

HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

2014-2016

1. Context – National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 recommends that a steering and performance based framework for the system governance of higher education in Ireland¹ is put in place. This framework, which is summarised in fig. 1.1 sets out the areas of responsibility for setting national priorities of Government and related short to medium term objectives for the higher education system.

The HEA will use this framework as the context for conducting a process of strategic dialogue with individual institutions where institutions will agree performance compacts with the HEA with institutional KPIs reflecting their contribution to overall system objectives.

The system performance framework is multi-purpose. The purposes of the framework can be summarised as follows:

- To hold the system accountable for performance for the delivery of national priorities and monitor performance of the system as a whole;
- To articulate all the expectations on the system of different areas of government/agencies across the various dimensions of higher education activity;
- To increase the visibility of performance of the system to Government and the wider public;
- To contribute to system and policy development by highlighting structural and other deficits including data capacity;
- To allow HEIs to identify their strategic niche and mission and agree a performance compact aligned with funding with the Higher Education Authority

1.1 Development of high level system indicators

A set of high level system indicators and monitoring sub-indicators have now been developed and agreed across relevant Government departments and agencies. They have been informed by international best practice². The indicators have been chosen to reflect the purposes of the framework and to form the basis for the HEA to assess how well the system is performing in relation to each system objective. It is recognised that they will need to be analysed within the context of the overall strategy, so as not to create perverse impacts. The indicators range from targets set and agreed by Government in both national and international policy contexts, to more descriptive indicators included to reflect the level of different kinds of activity in the system while being agnostic to their extent. International benchmarks have been included where appropriate to reflect Irish system performance in both the EU and wider OECD context.

Also included in the tables are “*essential deliverables*”, these being various structures, processes, mechanisms, policy and legal instruments which must be put in place or further developed if the desired outcomes are to be achieved. These will form an essential component of the contextual analysis of the HEA, who will report back to the Minister for Education and Skills on an annual basis in a system performance report. The indicators will

¹ Recommendation 17, National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, January 2011

² Constructing an indicator system or scorecard for higher education, a practical guide, UNESCO

be kept under review by the Department and the Higher Education Authority as the system performance framework is rolled out over the coming period.

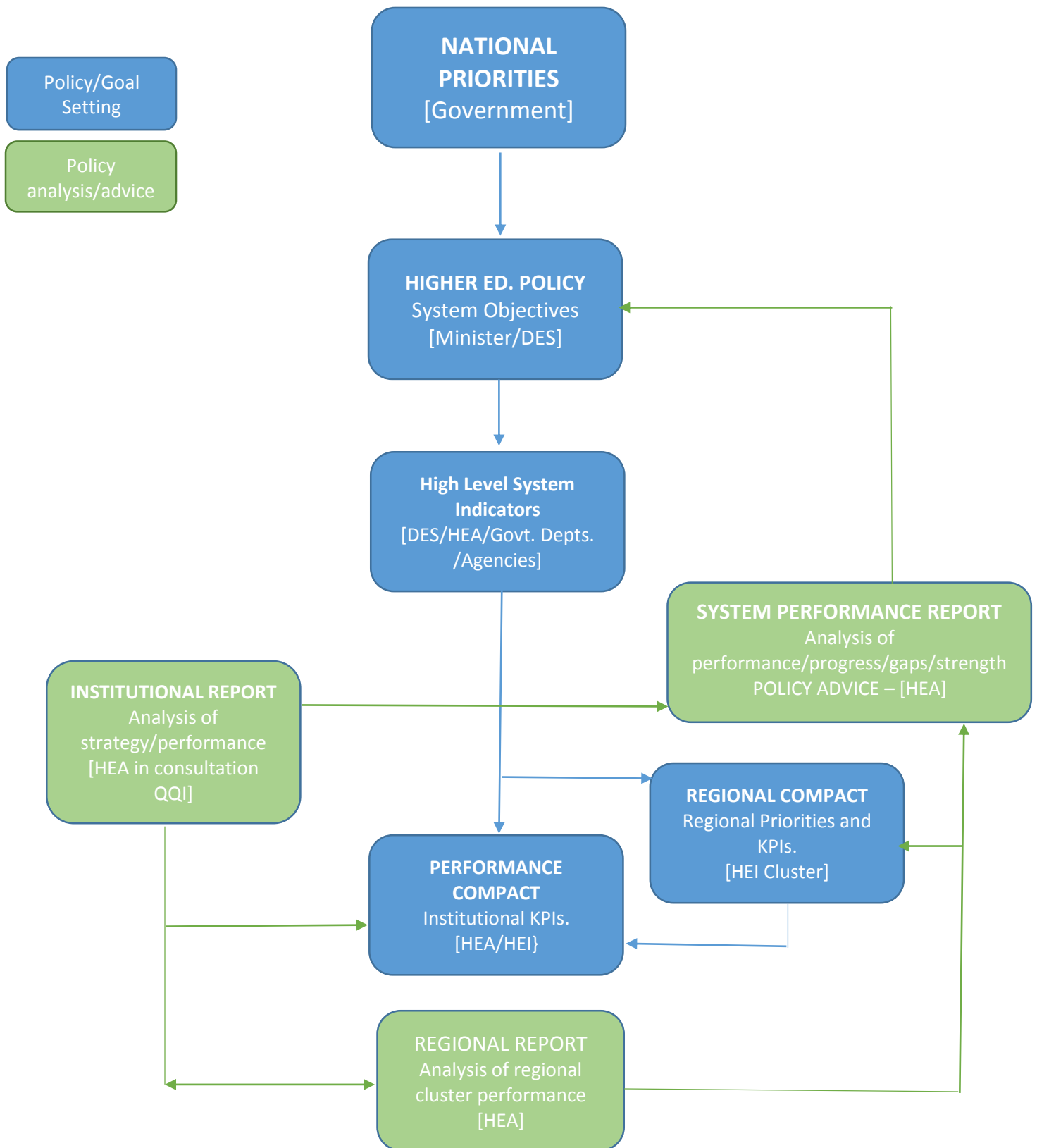
2. National Priorities

As noted by Government, national priorities and key system objectives for the period 2014-2016 are as follows:

1. Economic renewal and development at national and regional levels
2. Social cohesion, cultural development and equity at national and regional levels
3. Public sector reform towards greater effectiveness and efficiency
4. Restoration of Ireland's international reputation

2.1 Key system objectives for 2014-16:

1. To meet Ireland's human capital needs across the spectrum of skills by engaged institutions through a diverse mix of provision across the system and through both core funding and specifically targeted initiatives;
2. To promote access for disadvantaged groups and to put in place coherent pathways from second level education, from further education and other non-traditional entry routes;
3. To promote excellence in teaching and learning to underpin a high quality student experience;
4. To maintain an open and excellent public research system focused on the Government's priority areas and the achievement of other societal objectives and to maximise research collaborations and knowledge exchange between and among public and private sector research actors;
5. To ensure that Ireland's higher education institutions will be globally competitive and internationally oriented, and Ireland will be a world-class centre of international education;
6. To reform practices and restructure the system for quality and diversity;
7. To increase accountability of autonomous institutions for public funding and against national priorities.



HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK FIG. 1.1

Key System Objective 1:

To meet Ireland's human capital needs across the spectrum of skills by engaged institutions through a diverse mix of provision across the system and through both core funding and specifically targeted initiatives

No.	High level indicator	Monitoring/Sub Indicators	Source
1.1	Progress towards National Reform Plan EU2020 target of 60% tertiary attainment rate for 30-34 year olds by 2020	Annual direct/late entry participation rate/completion rates at Levels 6/7/8	HEA data Eurostat Annual report on EU2020
1.2	Progress towards national objective that Ireland produces the highest % of graduates from MST in EU.	All targets from ICT Action Plan CAO acceptances and applications % of Graduates from MST/STEM	HEA/Forfás CAO data Eurostat
1.3	Employer satisfaction rates with graduates	National level rates	IBEC National Employers Survey
1.4	Employer satisfaction rates with HEI collaboration with enterprise	National level rates	IBEC National Employers Survey
1.5	Trends in graduate employment rates	Employment rates for undergraduates and postgraduates	QNHS First Destination Survey DES Tracking study of 2009 cohort QQI FETAC Tracking study
1.6	Profile of graduate outflow by discipline	No and % of grad by level and discipline	HEA data
1.7	International benchmarks 1.1 and 1.5 Tertiary attainment rates 25-34 year olds Employment rates of graduates	Position in EU Position in EU/OECD Relative to EU/OECD averages	Eurostat OECD Education at a Glance [A1.1a and A7.1a]

Essential Deliverables:

1. Structures put in place in all higher education institutions to improve liaison with enterprise and links with public sector employers
2. The use of learning outcomes and the National Framework of Qualifications as a tool for dialogue between labour market and the higher education system.
3. The active engagement and participation of the labour market in the development and review of higher education programmes in HEIs based on learning outcomes in NFQ.
4. Expert Group on Future Skills needs/Forfás skills reports
5. Structures in DES to facilitate enterprise engagement (Enterprise Engagement Forum)

Key System Objective 2:

To promote access for disadvantaged groups and to put in place coherent pathways from second level education, from further education and other non-traditional entry routes

No.	High Level Indicators	Monitoring/Sub Indicators	Source
2.1	Progress towards Bologna objective to ensure that the student body entering in/participating in/ and completing higher education at all levels reflects the diversity of Ireland's population	Progress against target entry rates in 2013 National Access Plan for socio-economic groups And for other under-represented groups	Data indicator sources being developed by DES to include CSO, HEA and SUSI data for 2014 National Access Plan
2.2	Increase in numbers and proportions of entrants from non-traditional routes	Numbers and proportions entering from FE Sector and through RPL	DES school leavers tracking survey of 2009 cohort FETAC tracking study HEA data
2.3	Increased numbers and proportions of entrants into flexible learning opportunities in higher education into part-time or flexible/springboard programmes	Number of students entering part-time/distance or flexible programmes including Springboard	HEA data
2.4	Higher education persistence and completion rates for under-represented groups	Progression from 1 st year and completion rates for socio-economic and under-represented groups	HEA data
2.5	International Benchmarks % of students in tertiary education by mode of enrolment	Position in EU/OECD Relative to EU/OECD averages	OECD Education at a Glance [C1]

Essential Deliverables:

1. Development and implementation of a new National Access Plan from 2014 aligned with national priorities and system indicators
2. Review of institutional access plans to ensure measurable outcomes against objectives of new plan
3. Development of LINKS scheme between FE and HE institutions
4. Development of alternative entry routes into higher education
5. Springboard initiative and evaluation
6. Monitoring and measuring the implementation of National Policies and Procedures relating to the Access, Transfer and Progression Plan (ATP) particularly in relation to the articulation to higher education and within higher education in the proposed regional clusters

Key System Objective 3:

To promote excellence in teaching and learning to underpin a high quality student experience

No.	High Level Indicators	Monitoring/Sub Indicators	Sources
3.1	Meeting Bologna objective to ensure that QA procedures in line with international best practice	Internal QA External QA	Eurydice bi-annual report
3.2	Student Engagement and satisfaction scores	Student engagement and satisfaction scores national and regional levels	National Student Survey
3.3	Trend in progression rates from 1 st year into 2 nd year	Progression rates national, sectors, HEI, discipline and level of programme	HEA data
3.4	Progress against agreed commitments to reduce/review number of level 8 programmes and broaden entry routes	Number of CAO programmes national, sectors, HEI	CAO data Institutional profiles QQI database from 2014/15
3.5	International Benchmark Ratio of students to teaching staff in educational institutions	Position in EU/OECD Relative to EU/OECD averages	OECD Education at a Glance [D2.2]

Essential Deliverables:

1. Monitoring of how all HEIS are embedding focus on excellence in teaching and learning within institutional strategies, evaluation and change programmes
2. Full engagement of all HEIs with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning
3. Systems put in place to appropriately monitor staff contact hours with students on an institutional and sector basis as workload allocation models become transparent
4. Institutional follow up on statutory institutional reviews to be reflected in institutional strategic submissions for strategic dialogue process to HEA
5. Internal quality assurance review/improvement activities and other quality assurance mechanisms
6. Use of Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN) Common Principles for Follow-through on Quality Improvements identified through Quality Reviews (2010)
7. Assessment of integration of institutional strategic planning and quality assurance planning by HEA as part of strategic dialogue process
8. Implementation of subject benchmarks across all disciplines
9. Implementation of Transition reform agenda

Key System Objective 4:

To maintain an open and excellent public research system focused on the Government's priority areas and the achievement of other societal objectives and to maximise research collaborations and knowledge exchange between and among public and private sector research actors

No	High Level Indicator	Monitoring Indicators	Source
4.1	Growth in HERD	HERD private: public ratio	Eurostat/Forfás
4.2	Increase in proportion of HE research income from non-exchequer investment	Enterprise EU Philanthropic	HEI accounts EI
4.3	Maintain National Citation Ranking	Number of publications and % share of world output	Thompson Reuters
4.4	Increased collaborations with enterprise	Number of active collaborations between HEIs and enterprises % of PhD awards involving employer partners Public-private scientific co-publications (no. and per million of population)	Forfás Agency data Innovation Union Scoreboard
4.5	Increase in commercialisation activity	Number of HEI spinouts Number of licensing agreements	EI
4.6	Proportion of PhDs on structured PhD programmes	Enrolments Graduates	HEA
4.7	Activity aligned with priority areas and underpinning areas	Proportion of GBOARD	Forfás
	International Benchmark HERD as a % of GNP	Position in OECD	Eurostat/Forfás

Essential Deliverables:

1. Ongoing implementation of the recommendations of the National Research Prioritisation Exercise by all research funding agencies and Departments. The monitoring of HEI performance in the areas of research and innovation will take account of developments under the Framework for monitoring public investment in STI
2. Implementation of the National Framework of Doctoral Education to be launched shortly by HEA and QQI
3. Deeper engagement between HEIs and enterprise, and enhanced collaborations between HEIs

Key System Objective 5:

To ensure that Ireland's higher education institutions will be globally competitive and internationally oriented, and Ireland will be a world-class centre of international education

No.	High Level indicator	Monitoring Indicators	Source
5.1	Progress towards Bologna and EU target to ensure that at least 20% of all graduates by 2020 will have had a study or training period abroad	No. of outgoing Erasmus students No. of Irish students studying abroad	HEA data/Eurostat
5.2	Level of alignment of higher education international activity with the national Trade, Tourism and Investment strategy	No. of graduates with languages in priority markets HEI support to companies exporting to new markets Evidence of alumni/diaspora links in priority markets No. of students from priority markets	HEIs/HEA/EI
5.3	Proportion of overall student body of international students – progress towards 15% national target (subject to international education strategy review) in system overall	No. of enrolments of international students	HEA
5.4	Increased level of mobility and international experience of researchers and staff	No. of Marie Curie researchers No. of international and internationally experienced staff in HE System	HEA data
5.5	Extent and trend of transnational activity	No. of branch campuses/articulation agreements/joint awards/international online programmes No. of student exchange – outward and inward	Institutional reporting HEA data
5.6	International benchmarks Relative performance on Bologna target 5.1 International students as a percentage of all tertiary enrolment	Position in EU Position in OECD/EU/averages	Eurostat OECD Education at a Glance [C4.1]

Essential Deliverables:

1. Implementation of international education strategy
2. Introduction of the International Education Mark (IEM) and implementation of the code of practice by HEIs
3. Implementation of the IHEQN Guidelines for Collaborative and Transnational provision 2013
4. Institutional risk planning in the context of the internationalisation strategy
5. Comprehensive internationalisation strategies in place in each higher education institution

Key System Objective 6:

To reform practices and restructure the system for quality and diversity;

No.	High Level Indicator	Monitoring Indicators	Sources
6.1	Coverage of higher education programmes by level in regional clusters	Coverage of level 6/7 /8 programmes within regional clusters by HEI/Sector	Institutional profiles Regional plans QQI database of programmes and awards from 2014/15
6.2	Number of collaborative programmes between HEIs and common modules between programmes	Numbers of postgraduate collaborative programmes and students Numbers of undergraduate collaborative programmes and students Number of common modules between programmes	HEIs/QQI
6.3	Level of HEI research collaboration	Number of co-publications Number of research funding awards	Thompson Reuters Agency data
6.4	Proportion of student population in private HEIS	Enrolments in private colleges Irish/EU/International	HEA/DES

Essential Deliverables:

1. Implementation of the landscape reform agreed and published on May 30th 2013
2. Progress against agreed milestones and timeframe of implementation of landscape process including TU designation/ITE recommendations and Regional Cluster development process
3. Undertaking of discipline reviews by HEA
4. Academic plans to be agreed by participant HEIs in regional clusters and reviewed by HEA as part of their analysis in relation to the development of a well-co-ordinated and rational distribution of programmes based on institutional strengths and student demand.
5. Establishment of the Irish programmes and awards database by QQI

Key System Objective 7:

To increase accountability of autonomous institutions for public funding and against national priorities.

No.	High Level Indicators	Monitoring Indicators	Source
7.1	Level of funding overall into higher education system	Exchequer/non exchequer Research Core grant DES exp. Per student	HEA/DES Other agencies HEI accounts
7.2	Trends in relative proportions of public expenditure on educational institutions and index of change for tertiary education		OECD Education at a Glance (B3.3)
7.3	Level of efficiency gained and savings achieved through implementation of reform initiatives in line with Government policy	Savings achieved through: Shared services External service delivery models Property management Centralised procurement	HEIs/HEA
7.4	Level of utilisation of HEI facilities		HEA Space Survey
7.5	Relative unit costs	HEI/Sector/Graduate	HEI data Institutional profiles
7.6	International benchmark Relative performance of Ireland 7.2	Position in EU/OECD/against averages	OECD Education at a Glance [B3.3.]

Essential Deliverables:

1. Establishment of appropriate structures chaired by DES to liaise with higher education sector in relation to public service reform agenda
2. Identification of baselines and development of data collection model to monitor and evaluate the rollout of the implementation of the public service reform agenda including shared services, external delivery, property management and centralised procurement
3. HEA space survey to be updated