



# INVESTING IN GLOBAL RELATIONSHIPS

**Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010-15**



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## Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010-15

Report of the High-Level Group on International Education to the Tánaiste and  
Minister for Education and Skills





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## Foreword by the Tánaiste and Minister for Education and Skills



In a world of increasing globalisation and interconnectedness, with the emergence of new powerhouse economies and the reorientation of the world economy, Ireland needs to take a strategic approach to developing relationships that will be of national importance in the coming years.

The Irish education system has a critical role to play in Ireland's international engagement and in the development of these global relationships. The ambition set out in this five-year strategy is for Ireland to become a global leader in the provision of high-quality education to the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers, who will make a difference in their own countries and who will form vital networks of influence for Ireland.

The interests of students are at the heart of our concerns. We must continue to offer international students a high-quality education and a unique student experience that is based on strong integration with their Irish peers. An education in Ireland should be a transformational experience that adds significant value to the career outcomes and personal development of students.

We are not seeking to position ourselves as a mass-market player. As the High-Level Group points out in this report, our eventual success will be judged not by how many international students we educate but by who we educate, and how well.

We have strong advantages in this area. Education is practically part of the Irish DNA. Our education system has had a long history of international engagement and is globally respected. We are a small, safe and friendly country. We are a member of the European Union and have extensive global links through our diaspora. We are an English-speaking country with a unique cultural heritage.

This is a partnership-based strategy that seeks to build on these inherent advantages to position Ireland as a world leader in the delivery of high-quality international education by providing a unique experience and long-term value to students.

Work on delivery is already under way. I will shortly be publishing legislation that, among other things, will provide a statutory basis for a Quality Mark for international education. Enterprise Ireland is developing the new Education Ireland brand, which it will launch in the coming months. The Government has published its new approach to student immigration and visas. Taken together, these measures provide a strong basis for renewed efforts to promote international education in Ireland.

I am pleased, therefore, to endorse this strategy as national policy. I thank the High-Level Group for their work, and I look forward to working with all concerned to make the strategy a success.

**Mary Coughlan TD**  
**Tánaiste and Minister for Education and Skills**







**EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**



## Executive Summary

*This executive summary is available in a number of languages on the Education Ireland web site: [www.educationireland.com](http://www.educationireland.com).*

### The opportunity for Ireland

Ireland, as a small, open European economy, relies fundamentally on international engagement. An internationalised education system in Ireland has a crucial role to play in maintaining Ireland's international profile and attractiveness by educating the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs and decision-makers in our partner-countries, by giving our own students the intercultural expertise demanded in the global economy, and by enhancing the direct link with Ireland for members of our global diaspora who choose to come home to study.

The High-Level Group on International Education takes the view that, from a national perspective, the most compelling rationale for internationalisation is investment in future global relationships: with students educated in Ireland who will become our advocates overseas, with educational institutions that will be the research and teaching partners of the future, and with the countries that will be Ireland's next trading and business partners.

Internationalisation also provides a means of enhancing the quality of learning, teaching and research in Ireland and makes a significant contribution to our broader ambition as a global innovation hub.

Ireland has intrinsic strengths that have the potential to provide it with a competitive advantage in becoming a leading centre of international education. Nevertheless, competition in attracting talented international students and in developing mutually beneficial partnerships with globally ranked and respected institutions overseas is considerable.

Ireland must offer a high-quality education, strong integration with domestic students, and an unparalleled experience that adds significant value to the career outcomes of all who are educated here.

In the longer term, success will be judged by who we have educated and how well rather than simply by how many.

For Ireland to succeed in this environment, internationalisation will need to be developed as a long-term and sustainable process, based on high-quality and balanced engagement with international partners. This will include facilitating greater outward mobility and international experience of Irish staff and students, widening and deepening collaborative institutional and research links, internationalising curricula, further developing our involvement in transnational education (i.e. the delivery of Irish education overseas), continuing to engage in EU and multilateral initiatives, and contributing to overseas development.

The educational interests of international students, their safety and security, their integration with the wider student body and their general experience of Ireland are central to our concerns.

## Objectives and targets

**Primary objective: Ireland will become internationally recognised and ranked as a world leader in the delivery of high-quality international education by providing a unique experience and long-term value to students.**

## Other objectives and targets

### *By 2015 Ireland will—*

- increase total international student numbers (including full-time, part-time, and exchange) in higher education institutions to 38,000, an increase of over 12,000 or 50% on current numbers
- increase the number of full-time international students in higher education to 25,500, an increase of 8,500 or 50% on current numbers (this corresponds to an increase in the national proportion of such students from approximately 10% to 13%)
- increase the proportion of international students undertaking advanced research from 10% to 15% (3,800 students)
- increase the proportion of international students undertaking taught postgraduate programmes from 13% to 20% (5,100 students)
- increase the number of exchange and junior year abroad students from outside the EEA to 6,000, from its present level of approximately 3,600
- increase the number of English-language students by 25% to 120,000
- increase the number of offshore students (i.e. those undertaking Irish education programmes outside the jurisdiction) by 50% to 4,500
- enhance the economic impact of international education by some €300 million, to approximately €1.2 billion in total.

### *By 2015 Irish higher education institutions will—*

- strengthen institutional relationships with priority partner-countries to include greater collaboration in mobility, research, and teaching
- increase outward mobility of staff members and students to make significant progress towards Bologna and EU goals in this regard.

### *By 2015 the English-language sector will—*

- significantly diversify to include more higher education pathway programmes, teacher training courses, greater transnational delivery, and further collaboration with the wider tourism sector
- increase direct employment levels by 25%, to a target of 1,250 full-time jobs.

## **Making it happen: Ten strategic actions to improve Ireland's competitive position**

The following ten high-level actions are proposed to enhance Ireland's competitive position as a centre for international education and to underpin achievement of the above objectives and targets:

- 1. Ireland will enhance its performance through partnership and collaboration.**
- 2. The Education Ireland brand will be redeveloped and national promotion and marketing will be strengthened.**
- 3. Quality will be at the heart of Ireland's international education offering.**
- 4. Ireland's visa, immigration and labour market access policies will be strong and competitive.**
- 5. Ireland's higher education institutions will be globally competitive and internationally oriented.**
- 6. Ireland will develop targeted and relevant international education offerings.**
- 7. Government policies and actions will be consistent and supportive.**
- 8. Ireland will strengthen its networks of influence.**
- 9. Outward mobility by Irish staff members and students will be encouraged.**
- 10. North-South and EU co-operation will enhance Ireland's international education performance.**

Further details on each of these actions are provided below.

### **Strategic action 1: Ireland will enhance its performance through partnership and collaboration**

In 2009 the Government established a new framework for the promotion, quality assurance and co-ordination of international education. This involved terminating the operation of two existing agencies, the Advisory Council for English Language Schools (ACELS) and the International Education Board Ireland (IEBI), which were responsible, respectively, for the recognition of English-language programmes and branding and for the promotion of higher education overseas. Their responsibilities and resources were reallocated to existing, larger-scale agencies: Enterprise Ireland was given sole responsibility for the promotion and branding of international higher education, while the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland was given responsibility for quality assurance, including the recognition of English-language programmes and management of the internationalisation register (which regulates labour market access by non-EEA students) pending the establishment of a new Quality Mark for international education. The Government also established the High-Level Group on International Education and gave it responsibility for national co-ordination and the development of this strategy.

Ireland will now enhance partnership and collaboration at national level by building on the above new framework through the following actions:

- Internationalisation will be developed in partnership between the Government and education sectors and on the basis of collaboration within the education system, including closer co-operation between the higher education and English-language sectors.
- The High-Level Group on International Education and the four working groups it has now established (i.e. on implementation and market development/access, quality assurance and student experience, sectoral development, and branding), together with the standing Interdepartmental Committee on Student Immigration, will facilitate a co-ordinated national approach.
- Collaborative actions will take place in agreed priority partner-countries. Recruitment targets, agreed with the visa and immigration authorities, will be developed for these countries. Enhanced market intelligence will be made available through a process led by Enterprise Ireland.
- Ireland will also develop enhanced relations with trusted education agents recruiting international students on behalf of Irish institutions. Actions will include developing lists of approved agents, sharing information, training agents, and liaising between trusted agents and visa officials.

### **Strategic action 2: The Education Ireland brand will be redeveloped, and national promotion and marketing will be strengthened**

- The Education Ireland national brand will be redeveloped by Enterprise Ireland and will encompass higher education and the English-language sector. Institutions will contribute to a central funding pool to support generic promotion and localised marketing.
- In addition to supporting State agencies in the promotion of education, Ireland's diplomatic network will continue to play a crucial role in promoting international education.

### **Strategic action 3: Quality will be at the heart of Ireland's international education offering**

- Statutory provision will be made for quality assurance of education and related services provided to international students in the forthcoming Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill.
- A statutory Code of Practice and a Quality Mark, to be awarded to educational institutions that meet certain criteria, will be developed and managed by Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland (QQAI), the amalgamated agency to be established in 2011.
- The Code of Practice will cover issues such as marketing, recruitment and enrolment, information, orientation and induction, fees, accommodation, academic matters (including alignment with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and progression), support, welfare services and learner protection.
- The Code of Practice and Quality Mark will apply to institutions and will be used by State bodies for the purposes of visas and immigration, access to the labour market, and participation in national branding and promotional activities.
- Ireland's inherent advantages as a destination for international students will be enhanced by the provision of appropriate services at institutional level to support the safety, security and

well-being of students. Ireland's offering will be based on strong integration between international and Irish students.

### **Strategic action 4: Ireland's visa, immigration and labour market access policies will be strong and competitive**

A strengthened immigration and visa regime, details of which have been published recently by the Department of Justice and Law Reform, will improve Ireland's general competitiveness in the area of international education through the following actions:

- Shared recruitment targets will be developed by the educational sector and agreed with the visa and immigration authorities.
- Immigration rules will be strengthened and aligned with the Quality Mark to the benefit of all high-quality institutions.
- Degree programme visas will be fast-tracked.
- Students on short-term language courses will be treated as educational tourists and will not have to meet the usual standard conditions for students.
- The graduate work scheme will be extended to allow all graduates at NQF level 8 and above to remain in Ireland for up to one year for the purpose of gaining relevant work experience or developing a business idea.
- The children of students pursuing PhD programmes or participating in an academic programme agreed between Ireland and another state (within certain conditions) will be permitted to attend State-funded schools in Ireland. This will also apply to other students who pay an immigration levy to cover the State's costs of providing their children's education.
- The immigration authorities will consider temporary staff deployments to Ireland's overseas visa offices when large numbers of visa applications are to be processed.
- The immigration authorities are willing to work with trusted education agents, including the support of training initiatives for such agents.
- Turnaround times for all visa offices will be published quarterly to give greater certainty to applicants.
- The immigration authorities have issued a standing invitation to all stakeholders to submit workable, practical suggestions on how the processing of visa applications could be made more efficient or effective on an ongoing basis.
- The immigration authorities will continue to work in partnership with educational stakeholders on the High-Level Group to develop Ireland's international offering and the opening of new markets and opportunities in the higher education and English-language sectors.

### **Strategic action 5: Ireland's higher education institutions will be globally competitive and internationally oriented**

- Higher education institutions will develop comprehensive internationalisation strategies.
- Institutions should have regard to the medium term national target, to be reached in the period between now and 2020, that international students should comprise 15% of the full-time student population when setting their own targets. They may seek to recruit higher



numbers if they have the institutional capacity and the level of student support services to facilitate integration.

- Internationalised curricula should be a key component of internationalisation.
- Tuition fees will continue to have regard to the primacy of maintaining high-quality education and an exceptional student experience.
- The Irish quality assurance authorities will consider the quality assurance implications of the growing importance of transnational education as part of Ireland's overall international education offering.

### Strategic action 6: Ireland will develop targeted and relevant international education offerings

- Ireland will target international students who are strongly motivated in terms of their personal and professional development and who will benefit from the strengths of the Irish education system.
- Present and expected capacity for international students over the period of the strategy will be assessed and will be used to inform the development of disciplines and programmes of relevance to prospective students and institutional partners.
- Ireland's English-language product offering will continue to be diversified to include closer integration with tourism packages, pathway programmes to higher education, executive and corporate training, participation in teacher-training and capacity-building programmes in partner-countries, offshore provision of courses, and increased use of e-learning, including partnership with higher education providers.

### Strategic action 7: Government policies and actions will be consistent and supportive

- The High-Level Group and its four working groups will be used to facilitate consistency of policy and approach among Government departments.
- The following new scholarship programmes, which will be operated and funded in partnership between the Government and education institutions, will replace the existing Department of Education and Skills bilateral schemes:
  - The **Government of Ireland International Scholarships** will seek to attract high-calibre international students.
  - The **New Frontiers Programme** will be open to staff and students in Irish higher education institutions that hold a Quality Mark and who wish to undertake a period of study in an institution in a non-English-speaking partner-country outside the EEA.
  - The **Government of Ireland English Language Educators' Scholarship** will provide for a period of study in Ireland by talented English-language educators who will become advocates for Ireland in their home country.
- The Department of Education and Skills will maintain a small strategic fund to be entitled the Internationalisation Development Fund and to be used to fund one-off specific research and other initiatives designed to improve Ireland's position as a centre for international education.

### **Strategic action 8: Ireland will strengthen its networks of influence**

- Educational institutions, working with Irish diplomatic missions and Enterprise Ireland offices abroad, will facilitate the continued affinity of international alumni with Ireland.
- Alumni strategies will form part of the wider approach to Ireland's diaspora and networks of influence.

### **Strategic action 9: Outward mobility by Irish staff members and students will be encouraged**

- Specific targets and strategies for outward mobility will be set at institutional level.
- Outward mobility will be part of institutions' overall internationalisation strategy and, where appropriate, will be an expected part of education programmes.
- Existing mobility programmes at EU level (e.g. the Erasmus programme) and those in development for the future will be central to efforts to maximise the benefits of outward mobility.

### **Strategic action 10: North-South and EU co-operation will enhance Ireland's international education performance**

- The potential for mutually beneficial North-South collaboration in the area of international education will be explored.
- Ireland will actively participate in the development of a proposed EU international higher education strategy, and proposed developments in relation to EU mobility programmes, to maximise Irish interests, in line with the policies outlined in this strategy.

### **Implementation arrangements**

The High-Level Group will be responsible for overall implementation and progress towards the national objectives and targets will be monitored through publication of an annual report on internationalisation. Implementation will be phased over the full course of the five-year strategy. An indicative timetable for delivery in year 1 is set out overleaf.

**Indicative implementation timetable: Year 1**

<b>Quarter 3 (Q3) 2010</b>	Publication of details of new Student Immigration regime by Department of Justice and Law Reform.
<b>Q4 2010</b>	Publication of Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill.  Commencement of DES discussions with partner-countries on replacement of existing bilateral scholarship arrangements
<b>Q1 2011</b>	Commencement of implementation of new Student Immigration regime by Department of Justice and Law Reform  Introduction of new Education Ireland brand by Enterprise Ireland.  Agreement on priority partner-countries and visa and immigration targets for 2011 by Working Group on implementation and market development/access.  Implementation of pilot project on enhanced co-operation with agents in India led by Enterprise Ireland.  Implementation of new International Education Promotional Fund on a pilot basis by Enterprise Ireland and Fáilte Ireland.
<b>Q2 2011</b>	Meeting of High-Level Group on International Education. Review of implementation progress and consideration of implementation timetable for remainder of Year 1 and for Year 2.
<b>Q3 2011</b>	Publication of research on economic impact of international education carried out on behalf of the High-Level Group on International Education  First publication of <i>Internationalisation of Irish Education: Annual Report</i> by Enterprise Ireland.  Expected enactment of Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill and establishment of Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland (QQAI).  Following the establishment of QQAI, commencement of development of Code of Practice and Quality Mark. Implementation schedule to be approved and set out by the Board of QQAI.  Completion of initial capacity survey and foresight exercise on sectoral development by the HEA.  Launch of new national scholarship schemes by the HEA and Fáilte Ireland.



# PART 1

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT



## 1.1 INTRODUCTION: THE OPPORTUNITY FOR IRELAND

Ireland, as a small, open European economy, relies fundamentally on international engagement. An internationalised education system in Ireland has a crucial role to play in maintaining Ireland's international profile and attractiveness by educating the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers in our partner-countries, by giving our own students the intercultural expertise demanded in the global economy, and by enhancing the direct link with Ireland for members of our global diaspora who choose to come home to study. These multifaceted relationships with people and countries around the world greatly enhance the global image and understanding of Ireland and contribute to an accumulation of capital that is not just economic but political, social, and cultural.

Ireland has unique strengths that potentially provide it with a competitive advantage in becoming a leading centre of international education. We are a small, safe and friendly country. We are a member of the European Union and have extensive global links through our diaspora. We are an English-speaking country with a unique cultural heritage. Our education system has had a long history of international engagement and is globally respected. Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) facilitate worldwide recognition of Irish qualifications. In short, Ireland has an opportunity to become internationally recognised and ranked as a world leader in the delivery of high-quality international education.

In that context, and arising from the national strategy for economic renewal, *Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal*, the Government established the High-Level Group on International Education to co-ordinate a national approach to internationalisation and to develop a strategy for Ireland's enhanced performance in this area. The High-Level Group brings together the relevant Government departments and State agencies with representatives of the higher education and English-language sectors.

This five-year strategy sets out the international context in which Ireland will seek to improve its position, the national objectives and targets, and the steps necessary to improve Ireland's performance. The structure of this report is as follows:

- **Part 1** describes the context in which Ireland will seek to make progress.
- **Part 2** outlines a shared vision and targets.
- **Part 3** contains the ten strategic actions that are necessary to enhance Ireland's performance.
- **Part 4** sets out the time-frame and responsibilities for implementation.
- **Part 5** contains annexes to the report.

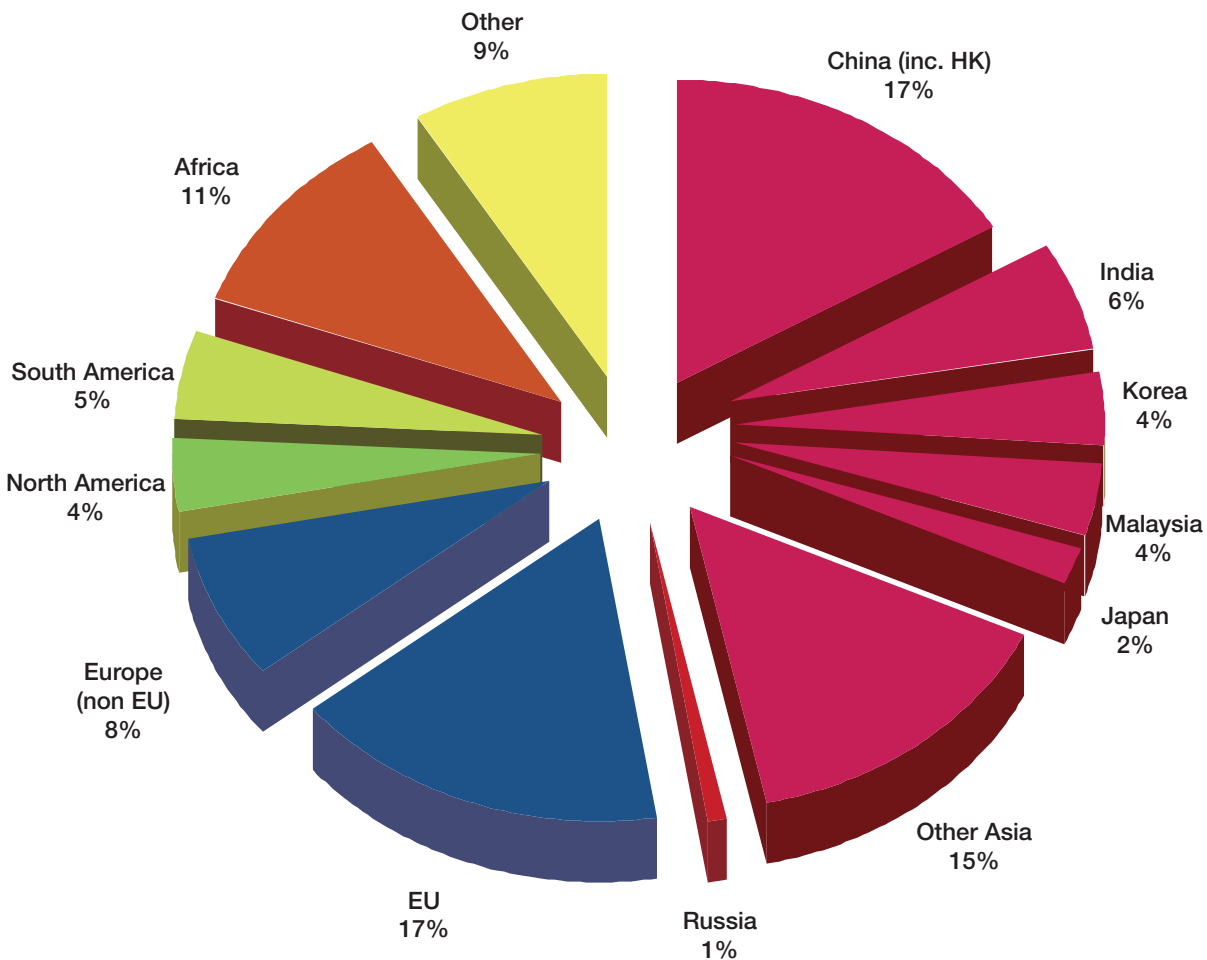
## 1.2 THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Competition in attracting talented international students and developing mutually beneficial partnerships with globally ranked and respected institutions overseas is considerable. The global context in which international education is provided has also changed dramatically in recent years, in ways that will have fundamental implications for Ireland's future approach.

### 1.2.1 International student mobility patterns

The OECD has identified the regions of origin of international students in the OECD member-states<sup>1</sup> (fig. 1). Asian students form the largest group of students studying overseas, accounting for roughly 47% of international students in OECD countries. The Asian group is followed by Europe (25%), Africa (11%), South America (5%), and North America (4%).

**Fig. 1: Origin of international students in OECD countries**



Specifically, the major non-OECD countries sending students to OECD member-states are China, India, Malaysia, Morocco, and the Russian Federation. A significant number of Asian students studying abroad also come from Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The OECD countries which send the most students to other OECD member-states are France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Canada, and the USA.

## 1.2.2 Global growth estimates

In the mid-2000s worldwide growth in demand for international education was regarded as “phenomenal.”<sup>2</sup> A frequently cited British Council report of 2004 predicted that international student numbers would increase from 2.5 to 5.8 million by 2020.<sup>3</sup> During this time, Ireland was experiencing annual expansions of approximately 20% in the number of international students,<sup>4</sup> albeit from a lower base than other countries. The number of international students studying in Irish higher education institutions increased by 135% between 2001 and 2010 — from approximately 11,000 to 26,000.

In more recent years, however, many countries have been reassessing the sustainability of the optimistic growth forecasts to 2020. While growth should still take place, it is likely to be at a lower rate. A recent review commissioned by the UK Government noted that the British Council 2020 projections produced in 2004 “are no longer tenable,”<sup>5</sup> finding that they were based fundamentally on demographic projections that have been found to bear little correlation to growth in international student numbers. Furthermore, the period of rapid growth took place during “an extraordinary expansion of global trade in general, and an extremely benign financial environment relatively speaking, neither of which can be relied upon in the future.” A recent Australian Government review of higher education also questioned the “viability and sustainability” of continued growth in international student numbers.

It is also evident that the motivation of a proportion of international students travelling overseas has had more to do with securing access to the labour market than with accessing educational opportunities. This is a concern being addressed in Ireland and elsewhere through strengthened visa and immigration policies, which will inevitably affect the numbers travelling to study overseas.

## 1.2.3 Increased global competition

While the likely levels of future growth and demand are unclear, what is certain is that competition for international students is increasing and is significantly diversifying beyond traditional centres of international education. Until relatively recently, 90% of international students travelled to OECD countries, and 46% studied in the top five English-speaking destinations.<sup>6</sup>

A number of non-English-speaking countries have now begun to successfully offer higher education through the medium of English. However, perhaps the most significant development has been the trend for international students to study closer to home as more attractive options become available in their regions. Countries such as Japan are seeking to significantly enhance the internationalisation of their education systems, and countries that have traditionally sent large numbers of students abroad, such as China and Malaysia, are seeking to attract international students. This trend is further supported by the growth of offshore delivery, including the development of branch campuses by higher education institutions from English-speaking countries, particularly in Asia and the Middle East.

## 1.2.4 Factors affecting the development of the English-language sector

While Ireland will always have a strong inherent advantage in the English-language sector, there are a number of emerging long-term trends that will necessitate strategic development and change in order for Ireland to take advantage of new opportunities in a changing market. An influential British Council report of 2006<sup>7</sup> highlighted some of these emerging issues, including increasing competition for native-speaking destinations as the language itself becomes more globalised and is taught in classrooms around the world and a long-term decline in the traditional base of the English-language sector (teenage and young adult English language learners). For short-term courses this will



necessitate the continued development of attractive offerings with close links to tourism. There will also need to be much greater collaboration with the higher education sector and a stronger emphasis on teacher training.

It is also worthy of note that the competitiveness of the English-language sector in particular is very dependent on currency exchange rates.

### **1.2.5 More sophisticated student choice**

As global competition increases, the study choices of international students are becoming more sophisticated. Unsurprisingly, in the context of a difficult global economic environment with high graduate unemployment in many sending countries, students are increasingly focused on making educational choices that add value to their career outcomes. They are also paying significant attention to the student experience and to the level of student support services in institutions.

### **1.2.6 Foreign government and sponsoring agency policies**

Given the importance of a relatively small number of major sending countries (see fig. 1), the policies of governments and sponsoring agencies in these countries will have a profound impact on the course of international education over the next ten years.

A number of countries, particularly in Asia and the Middle East, have put in place major national capacity-building programmes (for example, in vocational, medical and English-language education and training) that will provide significant opportunities for student recruitment over a period of perhaps ten to fifteen years. Nevertheless, these programmes are inevitably aimed at developing sufficient domestic capacity to ensure that staff and students do not have to be sent abroad in large numbers in the future. Sustainability beyond the initial period of high outward mobility will require the development of strategic relationships with these countries that are based on more than student recruitment.

The same is increasingly true of many other major sending countries, which are seeking to decrease the numbers of students studying full programmes overseas and to develop instead more strategic, two-way partnerships, including joint degrees.

Cultural integration is also a crucial issue for many governments and sponsoring agencies. Countries that are funding overseas scholarships clearly want their students to have an international experience and to integrate with the domestic and international student community. There are reports that some countries are diverting students away from certain traditional hosts because there is too much clustering of their students and insufficient integration with the domestic population. This presents a significant opportunity for Ireland but also a challenge to ensure that mistakes are not replicated here.

Even where students are not being funded by their home governments, the advice and support of their national authorities is crucial. It is increasingly evident that overseas governments are urging their students to exercise greater caution in their study choices. It is likely that some countries will adopt strengthened criteria before recommending institutions to students, including, for example, the length of establishment of institutions, the standing of awards bodies, the level of student support services, and international rankings (regardless of their veracity, methodology, or actual utility). This may have the effect of reducing the number and range of institutions to which students will be sent.



# PART 2

VISION AND TARGETS



## 2.1 A SHARED VISION FOR IRELAND AS A WORLD LEADER IN HIGH-QUALITY INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

### 2.1.1 Investing in global relationships: The core of Ireland's national approach

The Group takes the view that, from a national perspective, the most compelling rationale for internationalisation is investment in future global relationships, with students we have educated in Ireland becoming our advocates overseas, with education institutions that will be research and teaching partners of the future, and with the countries that will be Ireland's next trading and business partners.

Internationalisation also provides a means of enhancing the quality of learning, teaching and research in Ireland. It enriches our classrooms and campuses and benefits all students by providing them with vital international and intercultural experiences and perspectives and by potentially increasing their educational attainment and competence levels. It encourages cultural exchange and the consequent strengthening of relations with partners overseas, assists countries and institutions in developing their own capacity and human capital in ways that may not be available domestically, and makes a significant economic contribution.

The potential for international education services to make a significant contribution to economic recovery was identified in *Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal*. This happens directly through services exports, which generate earnings and employment in Ireland. It also applies indirectly through the role of internationalisation in supporting Ireland's broader ambition to become a global innovation hub, as part of a strategy to position Ireland as an attractive location to carry out and commercialise research.

### 2.1.2 Internationalisation as a long-term, sustainable process

For Ireland to succeed, internationalisation will need to be developed as a long-term and sustainable process, based on high-quality and balanced engagement with international partners. While there may be short-term gains in quickly ramping up international student numbers, such an approach could damage our reputation for quality. Growth must not take place faster than the necessary supports can be put in place to ensure a high-quality experience.

Ireland should not aim at the "mass market" but rather should present a "niche" offering of a high-quality education, accompanied by strong integration with domestic students, which will offer an unparalleled experience to students and will add significant value to their career outcomes. In the longer term, success will be judged by who we have educated and how well rather than simply by how many.

The type of long-term, balanced approach that is required will include facilitating greater outward mobility and international experience for Irish staff members and students, widening and intensifying collaborative institutional and research links with international partners, internationalising curricula, further developing Irish involvement in transnational education (including delivering Irish academic programmes overseas and establishing Irish-linked institutions outside of Ireland), and continuing to engage in multilateral initiatives such as the Bologna process.

Ireland, at both national and institutional level, will need to be responsive to the concerns of our international partners, particularly where other governments are funding the education and training of their nationals in Irish institutions.

Irish educators and researchers have always recognised the imperative of capacity-building in developing countries, particularly in Irish Aid priority countries, and future developments in internationalisation must be consistent with, and complementary to, Ireland's foreign policy and overseas development programme. Through our already substantial links with developing countries, we are positioned to play an important role in the capacity-building of research and educational facilities, which, in turn, is crucial to scientific development and the growth of civil society in those countries. Such activities are consistent with Ireland's general approach to development issues and also represent an investment in future relationships.

### **2.1.3 Placing the needs of students at the heart of our concerns**

The educational interests of our international students, their safety and security, their integration with the wider student body and their general experience of Ireland are central to our concerns. Policies and strategies are needed to ensure that students have a positive experience at all stages, from application to graduation and beyond. Progress in increasing student satisfaction will need to be measured.

A key part of our strategy will be to demonstrate that Ireland values global talent, including through immigration policies that will allow graduates to remain in Ireland for a period to obtain work or to develop a business idea. Ireland will target international students who are attracted by our strengths in innovation, creativity, and collaboration. This encompasses the full range of disciplines, prospective careers, and aspirations. By leaders we mean thought leaders as much as prospective politicians and CEOs. We want social entrepreneurs as much as those motivated by purely economic rationales. Artists and musicians will be as important in creating links for Ireland as company executives. Building on Ireland's strong tradition in the area of development co-operation, we also want people who are committed to making a difference in the world.

Striking a balance between catering for increased domestic demand and attracting increasing numbers of international students is critical to the success and quality of the educational experience of all students, and it is part of the overall context of managing competing goals of quality, quantity and funding in the development of the system. The recruitment of international students will not affect the provision of Government-funded places for domestic students, and institutions will continue to endeavour to meet the demand from school-leavers and non-traditional learners. Further reinvestment by institutions of international income may be required to ensure an experience of the highest calibre for all students, taking into account the increased pressure on resources and the added complexities of an internationalised campus. Providers will need to explore how the funding of these extra supports will be achieved, in the context of the overall resource issues facing the sector.

### **2.1.4 A collaborative approach**

Ireland is committed to a collaborative approach to internationalisation. Activity by the Government, State agencies and other stakeholders will only reach its full potential by implementing a jointly held vision for internationalising Irish education. This includes the co-ordination of national approaches in strategically important countries, the development of joint initiatives in Ireland and overseas, and a

collaborative approach to branding and marketing. There also exists considerable potential for North-South co-operation on the island of Ireland.

The European dimension is crucial to the Irish education system, and Ireland has benefited significantly from participation in EU programmes, such as Erasmus, under the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-13 and its predecessors. Ireland will continue to actively participate in education programmes within the EU and will contribute to the development of a proposed new EU international higher education strategy, which is to be developed collaboratively by the Commission and EU member-states.<sup>8</sup>

### **2.1.5 The potential for internationalisation of the private further education sector**

Ireland has to date regarded the higher education and English-language sectors as the strategic elements of its international education offering, and these sectors have been supported and promoted in the international arena by State agencies.

The further education sector<sup>9</sup> has not been similarly promoted. Nevertheless, approximately nine thousand non-EEA students were studying in further education institutions in 2009.<sup>10</sup> The Department of Justice and Law Reform has announced its intention to phase out eligibility for non-EEA students to study in Ireland on courses below level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Given the limited number of Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) places available, and the necessity of ensuring that these places can be accessed by domestic target groups, including school leavers and adults returning to education, it is not considered that public-sector providers of further education should be promoted as a strategic international sector in the medium term.

In this context, the Group considers that there is potential for the private further education sector to act as a pathway to higher education for international students, and the sector should examine the possibilities of working with higher education institutions in this regard.

After a suitable period of operation of the new immigration regime (see section 3.4 below), the potential for further education to form a part of Ireland's strategic international offering, particularly in respect of pathway programmes, will be re-examined.

## **2.2 INTERNATIONALISATION OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS**

### **2.2.1 Objectives and principles**

The Group proposes that the primary objective of this strategy should be that

*“Ireland will become internationally recognised and ranked as a world leader in the delivery of high-quality international education by providing a unique experience and long-term value to students.”*

This will be achieved in accordance with the following principles:

- Internationalisation will be developed as a long-term and sustainable process, based on high-quality and balanced engagement with international partners.
- The needs and interests of learners will be at the heart of the internationalisation process.
- The enhancement of Ireland's performance will be based on collaborative effort, including the development of a shared national brand.
- Ireland's institutions will be internationally oriented and globally competitive.
- The State's policies and actions will be consistent and supportive, and growth will be based on agreed targets and on full compliance by all institutions with national policy and the State's regulatory regime.

### 2.2.2 Background

Full-time international students account for approximately 12% of the student population in the university sector and 5% in the Institute of Technology sector.<sup>11</sup> No consistent figures are available for the private higher education sector, but the Group understands that in the larger private colleges the proportion is approximately 12%.

The *Report of the Interdepartmental Working Group on the Internationalisation of Irish Education Services* (2004) recommended that an appropriate medium-term target would be 12-15% international students in higher education institutions.

The Group considers that an average national proportion of 15% full-time international students remains a valid medium-term national target to be reached in the period between now and 2020. This figure is in line with the position of many leading OECD countries<sup>12</sup> in this area and is significantly above the OECD average of approximately 6.8%.<sup>13</sup>

While Ireland is still a major destination for English-language training, the number of English-language students in Ireland has declined significantly in the past number of years from approximately 120,000 in 2007 to 96,000 in 2009.<sup>14</sup> Currency fluctuations played a significant part in this decline.

### 2.2.3 Defining international students

For the purposes of this strategy, international students are broadly defined as students normally domiciled outside the jurisdiction who have come to Ireland specifically to undertake a programme of education.

It is expected that much of the growth in international student numbers will come from increasing participation of non-EEA students. However, institutions will need to take a balanced approach to ensure that relationships with EU partners, and EU activities such as the Erasmus programme, also continue to be given a high priority and prominence, particularly in the context of the ambitious approach to increasing mobility opportunities for students, which has been agreed by all EU member-states in the context of the new EU 2020 strategy<sup>15</sup>, successor to the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs which was launched in 2000.

## 2.2.4 Key objectives and targets

The following are the key objectives and targets for internationalisation by 2015:

- increase total international student numbers (including full-time, part-time, and exchange) in higher education institutions to 38,000, an increase of over 12,000 or 50% on current numbers
- increase the number of full-time international students in higher education to 25,500, an increase of 8,500 or 50% on current numbers (this corresponds to an increase in the national proportion of such students from approximately 10% to 13%)
- increase the proportion of international students undertaking advanced research to 15%, representing 3,800 students (up from the present figure of 8% of PhDs and 2% of research masters students, 2,600 in total)
- increase the proportion of international students undertaking taught postgraduate programmes from 13% to 20%, representing 5,100 students
- increase the number of exchange and junior year abroad students from outside the EEA to 6,000, from its present level of approximately 3,600
- examine sectors in which domestic demand has decreased and in which more ambitious targets are possible — these will be examined as part of the overall review of capacity and sectoral development.
- increase the number of English-language students by 25% to 120,000<sup>16</sup>
- significantly diversify provision in the English-language sector to include more higher education pathway programmes, teacher training courses, greater transnational delivery, and further collaboration with the wider tourism sector
- enhance the total economic impact of international education by some €300 million to approximately €1.2 billion in total
- increase direct employment in the English-language sector by 25%, to 1,250 full-time jobs
- increase the number of offshore students (i.e. those undertaking Irish education programmes outside the jurisdiction) by 50% to 4,500
- increase the outward mobility of staff members and students based in Ireland in order to make significant progress towards achieving Bologna and EU goals<sup>17</sup> in this regard
- strengthen institutional relationships with priority partner-countries to include greater collaboration in mobility, research, and teaching

## 2.2.5 Enhancing the economic and employment impacts of international education

### *Overall economic impact*

International education is also an important internationally traded service and an important sector in Ireland's trade relationships. The total economic impact of international students in Ireland is at present estimated to be approximately €900 million.

The total direct economic impact (i.e. tuition fees and living costs but without economic multipliers) is estimated at €682 million,<sup>18</sup> including €428 million in the higher education sector and €254 million in the English-language sector.



The economic target based on full implementation of this strategy should be a total of around €1.2 billion (direct and indirect) by 2015, encompassing a direct impact target of €900 million.

### ***Direct and indirect employment***

International education supports employment in Ireland, directly (jobs supported by tuition income) and indirectly (through spending in the economy). Financial contributions to home-stay families also represent an important source of income for the households in question.

Given the nature of the English-language sector, which is almost entirely dependent on international income, it is comparatively easy to assess the level of direct employment, which at present stands at 3,800 full-time and part-time jobs in peak season and 1,000 full-time jobs. The aim will be to restore direct employment levels to 2008 levels by 2015.<sup>19</sup> This would entail a 25% increase in full-time direct employment, to a target of 1,250. During peak times the target should be 4,000 full-time and part-time jobs.

The situation in higher education is much more difficult to assess, as institutions rely on a greater diversity of income streams, including significant Exchequer funding in the public sector.

There is no agreed methodology for assessing indirect employment supported or created by expenditure by international students, although there are general models for calculating direct, indirect and induced employment by different sectors. A simple (and possibly conservative) estimate of indirect employment supplied to the Group suggests that 13 jobs are created for every 100 international students in Ireland, which would conservatively suggest indirect employment of approximately 2,300 supported by international students in higher education in Ireland.

### ***Access to the labour market by non-EEA students***

It is also important to note that under present Government policy non-EEA students who meet certain criteria are permitted access to the labour market, under restricted conditions. This is justified on the grounds that competitor countries operate similar systems and that the removal of the work concession would have implications for Ireland's capacity to compete in this area.

In a time of high unemployment it is vital to strike the right balance between the undoubted economic benefits that accrue from international students contributing to economic activity in Ireland and the possible implications for Irish and EU citizens in the employment market.

The issue of the work concession will be examined in 2011 by the Interdepartmental Committee on Student Immigration (see section 3.4 below) in light of the new student immigration regime, which is intended to tackle abuse and minimise risks to the labour market.

The Group recommends that an assessment of the overall economic and employment impact of international education in Ireland should be a priority for future research to be funded by the Internationalisation Development Fund of the Department of Education and Skill<sup>20</sup>. This would be in line with studies carried out in other countries,<sup>21</sup> and the resulting data would represent a significant contribution to the review of the student work concession planned for 2011.



# PART 3

TEN STRATEGIC ACTIONS TO ENHANCE  
IRELAND'S PERFORMANCE



## 3.1 IRELAND WILL ENHANCE ITS PERFORMANCE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

### 3.1.1 Framework for the promotion, quality assurance and co-ordination of international education

In 2009 the Government established a new framework for the promotion, quality assurance and co-ordination of international education. This involved terminating the operation of two existing agencies, ACELS and IEBI, which were responsible, respectively, for the recognition of English-language programmes and branding and for the promotion of higher education overseas. Their responsibilities and resources were reallocated to existing, larger-scale agencies: Enterprise Ireland was given sole responsibility for the promotion and branding of international higher education, while the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland was given responsibility for the recognition of English-language programmes and management of the internationalisation register (which regulates labour market access by non-EEA students) pending the establishment of the Quality Mark. The High-Level Group on International Education was given responsibility for national co-ordination.

A description of the responsibilities of Government departments and State agencies in the area of international education is set out in section 4.2.

### 3.1.2 National co-ordination mechanisms

The High-Level Group will continue to meet in plenary session once a year in May to consider issues of strategic importance and to review progress on the implementation of this strategy. The Group will include representatives of the following bodies:

- Department of Education and Skills (chair)
- Department of Foreign Affairs
- Department of Justice and Law Reform
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation
- Department of Health and Children
- Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport
- Enterprise Ireland
- Fáilte Ireland
- Higher Education Authority
- Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland (when established)
- Science Foundation Ireland.

It will also include representative bodies and institutions, as appropriate, from the education sectors, as well as representation of international student interests.

More specific issues will be dealt with by sub-committees focusing on four important strands of work, as follows:

### ***Working Group 1: Implementation and market development/access***

This group will be chaired by the Department of Education and Skills and will comprise a small group of the key stakeholders responsible for implementing this strategy. It will also be responsible for selecting the priority partner-countries and for developing market targets and access. The group will consult the relevant Government departments and the Foreign Trade Council (which will be established as part of the Government's forthcoming Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy<sup>22</sup> in selecting countries that are of relevance to Ireland's future political and diplomatic, trade, investment, tourism, and cultural interests.

### ***Working Group 2: Sectoral development***

This group will be chaired by the HEA. It will be tasked with strategic development of the disciplines that will comprise Ireland's international education offering, having regard to the needs and demands of international students and of Ireland's international partners. It will initially conduct an examination of expected capacity and development needs for 2015. The group will also identify areas in which inter-institutional collaboration can be developed and will examine the potential for enhanced use of e-learning and blended learning. It will include a representative from the Health Services Executive (HSE).

### ***Working Group 3: Quality assurance and student experience***

This group will be chaired by the NQAI, and subsequently by Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland. It will deal with quality assurance in an international context, with a particular focus on building on present arrangements and assisting in developments towards the statutory code of practice and Quality Mark. This group will include a student representative.

### ***Working Group 4: Branding and promotion***

This group, to be titled the Brand Consultative Group, will be chaired by Enterprise Ireland and will deal with branding and promotion issues.

The standing **Interdepartmental Committee on Student Immigration**, which is chaired by the Department of Justice and Law Reform, will also meet as needed.

**Enterprise Ireland review and planning meetings** will continue, as heretofore, to provide a wide forum for discussion of strategic and operational issues in the higher education sector.

## **3.1.3 Collaboration in priority partner-countries**

### ***Rationale***

A number of priority partner-countries will be identified. All stakeholders — higher education institutions, English-language schools, Government departments, State agencies, visa offices, and Irish diplomatic missions — will work together to improve Ireland's performance in these countries.

Potential collaborative actions in these markets will include national branding and promotion, market intelligence activities, interaction with national sponsoring bodies, and more co-ordinated use of State resources. Government-funded scholarships (see section 3.7.3 below) will be targeted at students in these countries. Government departments will have regard to education issues in these countries when planning high-level visits, conducting intergovernmental discussions, and signing partnership agreements.

There may be other countries in which individual or smaller groups of institutions may more effectively make headway, depending on their institutional strengths or programme offerings, and the dialogue on market selection should have regard to this.

### **Development**

The list of strategic partner countries will be developed by the implementation and market development/access working group (which will include representatives of the Department of Justice and Law Reform) and will be reviewed annually.

The selection of countries will have regard to Ireland's long-term strategic interests (defined in terms of political, trade, business, diaspora, cultural, educational, tourism and development links), to the potential for enhanced collaboration and to appropriate market intelligence. Only countries where competitive immigration policies can be pursued will be selected.

A diverse range of international partners is required to prevent over-reliance on a small number of markets, but this must be balanced against the possibility of dissipating limited resources over too large an area.

This list will be continuously refined with reference to specific up-to-date market intelligence. In any given year, a smaller number of markets will be identified by Enterprise Ireland and Fáilte Ireland, in which specific agreed collaborative activities will take place.

Recruitment targets and plans for these countries and markets will be agreed with the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS), as will broad indications of the expected profile of prospective students. Updates on visa and immigration statistics and issues in these markets will be brought to the attention of both the implementation and market development/access working group and the Interdepartmental Committee on Student Immigration to facilitate rapid identification of emerging issues or problems.

The definition of priority partner-countries will not inhibit institutions, or groups of institutions, from working in other countries, provided that there is consultation with the Department of Justice and Law Reform on market access issues.

#### **3.1.4 Market intelligence**

Enterprise Ireland will take the lead in developing appropriate and up-to-date market intelligence for certain key markets on a rolling basis. New markets will be assessed in accordance with such market intelligence. Diplomatic missions will also play a role in providing information as part of this process, as will the overseas offices of Tourism Ireland.

Market intelligence will be reported in a standardised format in Education Market Intelligence Reports (EMIRs). EMIRs will include information on the nature and scale of the opportunity, to whom in Ireland it will be of interest, visa and immigration implications, competitor approaches on similar issues, prerequisites for success, relevant contact points, and other relevant information, including, where appropriate, matters relating to the governmental and administrative system and key decision-makers and qualifications recognition. Enterprise Ireland, Fáilte Ireland/Tourism Ireland and Irish diplomatic missions will continue to report on specific market opportunities that do not justify full-scale EMIRs.

Educational sectors should designate contact persons to receive EMIRs and market opportunity information for dissemination to the relevant parties. A two-way process of dialogue is vital to refine the relevance of market data; for this reason educational sectors should provide feedback on EMIRs.

Institutions and sectors should also share market intelligence that has wider validity.

### 3.1.5 Enhanced collaboration among institutions and representative groups

There exists considerable scope for enhanced co-operation between institutions in the international arena. Such collaboration can increase Ireland's overall capacity to engage internationally by taking advantage of different institutional strengths to provide more comprehensive offerings. It can also reduce the number of interlocutors involved in, and hence the complexity of, negotiations and transactions for international partners, such as student sponsoring agencies.

Areas in which there is potential for more collaboration include joint delivery of specifically tailored programmes (e.g. human capital development programmes, such as leadership and executive training, or "training the trainers"), transnational education, strengthened co-operation between international offices (including branch offices overseas), co-ordinated application procedures for overseas students, and the development of "Ireland-educated" alumni networks.

There is also potential for greater use of shared services. The HEA will take the lead in working with higher education institutions (including those from the private higher education sector) to identify areas in which such potential exists. This will include examining, with Enterprise Ireland and the Departments of Education and Skills and Foreign Affairs, the potential for unified Irish education offices in certain priority partner-markets to replace individual institutional overseas offices.

The Group welcomes moves by representative groups, such as the IUA, IOTI, HECA, and MEI, to increase co-ordination and collaboration within their sectors and to facilitate greater intersectoral collaboration.

### 3.1.6 Co-operation between the higher education and English-language sectors

Ireland's position as a native English-speaking destination is one of our crucial inherent advantages. The importance of the language of instruction as a factor in the choice of destination for international study is demonstrated by the fact that the five leading English-speaking destinations (USA, Canada, UK, Australia, and New Zealand) attract approximately 46% of the total number of international higher education students globally.<sup>23</sup>

There is significant potential for the English-language and higher education sectors to work together, including in the following areas:

- continued development of structured pathway programmes from English-language programmes to higher education institutions for suitably qualified students
- collaboration in branding and marketing
- sharing market intelligence
- co-operating in relations with agents.

In this regard, the Group welcomes the work being undertaken by MEI, in association with the ACELS function of NQAI, to develop a national structured pathway/foundation programme.

### 3.1.7 Monitoring and benchmarking

At present, Enterprise Ireland, in collaboration with the HEA, collects statistics on international student numbers in Ireland. Fáilte Ireland also conducts an annual survey of English-language schools. In order to facilitate evidence-based policy-making, participation in these exercises will be mandatory for all relevant institutions.

The HEA and Enterprise Ireland will work closely together to develop a database of international linkages.

The scope of future editions of the annual Enterprise Ireland report, *International Students in Higher Education in Ireland*, will be broadened, based on inter-agency co-operation, and it will be re-titled *Internationalisation of Irish Education: Annual Report*.

In addition to its present focus on students and markets in higher education, it will include—

- data on English-language students, to be provided by Fáilte Ireland, based on its annual survey<sup>24</sup>
- information on the number and type of overseas institutional partnerships of higher education institutions, including joint degree programmes and mobility programmes, as well as other aspects of internationalisation, to be collected and provided by the HEA
- information from the Department of Education and Skills on high-level contacts in the education area
- information on the progress and achievements of Irish Aid higher education capacity-building programmes, to be provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

## 3.2 THE EDUCATION IRELAND BRAND WILL BE REDEVELOPED, AND NATIONAL PROMOTION AND MARKETING WILL BE STRENGTHENED

### 3.2.1 Leading role for Enterprise Ireland and Fáilte Ireland/Tourism Ireland

Enterprise Ireland has the leading role in the development, promotion and marketing of international higher education, and it has responsibility for the Education Ireland national brand and web site. It forges international strategic partnerships for Irish higher education institutions and identifies and develops sectors and locations in which there is potential for greater international collaboration. It also works with the higher education institutions and their international offices in the development of their sales and marketing capabilities and their offering for international markets.

Fáilte Ireland is responsible for the strategic development of the English-language sector, while Tourism Ireland promotes English-language services overseas. In priority countries without Tourism Ireland offices, the agency will co-operate with Enterprise Ireland in providing on-the-ground assistance in promoting the English-language sector.



### 3.2.2 Redeveloping the Education Ireland national brand

Ireland's international competitors have developed strong national brand identities that complement and reinforce regional and institutional brands and that have very strong institutional participation. These branding efforts have been supported by substantial resources and promotional campaigns, which have significantly increased awareness of those countries as potential destinations for study, to the ultimate benefit of institutions.

Ireland has not allocated the same level of resources to the development of a generic national education brand. Research undertaken on behalf of Enterprise Ireland suggests that less than 10% of prospective international students recall the national Education Ireland brand.

In contrast, Ireland has developed strong and effective national brands and campaigns in other sectors, including tourism (e.g. "Go where Ireland takes you") and innovation (e.g. "Innovation Ireland"). This has yielded significant benefits, in many cases with a comparatively small outlay of funds. The defining feature of these successful campaigns has been their focus on the strengths and unique characteristics of Ireland's people, including collaboration, creativity, and innovation.

The Group regards the development of a shared national brand and marketing messages as a crucial platform to promote Ireland as a centre for international education. The Government has given Enterprise Ireland responsibility for redeveloping and promoting the national Education Ireland brand, in parallel with the development of this strategy and guided by the national priorities identified by the High-Level Group.

The principles that underlie the redevelopment of the Education Ireland brand are as follows:

- It will reflect and reinforce other Irish national branding messages, particularly in regard to innovation, culture, and creativity.
- It will focus on the high-quality of Ireland's offering, including the global reputation of Irish education and the unique student experience.
- It will encompass the higher education and English-language sectors, on the basis of the Quality Mark.<sup>25</sup>
- It will promote awareness of Ireland, to the benefit of all institutions that hold a Quality Mark.
- Institutions will actively support and promote the national brand and messages, including in their own marketing efforts.
- The marketing approach of institutions will be consistent with national policy, including the use of titles such as university, institute of technology and others prescribed by statute.

### 3.2.3 Shared funding of generic promotional efforts

Developing a high-quality national brand and carrying out effective generic and shared promotional activities require appropriate funding. Some countries, notably New Zealand, have developed mechanisms to pool revenue from institutions to support joint efforts, and the Group is attracted to a shared funding model for generic national promotion.

A pilot period of two years will be used to build consensus and trust between all stakeholders in the national branding process. For this pilot period, it is proposed that all institutions covered by the

national brand will contribute to a funding pool (to be called the International Education Promotional Fund) to support the development of the brand and wider generic promotion efforts. This fund will be administered by Enterprise Ireland and Fáilte Ireland in the higher education and English-language sectors, respectively, and part of the Fáilte Ireland fund will be designated for generic Education Ireland branding for use by Enterprise Ireland.

The Group considers it appropriate to divide institutions into payment bands for the purposes of contributing to the funding pool. It will be a core principle of the fund that success should not be disincentivised (i.e. that the burden of funding is not disproportionately carried by a few highly successful institutions). Therefore it is not expected that any individual institution will contribute more than €20,000-25,000 in the pilot period.

The fund will be ring-fenced for promotional purposes. Institutions that do not contribute to the fund will not be permitted to use the national brand and promotional materials and will not be facilitated by State bodies in participating in national approaches and overseas promotion.

The operation of the fund will be reviewed in 2013 at the end of the pilot period.

### 3.2.4 Brand Consultative Group

A consultative group for the development of the brand will be chaired by Enterprise Ireland and will comprise Tourism Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, and relevant stakeholders. The responsibilities of the Brand Consultative Group will be to—

- guide the ongoing development of the national brand
- promote broad consensus on the strategic direction of branding and promotional activities
- facilitate agreement on how institutions will promote the brand as part of their marketing plans
- consider the results of annual surveys on brand awareness.

### 3.2.5 New promotional initiatives

Enterprise Ireland will also take the lead on a number of new promotional and marketing initiatives:

- the development of localised approaches to priority partner-countries, commencing with a pilot project in one country

*This will include identifying champions who are well known and respected by the target audience to act as advocates for Ireland, developing sophisticated localised content for the Education Ireland and institutional web sites, and identifying and highlighting specific programmes or news that is of relevance to the brand's key messages in the markets concerned.*

- the development of updated marketing collateral to include web sites, print and e-brochures, fact sheets, and presentations, including in languages of the priority countries
- the development and introduction of a social media and internet marketing strategy
- the commissioning of annual surveys of international students, to be undertaken in all institutions, to assess movement in brand awareness

*This will supplement independent assessments of brand effectiveness and awareness.*

If the funding and implementation model is judged to be effective and is expanded after the pilot period, consideration could be given to expanding the funding base and to developing new structures (for example, overseas education offices or a full-time brand manager to work with Enterprise Ireland and the Brand Consultative Group).

### 3.2.6 Strengthening Ireland's relations with education agents

Education agents are a crucial influence on prospective students. They are particularly important in certain major markets, such as India. Research indicates that approximately 60% of international students in Australia and 45% in the UK had used the services of agents. Ireland will therefore need to develop its capacity for dealing with ethical and trusted agents on a more strategic basis.

A pilot project to develop relationships with trusted agents will initially be carried out in India and introduced in other key markets. Actions will include:

- Enterprise Ireland offices overseas, working with institutions, will develop lists of trusted agents who work with Irish institutions, have high ethical standards, and have a successful record, including high visa approval rates (e.g. greater than 85%) for their students. This list will be agreed with INIS.
- This arrangement will be formalised in some markets by designating Ireland-specialist agents who are entitled to use the Education Ireland brand and to enjoy other advantages, such as invitations to incoming education missions or training.
- The higher education and English-language sectors will collaborate on developing knowledge of local agents and on training initiatives.

*Training tools for agents will be developed, including agent packs, online training (including for visa and immigration procedures), and in-country training.*

- Diplomatic missions, Enterprise Ireland and Tourism Ireland overseas offices will network with agents to improve their general awareness of Ireland.
- Visa officials will work with trusted agents in resolving problems that may arise with visa applications (e.g. missing information).
- The Irish authorities will explore, with their international partners, possible joint actions for promoting ethical standards among agents.
- A feedback mechanism will be incorporated in the process of developing trusted agents in order that the immigration compliance of students is linked with the agent who recruited them. Agents who consistently send students who do not meet the required standard or who prove themselves to be unwilling or unable to attend classes or to meet the academic requirements of their study programme should receive lower priority. In cases of fraud, agents will be blacklisted for visa purposes.

### 3.2.7 Ireland's diplomatic network

While Enterprise Ireland and Tourism Ireland have the leading role in promoting Irish education services overseas, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Ireland's diplomatic missions overseas will continue to play a crucial role in promoting Ireland as a centre for international education.

Areas in which diplomatic missions support individual institutions and the wider promotion of Ireland as a centre for international education include—

- awareness-raising and the promotion of Irish education as part of overall promotional efforts

*These include St Patrick's Day activities, cultural initiatives, networking, and media and press work. Embassy web sites are also a crucial first port of call for prospective students, and these have been updated to include promotional material about Irish education.*

- networking with influential contacts of importance to Ireland's educational interests, including educational leadership at ministry, agency and institutional level, educational agents, and international offices

*Missions can also secure high-level access to decision makers, which can be particularly important in countries in which the state plays a crucial role in the educational sector, or those in which high-level access is a prerequisite for doing business.*

- using high-level visits to promote international education, including at Ministerial, senior official and agency level

*Missions also facilitate trade missions and trade fairs and can assist visiting delegations from Irish education institutions.*

- developing networks of influence, including the promotion of Irish education to the global Irish diaspora and maintaining links with Irish-educated alumni as part of wider networking efforts

*Missions can work with Irish educators working overseas to realise their potential as advocates for Ireland. The Department of Foreign Affairs can also work with the Global Irish Network, established on foot of the Global Irish Economic Forum held in Farmleigh in September 2009, to promote and refine high-level messages about international education in Ireland.*

- assisting in gathering market intelligence and safeguarding the reputation of Irish education by monitoring the activities of bogus institutions
- acting as the public face of the Irish visa and immigration system.

To make the most effective use of Ireland's diplomatic resources, the Group proposes the following:

- High-Level Group targets and localised plans will provide a basis for specific approaches by diplomatic missions in priority countries.
- Diplomatic missions will contribute to providing information on markets and opportunities in Education Market Intelligence Reports.
- Diplomatic missions will be provided with marketing material, presentations, etc. to assist in their promotional work. Embassy and Consulate web sites, as a gateway to Ireland, will continue to feature up-to-date marketing messages.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs will circulate its quarterly promotional reports to contact points in the representative groups.

- Irish diplomats will continue to receive briefings on international education as part of their pre-posting training programme.
- Educational institutions and representative bodies should, as a matter of routine, inform the relevant Irish diplomatic missions or Enterprise Ireland or Tourism Ireland offices of forthcoming visits to their countries or regions and should keep these offices informed of developments in the market.
- The Internationalisation Development Fund (see section 3.7.2 below) will be open to diplomatic missions and local Enterprise Ireland offices in priority countries to seek funding for local promotional activities and initiatives.
- In certain countries, Enterprise Ireland offices and diplomatic missions may wish to seek the assistance of locally-based Irish educators or alumni to advise on education promotion in their country of accreditation, for example as part of an advisory panel.
- Diplomatic missions will play a key role in maintaining the link with alumni by facilitating their participation in Irish networks and Ireland-themed events.

### 3.3 QUALITY WILL BE AT THE HEART OF IRELAND'S INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION OFFERING

#### 3.3.1 A strong framework for quality

Ireland has an international reputation for academic quality and for strong quality assurance procedures. This provides an extremely strong basis for the promotion of high-quality international education. However, prospective students also require reassurance about the overall international student experience available in institutions.

Countries have taken different approaches to assuring international students of pastoral care standards. Australia has what amounts to consumer protection legislation in the form of the Education Services for Overseas Students Act, which requires adherence to a statutory code of practice. New Zealand also operates a statutory code of practice. In the UK, in comparison, institutions set their own standards for student support.<sup>26</sup>

The Government has taken the view that a national framework, with a statutory basis, provides the clearest and most consistent assurance to prospective international students and sponsors about the levels of pastoral support that they can expect in Irish institutions.

As recommended in the *Report of the Interdepartmental Working Group on the Internationalisation of Irish Education Services* (2004), the Government has decided that a Code of Practice and Quality Mark for the provision of programmes of education and training to international learners will be established. This will be managed by Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland, the amalgamated agency to be established in 2011. Statutory provision for the Quality Mark will be made in the forthcoming Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill.

The Code of Practice will build on the Irish Higher Education Quality Network's (IHEQN) existing voluntary code of practice and guidelines for provision of education to international students<sup>27</sup> and the ACELS voluntary recognition scheme for English language schools, now administered by the NQAI

following its absorption of the functions of ACELS in 2009. In order to inform the development of the statutory code of practice, the IHEQN should gather feedback on the implementation to date of the voluntary code and guidelines.

The Code of Practice and Quality Mark will apply to institutions rather than (as with the present internationalisation register) individual programmes. Compliance with the Quality Mark and Code of Practice will not be mandatory for the operation of educational establishments in Ireland. However, the Quality Mark will be used for the following purposes by State bodies:

- In keeping with the recommendations of the 2004 report, visas will not be issued for study in institutions that do not have the Quality Mark, nor will students attending such institutions from non-visa required countries outside the EEA be allowed permission to remain to study for courses of longer than three months' duration.
- Access to work will be limited to students attending institutions that hold a Quality Mark.
- Only institutions that hold the Quality Mark will be allowed to participate in national branding arrangements and in work with State bodies in the area of international education.

The statutory Quality Mark will indicate, *inter alia*, compliance with the Code of Practice. Headline criteria for the Quality Mark will include marketing, recruitment and enrolment, information, orientation and induction, fees, accommodation, academic matters (including framework alignment and progression), support, and welfare services and learner protection.

Given the over-riding importance of ensuring a high-quality experience for international students, the threshold for obtaining a Quality Mark will be set at a high level. In developing the Code of Practice and Quality Mark, QQAI should have regard to national policy as enunciated in this strategy.

In the interim, and without prejudice to the development of the statutory Code of Practice, the Group supports the broad principles set out in the IHEQN voluntary code of practice<sup>28</sup> regarding the treatment of international students in the higher education sector and the ACELS regime in the English-language sector.

### 3.3.2 Communicating quality

It is vital that information about Irish academic standards and pastoral care be clearly communicated to international students and to their support networks, including friends and family, teachers, career guidance professionals, and sponsoring agencies.

The Education Ireland web site will include a specific section on quality, in both academic provision and student experience. This will include information on the quality framework for Irish education and will alert international students to information and documents that will be of relevance to them (for example, institutional reviews).

Documents summarising the academic quality procedures and the Code of Practice for provision of international education will be made available in the major languages of priority partner-countries.

As a further transparency measure for prospective international students, the working group on quality assurance and student experience will give consideration to developing a comparison between Irish and other international standards or processes for promoting academic quality and pastoral care for international students, which will be placed on the Education Ireland web site. This comparison exercise will preferably be conducted by an independent party and funded through the Internationalisation Development Fund.

In the interim, summaries of the IHEQN code of practice will be translated into the languages of priority partner-countries.

### 3.3.3 A unique student experience

Beyond the sphere of educational quality, Ireland also has a number of inherent advantages as a destination for international students, including our reputation for friendliness, good quality of life, a vibrant and unique culture and heritage, a young, creative and imaginative population, stunning scenery, and exciting activities, as well as a safe and secure environment for international students.

In order to capitalise on these intrinsic advantages, appropriate mechanisms need to be in place to support the safety, security and well-being of students. Irish institutions already place significant emphasis on these issues.

### 3.3.4 Cultural integration

Ireland is committed to offering an education that “respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership.”<sup>29</sup> The Department of Education and Skills is developing an intercultural education strategy to provide a framework for promoting an intercultural learning environment.

Integration with the student population and the wider community should continue to be a central part of the experience of studying in Ireland. The cultural and religious needs of students should be respected and facilitated.

However, research indicates that “significant intercultural interaction [between domestic and international students] is unlikely to occur spontaneously to any large extent,”<sup>30</sup> which implies that institutions need to take steps to promote integration and intercultural contact. Institutions should have regard to good practice in this area and should share information.<sup>31</sup>

International students must be integrated with the wider student community, and programmes should be diverse and integrated. Single-nationality programmes should not be provided, except where they are specifically requested by foreign sponsoring bodies or other clients.

Because of linguistic and cultural barriers and geographical separation from family supports, international students can be particularly vulnerable in matters relating to student accommodation. Institutions therefore have a particular duty of care in providing accommodation for international students. Where student accommodation is provided or used by institutions, it should be mixed between domestic and international students. International students, particularly of one nationality, must not be housed separately from other students.

Award of the Quality Mark should have regard to national policy in respect of integration.

### 3.3.5 Specific student supports and actions

Specific actions to maintain a high level of student support should include the following:

#### *Recruitment and enrolment*

- The HEA will examine turnaround times and international student application procedures in institutions as part of a benchmarking and improvement exercise.
- Institutions should consider establishing on-line application processes and establishing more comprehensive systems for enquiry handling and applicant communication and relationship processes. This could include own-language support (telephone, web chat, and e-mail) for some of the major markets, callbacks to prospective students who indicated some interest in studying in Ireland, and data collection to track perceptions of prospective students. This could be outsourced and could involve the development of shared services.
- The Education Ireland web site will include videos on how to complete visa applications and other pre-arrival issues. These will be made available on localised web sites in the major languages of priority countries.

#### *Arrival and orientation*

- The Education Ireland web site will include comprehensive generic orientation information to prepare international students for life in an education institution in Ireland.<sup>32</sup> This could include videos and information on arrival in Ireland and immigration procedures, dealing with cultural adaptation, living in Ireland, and coping with new challenges of studying at higher level. As part of a collaborative effort, individual institutions should take the lead on developing generic information on relevant topics.
- International student welcome desks, managed by the private sector on a service basis, could be provided on a pilot basis at Dublin Airport. Personnel at these welcome desks would welcome international students and would provide a point of contact with immigration officials.

#### *Academic progression and support*

- The well-being of international students, including their academic progression, should be monitored by institutions to ensure that they are in line with institutional norms. As part of its work in monitoring student progression, the HEA will analyse the progress of international students at a national level.
- Intercultural training for staff who deal with international students should be provided by institutions.
- Contact points should be established within institutions for international students requiring assistance with accommodation.
- Culturally sensitive events should be organised to promote inclusion with the wider student community, including sports, shopping, visits to theatres, galleries, and other cultural events.
- Mentoring and volunteer support programmes should be provided for international students who may be in danger of cultural isolation.



- Institutions should facilitate work by international students with volunteering programmes and other community-based activities.
- Family-based home-stays should be used as an accommodation alternative for certain students.
- Guides should be developed to assist students, e.g. information on religiously acceptable facilities.
- Institutions should work with local tourism bodies to design specific programmes of interest to international students.

### 3.3.6 Feedback from students

Research indicates that international students in Ireland generally display high levels of satisfaction with their studies and their general environment.<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, continuous feedback from international students is important for policy and promotional reasons. Many other countries have developed mechanisms to assess the levels of satisfaction of international students with their experience, and also in specific areas such as student safety.<sup>34</sup>

Standardised student satisfaction surveys should be carried out in institutions every two years. Enterprise Ireland will take the lead in working with institutions to organise these surveys in the higher education sector, and Fáilte Ireland will do so in the English-language sector, with possible support from the Internationalisation Development Fund.

Government Departments and agencies are willing to participate in an annual forum with representatives of international students (for example, organised by the USI or another student body) to discuss issues of interest and concern.

## 3.4 IRELAND'S VISA, IMMIGRATION AND LABOUR MARKET ACCESS POLICIES WILL BE STRONG AND COMPETITIVE

### 3.4.1 A strengthened visa and immigration system

Competitive immigration, visa and labour market access policies are recognised as being important in facilitating increased internationalisation when allied with high-quality institutional offerings, co-ordinated branding and promotional approaches, competitive policies and practices in other areas, and full compliance by institutions with the State's regulatory requirements.

The significant challenge for immigration services throughout the world is to balance the need for competitiveness with the necessary and appropriate safeguards.

In parallel with development of the international education strategy by the High-Level Group on International Education, the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS), in collaboration with the relevant Government Departments, and informed by a public consultation process, has undertaken a major review of student immigration policies, with the aim of strengthening the system, eliminating the potential for abuse, and developing a more internationally competitive immigration regime.

The INIS review<sup>35</sup>, recently published by the Department of Justice and Law Reform, sets out in detail the nature of the reforms to be implemented in the student immigration system. These reforms will strengthen the contribution of the student immigration system to Ireland's performance as a provider of high-quality international education and will contribute to the primary goal of developing relationships with future leaders, entrepreneurs and decision-makers in countries of importance to Ireland.

### **3.4.2 Key developments**

Some of the key developments arising from the work of the student immigration review and the High-Level Group's considerations are set out below.

#### ***Shared recruitment targets***

Ireland's targets for recruitment of international students will be agreed with the visa and immigration authorities. Progress towards these targets, and any strategic issues arising, will be dealt with by the implementation and market development/access working group and the Interdepartmental Committee on Student Immigration, as appropriate.

#### ***Strengthened rules and alignment of visa and immigration processes with the Quality Mark***

New rules will strengthen Ireland's immigration regime, which will benefit all high-quality providers. These include new limits on the length of time students can remain in Ireland, requirements for academic progression, strengthened inspection processes, requirements regarding alignment of courses with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and phasing out of the facility to bring non-EEA students into Ireland on Further Education courses lower than level 5 on the NFQ. At an appropriate time, students will not receive immigration registration in respect of attendance at institutions that do not hold the Quality Mark.

#### ***Fast-tracking of degree programme visas***

Applications for degree-level programmes will be fast-tracked, on the understanding that this will not have a negative impact on the service provided to applicants for other courses.

#### ***Reducing the burden on students studying for a short time in Ireland***

Students of short-term language courses will be treated as educational tourists and will not have to meet the usual standard conditions for students, nor will they be required to register with the immigration authorities on arrival.

#### ***Access to the labour market***

The postgraduate work concession will be extended from six months to one year for all graduates of programmes at NFQ level 8 and above granted by an Irish authority. During this time, graduates will be afforded a transition permission for the purpose of gaining relevant work experience, developing a business idea (within certain limits), or seeking an employment permit. The extension of the postgraduate work concession to one year, and its expansion to encompass business start-ups by international students, will make a significant contribution to Ireland's competitiveness by allowing international students to enhance their career prospects through study, work and entrepreneurship in Ireland. Internships and work placements will continue to be allowed in certain circumstances.

### ***Family reunification***

The children of students pursuing PhD programmes or participating in an academic programme agreed between Ireland and another State (within certain conditions) will be permitted to attend state-funded schools in Ireland. This will also apply to other students who pay an immigration levy to cover the State's costs of providing their children's education.

### ***Market pilot projects and initiatives***

INIS works in partnership with educational stakeholders on the High-Level Group to develop Ireland's international offering and the opening of new markets and opportunities in the higher education and English-language sectors. INIS will continue to work with reputable providers and their representative bodies in addressing immigration issues in advance of these new market initiatives and guiding them through the processes involved. INIS is also open to the establishment of certain pilot projects whereby visas for specific categories of students are processed locally.

### ***Staff deployment***

INIS is prepared to consider temporary staff deployments to Ireland's overseas visa offices when large numbers of visa applications are to be processed.

### ***Relations with trusted agents***

INIS is willing to provide support, information and guidance to training initiatives for reputable agents undertaken by Enterprise Ireland and Fáilte Ireland, in association with institutions and representative bodies. They are also committed to working with trusted agents to resolve issues that arise with visa applications, and they already do so in many cases.

### ***Evidence of finance***

The immigration authorities are open to exploring any alternative methods for making available financial evidence demonstrating that a student has access to money in Ireland and not just while he or she is applying for a visa.

### ***ICT solutions***

INIS is open to interfacing with technological solutions in the area of recording and accessing information regarding course acceptance and fee payment and is willing to work with private service providers and institutions on a pilot basis.

### ***Turnaround times***

Visa applications in countries that do not host an Irish visa office (where turnaround times generally match that of competitors) must usually be returned to Dublin, which inevitably lengthens the process. Nevertheless, students and institutions have a genuine need to know the likely turnaround times so that they can plan ahead, using this information in conjunction with any available data from the colleges as their response times. Subject to ICT-related work, INIS will publish quarterly statistical returns for student visa applications by country.

### ***Visa applications***

INIS has issued a standing invitation to all stakeholders to submit workable, practical suggestions on how the processing of visa applications could be made more efficient and effective on an ongoing basis.

### 3.4.3 Consultation with the Department of Justice and Law Reform

It is vital that early consultation with the Department of Justice and Law Reform takes place on any proposal to bring in large numbers of non-EEA students.

The Department of Justice and Law Reform works closely with educational sectors on the development of pilot projects and initiatives to take advantage of opportunities in emerging markets.

Information that is usually required or discussed with the Department includes:

- market background
- profile of the students being targeted
- projected numbers
- immigration status and visas
- issues regarding access to work
- documentation required
- administration of the scheme
- general conditions
- conditions regarding entry to the state
- monitoring of the scheme.

## 3.5 IRELAND'S HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WILL BE GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE AND INTERNATIONALLY ORIENTED

### 3.5.1 Internationalisation strategies

Effective internationalisation within institutions requires the articulation of a vision, the definition of objectives and targets, leadership at senior level, engagement throughout the organisation, and appropriate implementation structures. The objectives and manner of internationalisation will vary depending on the overall missions of different institutions.

Institutions should develop comprehensive internationalisation strategies that are linked with strategic goals and that have regard to national policies and priorities. They should set out the institutions' international visions and targets and implementation issues and set out the resources to be applied. Areas to be considered in these strategies include:<sup>36</sup>

- targets for international student recruitment and outward mobility, including exchange programmes
- EU activities and programmes
- capacity development for international students
- areas of specialisation in their international offering
- transnational education

- internationalised curricula and internationally-focused programmes, learning outcomes and assessment of students in line with international goals
- integration and student supports
- developing international experience of staff (including exchanges, overseas work in partner-institutions, international research, attendance at conferences, etc.)
- development of international partnerships
- improving international competitiveness
- global social responsibility and contribution to overseas development.

The HEA has a role in reviewing all elements of its designated institutions' strategic plans, including those relating to international education. It will also work with institutions on developing enhanced collaboration and sharing of services as well as on benchmarking and facilitating the sharing of good practice.

Institutions should also consider participation in appropriate cross-border internationalisation mapping and benchmarking exercises.<sup>37</sup>

### 3.5.2 Capacity issues

There are a range of issues that have implications for the capacity of the public higher education system to increase the number of international students. For example:

- By 2020 Ireland aims to have 72% of school-leavers participating in higher education,<sup>38</sup> and it is making significant progress towards this target. This target is significantly more ambitious than that of many other countries that are internationalising their higher education systems.
- Department of Education and Skills enrolment projections<sup>39</sup> are that approximately 188,000 students will be enrolled in State-aided higher education institutions by 2015, and 215,000 will be enrolled by 2020, representing increases of 30% and 48%, respectively, on present enrolment.
- Space utilisation in the Irish higher education system is high, both in and out of term time, particularly in the university sector.

Nevertheless it is very important to maintain a consistency of approach and momentum in raising international student numbers. The flow of students cannot be turned on and off in any given year — to do so would damage relationships with the countries concerned and would jeopardise longer term goals.

There may be some scope for changes in work practices which could increase capacity but these would have wider implications, for example in relation to terms of employment of staff, which are beyond the remit of this Group. In any event, with such a significantly expanding student population, any additional capacity thus created would be subject to the same competing demands as current capacity.

Growth in capacity for international students will therefore need to be self-funded on the basis of international revenue. Capacity may also be created by facilitating the outward mobility of students,

and demand can be met in other ways, such as innovative forms of delivery (for example, e-learning and blended learning), changes to programme structures, and increased overseas delivery of programmes (including in Irish-linked or Irish-administered institutions overseas),

As part of its work in co-ordinating the development of disciplines and sectors of relevance to international students and partners, the HEA will undertake a survey of institutions assessing current capacity for international students and expected capacity in 2015, particularly for programmes that are of strong international interest or for which domestic demand has decreased. This survey will support the identification of the subject areas which will be promoted in the period to 2015.

### **3.5.3 Institutional targets for international student recruitment**

When setting enrolment targets, institutions should have regard to the medium term national target that international students should comprise 15% of the total number of full-time students in higher education. Institutions may seek to recruit higher proportions of students if they have the institutional capacity and, in particular, the required level of student support services to facilitate strong integration.

While the Group is not recommending a ceiling on the proportion of international students in higher education institutions, it is vital that institutions themselves ensure that they are consistent with the national policy of offering strong integration of international students with Irish students. This is particularly the case where institutions have proportions of international students that are higher than the national norm. This principle will be reflected in the statutory Code of Practice and Quality Mark regime.

Institutions should also aim to have a relatively diverse mix of nationalities within their international student population in order to limit dependence on a small number of markets.

As a guide to prospective students, the proportion of international students in the student body should be provided on the web sites of institutions.

### **3.5.4 Tuition fees**

The growth in international student numbers will involve self-financing expansion that meets the full costs of educational programmes (including the costs associated with clinical placements where these arise and contributions towards capital development). In general, non-EEA students attending Irish higher education will continue to pay economic fees. Exceptions should be made for development co-operation programmes, such as the Irish Aid Fellowships, in which case institutions should consider offering EU fees levels.

There is a balance to be struck in setting the level of fees for international students, and institutions should consider the effects of higher fees on competitiveness; but they should also take into account the need to deliver a high quality of education and enhanced levels of student support.

In this regard, the Group notes the conclusion of the OECD that “tuition costs do not necessarily discourage prospective international students as long as the quality of education provided and its likely returns make the investment worthwhile.”<sup>40</sup> However, it is evident that cost considerations play a role, particularly in deciding between similar educational opportunities. The OECD suggests that the UK and the USA experienced less significant growth in international student numbers compared with other countries during the period 2000–07 because tuition fees were comparatively higher than other countries. (However, both countries have experienced significant growth since then).

Given that Ireland is seeking to educate future leaders and decision-makers in strategic partner-countries, the primary selling point for Ireland must be the prospect of high-quality education and a unique student experience that contributes to the personal and professional development of students, and in particular that adds value to their career outcomes.

It cannot be expected that all institutions will charge exactly the same tuition fees. However, as a general principle, Irish providers should aim to compete with their global competitors rather than with each other. Reductions in fees to levels that may affect student support may have implications for the awarding or retention of the Quality Mark.

Given the scale of investment involved — anywhere between €40,000 and €100,000 in tuition fees over the course of a four-year programme, and higher for certain medical programmes — the levels of expectation from students, families and sponsoring agents are high. It is important, therefore, that clear indications are given to international students, their families (who often make very significant sacrifices to fund the student's international experience) and sponsoring agents about what they can expect in terms of quality of education, student experience, levels of support, and returns on investment, with particular reference to career outcomes.

Institutions should be in a position to provide potential international students with maximum certainty on costs for the full duration of their studies. Furthermore, information about the cost of living should be standardised, taking account of regional differences.

Institutions should make efforts to collect specific information on the career outcomes of international students, which should be shared and used for marketing purposes. The HEA will include specific information on international students in its annual publication *What Do Graduates Do?*

### **3.5.5 Contribution of international income to diversification of funding**

The Group supports the principle enunciated in the *Report of the Interdepartmental Working Group on the Internationalisation of Irish Education Services* (2004) that “surplus fee income derived from the attraction of overseas students should be retained for use at institutional level.” With the exception of the designation of a small proportion of income or funding for generic branding, this should be the case for the public sector.

While the State must have regard to the contribution of international income to the funding of the higher education system, it is important that the success of institutions in the international area should not be disincentivised. The generation of additional fee income should not result in an offsetting reduction in other State funding to a particular institution.

### **3.5.6 Internationalised curricula**

The internationalisation of curricula is a crucial part of the overall internationalisation process. In addition to making programmes more relevant for international students, it provides a crucial means of increasing the global awareness of students. Institutions should seek to support the internationalisation of curricula and should consider how such curricula can be used to support international partnerships, for example by including information and maps on institutional web sites demonstrating the global coverage of curricula and research.

### 3.5.7 Transnational education

Transnational education can be broadly defined as “education where the degree-awarding institution and the student are located in different countries, and it encompasses a diversity of operations ranging from distance education and on-line learning to franchising and fully fledged branch campuses.”<sup>41</sup>

There has been significant global growth in the delivery of transnational education, and in some countries it is expected that transnational delivery will become the main form of international education provision. For example, nearly a quarter of a million students were enrolled in British education programmes outside the UK in 2005.<sup>42</sup>

At present, Irish institutions are involved in delivering transnational education in a number of ways, including through overseas campuses (in both the higher education and English-language sectors), joint degree programmes, and overseas delivery of programmes by Irish institutions. Further development of these areas and increased use of flexible learning (e.g. e-learning and blended learning) has significant potential in aiding internationalisation.<sup>43</sup>

Enterprise Ireland reports that approximately three thousand students can be classified as offshore students. The Group considers that a reasonable target would be to increase this number by 50% by 2015. Transnational education should be included in institutional internationalisation strategies.

In setting this target, the Group notes the following principles of good practice in delivering international education, drawn from recent work carried out on behalf of the European Commission<sup>44</sup> and from Irish experience of transnational education:

- Market analysis of the potential demand for the programmes in question is a crucial prerequisite.
- It is necessary to have a clear understanding from the outset of the long time-scales involved. It can take many years to make programmes operational, and even longer to assess success in meeting objectives.
- It is important to invest time and effort in understanding the local legal and regulatory framework and local culture and circumstances before starting cross-border programmes.
- There is usually a need for support, or at least acceptance, from the host-country government at regional and national level, especially for branch campuses and other large-scale projects.
- Larger transnational education projects require financial support in the start-up phase; the time-frame for such operations to reach a break-even point can be up to ten years. Successful models for the development of branch campus property include the use of the Business Expansion Scheme.
- Options for staff deployment include direct employment in the host country and the secondment of staff members from Ireland. There are strong possibilities for recruiting suitably qualified and able Irish graduates to undertake teaching activities in partner-institutions as part of joint programmes and on branch campuses.
- Collaborative arrangements should aim to achieve a balanced contribution from both sides and to generate mutual benefits. Partnership agreements should be detailed documents that clearly set out the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of the partners, including conditions for the ending of the partnership and the financial arrangements related to the operations.



Quality issues are clearly fundamental in the delivery of transnational education. While there are international guidelines (e.g. the *UNESCO/OECD Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*), most national systems do not yet encompass transnational education programmes, resulting in the possibility of a “quality assurance gap.”<sup>45</sup> It has been noted that “an entire higher education system may be temporarily damaged by sub-standard provision of cross-border programmes”; this is also true in situations in which accreditation and other issues have not been clarified sufficiently in advance.

Maintaining a high level of control in the hands of the awarding institutions, especially in academic matters, should help to ensure that cross-border programmes are of equal quality to those offered at home. However, Irish educational institutions must also ensure that they are fully in compliance with the quality assurance procedures of the partner-country, in addition to Irish procedures.

The Group recommends that the quality assurance authorities, led by the NQAI, should consider the implications, from the quality assurance perspective, of the growing importance of transnational education as part of Ireland's overall international education offering. In this regard, the Group notes that the UK and Australia, two of the leaders in this area in terms of market share, have adopted binding guidelines for good practice. Such work could be supported by the Internationalisation Development Fund.

### **3.5.8 Contribution of the higher education system to overseas development**

The Irish higher education system already plays a crucial role in Ireland's overseas development programme, in particular in education for capacity development. Co-operation is managed through schemes such as the Programme of Strategic Cooperation between Irish Aid and Higher Education and Research Institutes, 2007-11, and the Irish Aid Fellowship Training Programme.

Higher education institutions should consider fee waivers or the application of EU fees to certain students and researchers from developing countries, including as part of the Irish Aid Fellowship Training Programme.

Globalisation and development issues are integral to many programmes of study. We cannot train future leaders and decision-makers without reference and exposure to what is happening in other parts of the world, including in the poorest parts. This imperative should be reflected, as appropriate, in the development of internationalised curricula.

### **3.5.9 Incentivising investment**

While issues relating to the tax system are beyond the scope of this strategy, the Group notes the arguments made that provisions such as tax relief for private colleges by way of capital allowances for investment in institutional facilities and the treatment of private third-level institutions as internationally traded services companies would be beneficial in terms of enhancing internationalisation.

## **3.6 IRELAND WILL DEVELOP TARGETED AND RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION OFFERINGS**

### **3.6.1 Student profiles**

If investment in global relationships is Ireland's primary rationale for engaging in internationalisation, it follows that a strategic approach should be taken in identifying and targeting certain types of student who are likely to become the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs and decision-makers in countries of importance to Ireland.

It is important to stress that the Group regards this as encompassing the full range of disciplines, prospective careers, and aspirations. By leaders, we mean thought leaders as much as prospective politicians and CEOs. We want social entrepreneurs as much as those motivated by purely economic rationales. Ireland has a tremendous cultural heritage and a vibrant artistic community, and so artists and musicians will be as important in creating links for Ireland as company executives. Building on Ireland's strong tradition in the area of development co-operation, we also want students who are committed to making a difference in the world.

The common theme will be to target and recruit students who are strongly motivated in terms of their personal and professional development and who will benefit from the strengths of the Irish system.

Enterprise Ireland, as part of its branding strategy, has identified a number of categories of prospective international student, based on profiles of values, desires, study interests, age profiles, etc. Recruitment targets for individual markets will also include targets for the types of student Ireland wishes to recruit.

### **3.6.2 Developing disciplines of relevance**

While there will continue to be potential for the marketing of programmes in disciplines in which additional capacity is available, a more strategic approach will need to be taken if Ireland is to be successful in attracting the profile of students in whom we are interested.

The HEA, in leading the working group on sectoral development, will identify disciplines and areas that are of relevance to prospective students and to partner-countries, taking account of capacity and institutional strengths.

### **3.6.3 Diversification in the English-language sector**

The Group takes the view that, notwithstanding the global long-term outlook of declining numbers studying English overseas, Ireland retains unique advantages, including a reputation for quality, safety, and a renowned culture and heritage, which will allow the sector to grow.

However, Ireland's offering will need to continually improve if it is to stay competitive. In particular, there is scope to continue the development of more co-ordinated packages combining English-language learning with tourist activities (e.g. golf, fishing, walking, horse-riding, adventure sports etc.).

The transfer of ACELS (the voluntary inspection and recognition scheme for the English-language sector) to the NQAI, the development of the Quality Mark and the development of the English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) programme as a foundation course on the NQF are crucial in positioning Ireland for taking advantage of new opportunities for sustainable growth and diversification in the English-language sector, including in the following areas:

- pathway programmes to higher education, in Ireland and elsewhere in Europe, based on the EGAP
- further development of the executive or corporate training sector
- participation in teacher-training and capacity-building programmes in partner-countries
- offshore provision of courses, and an increased use of e-learning, including in partnership with higher education providers.

On the basis of priority market strategies and the strengthened immigration regime, new markets will be available to the English-language sector, based on agreed targets and plans. In general terms, short-cycle courses, pathway/foundation programmes and specialist training will provide the most sustainable opportunities for growth in these new markets.

## **3.7 GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS WILL BE CONSISTENT AND SUPPORTIVE**

### **3.7.1 Consistent Government policy**

Given the strategic importance of international education to the development of Ireland's global relationships, Government policies and practices should be supportive and consistent with national goals in this area. Specific areas (including visas and immigration and the deployment of diplomatic resources) are considered elsewhere in the report.

The High-Level Group and its working groups and the standing interdepartmental committee on student immigration will be the mechanisms that will promote consistent approaches and policy-making on international education issues.

Government departments and agencies will continue to engage at political and senior official level with counterparts in partner-countries and in forums such as joint economic commissions and joint working groups to ensure the promotion of Ireland as a centre for international education. They will also facilitate inward and outward visits that are of benefit to Irish educational interests.

### **3.7.2 Supporting internationalisation initiatives**

The Department of Education and Skills will maintain a small strategic fund to be entitled the Internationalisation Development Fund and to be used to fund one-off, specific initiatives designed to improve Ireland's position as a centre for international education, including academic and student experience projects and branding and promotion projects.

The following projects could be considered for priority funding:

- brand development
- research on the economic impact of international education in Ireland
- independent comparison between Irish and other international standards and processes (in terms of academic quality and pastoral care)
- standardised student satisfaction surveys
- research on quality assurance in transnational education.

### 3.7.3 Supporting policy goals through national scholarships

Scholarships can be a crucial tool in recruiting talented international students and in developing interest among potential students in Ireland as a destination for study. Many other leading providers of international education have well-funded scholarship schemes, for example the New Zealand International Scholarships and the Australia Awards.

At present Ireland supports a number of schemes aimed at offering exceptional international students a chance to study in Ireland, including the George Mitchell Scholarship Programme, Irish Aid Fellowships, and the Department of Education and Skills bilateral scholarship programme. Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) provides grants for outstanding international researchers who wish to relocate to Ireland. A number of institutions have established their own scholarship/award programmes, and a number of national schemes are open to applicants from outside Ireland.

The Department of Education and Skills proposes, in consultation with its bilateral partner countries, to end its current exchange scholarship programme, which has developed *ad hoc* over the past thirty years. Scholarships are at present awarded for one year of postgraduate study on the basis of bilateral agreement with partner-countries. The programme has not been tied to overseas promotion of Ireland, and, consequently, levels of interest from prospective students have tended to be low. The nature of the conditions means that there is little flexibility to target resources where they are of most benefit.

It is proposed to reallocate these resources (approximately €300,000 annually), subject to discussion with Ireland's international partners, to support the establishment of a new international scholarship pool, with the aim of attracting talented international students and educators, promoting greater awareness of Ireland as a centre for international education, and facilitating outward mobility of Irish students. There may be potential to expand the scholarship pool, particularly the proposed New Frontiers programme (see below), through endowment or philanthropy opportunities. The pool will comprise three programmes, which will operate on a pilot basis for two years.

The first programme will be the **Government of Ireland International Scholarship**, to be administered by the HEA and jointly funded by institutions. It will be open to students who wish to attend any higher education institution that holds a Quality Mark. The one-year scholarship will provide €10,000 per student, half from the institution and half from the scholarship pool. The option will also be open to institutions, with the agreement of the HEA, to re-brand institutional scholarships as Government of Ireland International Scholarships. This will add to the promotional reach and impact of the scholarship programme. It is expected that up to thirty scholarship awards will be made in the first year of the programme (academic year 2011/12). Consideration will also be given to re-branding the Irish Aid Fellowships as Government of Ireland International Scholarships, with clear targeted provision for fellows from the Irish government partner-countries in the developing world.

The second programme will be the **New Frontiers Programme**, also to be administered by the HEA. This will be open to staff members and students in Irish higher education institutions that hold a Quality Mark and who wish to undertake a period of study in an institution in one non-English-speaking partner-country outside the EEA. The State's contribution will be €2,500, and it is expected that institutions will also provide funding. It is expected that up to thirty awards will be made in the first year of the programme (2011/12).

The third programme will be the **Government of Ireland English Language Educators Scholarship**, to be administered by Fáilte Ireland. This will be provided for a period of study in Ireland by talented English-language educators who will become advocates for Ireland in their home countries. It will be open to students who wish to attend an institution that holds a Quality Mark. The award will be €5,000, and it is expected that institutions would also contribute funding. It is expected that up to fifteen awards will be made in the first year of the programme (2011/12).

As a condition of receiving scholarships and awards, students will be required to promote Ireland as a centre for international education — for example using social media — and will be used as advocates for Ireland in promotional campaigns in their home countries.

The Education Ireland web site acts as a resource for international students wishing to research scholarship and award opportunities. All institutions should ensure that up-to-date information on institutional awards is included on this web site.

## 3.8 IRELAND WILL STRENGTHEN ITS NETWORKS OF INFLUENCE

### 3.8.1 Irish-educated alumni are a key part of Ireland's networks of influence

Alumni educated in Ireland who maintain their links with Ireland are a hugely valuable network for Ireland. To maintain these links, therefore, Ireland will need to take a strategic approach to long-term engagement that will keep the relationship alive in a meaningful, productive and sustainable way. From the viewpoint of the graduates themselves, the relationship with Ireland and with institutions must offer them continuing value, whether in terms of their personal or professional development.

The High-Level Group considers that there is potential for enhanced collaboration in this area. In addition to the institutional link, alumni relations should be regarded as falling within the broader rubric of Ireland's bilateral relations with a country, and they should be consistent with other national approaches in that country. Diplomatic missions and Enterprise Ireland offices in the countries concerned, in collaboration with institutions, are best placed to judge the necessary actions to facilitate the continued affinity of alumni with Ireland.

In this context, Ireland's relations with its international alumni will be based on the following principles:

- Institutions themselves, through their alumni offices and networks, will continue to provide the primary channel of communication with their alumni, through email, magazines, web sites, and social networking sites.
- Institutions should encourage their international students to remain connected with Ireland following graduation and should facilitate these connections. They should collect student contact information in a way that allows it to be shared with Irish diplomatic missions and promotional agencies for purposes that are mutually beneficial.
- Alumni need to see the value, professionally or personally, of participating in alumni activities. A key selling point in this regard should be the opportunity to continue to connect with, and indeed be part of, the global Irish diaspora of 80 million people.

- Ireland's diplomatic missions and Enterprise Ireland local offices should take the lead in determining the most appropriate ways to facilitate alumni affinity with Ireland, including as part of country diaspora strategies. While these networks should eventually be self-sustaining, they often require assistance, especially in the start-up phase. Diplomatic missions, Enterprise Ireland and Tourism Ireland offices can provide advice and guidance in this context. Where appropriate and possible, they provide a space for, and participate in, some meetings.
- "Ireland alumni networks" rather than individual chapters of institutions have a greater chance of reaching the scale necessary to be sustainable. In many countries, alumni networks are most likely to be sustainable if they are part of wider Irish networks (e.g. business, cultural, or sporting associations).
- Irish-educated alumni should be given the opportunity of continuing to connect with Ireland and the global Irish diaspora, whether through specific alumni events or through participation in Ireland-related events, such as embassy receptions, St Patrick's Day celebrations, cultural and sporting events, business networking events, etc. Other initiatives, such as annual e-mails from the local Irish ambassador to alumni, can also play a role.
- Alumni should be given the opportunity to participate in the marketing and promotion of Irish education in their home countries and should be encouraged by their home institutions to do so.
- The Education Ireland web site and local embassy web sites should include information on how alumni can get involved in Ireland-related activities in their home country.
- The High-Level Group and market seminars should facilitate the sharing of information on useful initiatives to promote alumni affinity.
- Activities to support alumni connection will be eligible for consideration for support under the Internationalisation Development fund, through diplomatic missions and Enterprise Ireland offices.
- Consideration should be given to how social media can be used to strengthen links with alumni educated in Ireland.

### 3.8.2 Connecting with the next generation of the global Irish diaspora

The opportunity to study in Ireland will be crucial in engaging with members of our global diaspora and in keeping our links alive and vibrant. There is a significant pool of people overseas who may have a latent interest in, or connection to, Ireland, which could be activated by the opportunity to study in Ireland — for example, the 10 million Irish-Americans under eighteen.<sup>46</sup>

The Group supports the proposal in *Ireland and America: Challenges and Opportunities in a New Context* that consideration be given to the potential for a "fast track naturalisation regime for those with Irish great-grandparents who, although not eligible for citizenship by virtue of descent, have demonstrated a particular affinity with Ireland having spent time in Ireland as students, with the time, or a portion of the time spent in Ireland as a student, exceptionally counting towards residency in Ireland requirements of the naturalisation process."

Given the potential strategic importance of education to Ireland's relations with the next generation of the global Irish community, the Group recommends that education themes form a key part of communications with the Irish diaspora, especially around St Patrick's Day and in the ongoing work

of Ireland's diplomatic network. Efforts should also be made to use all available channels of communication with the diaspora, including those offered by specific initiatives (for example, the proposed certificate of Irish ancestry) to inform people of the opportunities for study in Ireland.

### 3.9 OUTWARD MOBILITY BY IRISH STAFF AND STUDENTS WILL BE ENCOURAGED

#### 3.9.1 Outward mobility as a key component of balanced internationalisation

A balanced and sustainable process of internationalisation must include outward mobility of Irish staff members and students as well as the inward movement of international students. There are a range of compelling reasons to support increased outward mobility:

- It can be highly beneficial to the staff members and students concerned, in terms of developing skills and improving employability, contributing to personal development, broadening horizons, accessing new knowledge, and developing intercultural and linguistic abilities. The report of the Innovation Taskforce<sup>47</sup> highlighted the importance of increasing Irish attendance at world-leading institutions abroad as part of a move towards increasing two-way flows of students through the Irish system.
- Institutions benefit from becoming more internationally oriented and open. There are also benefits in terms of accessibility and efficiency.<sup>48</sup>
- There is evidence that the promotion of mobility among domestic students can prove beneficial to the student experience of international students.<sup>49</sup>
- Increasingly, international partners are also indicating a preference for such two-way partnerships.
- Encouraging two-way mobility is a key policy priority at the EU level.<sup>50</sup>

As global competition for talent intensifies, and as international experience and intercultural expertise are increasingly valued by employers, the potential for mobility experience could become an increasing factor in the choice of education institution for both students and staff members.<sup>51</sup>

#### 3.9.2 The present situation

More than 14% of Irish students are enrolled on higher education programmes outside the country, which is nearly five times the EU average.<sup>52</sup> Most of these students are enrolled in Britain and Northern Ireland, followed by smaller numbers in the USA, Germany, France, and Australia.<sup>53</sup>

The proportion of outgoing Irish students under the Erasmus programme is in line with the EU average<sup>54</sup>. (Ireland is however one of only four EU countries in which the number of incoming Erasmus students is twice as large as the number of students going out.<sup>55</sup>)

There are no national-level statistics available regarding the international mobility of staff members.

### 3.9.3 Guidelines for increasing outward mobility

There is scope for increasing the number of Irish students undertaking periods of study overseas, including in partner-countries outside the EU.

The Group notes the ambitious approach set out in the Integrated Guidelines for implementation of the EU 2020 strategy that steps should be taken to ensure that learning mobility becomes the norm and the Bologna target<sup>56</sup> that at least 20% of those graduating in 2020 should have had a study or training period abroad. The Group also note work being undertaken at EU level on the potential development of a benchmark to measure mobility, focusing initially on physical mobility between countries in the area of higher education.

Specific targets and strategies should be set at an institutional level, and outward mobility of staff members and students should be part of institutions' overall internationalisation strategy, and, where appropriate, an expected part of education programmes. In addition to EU programmes, greater emphasis should be placed on two-way mobility with non-EEA partner-institutions. Good practice in this area includes the following:

- Institutions could consider using some of their international revenue to fund mobility arrangements with international partners, including as part of the proposed New Frontiers programme.
- The support, leadership and participation of academic staff is vital in highlighting the importance of mobility and in driving curricular change. The provision of administrative support and awareness-raising campaigns can also be important.
- Students from non-traditional backgrounds should be encouraged to become mobile. "Mobility alumni" can be used to support and promote further exchanges.
- Strong messages from the business community about the value of international experience employment prospects could encourage students to undertake mobility.
- Where appropriate, curricula should include mobility components. These should be linked to specific learning outcomes, attainment of qualifications, and credits and professional experience.
- Alternatives to longer-term exchanges can be developed, such as short-term mobility, group-based models, employment-linked exchanges, and relationships with overseas charities and NGOs can be developed.
- Existing mobility programmes at EU level (e.g. the Erasmus programme) and those in development for the future, should be used to maximise the benefit of, and possibility for, exchanges both with EEA and non-EEA countries.

## 3.10 NORTH-SOUTH AND EU CO-OPERATION WILL ENHANCE IRELAND'S INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE

### 3.10.1 North-South co-operation

The Northern Ireland Executive has placed a strong emphasis on internationalisation of education through the Choose Northern Ireland initiative, a collaboration between the Northern Ireland Department of Employment and Learning and the British Council. Significant North-South co-operation



on international education already takes place, for example through Universities Ireland<sup>57</sup> and the branding of the two Northern Ireland universities under the Education Ireland brand at the annual NAFSA conference in the USA.

The Group considers that there is scope for enhanced North-South co-operation in areas of mutual benefit, and it recommends that areas for enhanced co-operation be explored by the relevant Departments, promotional agencies, and institutions. Particular areas in which co-operation in internationalisation could prove mutually beneficial include trilateral partnerships with institutions overseas, sharing of market intelligence, working with educational agents overseas, and enhanced co-operation in promotion and branding.

The Group recommends as an appropriate first step an initial policy dialogue between the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Employment and Learning, which could, after the initial stage, and subject to agreement, be expanded to include Enterprise Ireland and the British Council.

### 3.10.2 EU programmes and policies

European Union policies, and programmes such as Erasmus, have been crucial to the development of internationalisation in the Irish education system and to the enhancing of European identity and an international outlook among Irish staff members and students. The Erasmus project has been one of the great success stories in European education policy.

At present, European students constitute 38% of international students in Ireland, and, of these, nearly half are on exchange programmes such as Erasmus.<sup>58</sup> Anecdotally, the Group understands that a significant number of exchange students return to Irish institutions to undertake postgraduate study or research.

There have also been indirect benefits arising from participation in EU programmes. Structures that were originally developed in institutions to implement Erasmus actions (for instance, international offices and international student supports) have been expanded to handle wider internationalisation issues. Their role in managing Erasmus and other programmes continues to be vital.

In recognition of the increasing importance of internationalisation, including that with Third World countries, the European Commission and Member States will be developing an international higher education strategy for Europe. The European Commission and Member States will also be developing a flagship initiative entitled *Youth on the Move* under the EU 2020 strategy. A key aim of *Youth on the Move* will be to promote student and trainees' mobility by enhancing the EU's existing mobility programmes and linking them up with national programmes and resources. The Department of Education and Skills will actively participate in the development of these initiatives to maximise Irish interests, in line with the policies outlined in this strategy.



# PART 4

## IMPLEMENTATION



## 4.1 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The ten high-level actions to enhance Ireland's performance involve all stakeholders, including Government departments, State agencies, education institutions, representative bodies, etc. It is essential therefore that implementation takes place on a partnership basis.

The High-Level Group will be responsible for overall implementation. On an operational basis the working group on implementation and market development/access will drive forward delivery of the key agenda items. The other working groups will facilitate a partnership-based approach in their respective areas of responsibility: quality assurance and student experience, sectoral development and branding.

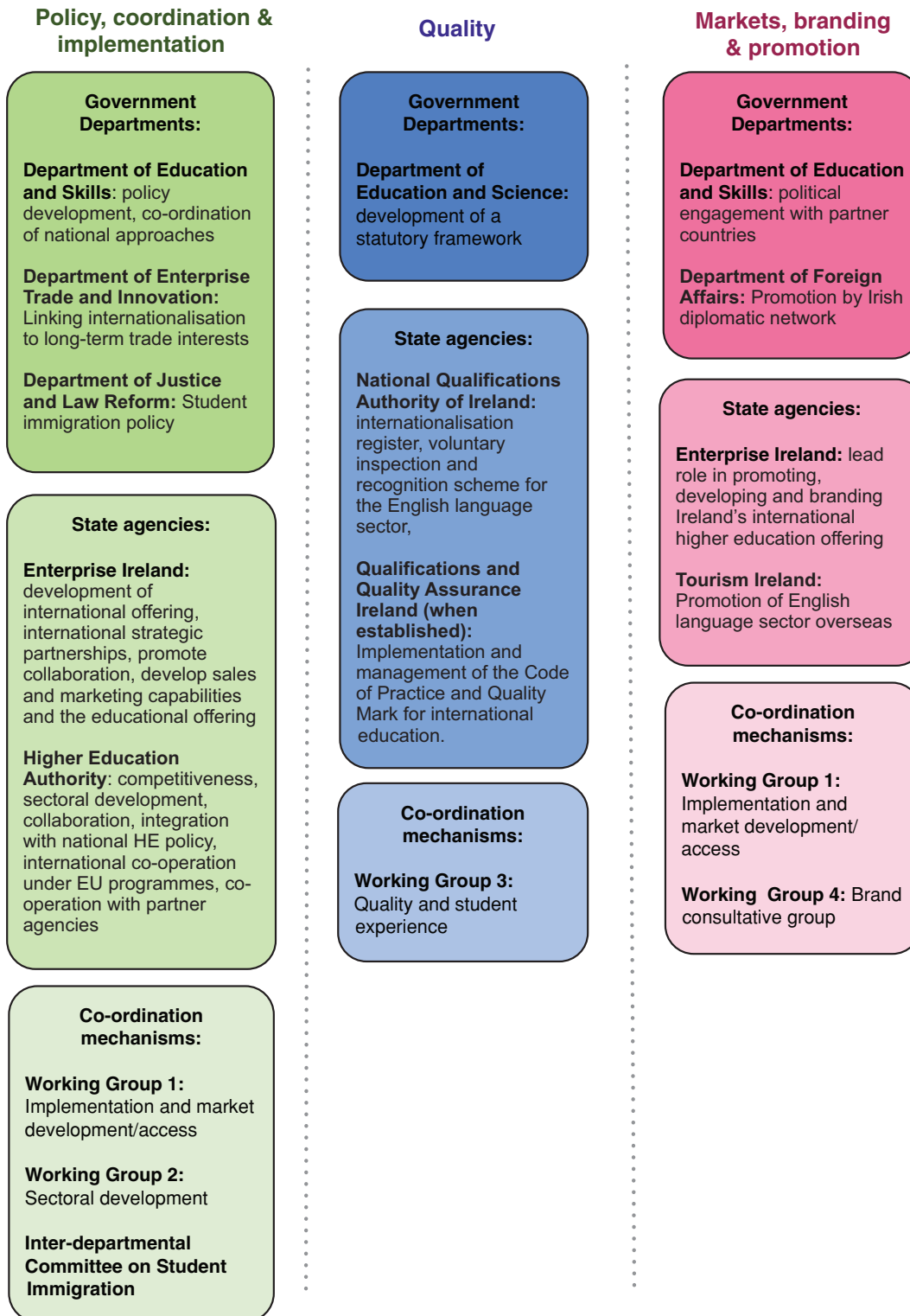
The responsibilities of Government departments and State agencies in the area of international education are set out in section 4.2 below.

The Group is cognisant of the variety of challenges and resource constraints facing stakeholders throughout their full range of activities. It is proposed that implementation will be phased over the full course of the five-year strategy. An indicative timetable for delivery in year 1 is set out in section 4.3 below.

Progress towards the national objectives and targets will be monitored through publication of the annual report on internationalisation. Institutions will also need to monitor the progress of their own internationalisation strategies.

## 4.2 FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROMOTION, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CO-ORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

### Strategic co-ordination: High-Level Group on International Education



### 4.3 INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE: YEAR 1

<b>Quarter 3 (Q3) 2010</b>	Publication of details of new Student Immigration regime by Department of Justice and Law Reform.
<b>Q4 2010</b>	Publication of Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill.  Commencement of DES discussions with partner-countries on replacement of existing bilateral scholarship arrangements
<b>Q1 2011</b>	Commencement of implementation of new Student Immigration regime by Department of Justice and Law Reform  Introduction of new Education Ireland brand by Enterprise Ireland.  Agreement on priority partner-countries and visa and immigration targets for 2011 by Working Group on implementation and market development/access.  Implementation of pilot project on enhanced co-operation with agents in India led by Enterprise Ireland.  Implementation of new International Education Promotional Fund on a pilot basis by Enterprise Ireland and Fáilte Ireland.
<b>Q2 2011</b>	Meeting of High-Level Group on International Education. Review of implementation progress and consideration of implementation timetable for remainder of Year 1 and for Year 2.
<b>Q3 2011</b>	Publication of research on economic impact of international education carried out on behalf of the High-Level Group on International Education  First publication of <i>Internationalisation of Irish Education: Annual Report</i> by Enterprise Ireland.  Expected enactment of Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill and establishment of Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland (QQAI).  Following the establishment of QQAI, commencement of development of Code of Practice and Quality Mark. Implementation schedule to be approved and set out by the Board of QQAI.  Completion of initial capacity survey and foresight exercise on sectoral development by the HEA.  Launch of new national scholarship schemes by the HEA and Fáilte Ireland.





# PART 5

ANNEXES





## Annex I: Key to abbreviations

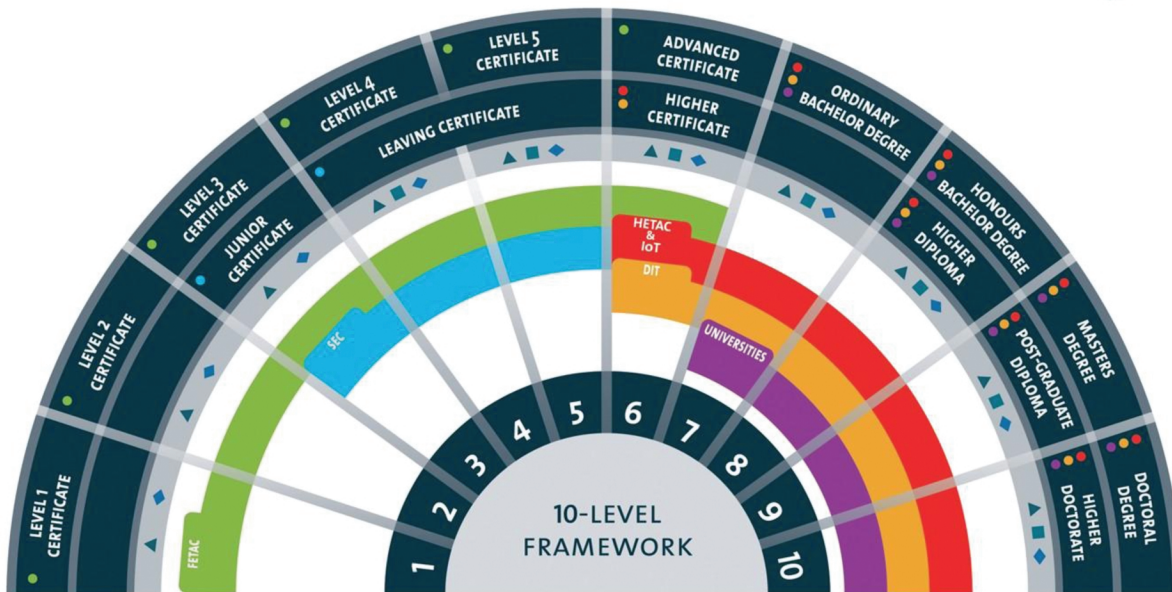
<b>ACELS</b>	Advisory Council for English Language Schools. ACELS ceased to operate as a separate agency at the end of 2009, with its functions being absorbed by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. The abbreviation ACELS is still used to describe the NQAI functions concerned.
<b>Bologna process</b>	Process for creating a European Higher Education Area
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>DES</b>	Department of Education and Skills
<b>DETI</b>	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation
<b>DFA</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs
<b>DJLR</b>	Department of Justice and Law Reform
<b>EEA</b>	European Economic Area (EU member-states plus Norway, Liechtenstein, and Iceland)
<b>EGAP</b>	English for General Academic Purposes
<b>EI</b>	Enterprise Ireland
<b>EFL</b>	English as a Foreign Language
<b>EMIR</b>	Education Market Intelligence Report
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FETAC</b>	Further Education Training and Awards Council
<b>FI</b>	Fáilte Ireland
<b>HEA</b>	Higher Education Authority
<b>HECA</b>	Higher Education Colleges Association, representative group
<b>HETAC</b>	Higher Education Training and Awards Council
<b>HLG</b>	High-Level Group on International Education
<b>HSE</b>	Health Services Executive
<b>IEBI</b>	International Education Board Ireland (defunct)
<b>IDC</b>	Interdepartmental committee
<b>IHEQN</b>	Irish Higher Education Quality Network
<b>INIS</b>	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service

<b>IOTI</b>	Institutes of Technology Ireland, representative group
<b>IUA</b>	Irish Universities Association, representative group
<b>MEI</b>	Marketing English in Ireland, EFL representative group
<b>NAFSA</b>	Association of International Educators. The name of the association has changed to reflect the expanding roles of NAFSA members into all aspects of international education and exchange. The original name of the association was National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA).
<b>NFQ</b>	National Framework of Qualifications
<b>NQAI</b>	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>QQAI</b>	Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland: provisional title of the proposed amalgamated qualifications agency to be established under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill
<b>RCSI</b>	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
<b>SFI</b>	Science Foundation Ireland
<b>TI</b>	Tourism Ireland
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>USI</b>	Union of Students in Ireland

## Annex II: National Framework of Qualifications

# NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS

Údarás Náisiúnta  
Cáilíochtaí na hÉireann  
National Qualifications  
Authority of Ireland



### AWARDING BODIES

- FETAC - Further Education and Training Awards Council
- SEC - State Examinations Commission (*Department of Education & Science*)
- HETAC - Higher Education and Training Awards Council
- IOT - Institute of Technology (*make their own awards at specified levels under Delegated Authority from HETAC*)
- DIT - Dublin Institute of Technology
- Universities

### AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

There are four types of award in the National Framework of Qualifications

- ◐ **Major Awards:** are the principal class of awards made at a level
- ▲ **Minor Awards:** are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
- **Supplemental Awards:** are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
- ◆ **Special Purpose Awards:** are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement

## Annex III: Members of the High-Level Group on International Education

<b>Mr. Paddy McDonagh (chair)</b>	Assistant Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills
<b>Ms. Orla Battersby</b>	Manager, Business and Consumer Services Department, Enterprise Ireland
<b>Mr. Tom Boland</b>	Chief Executive, Higher Education Authority
<b>Ms. Claire Byrne</b>	Director of Corporate Affairs and Communications, National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
<b>Dr. Robert Flood</b>	Head of International Affairs, Dublin Institute of Technology
<b>Dr. Ruth Freeman</b>	Director of Enterprise and International Affairs, Science Foundation Ireland
<b>Ms. Dympna Hayes</b>	Director, Bilateral Trade, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation
<b>Mr. Diarmuid Hegarty</b>	President, Griffith College, Dublin
<b>Ms. Geraldine Jinks</b>	Executive Officer, International Section, Department of Education and Skills, Secretary to the Group
<b>Mr. John Lynch</b>	Special Adviser on International Education, Higher Education Authority
<b>Ms. Elizabeth McCullough</b>	First Secretary, Promoting Ireland Abroad Division, Department of Foreign Affairs
<b>Mr. Séamus Mc Loughlin</b>	Principal Officer, International Section, Department of Education and Skills
<b>Dr. Terry McWade</b>	Deputy Chief Executive, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
<b>Mr. Keith Moynes</b>	Assistant Principal Officer, International Section, Department of Education and Skills
<b>Ms. Ethna Murphy</b>	Manager, Leisure Tourism, Fáilte Ireland
<b>Prof. Ciarán Ó Catháin</b>	President, Athlone Institute of Technology
<b>Mr. Phil O'Flaherty</b>	Principal Officer, Qualifications, Curriculum & Assessment Policy Unit, Department of Education & Skills
<b>Mr. Ray O'Leary</b>	Principal Officer, Tourism Division, Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport

<b>Ms. Gerri O'Sullivan</b>	Assistant Principal Officer, Tourism Division, Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport
<b>Mr. Kevin O'Sullivan</b>	Principal Officer, INIS, Department of Justice and Law Reform
<b>Ms. Sheila Power</b>	Director, Irish Council for International Students
<b>Prof. Lawrence Taylor</b>	Vice President for International Affairs, National University of Ireland, Maynooth
<b>Ms. Louise Tobin</b>	Director of International Student Recruitment and Strategy, University College Cork
<b>Mr. Justin Quinn</b>	Managing Director, Centre for English Studies

The Secretariat for the High-Level Group on International Education is provided by the International Section of the Department of Education and Skills.

## Annex IV: Acknowledgements

The Group would like to thank Dr. Ciarán Dunne of DCU, who provided research and a range of insights to the Department of Education and Skills, and Mr. Jonathan Pratt of Studylink, for developing the Education Ireland branding strategy on behalf of Enterprise Ireland. The Group also wishes to thank members of the working groups who contributed to the development of the strategy.

## NOTES

1. *Education at a Glance, 2009*, OECD, 2010.
2. *International Students in Higher Education in Ireland: Current Status, Future Trends*, International Education Board Ireland, 2004.
3. *Vision 2020: Forecasting International Student Mobility: A UK Perspective*, British Council, 2004. The British Council is a non-governmental organisation, incorporated by Royal Charter in 1940, which specialises in international cultural, scientific, technological and other educational co-operation between the UK and other countries.
4. *ibid.*
5. Bone, D., *Internationalisation of UK HE: A Ten-Year View*, Report for the UK Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills, November 2008.
6. *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society: Volume 2: Special features: Equity, Innovation, Labour Market, Internationalisation*, OECD (2008). The major English-speaking destinations were listed as the USA, UK, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. Ireland accounted for less than 1% of the total figure.
7. Graddol, D., *English Next: Why Global English May Mean the End of "English as a Foreign Language,"* British Council, 2006.
8. Proposals for a new EU strategy are set out in "Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on the internationalisation of higher education (2010/C135/04)," *Official Journal of the European Union*, C135/12, 26 May 2010.
9. For the purposes of the strategy, further education is defined as programmes of education outside of the higher education sector at below level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications, not including either English-language courses or attendance at primary or post-primary school. (Such programmes correspond to levels 1-6 of the NFQ.)
10. Figures from the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service.
11. Source: HEA enrolment statistics, 2009; *International Students in Higher Education in Ireland, 2009/10*, Enterprise Ireland, 2010.
12. *Education at a Glance, 2009*, OECD, 2010.
13. Hazelkorn, E. *Australia: World Class Universities or World Class University System?*, OECD, 2008.
14. Fáilte Ireland figures.
15. *Europe 2020 — A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, European Commission, 2010
16. If capacity is rebuilt in terms of numbers of schools and venues, it may be appropriate to look again at the target figures mid-way through the strategy.
17. The Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines, which were adopted by the European Council and set out the framework for implementation of EU 2020 by Member States include a call for steps to be taken to ensure that learning mobility becomes the norm. The Bologna process has set a goal that at least 20% of all students should have a period of study or training abroad.
18. Fáilte Ireland EFL school survey, 2009, and *International Students in Higher Education, 2009/2010*, Enterprise Ireland, 2010.
19. Fáilte Ireland EFL school survey, 2009.
20. See section 3.7.2.

21. *The Australian Education Sector and the Economic Contribution of International Students*, Australian Council for Private Education and Training, 2009; *Economic Impact of International Education in Canada: Final Report*, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, 2009.
22. In response to the Government's Smart Economy Framework, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation is currently working with the Development Agencies and other relevant Departments to develop a new Strategy for Trade, Tourism and Investment.
23. *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society: Volume 2: Special features: Equity, Innovation, Labour Market, Internationalisation*, OECD, 2008.
24. It is not intended that this should preclude the separate release of the Fáilte Ireland survey results, which are usually released earlier in the year, or information by other agencies.
25. In advance of the introduction of the Quality Mark, the Education Ireland brand will be open to universities, institutes of technology, HETAC approved institutions and English-language schools that are recognised by the Department of Education and Skills as part of the ACELS recognition scheme operated by the NQAI.
26. Humfrey, C., *Towards a New UK Quality Standard for International Student Services*, PMI Student Experience and Employment Group, 2008.
27. *Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Irish Higher Education Institutions*, IHEQN, 2009.
28. *Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Irish Higher education Institutions*, IHEQN, 2009.
29. Education Act (1998).
30. Ward, C., *The Impact of International Students on Domestic Students and Host Institutions: Export Education Policy Project of the New Zealand Ministry of Education*, 2001.
31. For example ICOS Seminar on Enhancing the Student Experience: What Do Students Really Need?, June 2010 ([http://www.icosirl.ie/eng/news/events/annual\\_seminar\\_2010](http://www.icosirl.ie/eng/news/events/annual_seminar_2010)).
32. One model for this is the University of Southampton's "Prepare for Success" web site (<http://www.prepareforsuccess.org.uk>).
33. Delaney, L., Bernard, A., et al., *Eurostudent Survey III: Report on the Social and Living Conditions of Higher Education Students in Ireland, 2006/2007*, Higher Education Authority, 2008.
34. For example, *Creating Confidence: International Student Safety Survey*, British Council, 2007.
35. *New Immigration Regime for Full Time Non-EEA Students, Final Report and Recommendations of the Interdepartmental Committee*, Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, 2010
36. Draws on Dunne, C. (DCU), *Rationales for Internationalisation of Higher Education*, paper prepared for the Department of Education and Skills (2009).
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39. *Projections of Full-time Enrolment in Teaching Institutions Aided by the Department of Education and Science*, Department of Education and Science, February 2010.
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41. *Transnational Education in the European Context: Provision, Approaches and Policies*, Academic Cooperation Association, on behalf of the European Commission, July 2008.



42. Ibid.
43. *Open and Flexible Learning: HEA Position Paper*, HEA, 2009.
44. *Transnational Education in the European Context: Provision, Approaches and Policies*, Academic Cooperation Association, on behalf of the European Commission, July 2008.
45. *Transnational Education in the European Context: Provision, Approaches and Policies*, Academic Cooperation Association, on behalf of the European Commission, July 2008.
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47. *Innovation Ireland: Report of the Innovation Taskforce*, Government of Ireland, 2010.
48. *The Impact of ERASMUS on European Higher Education: Quality, Openness and Internationalisation*, European Commission, 2007.
49. Tang, N., Nollent, A., et al., *Linking Inward and Outward Mobility: How Raising the International Horizons of UK Students Enhances the International Student Experience on the UK Campus*, UKCISA (2009).
50. *Green Paper: Promoting the Learning Mobility of Young People*, European Commission, 2009. The Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines, which were adopted by the European Council and set out the framework for implementation of EU 2020 by Member States include a call for steps to be taken to ensure that learning mobility becomes the norm.
51. Dunne, C. (DCU), *Rationales for Internationalisation of Higher Education*, paper prepared for the Department of Education and Skills, 2009.
52. *Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training, Indicators and Benchmarks, 2009*, European Commission, 2009.
53. *Global Education Digest*, UNESCO, 2009.
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55. *Statistical Overview of the Implementation of the Decentralised Actions in the Erasmus Programme in 2007/2008*, European Commission, 2010.
56. The Bologna Process, 2020: The European Higher Education Area in the New Decade, Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve, 28-29 April 2009.
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