Heads of Terms were negotiated in July 2016 for the preferred location for the ESBS Organisation with target completion estimated for early 2017.
While the Education and Training Sector’s approach to Shared Services has been advanced over the period of the initial plan, the timelines set out in that plan have proven to be overly ambitious. The timelines did not take into account the enormous demands that would be experienced by all public sector supports once the period of economic and fiscal retrenchment started to come to an end. They also assumed that resources in terms of funding, staffing etc. would be readily available to meet the aggressive timelines set out for each project. The sector has learned from this experience and these learnings have been taken into consideration in this plan. A panel of project managers was established in December 2016 and these resources are now being assigned to projects to drive the programme of work over the course of this plan.

All work under the 2014-2016 plan has been governed through the Department’s Public Service Reform governance structures. Each project has had a project steering group to which the project manager reports. This is overseen by the relevant sectoral programme board and the reform programme is overseen at Management Board level by the Education and Training Reform Board (ETRB) chaired by the Secretary General. It is expected that the 2017-2020 programme of work will continue to be governed through these structures, allowing the sector to develop the operational governance for Shared Services during the life of this plan. It should be noted that though multi-annual funding has been secured for the three projects referred to above, further progression and implementation of projects under this Plan will be dependent on further multi-annual funding being negotiated and secured.
3. Shared Services Priorities 2017-2020

The Education and Training Sector Shared Services Plan 2017-2020 is primarily concerned with driving existing initiatives forward while acknowledging certain further initiatives may be identified and pursued over the life of this plan. This broad programme of work has been broken down under the following categories for the purposes of this plan:

- Transactional Shared Service projects
- Shared service operations development
- Shared procurement development
- Centres of Excellence
- Alternative Models of Service Delivery

Over the period of the plan the Department and Sector’s knowledge of Shared Services will evolve. The categorisation in use in this plan reflects the current state within the broad Shared Services programme and this also will evolve over the life of the plan.

3.1. Transactional Shared Services Projects

Transactional Shared Service projects are focused on the assessment, evaluation and implementation of transactional share service solutions. These projects look at changing the delivery of traditional high volume administrative processing. A base line is established for each initiative and a standard business case is produced to assess the relevant future delivery options. The implementation of the appropriate transactional solution is then based on the business case findings.

3.1.1. Payroll Shared Services for the Education and Training Boards

HR and Payroll services in the ETB sector had been provided at various sites across the 16 ETBs. Under the previous plan, these services were assessed for Shared Service provision and the business case concluded that payroll services would move to a Shared Service solution.

Work has advanced on payroll Shared Services in the ETB sector, and this project remains a focus under this plan. The project team have documented the current processes (‘as is’) and developed the future processes (‘to be’), detailed requirements and target operating model (TOM). This work has been used to define the functional and technical specifications for the software solution required to underpin the services.

Extensive stakeholder engagement has been required with OGCIO, the Office of Government Procurement (OGP), Chief State Solicitors Office (CSSO) and other parties such as the Revenue Commissioners, to agree the detailed workings of this new solution. The business case for the project was agreed and approval received to proceed from the OGCIO Peer Review Group in July 2016, and a request for tender (RFT) for the payroll system solution was drafted and will issue early in 2017 on foot of OGP/OGCIO and CSSO approval.

In addition, a project charter and initial plan has been developed for the Education Shared Business Services Organisation location. Strategy documents have also been prepared to set out how ESBS Payroll will address recruitment, training and ICT and it is anticipated that staff migration into the new Centre will occur in the second half of 2017.
An approach to governance and funding for ESBS payroll is being developed and will be agreed with the payroll project steering group, and will be reviewed and refined with input from the ETBs through the ETBI Forums and individual senior stakeholder engagement.

The extended timeline for the procurement process has impacted on the delivery of the project, due to dependencies on the availability and commitment of both internal and external stakeholders. This in turn impacted the system build and go-live date. In late 2016, the project team re-planned a revised project schedule which was communicated to all stakeholders.

In late 2016, an appointment of the Head of Payroll for the ESBS was made. This constitutes an important first step in the development of the ESBS.

It is expected that this project will complete the following steps during the life of this plan:

- Complete any procurement processes and engage with the preferred suppliers
- Draw down on existing frameworks or contracts where possible
- Develop the detailed design and detailed implementation plan with suppliers
- Revise the target operating model and future processes based on the detailed design
- Build and test the systems and processes
- Train staff and train the client sector on the new processes
- Check alignment of systems, people and processes
- Implement the transition plan
- Embed the processes and move to operational governance

**Among the financial and non-financial benefits to be realised are:**

- Projected 27% (€1.8m) annual cost savings on ETB payroll operations
- Reduction of ETB Payroll FTE from 93 to 70
- Single Payroll processing centre for all 16 ETBs
- Single governance structure with common set of standards, policies and procedures on a single technology platform
- Strong focus on customer services and performance measurement driving continuous improvement
- Improved continuity and resilience of payroll service
- Improved cost visibility and internal controls
- Support for ETBs to focus on their core mission
- Improved management information systems

The implementation budget for the project is €9.2 m, with a spend as of end-2016 of €871k.

**3.1.2. Finance Shared Services for the Education and Training Boards**

There are a variety of financial management systems in place across the 16 ETBs. Under the previous plan, an initial project team was formed and conducted a baselining exercise and business case for a financial management Shared Service across the ETB sector.

The project team have documented the current processes and are currently developing the future processes detailed requirements and target operating model. This work will be used to
define the functional and technical specifications for the software solution required to underpin the services.

Engagement has commenced with stakeholders such as OGCIO, OGP and the Comptroller and Auditor General to agree the detailed workings of the new solution. This work will all feed into the development of the RFT and the implementation of the project under this plan.

As part of the development of the business case, it was established that the sector would need interim steps to be taken to relieve the processing pressures on the sector. The project team engaged with the sector and have developed certain initiatives such as e-invoicing and a pilot purchase card process to help address processing volumes in advance of the full implementation of a Shared Services solution.

The business case also explored the impact of location on the various options under consideration, and it confirmed the benefits of a co-located solution with the payroll Shared Services project, thereby forming the basis of an Education Shared Business Services Centre.

It is expected that this project will complete the following steps during the life of this plan:

- Develop detailed requirements
  - Map current processes and deliverables
  - Develop a target operating model and future processes
  - Agree ICT strategy and approach
  - Agree procurement approach (if necessary)
- Develop Change Management, Communications and Transition Strategies and plans
- Agree the operational governance which will underpin the service to be provided
  - Develop and agree a Memorandum of Understanding, Service Management agreement and Schedule of services
  - Agree the funding model
- Complete any procurement processes and engage with the preferred suppliers
  - Draw down on existing frameworks or contracts where possible
- Develop a detailed design and detailed implementation plan
- Revise the target operating model and future processes based on the detailed design
- Build and test the systems and processes
- Train staff and train the client sector on the new processes
- Check alignment of systems, people and processes
- Implement the transition plan
- Embed the processes and move to operational governance

Among the financial and non-financial benefits to be realised are:

- Projected annual saving of €4.2 million or 23%
- Retained ETB finance staff (FTE) reduction of 190 from 275 to 85
- Single Finance Shared Services processing centre for all 16 ETBs
- Standardised set of processes and procedures on a single tech platform
- Improved governance
- Improved visibility and reporting across the entire finance function
- Improved procurement methodology
• Support for ETBs to focus on their core mission

The implementation budget for the project is €7.8m, with a spend to date of €385k.

3.1.3. HR/Payroll Shared Services for the Higher Education Sector

Data gathering and a baseline study on the feasibility of payroll Shared Services in Higher Education were conducted by the sector in 2014 and collated by a team of sectoral representatives and Departmental staff. In 2015, on the basis of the findings in the baseline study, a business case was compiled which found that a transactional Shared Services solution was the optimal solution for HR/payroll processing in the Higher Education Sector. It also recommended co-locating Higher Education payroll processing services with the ETB payroll processing services, thereby realising savings due to economies of scale.

Following on from the recommendation of the business case, it was decided that the first phase of implementation of the Higher Education HR/Payroll Shared Services Project (the initial ICT phase) will consist of a HR/payroll software upgrade of the Institutes of Technology (IoT) HR/payroll systems which were found to be in need of immediate upgrade.

This upgrade has been managed by the existing Higher Education applications ICT provider EduCampus, and an approach has been agreed that can facilitate the subsequent development of transactional Shared Services for the Higher Education HR/Payroll Shared Services Project.

The specifically recruited project manager and project team will work with the sector to advance this project through detailed analysis and design to ensure the future operating model meets the sector needs.

3.1.4. Finance Shared Services for the Higher Education Sector

It is also intended under this Plan to assess the possible delivery of financial management services across the Higher Education Sector through a Shared Services model. Subject to positive recommendations from a baseline and business case for financial management Shared Services in the sector, a project team will be formed to advance the optimal solution.

Under the Education and Training Sector Shared Services Plan 2014-2016, it was established that University Finance Directors had developed a comprehensive plan for moving progressively to leading practice in respect of financial management services across the sector. 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)
• piloting procure to pay initiatives for E-catalogues/marketplace portals, E-invoicing and invoice capturing technologies (Optical Character Recognition (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 Science Foundation Ireland and the Health Research Board which it is hoped will become a pilot that could be rolled out to all funding agencies).

The Institutes of Technology financial applications are already delivered on a shared technology platform, and there are plans to upgrade that platform as part of the ongoing EduCampus MIS Refresh project. 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.

The Department remains committed, as part of its Shared Services goals, to conducting an assessment of financial management services across the Higher Education Sector, and subject to positive findings from baseline and business case, proceeding to the implementation of the optimal solution for the sector.

3.1.5. **Upgrade of School Employees HR/Payroll to full Shared Services**

The Department of Education and Skills is responsible for the payment of salaries and pensions to schools staff both teaching and non-teaching who are, or were, employed in primary, secondary and Community and Comprehensive schools. It pays over 103,000 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. 100% 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 when compared to other public sector solutions and to international standards. The systems underpinning this service now require an upgrade. As with all Shared Service initiatives, the initial step will be to conduct a baseline and business case assessing the options open to the Department for the optimal delivery of these services into the future. It is expected that this project will involve an upgrade of the current systems and processes to full Shared Services standards.

In late 2016 a steering group was formed to oversee this project and DES specifically recruited project manager and project team will oversee this work.

It is expected that this project will complete the following steps during the life of this Plan:

- Set project scope
- Data gather and develop a base line
- Develop a business case looking at relevant alternative solutions
- Recommend a preferred solution and an outline implementation road map
- Negotiate multi-annual funding for the Shared Services project
- Commence implementation planning
- Develop detailed requirements
  - Map current processes and deliverables
  - Develop a target operating model and future processes
  - Agree ICT strategy and approach
  - Agree procurement approach (if necessary)
- Develop Change Management, Communications and Transition Strategies and plans
• Agree the operational governance which will underpin the service to be provided
  o Develop and agree a Memorandum of Understanding, Service Management agreement and Schedule of services
  o Agree the funding model
• Complete any procurement processes and engage with the preferred suppliers
  o Draw down on existing frameworks or contracts where possible
• Develop a detailed design and detailed implementation plan with supplier
• Revise the target operating model and future processes based on the detailed design
• Build and test the systems and processes
• Train staff as Shared Services providers and train the client sector on the new processes
• Check alignment of systems, people and processes
• Implement the transition plan
• Embed the processes and move to operational governance
• Monitor processes and track benefits
• Implement a continuous improvement programme driving operational change to meet clients’ needs.

3.1.6. *Pension Shared Services for the Education sector*

The Department of Education and Skills Pensions Unit, based in Athlone, administers the pension schemes for schools employees including teachers and special needs assistants. It also administers pensions for 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 the Department’s payroll system for school employees. Some records have been digitised and 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 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 ETBs, IoTs including Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), Universities, Colleges of Education and the agencies/bodies under the aegis of the Department.

The Department intends to assess the provision of these services for possible Shared Service delivery under this plan. This work will be scheduled for the latter part of this plan, as much of the work on the Departments HR/payroll projects needs to be progressed in order to inform the sector on the exact scope of this project.

3.1.7. *Support Department Participation in Civil Service Shared Service Initiatives*

The Department is actively participating in the Civil Service Shared Services programme. Since the publication of the *Education and Training Sector Shared Services Plan 2014-2016*, DES has participated in the planning and transition of transactional HR services to PeoplePoint and payroll services to the PSSC (Civil Services payroll Shared Service). Both these services are operational, and DES is working with the NSSO on process improvement and continuous improvement.
The NSSO Financial Management Shared Service (FMSS) project has been progressing over the life of the initial Shared Services plan. DES has been an active member of the working groups, design authority and governance groups, helping to define the future requirements from a functional and technical perspective. The project has recently engaged a preferred supplier for the software solution which will underpin the FMSS services, and DES will continue to be an active part of the client working groups, design authority and governance to help design and configure the solution.

The Department is running a programme of readiness projects to assist with the preparation for the move to FMSS. The first of these projects, the implementation of Purchase to Pay (P2P) Processes has been rolled out on a phased basis across the Department with the Planning and Building Unit (PBU) going live during the summer of 2016. The procurement needs of the PBU are the most complex ordering and procurement processes so the section has learned how its complex needs can be met in the future Shared Service solution. The implementation has since been rolled out for the IT unit and Corporate Services unit and the team are now looking at the roll out to other specialist areas.

The programme of preparation for FMSS will continue across the 2017-2020 plan as the Department of Education and Skills is scheduled for wave 3 of the FMSS implementation. The Shared Services advisor will provide support to the DES team and assist them in the preparation for Shared Services.

3.2. Shared Services Operations Development

The focus of the 2014-2016 plan was the investigation and evaluation of projects which the Education and Training Sector identified for possible Shared Service solutions. The 2017-2020 plan will support the implementation of those initiatives and develop the operational structures necessary to deliver those services.

3.2.1. Development of Management and Governance of Shared Services

The Department explored the development of Shared Services for the Education and Training Sector under the 2014-2016 Shared Services plan and agreed its strategy. It considered the possible structures for the development of Shared Services within the sector and concluded that a central management structure would be needed to manage the sector’s Shared Services initiatives.

No overarching body exists within the Education and Training Sector providing services to the whole of the sector, so the decision was taken that Shared Services would begin as an administrative arm of the Department, allowing time for the evaluation of the appropriate legal structures to be developed and put in place. This arm of the Department will be known as Education Shared Business Services (ESBS) and it will be supported by the Public Service Reform Programme Office in the first instance and by the other relevant units within the Department.

Under the 2017-2020 plan the Department will explore the relevant legal structures and governance required to underpin the individual Shared Services initiatives and the management support structures.

It is expected that the following steps will be taken to develop supports within the Department for the Shared Service initiatives:
Agree approaches to staffing and impacts on delegated sanction
Agree the approaches to accounting for the new services
Agree the approaches to governance and funding of the new services
Agree the approach to any IR matters which may arise
Agree the level of Departmental ICT support necessary for a particular initiative

Agree a plan for the development of the Shared Services organisation including:

- Agreeing the key roles required to manage the Shared Services organisation within the Education sector
- Agreeing the operational governance and funding for individual functions and the organisation
- Agreeing the legal relationship between the Department and the Shared Services organisation
- Agreeing the legal relationship between the Shared Services organisation and existing Shared Services initiatives and new projects
- Developing the Shared Services organisation as an umbrella management structure that ensures the common Shared Services goals of each initiative are aligned to maximise the benefits to the Education sector as a whole
- Agreeing common ICT requirements and an incremental deployment plan
- Agreeing common management of service providers

### 3.2.2. Leverage Existing ICT Infrastructure and Solutions

The 2014-2016 plan committed the Department to developing and leveraging existing Shared Services initiatives within the sector. As part of that commitment the ICT services being offered to the sector were reviewed. A decision was taken to wind down An Chéim, the provider of shared technology applications to the Institutes of Technology (IoT) and to bring that service under the management of a new company EduCampus. This new company was formed as a subsidiary of HEAnet, Ireland's National Education and Research Network provider, thus bringing the provision of IT services to the Education and Training Sector under a single structure.

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. In 2015 the Department of Education and Skills pledged a €210m investment in digital technology in schools, the largest investment of its kind. The Digital Strategy for Schools sets out the Department of Education and Skills’ vision and plan for enhancing teaching, learning and assessment through ICT.

The Strategy links with and complements major strategies of Government including the Action Plans for Education, and the Action Plan for Jobs, and also the ICT Skills Action Plan, and will help to develop the country’s economic potential. It sets out a comprehensive set of actions to be achieved from 2015 to 2020.

The Strategy is the result of extensive local and international research and involved extensive consultation and reflects the views of education stakeholders including young people. 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.

**HEAnet**

HEAnet is Ireland’s National Education and Research Network, providing Internet connectivity and shared ICT services to educational and research organisations throughout Ireland. The company was established in 1983 by the Irish Universities with the support of the Higher Education Authority. HEAnet originally addressed the network needs of the seven Universities and the Dublin Institute of Technology, but over time has expanded its network footprint to in excess of sixty clients including the thirteen Institutes of Technology, other publicly-funded colleges and research agencies, as well as Ireland’s primary and post-primary schools. HEAnet operates a nationwide high-speed broadband network that connects approximately 1,000,000 students, researchers and staff across first, second and third level education.

HEAnet is currently pursuing a number of Shared Services projects that build upon their existing services:

**100GB Backbone Network**

A key HEAnet network development over 2017-18 will be the upgrade of the national education and research network to accommodate aggregate bandwidth levels of up to 100Gb capacity. This will serve to accommodate the increasing bandwidth usage across the spectrum of: primary schools, post-primary schools, universities and higher education colleges, in addition to research bodies and agencies.

**Schools Connectivity Programmes**

DES ICT Policy Unit will continue to work with HEAnet in developing shared ICT services for schools. Since 2005, HEAnet have managed the Schools Broadband Network on behalf of the Department which extends to 4,000 (approx.) schools across Ireland.

**Identity Management**

HEAnet manages the *Edugate* identity federation on behalf of the Irish education and research community. *Edugate* enables users across the sector to access a growing range of online resources by using their home campus username and password.

**Cyber Security**

HEAnet continues to develop and offer security services to defend against malware and new security threats. A recent service development in this regard being Distributed Denial-of-Service mitigation which is now available to all HEAnet clients.

**Cloud Computing Competency Unit**

HEAnet recognises that its future Shared Services strategy must align with the changes taking place in the technological landscape. Cloud Computing is a disruptive business trend impacting all HEAnet clients, presenting major opportunities as well as significant risks. To support optimal and prudent adoption of cloud-based solutions, the intent of the *HEAnet Cloud Competency Unit* shall be to establish a central Shared Service unit offering professional services to the sector in terms of cloud technology assessment, cloud on-boarding, and mitigation of associated cyber risks.

**eduroam – WiFi Roaming Solution for Academia**

*eduroam* provides free and seamless access to WiFi for staff and students of the education and research community worldwide. The service enables a staff or student member to access
WiFi services (using their home institution credentials) across thousands of campus locations across 75 countries worldwide. HEAnet continue to extend the availability of eduroam in Ireland and, on foot of a recent agreement with the HSE, we are currently working with the HSE to extend the eduroam service to teaching hospitals across Ireland.

**Brokerage**

Under its Brokerage function, HEAnet strives to broker preferential pricing and improved service levels across a range of ICT products and services on behalf of the education and research sector. Building on this, HEAnet is targeting savings in excess of €3m annually over the term of the new strategic plan.

**GÉANT Cloud Catalogue**

HEAnet has been an active contributor to the GÉANT project which sets out to establish a pan-European procurement framework of Cloud Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IAAS) Providers. This framework should enable easier provision of cloud infrastructure services by the education and research community across Europe, including Ireland.

**EduCampus**

EduCampus, formerly known as An Chéim, is a subsidiary company of HEANet, and currently acts as a Shared Services ICT applications provider to the Institute of Technology (IoT) sector. EduCampus’ current portfolio of applications include a:

- HR/Payroll solution;
- Financial Management solution;
- Student Information system;
- Student Credentials solution; and
- Library Management system.

In 2016 EduCampus began a programme of work to upgrade its current solutions which had been inherited from An Chéim. This programme of work is known as the Management Information Systems (MIS) Refresh programme and it is expected that this programme of work will be completed by the end of 2019. This is an IT infrastructure project that is important to the continued functioning of IT services for key functions such as payroll, finance and student information (including grades and exam results) in the IoT Sector.

Under this plan for 2017-2020, the potential of expanding the services EduCampus can provide to the wider Higher Education Sector may be explored. As an initial development in this regard, the Department agreed to fund the first stage of the MIS refresh project for the HR/Payroll ICT applications that EduCampus provides to IoTs. This payroll software upgrade covers initially the EduCampus-operated IoT payroll system, but has the potential to subsequently serve the ICT needs of the previously referred to Higher Education Payroll Shared Services Project.

Additional consideration may be given to the potential of expanding HEAnet and EduCampus services to the wider education sector over the life of this plan.

**3.2.3. Procuring and deploying Common Corporate Technologies**

During the initial plan for 2014-2016, the Department engaged with OGCIIO to develop its strategy and approach to ICT deployment related to Shared Services. It also ran an evaluation of the some of the ICT solutions currently supporting the Education and Training Sector and
an evaluation of IT services across the Department. The findings were that the Department had only been in a position to just keep the existing services operational during the period of economic and fiscal retrenchment. These existing services now need an extensive programme of investment and where feasible, the Department will consider an upgrade to Shared Service provision for these services (the main projects have been noted in the transactional projects above). In addition to identifying areas that required investment, this work also confirmed that the Department, and wider Public Sector, is struggling to hold onto in-house resources to support the provision of IT services. These findings informed the Departments approach to ICT Shared Service solutions.

In line with the Public Service ICT Strategy, the Department’s Shared Services projects and programme will reflect the five key strategic objectives: Build to Share, Digital First, Data as an Enabler, Improve Governance, Increase Capability. Where possible the Department will:

- Look for off-the-shelf applications to underpin the transactions Shared Service processes
- Use managed service solutions
- Use external supplier support for the applications
- Agree and approve the underlying principals
- Address the common ICT infrastructure and technology needs for Shared Service projects such as:
  - Telephony
  - Business Intelligence (BI)
  - Customer relationship management (CRM)
  - Case management
  - Document management systems
  - Network connectivity
  - Internet extranet
  - Remote access
  - Site connectivity and configuration including
    - PCs and devices
    - Email
    - Wireless
    - Servers, etc.
- Agree and approve the basic requirements for the future technology landscape, where possible
  - Ensuring integration
  - Minimising duplication of effort
  - Facilitating customer needs
  - Facilitating the needs of the Shared Services teams
- Agree and approve the approach to
  - Disaster recovery
  - Interface maintenance and support
  - Standard reporting
  - Management and control of user access rights
  - Support and maintenance of systems and tools
  - User acceptance testing
  - Change control
• Management of ICT service providers
  • Agree approach to procurement and where possible use existing frameworks and contracts.

This approach will ensure that Shared Services projects and operations are not limited by the skills of the resources available within the Education and Training Sector. It will allow the sector to benefit from the supplier investment in technology solutions.

3.2.4. **Assess Future Potential of Existing Initiatives**

Under the initial 2014-2016 Plan, the Department committed to assessing existing initiatives for future potential. A proposal was made by SUSI the single awarding authority for student grant applications to upgrade the systems underpinning their grants processing Shared Service. This proposal was considered and approved. A project Manager was appointed and a project is underway for the implementation of an Integrated Grants Processing System (IGPS). Under the 2017-2020 Plan, this project will be brought to completion and implemented, providing the Education and Training Sector with an integrated solution for its Shared Service grants processing.

The Department further commits to assessing other existing initiatives for future development under this plan. This will allow for the development or expansion of services should the assessment be validated and approved.

3.3. **Procurement Shared Services Development**

As part of the Government’s procurement reform programme, it is expected that, over time, procurement within the Education and Training Sector will largely be dealt with through OGP and the Education and Training Sector initiatives that the Department has developed under the initial Shared Services Plan. The Department and its’ organisations in the wider Education and Training Sector are actively engaged in supporting the implementation of the Procurement Reform Programme.

The centralised procurement model, which operates under the management of OGP, splits procurement for the Public Sector into central categories of goods/services which OGP sources for the whole of the Public Sector, and sector-specific categories which are handled by Education, Health, Local Government and Defence on behalf of the whole Public Sector.

In 2014 the Education Procurement Service (EPS) was mandated to act as the ‘Education Sector Hub.’ This is the term given to the sector specific units under the OGP model. The EPS procures sector specific goods/services on behalf of the sector and manages two categories and library procurement on behalf of OGP under the central procurement model. It also represents the Education and Training Sector needs with OGP, providing a voice for the sector at OGP executive level. The sector is working with OGP to agree a Memorandum of Understanding underpinning this relationship and the Department continues to work to ensure that the Hub is appropriately resourced to deliver on its programme of work and strategy into the future.

In addition to this, the Schools Procurement Unit (SPU) was established in May 2014 to support the schools sector and assist it in its engagement and compliance with the new centralised procurement model. Centralised procurement is a major change programme for the schools sector, and the SPU is assisting the sector to ensure that it can benefit from OGP.
initiatives. A similar function is provided for the ETBs by the Public Service Reform (PSR) Manager based in ETBI.

The Public Service Reform (PSR) Unit was established in ETBI in 2010 to support ETB’s through the Public Service Reform agenda, including procurement. The PSR Manager facilitates ETB participation in OGP contracts and frameworks, leads sector specific projects and provides advice and guidance to the ETB’s.

To coordinate procurement across the Education and Training Sector, an Education Procurement Network has been established by the Department so that the Department, Agencies and sub sectors initiatives can all align their needs within the OGP model.

The Department’s ultimate intention is to integrate these resources under one entity as part of the procurement function of the proposed Education Shared Business Services (ESBS) Organisation. This development will be explored under this plan.

**Education Procurement Service (EPS)**

The EPS’s remit includes the promotion of the Government’s Procurement Reform Programme, the aggregation of requirements from the Higher Education Sector, and the encouragement of centralised sourcing. It undertakes procurement on behalf of the wider public service for Laboratory Equipment, Agriculture and Veterinary Supplies and the Procurement of library materials for the Public Sector. It also procures education specific goods and services for the wider Education and Training Sector, when necessary.²

The EPS has estimated achieved forecast secured savings from sourcing exercises of:

- €2.4m in 2014
- €2.8m in 2015
- €3.1 m in 2016

These savings are based on the categories of Agriculture and Veterinary; Laboratory Equipment; and Library materials. Other savings on centralised procurement for the Education Sector are reported through OGP – these include utilities, stationery and IT, for example.

**Schools Procurement Unit (SPU)**

The SPU was established by the Department in 2014 as the central support resource for all primary and post-primary schools (excluding ETB schools) on procurement-related issues. Located within the Joint Managerial Bodies Secretariat (JMB) headquarters in Milltown, the SPU has been active in providing advice and assistance to schools to improve their processes and practices in order that they manage their procurement efforts in an effective and compliant manner. The Unit assists schools to draft procurement documents; provides guidance on how to manage tender evaluation and contract award processes. It also visits schools to provide supportive procurement ‘health-checks’. Over its existence, the SPU has

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² In late 2016, the EPS was awarded ‘Procurement Team of the Year’ at the National Procurement and Supply Chain Awards, as recognition for the role played by it as Education sector hub under OGP’s central procurement model.
collaborated in, and presented at, a series of school-focused events to positive effect in terms of spreading the importance of compliance with centralised procurement.

**Future Procurement structures under Shared Services**

Ultimately, the Department’s Shared Services Strategy envisages a single procurement Shared Service for the Education and Training Sector. The Department views the EPS and SPU as being a constituent part of its future ESBS Organisation, with responsibility for ensuring procurement support and compliance across the Education sector. This scenario envisages the current sectoral offerings being ultimately combined into one body.

As part of this plan, the Department will consider how best to further develop procurement within the Education and Training Sector and to align and streamline the governance of the various resources as part of its Shared Services offering. The achievement of this is a medium-to-long term goal given that the development of ESBS organisation is currently at the planning and design stage.

### 3.4. Centres of Excellence

The concept of a Centre of Excellence emerged in line with the Shared Service model, focusing on abilities and professional knowledge rather than high volume standardised processing. A Centre of Excellence refers to a team, a shared facility or an entity that provides leadership, best practices, research, support and/or training for a focus area. The focus area might be a technology, a business concept (for example, Business Process Management), a skill (negotiation, legal support, quality assurance) or a broad area of study (such as learning and development). Centres of Excellence deliver services that need deep and specialised knowledge. The term may also refer to a network of institutions collaborating with each other to pursue excellence in a particular area.

The initial 2014-2016 Plan identified a number of existing solutions across the Education and Training Sector and committed to explore the possibility of a number of projects for assessment and implementation. The key projects which carry forward under this current plan are outlined here and the Department will continue to assess future initiatives for provision under this service delivery method on an as needs basis.

#### 3.4.1. Financial Shared Services Support Unit (FSSU)

The Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU) was set up in 2006 to provide a support mechanism for all voluntary secondary schools to enable them comply with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 in terms of accountability, transparency and financial responsibility for State funds. The FSSU currently provides financial support services to 375 voluntary secondary schools.

Its role and objectives include:

- Providing an advice and support service for the schools on all aspects of financial management and control. As part of this process standardised procedures and accounting formats have been developed.
- Receiving annual accounts from schools.
- Carrying out such audits as may be required.
The operating costs, including the employment of a director, accountants, support staff and overheads, is met by the Department of Education and Skills.

Expansion to Primary level
Preparatory work began in 2016 to facilitate the commencement of the FSSU service at primary level on a phased basis from September 2017. The Department is planning to put in place arrangements to strengthen and support the existing financial governance arrangements at primary level. It is considered the type of service currently provided by the FSSU to voluntary secondary schools is a good exemplar of the type of service that it would be desirable to have available to primary schools, adjusted as appropriate to reflect the needs of the primary sector.

The FSSU will, when fully operational, provide the same role and functions for the primary sector as it currently provides to the voluntary secondary sector.

In terms of next steps, the FSSU will complete the recruitment of the staff necessary to expand the service in 2017, while developing guidance for primary schools on financial matters including standardised national format for school accounts. The FSSU will then commence service at primary level. It is anticipated a circular will be issued to schools in September 2017. It is envisaged that the initial rollout of the FSSU service at primary level will involve it operating from two regional locations – Maynooth and Cork.

3.4.2. ETB Legal Services Support Unit
An ETB Legal Services Support Unit (LSSU) has been established within ETBI for a period of 3 years with a review to take place after 18 months to assess the effectiveness of the Unit. The LSSU will provide a range of legal services to the ETB sector and will provide a central point of contact for advice and guidance to ETBs on legal matters with a view to minimising the risk of similar cases being taken across the sector. It will also support the compliant and effective procurement of legal services in the ETB Sector.

The new unit will support ETBs in procuring from OGP’s Legal Services Framework Agreement (LFSA) and where significant contract management issues arise the LSSU will be the point of escalation, liaising with service suppliers and other stakeholders on behalf of ETBs to implement corrective action when required.

The Department commits to continue to assess other services for provision as a centre of excellence under this plan.

3.5. Alternative Models of Service Delivery (AMSD) and External Service Delivery (ESD)
Traditional public sector models generally involve the direct delivery of services by government departments or agencies. AMSD extend beyond the direct provision of services by the public sector, to the private sector and/or not-for-profit organisations. AMSD is not a new concept and have been implemented internationally for a number of years.

The AMSD Unit was established within the Reform and Delivery Office of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in 2012. The Programme for Government contains commitments to identify and eliminate non-priority programmes and to deliver non-critical functions using innovative and alternative models. The Government also pledges to open up the delivery of public services to a range of providers. The Public Service Reform Plan also
commits to identifying and evaluating new business models and opportunities to support the
delivery of a range of non-core processes or services.

In the Public Service Reform Plan the Government gave an undertaking to promote much
greater use of alternative models of service delivery. This includes a comprehensive cross-
Government requirement for the production of detailed ESD plans as part of the reform
agenda.

The Department of Education and Skills published its ESD plan in 2014 and has explored a
number of initial areas for possible external service delivery. AMSD and ESD projects are
managed by the relevant line section in the Department of Education and Skills and co-
ordinated and reported on through the Public Service Reform Programme Office.

The Department commits to considering the appropriate delivery model for all new initiatives.
The types of AMSD delivery which are being considered are:

1) Joint Ventures
These are arrangements where two or more organisations enter into a formal
arrangement to achieve a shared objective by contributing resources and sharing the
risk and reward. These ventures can be with other public organisations or with private
organisations. In the Education Sector such arrangements have been used in school
and higher education infrastructure design, construction and maintenance.

2) Managed Services
The transfer of a corporate function from public provision to an external expert
provider. The external provider then delivers that service on behalf of the public sector
and the relationship is managed through service level agreements. This form of service
delivery has been used to provide certain ICT services and customer service support
in the Education sector.

3) Government owned contractor operated
The public sector retains ownership of key assets and property but contracts out the
management and operation of the service to an external provider.

4) Public Service Mutual
An organisation which is formed by the public sector for a specific purpose and is given
its own legal form under specified guarantees so that the service is provided for the
benefit of the public sector organisations. An example of this would be Irish Public
Bodies Insurance. This body was created to provide insurance services to the Local
Government sector and the ETBs.

3.5.1. External Service Delivery Projects
The Education and Training Sector has a long and successful track record in the use of ESD
models. Some of the services and projects delivered through ESD are:

- School and higher education infrastructure design, construction and maintenance
  which also includes a number of Public Private Partnership arrangements;
- Education and training courses in the further Education and Training Sector and the
  Higher Education Sector;
- An Employee Assistance Service for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants and their
  families;
• School transport services; and
• Back office and corporate service type functions such as ICT support, payroll, audit, legal services, waste management, security and cleaning in various education providers and agencies.

Under the External Service Delivery Plan for 2014-2016, a body of work examining the wider use of ESD within the Education and Training Sector was conducted. A number of initiatives were evaluated under the Plan and in the majority of cases it was established that ESD was not the appropriate solution. The Report did identify a number of trends and observations in the course of the audit. It recommended that, in common with the method taken by other Departments in the development of their respective ESD Plans, that a reporting mechanism be developed and put in place to monitor the range of services currently outsourced within the Education and Training Sector. This will allow, over time, a picture to be built up of what ESD exists in the sector currently and where ESD could possibly be expanded within the sector.

The report also found that there appears to be little scope for expansion of service delivery in the areas of waste management, office cleaning and security, and that the area where the Education and Training Sector has had the most success with ESD is Facilities Management.

The Department currently engages external service providers for many corporate functions and business supports. Across the schools sector, and in many of the larger institutions in the Higher Education Sector, a number of facilities management services are currently delivered by external providers. A number of the universities, for example, have outsourced cleaning services, buildings maintenance services and security services. Based on the survey conducted for the 2014-2016 plan the spend on these services is €10.3 million, €3.6 million and €3.2 million respectively per annum.

Consideration will be given to assess the potential to accurately monitor/survey, the facilities management services that are currently outsourced across the Education and Training Sector, on an annual basis.

3.5.1.1. Payments in Schools

Schools are responsible for handling a huge range of incoming and outgoing payments, such as voluntary/administration fees, book rental schemes, school trips, etc. from parents. Cash and cheques appear to be the dominant way incoming payments in particular are made, despite the growth of alternative options in other countries. Teachers and administrative staff face a number of issues with organising these payments including administrative workload, cash security risk, reconciliation of payments and maintaining an audit trail.

The Department has explored the potential of electronic payments systems to offer parents the option to pay fees to schools electronically, this would give parents other options than payment by means other than cash or cheque. This follows on from the Central Bank Recommendation, under the 2014 National Payments Plan, that the Department of Education and Skills establish a national programme with the objective that all schools offer parents the choice to make payments by electronic means.

The study has identified that the market is providing a number of different solutions to schools at present, while at the same time underlining the fact that there is no ‘one size fits
all’ solution. Therefore 100 schools have been identified to take part in a pilot payments project and work has commenced to procure a solution for this pilot scheme.

If successful, the solution for this pilot will handle all types and methods of payment. This solution could then be made available to schools of all sizes.
### 4. Action Plan for Education: Shared Services Plan Actions 2017-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Delivered By</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengthen DES management systems through Shared Services</strong></td>
<td>2017 -2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree the DES Shared Service Strategy</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>DES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publish the Shared Services plan 2017-2020 for the Department and the Education and Training Sector in line with DES Shared Service Strategy</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>DES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve the quality of services across the sector through the introduction of Shared Services, in line with the Shared Services Plan</td>
<td>2017-2020</td>
<td>DES</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Support the Department implementation of Civil Service shared services</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Embed the use of Financial Shared Services in DES</td>
<td>2017-2020</td>
<td>DES, DPER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake ‘Shared Services ready’ projects within DES and participate in ‘build and test’ phases of the overall project</td>
<td>2017-2020</td>
<td>DES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commence change impact assessment within the DES</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>DES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move the Department’s finance and accounting transactions to the Financial Shared Services Centre</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>DES, DPER</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education Shared Business Services (ESBS)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish Education Shared Business Services (ESBS)</td>
<td>2017-2020</td>
<td>DES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop operational site for new ESBS functions</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>DES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree supports from the Department for the new services</td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>DES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop operational governance for initial Shared Service projects</td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>DES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commence the development of the management structures for Shared Services</td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>DES</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Procurement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Further develop the Education Sector Procurement hub and the sectoral procurement initiatives to maximise the benefits of centralised procurement for all parts of the sector from schools through to Higher Education Institutions</td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>DES, EPS, SPU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improve the quality of services across the sector through the introduction of Shared Services</strong></td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>DES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare business cases for the upgrade the Department’s Payroll and Pensions functions to a Shared Service standard to yield significant efficiencies and better outcomes for the Department and customers</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>DES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* This action has been split into two discrete projects as outlined in the body of this plan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Delivered By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upgrade ICT systems for Higher Education HR/Payroll to support the Shared Service agenda</td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>DES, EduCampus, HEIs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate engagement with the ETB sector in relation to the next phase of the organisation design</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>DES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a plan to support and enable continued integration across the ETB sector and prepare for the advent of Shared Services</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>DES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a Legal Shared Services Centre of Excellence to support to support the ETB sector</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>DES, ETBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect the ETBs’ head offices and training centres to one network provider, Government Networks, allowing inter-office connectivity and future agreements for associated services, such as VOIP</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>DES, ETBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin the phased implementation of Payroll Shared Service for ETBs</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>DES, ETBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin the phased implementation of Finance Shared Service for ETBs</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>DES, ETBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued support for the school employee payrolls to provide for statutory changes, new or changes to existing policies etc.</td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>DES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support the rollout of the Financial Services Support unit (FSSU) to the primary schools sector</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>DES, FSSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit initial staff for provision of FSSU service at primary level</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>DES, FSSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop guidance for primary schools on financial matters including standardised national format for school accounts</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>DES, FSSU</td>
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APPENDIX 1: Bodies Under the Aegis of the Department

An Chomhairle um Oideachais Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)
Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (CICA)
Educational Research Centre (ERC)
Grangegorman Development Agency (GGDA)
Higher Education Authority (HEA)
Irish Research Council (IRC)
Léargas – the Exchange Bureau
National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE)
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)
National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB)
Residential Institutions Review Committee (RIRC)
Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board/RISF – Caranua
Skillnets Ltd
An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS)
State Examinations Commission (SEC)
The Teaching Council
APPENDIX 2: 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 the Department’s Shared Service plans for 2014-2016. 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.

It was 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. An example would be the Janet network in the UK 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 and Education Networks) exist in the majority of countries around the world. Further information on European NRENs can be obtained in the Terena Compendium.³

A 2008 report 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.⁴ Further information on the Shared Services reviewed can be found in the initial Shared Services Plan 2014-2016. Furthermore, as part of the planning process, each Shared Services project under the auspices of this Plan investigates the relevant comparators both nationally and internationally.

A study of Shared Services in the Irish Public Service and Internationally, compiled by Deloitte on behalf of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in November 2015, provided a brief overview of Shared Service developments to date in the Irish public service and in other countries with good experience of developing same:⁵

| Ireland | Since the publication of the 2011 Public Service Reform Plan, four central Shared Services organisations have been established, with more planned. Those established include: PeoplePoint (the HR and pensions administration Shared Service Centre) and the PSSC (the Payroll Shared Service Centre) in |

³ See http://www.terena.org/activities/compendium/
⁵ An Examination of Shared Services in the Irish Public Service and Internationally, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, November 2015, http://www.per.gov.ie/en/research-into-shared-services-in-irish-public-service
the Civil Service; and Health Business Services (for the HSE) and MyPay (the Local Government Payroll and Superannuation Shared Service Centre) in the Public Service.

**Denmark**  
The Danish Government first introduced Shared Services in the mid to late 1990s, largely as a result of a focus on efficiencies. In the early 2000s, a common system and Finance Shared Services for all of government was introduced. HR and Payroll Shared Services was also created at approximately this time and ICT Shared Services in approximately 2006. The Health and Education sectors established HR, Finance and ICT Shared Services and Local Government have also been exploring Shared Services, but mostly in mission support and not corporate services.

**Finland**  
The Finnish Government’s Shared Service journey began in 2003, the impetus being a lack of sufficient ICT skills and the need to increase efficiencies to counterbalance high rates of retirement. In 2006, five Shared Service centres were established to deliver Finance and Payroll services to all government agencies and ministries; four locations were later consolidated and continue to migrate to a common platform. More recently, the central government has also implemented Shared Services for ICT, Real Estate, and Procurement.

**Portugal**  
Portugal began implementing Shared Services for Procurement, HR and ICT, though on a small scale, approximately 15 years ago, when the government implemented new organisational structures across Departments and a strategy for public sector Shared Services in ICT. In 2012, eSPap was created under the Ministry of Finance, tasked with developing tools and supporting the implementation of Finance, HR, Procurement, Fleet Management, and ICT Shared Services across the Health, Education, Local and Civil Service sectors. Finance, HR and ICT Shared Services has been implemented at the Civil Service level. Local Government has plans to implement HR, Finance, ICT and PMO Shared Services.

**UK**  
Following the Gershon Efficiency Review in 2004, the UK Government moved to try and deliver cost savings and improve standardisation via a number of means including Shared Services. By 2011, eight Shared Service centres had been established, providing Finance, HR, Procurement and Payroll service. In 2011, the Government introduced a new vision, the ‘Next Generation Shared Services Programme’, to drive efficiencies and further rationalise service providers. Services are now delivered from five Shared Service centres by a combination of public sector and private sector service providers. Local government has implemented Shared Services in various locations, with a number of county councils partnering in Shared Services.

**Australia**  
In 2010, the Australian Government rationalised Finance systems by consolidating agencies into clusters with one system. These Shared Services arrangements had varying degrees of success, with some clusters more mature today than others. Since 2010, Shared Services has been adopted in an ad hoc fashion. 2014 saw the introduction of the Contestability Programme, with the objective of reviewing government programmes to determine whether alternative service delivery models would deliver services more efficiently. Some local (state) government Shared Services
initiatives have been implemented, with varying degrees of success.

**Canada**
The Canadian Government commenced development of Shared Services with the transformation of Payroll and Pension administration to more easily meet policy and legislative requirements and enable cost savings. A common pay and pension system now delivers services to pensioners and employees. Shared Services Canada was established in 2011 to deliver shared ICT services. Finance system improvement has been completed sporadically, and HR is under review. The Province of British Columbia began implementing Shared Services in early 2000, and New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Ontario have also implemented or plan to implement Shared Services.

**USA**
The US Government began investigating Shared Services developments in the 1980s, by the Office of Management and Budget, in an attempt to decrease the number of duplicate systems and move to a more electronic based administrative processing. EPayroll, which consolidated 26 disparate payroll systems, was created in 2002. The 2005 Management Agenda from the President designated corporate services as ‘Lines of Business’ and Departments and Agencies were directed to select from a designated list of service providers for each function. A number of state governments, such as the states of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, have also implemented Shared Services.
APPENDIX 3: Glossary of Terms

Action Plan for Education
The Department of Education and Skill’s Action Plan for Education 2016-2019 sets out the mission, vision, values and goals that will underpin the Department’s high level work programme for the next three years. This Strategy aims to ensure the provision of the infrastructure required for a high quality education and training system that will support Ireland’s social, employment and economic recovery.

Alternative Models of Service Delivery (AMSD)
Traditional public sector models generally involve the direct delivery of services by government departments or agencies. AMSD extend beyond the direct provision of services by the public sector, to encompass joint ventures, managed services, government controlled contractor managed and Public Service mutual solutions.

Baseline
A baseline provides reference levels against which an entity is monitored and controlled. Baselines help the planning of Programme and Project information. The completion and approval of the set of documents in each baseline represents a step forward in the development of the programme/project. Reviews of effectiveness can be scheduled; for example, the governance baseline could be reviewed as part of a health check. Classification helps programme/project teams understand their purpose and maintenance regimes; for example, management information is in constant use, so the management baseline would be regularly updated, whereas the boundary baseline would be relatively stable, with a change potentially having a major impact on the programme/project’s viability. Baselines of documents interrelate; if one is changed, the impact on the others should be considered. A baseline exercise commonly takes place in advance of a Business Case being developed.

Business Case
Good practice is that all projects should develop a Business Case which sets out the context, purpose, and objectives, including benefits, resource requirements, costed options and risk profile, in order to assess its viability and make appropriate management decisions about its continued viability.

Large-scale, complex projects require a detailed business case to be developed and approved before moving to implementation. The Public Spending Code provides guidance on the development of Business Cases for these projects. The level of detail required is dependent on the cost, scale and risk involved in the project. The Business Case is referenced and reviewed throughout the lifecycle of the project to ensure continued relevance.

Business Process Improvement (BPI)
Business process improvement (BPI) is a strategic planning methodology aimed at identifying the operations or employee skills that could be improved to encourage smoother procedures, more efficient workflow and overall business growth. This process can also be referred to as functional process improvement.

The purpose of business process improvement is to meet customer demands and business goals more effectively. Rather than drawing out change management in incremental steps, BPI seeks to bring drastic transformation in an organisation’s performance. Process mapping,
which assesses business operations to pinpoint problem areas and adjust workflow, is often the first step in a larger business process improvement effort.

**Centre of Excellence**
The term ‘Centre of Excellence’ refers to a team, a shared facility or an entity that provides leadership, best practices, research, support and/or training for a focus area. The focus area might be a technology, a business concept (for example, Business Process Management), a skill (negotiation, legal support, quality assurance) or a broad area of study (such as learning and development). Centres of Excellence deliver services that need deep and specialised knowledge. The term may also refer to a network of institutions collaborating with each other to pursue excellence in a particular area.

**Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA)**
A CBA is the process of quantifying costs and benefits of a decision, programme, or project (over a certain period), and those of its alternatives (within the same period), in order to have a single scale of comparison for unbiased evaluation. For large scale complex projects the CBA is one of the methods used in the Business Case. CBA estimates the net present value (NPV) of a decision by discounting the investment and returns. Though employed mainly in financial analysis, a CBA is not limited to monetary considerations only. It often includes those environmental and social costs and benefits that can be reasonably quantified.

**Education and Training Sector**
The term used to describe the entire sector. It includes providers such as schools and institutions and encompasses early years education, primary and second level education, further education and training, and higher education. The term also refers to functions provided by the Department, bodies under the aegis of the Department, and supports for research and international education.

**Education and Training Reform Board (ETRB)**
The ETRB is collectively responsible for ensuring the delivery of the Department’s Integrated Reform Delivery Plan (IRDP). The ETRB oversees and monitors the planning, implementation and review of the reform programme at a strategic level and provides clear leadership and direction throughout the programme lifecycle. Membership of the Board includes all members of the Department of Education and Skills Management Board and the Board is chaired by the Secretary General.

**External Service Delivery (ESD)**
External Service Delivery involves the contractual engagement of an external provider to fulfil a function which was previously provided through direct provision. Although the service under contract is provided externally, the public service body that is engaged in the contract (known as the ‘contracting authority’) is still accountable for the delivery of the service.

**Integrated Reform Delivery Plan (IRDP)**
As part of the Government’s Public Service Reform Programme Plan, the Department of Education and Skills has developed an Integrated Reform Delivery Plan (IRDP) for the Education and Training Sector. The plan sets out the major Education and Training Sector specific reform projects underway, alongside implementation of the key cross-cutting elements of the Public Service Reform Plans. The Department reports to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and to the Cabinet Committee on Public Service Reform on progress in implementing these plans on a regular basis.
Metrics
Metrics are parameters or measures of quantitative assessment used for measurement, comparison or to track performance or production. In project management, metrics are normally set in relation to benefits. Project managers are asked through the planning stages or business case to identify the benefits that a project is being designed to bring about. Metrics are used to measure the benefits. For example, if the benefit identified is to increase the efficiency of a process the metric might be the number of weeks taken to complete a process.

National Shared Services Office
The National Shared Services Office (NSSO) is responsible for delivering Shared Services within the Civil Service and setting standards and implementing government policy for Shared Services across the Public Service in Ireland. It is currently an administrative office within the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, set up as part of the Government’s reform programme.

Programme Board
A Programme Board has responsibility for an overall Shared Services programme, including the portfolio of related or subsidiary projects. The Programme Board is responsible for ensuring that the portfolio of projects is relevant to the overall programme plan. Membership of the board includes senior staff from the Department and may include representatives from key external stakeholder groups. The Programme Board approve Programme Plans. They may choose to approve individual project plans and may set the tolerances and parameters for these. The Programme Board receive regular (quarterly) project and programme updates.

Programme for Government (PfG)
The Programme for Government is a statement of the Government’s key priorities and targets. The Department’s Statement of Strategy and Reform Programme reflect the PfG commitments for which that Department is responsible. The Government, through the Programme for Government Office monitors progress against commitments in the PfG across all Departments and reports and updates on priorities annually.

Public Service Reform Programme Office
The Public Service Reform Programme Office (PSR, Programme Office) oversees the development and support the implementation of the Department of Education and Skills’Integrated Reform Delivery Plan (IRDP). The PSR Programme Office encourages and supports common programme and project management structures, governance and methodologies across the Department and the Sector to ensure planning, monitoring and control that are fit for purpose and which support the Department in delivering on its reform agenda.

Public Spending Code
The Public Spending Code is the set of rules and procedures upheld across the Irish Public Service ensuring the obligation of all Irish public bodies to treat public funds with care, and to ensure that the best possible value-for-money is obtained whenever public money is being spent or invested. The Code brings together in one place all of the elements of the value-for-money framework that has been in force up to now, updated and reformed in some respects. The Code is maintained on this website under the management of the Central Expenditure
Evaluation Unit (CEEU) of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform as a resource for the entire Irish public service.

**Shared Services**
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. It is defined in this Plan as the consolidation of corporate services into a Shared Services Centre administered by the Public Service, to enable increased standardisation, efficiency, purchasing power, service quality, automation, and control. The move to Shared Services allows organisations to focus retained resources on core activities.

**Stakeholder**
Stakeholders are individuals or groups who are not part of the project management team, but who may need to interact with the project or who may be affected by the project’s outcome. These people may:

- Support or oppose the project;
- Gain or lose as a result of project delivery;
- See the project as a threat or enhancement to their position;
- Become active supporters or blockers of the project and its progress.

**Stakeholder Engagement**
Stakeholder engagement is the process of identifying and communicating effectively with those individuals or groups who have an interest or influence on the project’s outcome. It is usually carried out at the Programme level. All projects need to have some level of some stakeholder engagement, particularly if not part of a programme.

Parties external to the project management team can exert a powerful influence on a project. Effective communication with key stakeholders, both internal and external to the corporate organisation, is essential to the project’s success.

**Statutory Obligation**
Statutory obligations are those obligations that do not arise out of a contract, but are imposed by law.