

Presentation to the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic
Review of efficient and effective public expenditure on education

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The Irish higher education system – key facts

- Seven universities – research intensive, comprehensive (52% of students).
- Fourteen institutes of technology – regional, technical and vocational focus (42%).
- 6% in small specialist colleges e.g. initial teacher education.
- A small but developing private sector.
- Strong growth in undergraduate numbers +22% since 2008; a further +25 % by 2030.
- 55% of 18 to 21 year olds progress from second level school to higher education.
- Attainment rate for 30 to 34 year olds @ 51% is highest in the European Union.
- National target for attainment – 60% by 2020 (EU target 40%).
- Policy, oversight and regulation a function of the Ministry of Education and Skills and the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

Irish Higher Education System – Key Facts

	Universities	Institutes of Technology
STAFF		
Academic:	7,067 (52% of total)	4,790 (59%)
Support:	6,632 (48%)	3,353 (41%)
Total Staff:	13,698	8,143
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS		
Full Time:	73,785	64,294
Part Time:	6,711	13,928
Remote:	1,816	1,332
POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS		
Full Time:	17,742 (6,166 doctorate)	3,070 (455)
Part Time:	9,284 (1,073)	3,457 (117)
Remote:	953	373

Irish Higher Education System – Key Facts

Income and Expenditure (€000)		
	Universities	Institutes of Technology
Total Income:	€1,492,653	€727,856
State Grants:	€321,471 (22%)	€317,544 (44%)
Fees (State):	€267,540 (18%)	€72,626 (10%)
Fees (Private):	€431,935 (29%)	€196,622 (27%)
Research:	€358,877 (24%)	€70,298 (10%)
Other Income:	€112,830 (8%)	€70,766 (10%)

Irish Higher Education System – Key Facts

Income and Expenditure (€000)		
	Universities	Institutes of Technology
Total Expenditure:	€1,490,637	€713,440
Pay:	€788,039 (53%)	€505,087 (71%)
Non-pay:	€343,704 (23%)	€140,970 (20%)
Research (Pay):	€226,739 (15%)	€35,159 (5%)
Research (Non-pay):	€132,155 (9%)	€32,224 (5%)
Total expenditure per student:	€10,289	€8,176

The Higher Education Authority of Ireland (HEA)

- Leads the strategic development of the Irish higher education and research system
- Statutory responsibility, at central government level, for the effective governance and regulation of higher education institutions and the higher education system.
- Accountable to the Minister for Education and Skills for the achievement of national outcomes for the higher education sector and the quality of those outcomes

The HEA exercises functions in respect of -

- Funding
- Accountability
- The quality of outcomes
- Policy research and advice to the Minister
- Data analytics and knowledge management
- Advocacy and communicating higher education
- Co-ordination of interaction between public bodies and the higher education system.

Quality

- Quality of outcomes primarily responsibility of the institution.
- Robust national quality assurance processes closely linked to European standards.
- System of awards fully conforms with requirements of the Bologna process.
- Average retention rate is 80% = higher in universities than institutes of technology.
- Employer surveys indicate 75% satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of graduates, rising to 80% in the case of STEM graduates.
- Very high (over 70%) satisfaction levels in student surveys.
- Very strong recovery in employment market after recession with strong demand for graduates in all disciplines and with emerging shortages in many areas.

Quality

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

- A statutory agency of Ministry of Education and Skills
 - Maintains the National Framework of Qualifications – sets out the indicators of knowledge, skills and competences of each level (1 to 10)
 - Conducts institutional reviews of quality assurance processes – focus is on quality enhancement, sharing best practice and setting guidelines.

Higher Education Authority

Accountable to Government for overall performance of Higher education system and quality of outcomes

Quality one of 7 national objectives addressed in Performance Contracts

Memorandum of Understanding between QQI and HEA

Reform – the drivers

- Globalisation of higher education and growing international competition.
- The increasing impact of higher education in the economy.
- A growing demand for access.
- Cost and a drive for efficiencies.
- Inequality of access and participation.
- A loss of diversity of institutional mission and mission drift.
- Incoherence of outcomes and inconsistency with national objectives.
- Greater transparency of outcomes and accountability.

Reform – the process

- Government decision to develop a strategy for higher education.
- A panel drawn from a range of stakeholders, including international expertise.
- A secretariat lead by the HEA.
- Consultation through invited written submissions and focus groups.
- An international panel of experts to review drafts and comment.
- A year long process.
- Strategy published January 2011.
- Implementation commenced early 2012.

National Strategy for Higher Education – key objectives

Improve the alignment of institutions' strategic plans and their overall performance with national priorities, within a framework of institutional autonomy and improved transparency of performance and accountability for funding.

Develop a more coherent system of mission specific and diverse higher education institutions to deliver on stated national priorities.

Institutional consolidation, collaboration, the creation of regional clusters of institutions and technological universities.

National Strategy for Higher Education – implementation

Government set out a System Performance Framework - the national priorities and objectives for the higher education system.

National priorities of Government

Economic renewal and development at national and regional levels

Social cohesion, cultural development and equity at national and regional levels

Public sector reform towards greater effectiveness and efficiency

Restoration of Ireland's international reputation

National Strategy for Higher Education implementation

High level objectives

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

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

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

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

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National Strategy for Higher Education implementation

High level objectives (continued)

- To ensure that Ireland's higher education institutions will be globally competitive and internationally oriented, and Ireland will be a world-class centre of international education;
- To reform practices and restructure the system for quality and diversity;
- To increase accountability of autonomous institutions for public funding and against national priorities

National Strategy for Higher Education implementation - Quality

- High level indicators
- Meeting Bologna objective to ensure that QA procedures in line with international best practice
- Student Engagement and satisfaction scores
- Trend in progression rates from 1st year into 2nd year
- Progress against agreed commitments to reduce/review number of level 8 programmes and broaden entry routes
- International Benchmark Ratio of students to teaching staff in educational institutions

National Strategy for Higher Education implementation - Quality

Essential Deliverables:

1. Monitoring of how all HEIS are embedding focus on excellence in teaching and learning within institutional strategies, evaluation and change programmes
2. Full engagement of all HEIs with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning
3. Systems put in place to appropriately monitor staff contact hours with students on an institutional and sector basis as workload allocation models become transparent
4. Institutional follow up on statutory institutional reviews to be reflected in institutional strategic submissions for strategic dialogue process to HEA

National Strategy for Higher Education implementation - Quality

Essential deliverables (continued)

5. Internal quality assurance review/improvement activities and other quality assurance mechanisms
6. Use of Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN) Follow-through on Quality Improvements identified (2010) Common Principles for through Quality Reviews
7. Assessment of integration of institutional strategic planning and quality assurance planning by HEA as part of strategic dialogue process
8. Implementation of subject benchmarks across all disciplines
9. Implementation of Transition reform agenda

National Strategy for Higher Education implementation

Implementation to be delivered through a formal process of negotiation of performance agreements between the HEA and the higher education institutions (HEI) called “Strategic Dialogue”.

Up to 7% of funding to be contingent on performance

Strategic dialogue – objectives

Overall objectives. Each higher education institution demonstrates-

- how their strategy is aligned with national priorities and
- how they are providing for ongoing improved performance.

The Higher Education Authority

- assesses HEI strategies.
- ensures system coherence and consistency with national priorities.
- ensures the totality of HEI strategies is sufficient to meet national priorities.
- ensures coherence of the higher education system as a whole.
- allocates public funding according to performance.

Strategic dialogue – Process

Process designed following review of benchmark countries – the Netherlands and Hong Kong

- HEI proposes which of the national priorities it proposes to address based on the mission and current strengths of the institution.
- HEI proposes target outputs and outcomes for each of the chosen priorities and metrics for assessment of performance against the chosen priorities – realistic but challenging.
- HEA assesses HEI proposals with Irish and international peer reviewers and experts.
- The HEA negotiates a formal three-year agreement with each HEI.
- Performance is reviewed annually against agreed metrics set out in the agreement.
- Up to 7% of funding contingent on performance – sufficient to encourage performance against agreement but not to undermine sustainability.
- The HEA reports annually to the Minister on the performance of the system.

Strategic dialogue – implementation to-date

- Compacts agreed with all HEIs in 2013 for the period 2014-2016.
- First System Performance Report submitted to Minister for Education and Skills, May 2014.
- HEIs demonstrate a high level of consistency with national priorities and ambition for performance.
- First review of performance takes place in 2015 – relating to 2014 performance.
- Review based on self-assessment reports by the HEIs, reviewed by the HEA with a panel of Irish and international peers and experts.
- Discussion with each HEI and panel.
- High level of performance confirmed.
- Three HEIs penalised (3%) but allowed to propose actions to deal with deficiencies.

Strategic dialogue – high level outcomes from 2014 performance review

- Most HEIs had made significant progress in achieving their 2014 goals as set out in the Performance Compacts.
- The standard of self-analysis variable and appetite for improved performance was not uniform across the sector.
- Many HEIs felt the need to report under all seven national objectives rather than seek to be different, according to their own institutional strengths, in a national or regional context.
- Only a small number of HEIs showed a good awareness of how to benchmark their performance by reference to identified local, regional or international comparators.
- Without in-depth benchmarking, demonstrating high performance was difficult. While almost all HEIs achieved their 2014 targets, assurance as to the 'degree of stretch' in their performance was difficult to establish.
- HEIs are operating in a difficult environment with increasing student numbers during a period of reducing financial resources presenting a challenge in balancing institutional sustainability and performance.
- Smaller institutions are at a disadvantage in the process as they may not have the managerial capacity or resources for in-depth institutional research in support of their strategic planning processes.

Strategic dialogue – opportunities and risks

Opportunities

- A better relationship and a shared understanding between government and HEIs.
- Clear demonstration of what the higher education and research system is delivering against government objectives.
- Government can formally and transparently guide the outcomes from higher education.
- An instrument to drive improved performance.

Risks

- The objectives stated by government should avoid prescriptive detail.
- Objectives to be limited so as not to crowd out the other objectives and activities of the HEIs.
- A risk that the process descends into bureaucracy and gaming.

The teaching profession

- A high-status profession
- Top 10% of school leavers enter initial teacher education
- Predominantly female
- 4% drop out

The teaching profession – Reform

Objectives: To build on excellence so as to meet contemporary challenges
Consolidation for greater effectiveness

Review conducted by an international panel of experts commissioned by the Higher Education Authority at the request of the Minister for Education and Skills

Key outcomes: Providers of initial teacher education reduced from 19 to 6
All providers merged with universities, or with very close linkages
Teacher education now to be provided in the context of a rich research environment

Equity of access and participation

- One of the key national objectives set by Government and a focus of specific attention in strategic dialogue and performance agreements.
- Three National Plans for Equity of Access to Higher Education have been published.
 - Latest plan published in 2015 for period to 2019.
- Key target groups
 - Socio economic disadvantage
 - Disability
 - Traveller community
- Specific target for Traveller participation set for the first time.
 - From 35 (current) to 80.

Profile of the Irish Traveller population – 2011

- Number 29,573 (0.6% of the total population).
- Average age 22.4 (36.1 for the general population). 52.2% under 20.
- Among 15 – 29 year olds 33% married (8.2% of the general population)
- 27% of Irish Traveller women 5 or more children (2.6% of women in general population)
- 13% of Irish Traveller women 7 or more children (0.4% of women generally).
- 26.4% of Irish Traveller households had 6 or more persons (4.4% of all households).
- 20.5% lone parent households (11.9% general population)

Profile of the Irish Traveller population – 2011

- 69% of Travellers educated to primary level at most.
- 115 Travellers (1%) had completed third level in 2011 (30.7 % of the general population).
- Unemployment 84.3%.
- 17.5% with one or more disabilities (13% for general population)
- 20.2% households own their home (69.7% for general population)
- 30.3% of Traveller households living in mobile or temporary accommodation had no sewerage facilities.

Draft National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy

Strategy preparation is led by the Ministry of Justice and Equality and is a cross-Government activity.

Strategy to be published by end 2016 and run to 2020

Objectives with specific actions cover

- Cultural identity
- Education
- Employment and traveller economy
- Children and youth
- Health
- Gender equality
- Anti-discrimination and equality
- Accommodation
- Traveller and Roma communities
- Public services

Draft National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy

Objectives and actions in the education sector

Objective 1: Access, participation and outcomes for Travellers and Roma in education should be improved to achieve outcomes that are equal to those for the majority population.

Key actions

- The Department of Education and skills will provide proactive, early intervention education welfare supports to promote and support Traveller and Roma attendance, participation and engagement with the education system and retention to the end of second level or equivalent.
- All relevant Departments and agencies will promote the early Childcare and Education (ECCE) pre-school scheme, as well as the Access and Inclusion for Children with a Disability scheme (AIMS), within the Traveller and Roma communities in order to facilitate access for every child to free pre-school from the age of three until they start school.
- The Department of Education and Skills will initiate and support the development of a network of peer support and mentoring for Travellers and Roma in third level education.

Draft National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy

Objectives and actions in the education sector

Objective 1: Access, participation and outcomes for Travellers and Roma in education should be improved to achieve outcomes that are equal to those for the majority population.

Key actions

- The relevant Departments and agencies will implement good practice initiatives to support parental engagement in education and increase children's school readiness.
- The Department of Education and Skills will introduce positive action measures to encourage and support Travellers and Roma to become early year educators, teachers and special needs assistants.
- The Department of Education and Skills will ensure that a range of flexible, accessible and culturally appropriate English language supports are available to facilitate Roma participation in the main stream education system

Draft National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy

Objectives and actions in the education sector

Objective 2: There should be a positive culture of respect and protection for the cultural identity of Travellers and Roma across the education system.

The Department of Education and Skills will consider whether a specific focus on Travellers and Roma is required in the programmes it has introduced for initial Teacher Education and for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) based on the concept of inclusive education.

Draft National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy

Objectives and actions in the education sector

Objective 3: There should be improved opportunities for Traveller and Roma men to engage in culturally appropriate apprenticeships, training and lifelong learning.

- The Department of Education and Skills will continue to implement culturally appropriate initiatives which support Traveller men to develop literacy, numeracy and “soft” skills to facilitate their engagement in mainstream services and supports.
- The Department of Justice and Equality, in collaboration with Traveller and Roma organisations and employer bodies, will promote greater Traveller and Roma participation in apprenticeship and traineeships.