

Minutes of the High Level Group Meeting on International Education

Clock Tower, 2pm

Friday, 7th October 2016

Refer to Annex 1 for list of Attendees.

1. Introductory Remarks – Chairperson

The Chairperson welcomed the members of the group and requested a tour de table of introductions. The team were thanked for their hard work on the recent launch of the International Education Strategy.

2. New International Education Strategy

The challenges and opportunities identified in the Strategy were put to the floor for discussion.

Brexit

Two key areas for education have been identified as the priorities so far-

1. Common Travel Area – student flows
2. Research and Academic – staff mobility and research collaborations/funding.

DES are currently contributing to the Government risk analysis and planning processes in the Contingency Framework and are one of the Departments to be involved in subgroups to lead on this process.

SFI suggested that we look at new opportunities for Ireland as they are focusing strongly on academic recruitment schemes.

HEA pointed out that some 27,000 students choose the U.K. for Erasmus+ because of the English language aspect. There are some 12,000 Irish Students following higher education programmes in the U.K.

MEI advised that the Sterling exchange rate will be a big issue.

HECA spoke about the threat to access to student loans after Brexit for Irish students in the UK.

Student Accommodation

DIT raised this as a collective problem noting a small (but insufficient) alleviation with the Grange Gorman site for themselves.

RCSI stated that this is now a sectoral issue, which all are experiencing.

HECA and Dept of Justice and Equality agreed on above and emphasised the challenges around the rental sector.

DES – Mary Doyle stated she was chair of a working group on Student Accommodation and it will be some significant time before there is a balance between supply and demand here. She also stated there will be a lot of units coming on stream and that first year students are a priority.

EI raised a number of points such as

1. Resource issue for HEA and HEIs when looking at more markets.
2. Branding should be refreshed specifically around Asia.
3. Improved communications internal and external required.

DES stated that they hope to obtain some additional resources to implement the Strategic actions.

3. Membership of High Level Group (HLG) on International Education

DES - to examine membership on the High Level Group and Sub-Groups.
ICOS - recommended Union of Students of Ireland (USI) as a member on the HLG.

DES will make contact shortly with suggestions on membership and meetings for the subgroups.

Legislation

DES has worked out a set of actions particularly in the English Language sector. IEM needs legislation and should be with the Government soon, however it will be well into 2017 before legislation is passed. A progress report will be provided at the next plenary meeting.

AOB

China

DES provided a brief summary update on Wuhan. At China's request we have targeted the central area including Wuhan. DES informed the members that and we are looking forward to signing several agreements.

MEI – Mentioned their visit to China and the very positive feedback they received. They intend to return to China again in February/March 2017.

DES confirmed that the High Level Group will aim to meet four times a year.

Next Meeting: To be confirmed shortly but before the end of 2016.

ANNEX 1:
ATTENDANCE LIST

Representing

Name

Departments and agencies

Department of Education and Skills	Mary Doyle (Chair) Vincent Landers Alan O Callaghan Sarah Moroney Mary Whelan David Smith
Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade	Alma Ní Choighligh
Department of Justice and Equality	Michael Walsh
Dept. of Transport Tourism & Sport	Donal Reddington
Enterprise Ireland	Giles O Neill
Higher Education Authority	Gerry O Sullivan Mary May
Higher Education Consultants Assoc	Prof Diarmuid Hegarty
Quality and Qualifications Ireland	Bryan Maguire Deirdre Stritch
<i>Representative groups/institutions</i>	
Dublin Institute of Technology	Robert Flood
Technological Higher Education Association	Dr Jim Murray Miriam Ryan
Irish Council for International Students	Sheila Power
Irish Universities Association	Sinéad Lucey Lewis Purser Josephine Page
Marketing English in Ireland	Therese Dillon
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Philip Curtis
Science Foundation Ireland	Peter Clifford
Assoc. of Study Abroad Providers In Ireland (ASAPI)	Thea Gillen
C.H.o.I.C.E. (Conference of Heads of Irish Colleges of Education)	Holly Cowman