

Minutes of the High Level Group Meeting on International Education

Plaza Suite, Academy Plaza Hotel, 2.30pm

Monday 27th November, 2017

Refer to Annex 1 for list of Attendees.

Refer to Annex 2 for list of Subgroups

1. Introductions

The Chairperson welcomed the members of the group.

The Chairperson stated that the intention of the meeting is to update the members on the progress to date and to briefly discuss each of the Priority areas.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting for approval

The Chairperson proposed to give the members a week to examine the minutes. Members to get back to DES with any changes by cob 1st December, otherwise they will be taken as read.

3. Updates from Chairpersons of HLG Subgroups, followed by open floor discussion – Vincent Landers, DES

a. SG 1: A Supportive National Framework –DES

DES gave a brief overview of Strategic Priority 1- five strategic actions aimed at Government Departments and Agencies and thanked all members for their input.

1. A brief discussion took place regarding the successful progression of the International Education Strategy alignment with the New International Trade Strategy and the Regional Trade Strategies and input at the Team Ireland Conference.
2. DES gave an update on the International Education Mark and informed the members the legislation that will enable the IEM legislation remains on schedule for the introduction of the Mark in 2018. Government approval has been received for the Heads of Bill and the proposed Bill has been exempted from pre-legislative scrutiny by the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Skills. As the drafting and legislative processes advances, QQI and DES will continue to develop the practical measures for the roll out and

implementation of the IEM. The intention is to have the IEM in place for 2019.

3. An MoU with the Higher Education Authority and Science Foundation Ireland is currently being discussed between both parties.
4. Cost Benefit Analysis – The aim is to proceed with a tender for contract by end of 2018.
5. Stay back – A new two year Stay back for post-graduate international students will be in place for next year. DES highlighted this positive development for Embassies and thanked all involved in making this happen, in particular the Department of Justice and the INIS officials.

b. SG 2: Internationally oriented, globally competitive institutions – Gemma Irvine, HEA

1. Strategic Dialogue Process – The new Performance Framework is due to be published soon.
2. HEI's delivering the International Strategies – IUA and THEA are working closely with the HEA in this regard.
3. The HEA has been working to develop a clear definition of International Students and the next step is to meet with the HEIs to discuss the data being submitted. Using the HEA definition, the number of international students has been increasing year on year, with trend in the right direction to meet targets. Further work is needed to better capture disadvantaged student data, and data from the private colleges.
4. Government of Ireland Academic Staff Mobility Fund – Launched in October 2017. Worked closely with IUA and THEA. To be replicated next year.

Successful proposals will include academic collaborations on, for example –

- Preparation of a joint teaching programme;
- Shared exploration on innovative approaches to inter alia a teaching pedagogy, student support activity, internationalisation of curricula, digital education and delivery;
- Development of new student mobilities streams outward and inward;
- The exploration of new inter-institutional partnerships with individual countries;

- The advancement of a research concept to the application of funding stage.

The successful proposals (following an external evaluation) will be due for implementation between December 2017 and December 2018.

- All 7 Universities applied for the mobility fund and 12 of our IoTs applied.
- Total amount of funds requested amount to a provisional €1.6m (124 projects) so three times the €500,000 fund available. This was a great response and particular thanks need to go to Gerry O'Sullivan and his team in the HEA as well as Sinead in IUA and Miriam in THEA for making this happen!
- Independent evaluations have been done and the joint panel meeting is on today (27 November) so announcements should be this week

5. Marie Sklodowska-Curie – Work ongoing on this.

6. Increase the numbers of graduates in 2020 who undertake a study abroad – A need to focus in the future on the work of Erasmus for disadvantaged students and incoming and outward mobility.

A review of existing international scholarships in Ireland has been completed by the HEA. This has produced a very comprehensive list of scholarships available and there is potential to use this as a resource for students looking for opportunities. HEA will work with EI on how best to use this data. It was highlighted that the Government of Ireland Scholarships is unique and is adding value to the system. It is open to international students in the final year of undergraduate programme, one year of a taught master programme and a one year of a research programme. The launch is to take place in December 2017. Applications open in January, closing in March 2018. There are 60 scholarships €10,000 per student. The HEA are working closely with the IUA and THEA on this.

7. Accommodation – A huge amount of work has been done on this and the work is ongoing.

**c. SG 3: Sustainable growth in the high-quality English Language Sector –
Lorcan O'Connor Lloyd, MEI**

DES welcomed the incoming chairperson Pdraig Hourigan to Subgroup.

1. Recommendations, actions outcomes - In order to progress the ELT sector, DES highlighted that a representative from Dept. of Justice, visa section is now a member of the group.
2. MEI gave a brief update on the markets: China and Turkey are successful. Korea and Japan are mature markets with Korea having the 2nd highest in stay back i.e. 19.6 week. To revisit Colombia and Vietnam.
3. EI Brand - It was mentioned that The Education in Ireland brand will assume the lead role in promoting the Non-EU Adult ELT sector in the International markets, once the IEM is in place. DES highlighted their interest to capitalise on the IEM and will inform MEI when it's in place.
4. MEI informed the group that Bradley Brand & Design provided their presentation on a national brand for ELT to the sub group. This was followed by a general discussion. BB & D received positive feedback and is in the process of validation for the brand.
5. Student Numbers - MEI are in the process of gathering student numbers and highlighted that Brexit will be an issue, noting cheaper costs for junior students to go to UK this summer.

d. SG 4: Succeeding Abroad - Vincent Landers, DES

1. Markets - DES informed the group of the enhanced efforts in bi-lateral activity within existing and high potential markets.
2. Market Diversity - DES continue to identify potential markets with the subgroup. Good progress has been made. In particular DES mentioned Vietnam JWG that came from out of the Memorandum of Understanding which was then followed up by a successful Trade Mission.
- 3-6 Branding – The subgroup discussed the progress being made with EI Branding mentioning the importance of the International Education Mark (IEM) in this context.
- 7-9 Alumni – DFAT to include Alumni events in Trade Mission events. The subgroup is to look at the current Student Ambassador Programme to see if we can expand it to include invitations to Irish abroad in some way for 2018.
- 10 Brexit – DES and DEBI hosted a Joint Stakeholder Dialogue on Enterprise Skills Needs and Brexit in July. The next conference is planned for December 2017.
The common travel area discussions with the UK are progressing well.

4. AOB

Branding, IEM

EI gave an update on the IEM and the importance of involving ELT under the one brand. EI also mentioned that they are currently sharing the future ELT brand from Bradley Brand and Design with the HEIs.

Visa Issues

A discussion took place about length of time it took for decision on visas and some students not being able to get home for holiday periods. DES noted the comments and will work with Department of Justice on seeking clarification.

Brexit

In terms of Brexit the IUA highlighted the opportunities for EU markets, locally or bi-laterally as we're the only English speaking country near them. IUA to follow up with DFAT on this. SFI highlighted that Team Ireland don't have a Science Attaché which would greatly enhance the impact. EI clarified that Minister Coveney wants to double the impact and not the numbers.

Student Accommodation

A general discussion on the issues of student accommodation took place of which the USI mentioned the issue around owner occupied housing and homelessness. Mary Doyle, DES told the group that she chairs the Student Accommodation workshop. She mentioned that the number of beds are going in the right direction and credit is due to the HEIs.

Action Point

DES to circulate documentation

Mary Doyle thanked the group, sub groups, chairpersons and DES team for all their hard work, in particular, noting the work done on the two year Stay Back and the legislation on the IEM.

She notified the group that she is finishing with the international cooperation area and that Alan Wall is replacing her.

Next Meeting

Early 2018 date to be confirmed.

ANNEX 1:
ATTENDANCE LIST

Representing

Name

Departments and agencies

Department of Education and Skills

Mary Doyle (Chair)
Vincent Landers
Alan O'Callaghan
Padraig Hennigan
Anne Holland
Roseann Gilligan
Mary Whelan

Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade

Brendan Sinnott

Department of Justice and Equality

Michael Walsh
Lorna Conway

Enterprise Ireland

Giles O'Neill

Higher Education Authority

Gemma Irvine

Higher Education Consultants Assoc

Prof Diarmuid Hegarty
Robert Flood

Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Bryan Maguire
Sue Hackett
Carmel Kelly

Representative groups/institutions

Technological Higher Education Association

Jim Murray
Miriam Ryan

Irish Council for International Students

Sheila Power

Irish Universities Association

Lewis Purser
Sinéad Lucey

Marketing English in Ireland

Lorcan O'Connor Llyod
Padraig Hourigan

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

Philip Curtis

Science Foundation Ireland	Ciara Cotter
Assoc. of Study Abroad Providers In Ireland (ASAPI)	Janice Gaffey
Conference of Heads of Irish Colleges of Education (C.H.o.I.C.E.)	Holly Cowman
Union of Students in Ireland (USI)	Síona Cahill

Apologies

Dept. of Transport, Tourism and Sport	Maria Melia
Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Alma Ní Choigligh
Higher Education Authority	Gerry O'Sullivan

ANNEX 2

SUBGROUP LIST

SUBGROUP 1: A supportive national framework

MEMBERSHIP:

Department of Education & Skills

Department of Justice & Equality

Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Higher Education Authority

Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Irish Universities Association

Technological Higher Education Association

Science Foundation Ireland

SUBGROUP 2: Internationally oriented, globally competitive institutions

MEMBERSHIP:

Department of Education & Skills

Higher Education Authority

Irish Universities Association

Technological Higher Education Association

Higher Education Colleges Association

SUBGROUP 3: Sustainable growth in the high-quality English language training (ELT) sector

MEMBERSHIP:

Department of Education & Skills

Enterprise Ireland

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Marketing English in Ireland

Sector Reps

SUBGROUP 4: Succeeding Abroad

MEMBERSHIP:

Department of Education & Skills

Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade

Department of Justice

Enterprise Ireland

Irish Universities Association

Technological Higher Education Association

Higher Education Colleges Association