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NUI Maynooth Teaching and Learning Strategy

2009-2011

Overview

Introduction

NUI Maynooth is committed to sustaining standards of academic excellence across its programmes, and to ensuring that students are brought to the forefront of learning in their disciplines. The first statement of strategy for Teaching and Learning was adopted by the Academic Council in March 2007. Following the introduction of initiatives in both undergraduate and graduate education as part of the University Strategic Innovation Plan, a review of the T&L Strategy was initiated in 2008. As it coincided with the mid term review of the University Strategic Plan this revised T&L Strategy is aligned with the University Strategic Goals for 2009-2011.

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning is led by the following core principles:

- Teaching underpinned by Research: The University is committed to ensuring that the teaching in all its programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels is provided by a community of active researchers. NUI Maynooth is committed to the principle that high quality teaching and research are inextricably intertwined in the university context. Research-enabled and enquiry-based teaching will support the transition to fourth level for those students continuing beyond a first degree.

- Student-Centred Learning: NUI Maynooth is committed to placing the student at the centre of the learning process. As such it aims to ensure that the student's University experience is an empowering one in which learning is supported and facilitated through innovative and continuously developing pedagogical strategies within the University. It is committed, therefore, to providing an enriching learning environment for its students where intellectual exploration and development are mirrored in the opportunities for participation in the social, aesthetic and civic life of the University.

- Flexible Lifelong Learning: The University is committed to preparing the learner for a life of learning, not solely for a terminal qualification. In this context, it aims to enhance the student's motivation for learning and the joy of learning for its own sake. The University is committed to providing more flexible learning opportunities for its students through modular programming; exploring new modes of delivery, particularly through the use of e-learning where appropriate; the ongoing refinement of its accreditation and award systems within the European Credit Transfer System, and to placing all of its awards on the National Framework of Qualifications.

- Inclusiveness: The University is committed to a dynamic access programme, embodying distinct strategic objectives regarding the participation of groups that may be disadvantaged by age, socio-economic background, disability or ethnicity. The University is also committed to building on the already well-developed systems of support that it provides to these students. Furthermore, the University is committed to supporting students in the additional challenge of choosing appropriate careers, particularly when they may not have had access to informal support or role models outside their studies. The University recognises that achieving a successful educational outcome continues to be a significant challenge even after the access barrier has been overcome.

- Dialogue: In line with its commitment to innovation and participation in its approaches to teaching, NUIM will continue to develop its structures to support a culture of active and

ongoing staff-student dialogue throughout the University. Already, there is an active student presence and involvement on committee structures at every level throughout the University. This representation will be extended both in the decision making arenas, and also in the teaching and learning methodologies to be promoted in the University. NUI Maynooth is therefore committed to the development of a community of learners throughout which the students are empowered to take responsibility for their own learning, to develop as highly motivated, creative, self-directed learners and to mature as active citizens in this society.

Aims

In the context of the underpinning principles stated in the *Introduction*, and the revised Strategic Goals of the University, the specific priorities of this Teaching and Learning Strategy are:

- to enhance the teaching environment and a learning experience of all students at NUI Maynooth;
- to draw upon the university's research strengths to enhance teaching;
- to draw on collaborative partnerships to enhance teaching and learning;
- to promote and enhance postgraduate education;
- to foster learner autonomy and the empowerment of learners to continue learning throughout their lives;
- to support the professional development of educators;
- to diversify methods, and promote innovation, in teaching, learning and assessment.

These aims will be pursued in this Strategy through a focus on four core themes, in each of which we can point to considerable progress since 2007, but for each of which we have also identified a set of further goals and actions over the next two years.

Context

1. The Local Context: NUI Maynooth as a place to study

The reputation for friendliness, and the approachability of staff, have frequently been documented as distinguishing features of the student experience at NUI Maynooth. Institutional research survey data from incoming cohorts, media reports, and our formal and informal contacts with students, all demonstrate that students who come here hold this University in high regard.

The student experience, including the experience of formal teaching and learning at this University, is characterised by strong and positive interaction with the academic staff. NUI Maynooth is the smallest of the seven Universities, and Maynooth is unique in Ireland in being a university town. The University's scale allows for a culture of interaction which is unique in the sector in Ireland. Interaction and dialogue are important not only for the wellbeing of the student, but are at the heart of teaching and learning.

In respect of the governance and organisation of the University, the EUA Review process in 2004/5 highlighted the extent to which students participate in the formal structures of the University. However, the culture of interaction between staff and students may be threatened by further expansion and the rapidity of change. The University's *Charter for Teaching and Learning* (2002), currently under revision, sets out its commitments to its students, and functions as a learning contract between teachers and students here. The Teaching and Learning Strategy seeks to take forward the commitments of that Charter in providing an improved teaching and learning experience and environment for all students. This Strategy also seeks to identify ways in which our culture of interaction and dialogue with students can be protected in a context of expansion.

Relationship of this strategy to the University's Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan of the University from 2006-2011, and the subsequent Addendum for the period 2009-2011, is influenced by **National Priorities** in respect of Higher Education, specifically in relation to teaching and learning. These are: improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, widening participation in higher education, and greater flexibility in meeting the diverse needs of a student population which is engaged in learning for life. The University has identified as one of its own **Strategic Priorities** that it will continue to lead in the provision of access to non-traditional learners. These priorities in turn inform the Teaching and Learning Strategy.

Furthermore, the Teaching and Learning Strategy takes forward the refined **Strategic Goals** of the University, as described in the Addendum to its Strategic Plan. Specifically, this Strategy addresses SG1, *Provide a teaching environment and a learning experience that will continue to attract high calibre undergraduates and support modest expansion,* and it also addresses related objectives in Strategic Goals 2, 3, 5 and 6. This Strategy includes a synopsis of relevant sections of the Graduate Education Strategy, and proposes that research and enquiry should be part of learning at all levels, with undergraduate courses offering specific preparation for research at postgraduate level.

The Teaching and Learning Strategy seeks to build on the many existing initiatives which have opened the institution to non-traditional learners and lifelong learners.

Additionally, we seek to continue to improve the quality of all courses, through pedagogical innovation and the continued professionalisation of teaching. Furthermore, this Strategy takes account of the internationalisation of our provision and the new demands of a multicultural campus.

Teaching and Learning: Structures at NUI Maynooth

The Academic Council holds overall responsibility for teaching and learning in the University. The Teaching and Learning sub-committee of Academic Council, chaired by the Dean of Teaching and Learning, is responsible for the formulation of policy in all areas affecting the conduct and promotion of teaching and learning[1] in the University.

In addition to the Teaching and Learning Committee, the Academic Programme sub-committee of Academic Council oversees the design, review, approval and validation of new accredited programmes and modules.

The strategic development of teaching and learning is taken forward across the University by the Centre for Teaching and Learning, established in September 2008. The Centre is engaged in collaborative projects with partners across the sector. Internally, its work is founded on collaboration with individuals and groups of colleagues in academic, support and service departments. Members of staff in the Centre for Teaching and Learning report, through the Manager of the Centre, to the Dean of Teaching and Learning.

Under the funding awarded by the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) Cycle 1 in 2006, a number of Teaching and Learning initiatives aligned to the needs of Faculties were put in place. A sectoral project with partners in the SIF1 Strategic Alliance addressed teaching and learning issues, and also lifelong learning, from a cross-sectoral perspective.

Under the second cycle of SIF funding in 2008, NUI Maynooth became a partner in the Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA) The partners with NUIM in this project include the Institutes of Technology, DIT, IADT, ITB and ITT, and the Universities, TCD, UCD and DCU. The *Enhancement of Learning* strand of the DRHEA's work has the most immediate synergy with the current document, and includes the following priority activities:
- *Dublin Centre for Academic Development*
- *Reforming the Curriculum*
- *Teaching for engagement and retention*
- *E-Learning*

A further development within the University since 2007 has been the revision of criteria for promotion. The importance of the teaching function for all academic staff is reflected in the new criteria for promotion. The requirement for a teaching portfolio places even greater emphasis on an evidence-based commitment to personal development in the teaching, learning and assessment dimension of the academic profile.

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[1] Teaching and Learning Committee *Terms of Reference*, February 2005

2. The National and International Contexts

This Strategy has been written within the framework of wider national and international developments which have a bearing on the achievement of its aims.

At government level, the mission of the Department of Education and Science (DES) is to provide for high quality education that will "enable individuals to achieve their full potential and to participate fully as members of society".[2] Furthermore, it envisages its role as contributing to the social, cultural and economic development of the state. This Strategy, in focusing on the quality of the student's experience both in educational terms and more broadly, takes account of this mission for higher education.

The specific goals of the DES are paralleled in the principles and objectives of this Strategy. These include the provision of education suited to the needs of the individual, and with equal opportunities for all to participate. The improvement of the quality of education is linked with the improvement of educational practice in a variety of educational settings. This Teaching and Learning Strategy takes account of the DES *Statement of Strategy 2005-2007* and DES research into the educational and professional contexts of the future. Specifically, it takes account of the need for highly skilled professionals in the knowledge economy.

The aims for Higher Education under the National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013 are to:
1. Increase participation and equity of access;
2. Encourage a greater flexibility of course offerings to meet diverse student population needs in a lifelong learning context;
3. Promote the quality of teaching and learning;
4. Significantly increase PhD numbers and research activity;
5. Ensure effective technology transfer; and
6. Safeguard and reinforce the many roles of higher education in providing independent intellectual insights and in contributing to our broader social, human and cultural understanding.

This Strategy addresses the first three of these aims, and the third aim most closely.

The Strategy serves as a means of summarising our progress in the development of teaching and learning to date as well as framing our goals for the future. Most recently, the University has received assistance in support of the development of teaching and learning from SIF Cycle 1, and it hopes to build on this. The second cycle of SIF identified particular aims:
1. enhance the delivery of core activities of education and research, through effective and creative institutional and inter-institutional collaboration and including where necessary, appropriate internal restructuring and rationalisation efforts;
2. support innovation and quality improvement in teaching and learning, including enhanced teaching methods, programme restructuring, modularisation, and e-learning,
3. support access, retention and progression at individual institutional level and through inter-institutional, sectoral and inter-sectoral collaboration.

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[2] Department of Education and Science website, http://www.education.ie/ *Welcome from Minister* [last accessed 19 February 2007]

The Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (SSTI) emphasises the need for a vibrant third level educational experience and for stronger links between third and fourth levels. The IUA echoes this call in its publication *Fourth Level Ireland*. In December 2008, the Government framework document for sustainable economic renewal, 'Building Ireland's Smart Economy', emphasised the need for flexible learning initiatives and for alliances within the third level sector that can advance performance through more effective concentration of expertise and investment. The Teaching and Learning Strategy addresses these calls.

The University is committed to the engagement of the Universities with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) and the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). It is working to align all of its awards with the NFQ and to include them in the Framework. This alignment and recent verification of the NFQ with the European Framework of Qualifications brings NUIM another step further in the Bologna process. ECTs are already in full use in the University, credit transfer and credit accumulation processes are developing, accreditation of prior learning (APL) is in use, and the University is committed to the process of embedding learning outcomes into curriculum development.

Four Core Themes

Informed by the principles outlined in the *Introduction*, the *Aims* established for the lifecycle of this document, and the contexts described above, this Strategy will focus on the following core themes:

1. *Developing undergraduate education:* Teaching should foster a culture of active learning, independent enquiry and critical thinking amongst students from the beginning of their studies at the University. Learning outcomes should be clearly identified and aligned with teaching and assessment methods. Pedagogical strategies should be student-centred and focused on the development of the whole student experience.

2. *Developing graduate education:* The structure of graduate education is being actively developed through the separate strategy for graduate education. NUI Maynooth will facilitate the development of structured doctoral programmes, continue the process of introducing professional doctorates, and incorporate generic skills modules into existing programmes, and develop new programmes to reach out to groups outside the University.

3. *Fostering access, fostering lifelong learning:* Teaching should foster a desire to learn throughout life, and develop the learner's autonomy in order to pursue lifelong learning. Access to learning through technology and assistive technology, the provision of new programmes, and the accreditation of prior learning, are all addressed by this Strategy.

4. *Pedagogical innovation and transformation:* The staff of the University are developing and changing their pedagogies and services to respond to the changing nature of the student body, improved understandings of how students learn, and the changing technologies they use to learn. The continuing professional development of academic and support staff, and an ongoing engagement with new approaches to learning and teaching, are critical to this.

1. Developing undergraduate education

Introduction

The University focuses strongly on the rights and expectations of the student, including his or her career aspirations, from the point of entry to the institution. The nature of the University as a student-centred one is demonstrated in student feedback. Students talk about the University as a friendly environment, in which they can approach staff face-to-face, and in which there is a strong caring ethos. In addition to teaching and tutoring as part of formal programmes, there are additional supports for learning provided: for example, through the Academic Advisory Office Access Office, Library, Career Development Centre, Language Centre, student mentoring, and existing initiatives in teaching and learning (including e-learning). Modular provision has enhanced the flexibility of courses, and formative assessment complements summative assessment to lessen the emphasis on terminal examinations in many subjects. Internships are being offered to increasing numbers of students in their penultimate year of undergraduate study. These placements allow students to gain experience of research in their subject disciplines, or alternatively experience in industry.

More widely, from the perspective of the student's interaction with the University as an organisation, an extensive Induction Programme is provided for all new students. Ongoing support in all aspects of a student's life at the University is provided through the Support Services on campus. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities (including many sports) is provided and supported. The University's Teaching and Learning Charter gives formal recognition to students' expectations of the institution. This Strategy seeks not only to maintain and support this student-centred environment, but to enhance and develop it.

Actions completed since 2007
1. There has been continued engagement from leading academics, and researchers in the research institutes, in the teaching of undergraduate students.
2. More students have been provided with the opportunity of internship in their penultimate year of study, to introduce them to research and potential areas of further study.
3. Work has continued in identifying opportunities for core competencies and generic skills development in undergraduate programmes, including maths support and innovative approaches to tutorial support for large classes.
4. Research has been undertaken at institutional level to articulate more clearly the nature of the student experience, and most recently, to document the nature of student experience in large groups.

Objectives to 2011
1. The University is committed to managing increases in student numbers in ways that avoid negative impacts on the quality of the student experience.
2. The University is committed to ensuring further development of recently established programmes.
3. The University is committed to improving the quality of the teaching and learning environment.
4. The University is committed to enhancing the learning experience for all students.
5. Modules and programmes will be reviewed from the perspective of learning outcomes, with assessment aligned to these. This will be undertaken on the context of the DRHEA collaborative project on *Reforming the Curriculum* in SIF2.

6. The student and staff experience of e-learning will be enhanced through ongoing development of supports for staff using the Moodle virtual learning environment, and the full range of learning technologies provided. This too will inform, and be informed by, a DRHEA collaborative project on *E-Learning* in SIF2.
7. The University is committed to continuing the active engagement of academics and leading researchers in the teaching of undergraduate students. This is not only to enhance the undergraduate learning experience, but also to strengthen the links with postgraduate education. Collaborative work with the DRHEA to enhance *Enquiry-based and research-enabled learning* will further support this work.
8. Support students' entry to the University, progression through their undergraduate studies, and transition to postgraduate studies and/or further career choices via:
    a. Continued monitoring and development of the induction programme for new students.
    b. Further development of student mentoring processes.
    c. Through the modularisation of the undergraduate programme, to develop further supports for students in choosing modules at different stages of their studies, and to continue development of interdisciplinary study at undergraduate level.
    d. To provide additional opportunities for internships in undergraduate programmes, particularly those programmes which traditionally have not been associated with such placements.
9. To provide opportunities for students to record and document their generic skills development, civic engagement and extra-curricular learning, and career development, for example through an e-portfolio system.
10. To continue the development of provision in relation to mathematics support, academic writing, and information literacy.
11. To continue and develop further the systems of prizes and awards recognising excellence at undergraduate level.
12. To continue research at an institutional level into the student experience at Maynooth, reviewing data previously gathered and introducing standardised feedback systems to departments.

2. Developing graduate education

Actions completed since 2007

The Research and Graduate Studies Office has been reorganised with the establishment of the position of Vice-President for Research. Supported by SIF funding, a Dean of Graduate Studies was appointed in 2008 to coordinate graduate education internally, and develop further external links in relation to graduate education. Further programme proposals were identified with Faculties, and a number of these programmes have been validated and launched. A cross-Faculty Graduate School has been established. Internships have been provided to identify the potential at undergraduate level for postgraduate study, and to introduce undergraduate students to the nature of postgraduate research.

In light of these changes, a separate Strategy has been prepared by the Dean of Graduate Studies, entitled *Graduate Studies at NUI Maynooth*. The key points and strategic goals in this document, presented in its *Executive Summary*, follow here:

1. The University has committed to increasing the numbers of PhD students; improving completion rates for PhD students; providing structured programmes, including generic skills training, and skills of relevance to external stakeholders for all PhD students; developing cost-effective high-quality graduate programmes through inter-institutional collaboration; developing infrastructural supports for postgraduate research students; supporting academic staff in developing their supervisory skills; incentivising and rewarding individuals and departments for increasing numbers of postgraduate research students.

2. The Strategic Goals of the University are aligned with national strategy, and are: to offer all postgraduate students a first class educational experience; ensure that all students develop a breadth of skills beyond the confines of any single discipline; establish new programmes and reinforce existing programmes that will stand fair comparison with the highest international standards; ensure that all graduates leave NUIM viewing a range of possibilities for employment and contribution to wider society; contribute to national goals for scale and quality of postgraduate education; ensure that strong graduate education programmes develop as an integral part of excellent research programmes at NUI Maynooth; offer all students an outward-looking educational experience influenced by a strong international perspective; increase the number of graduates with higher level qualifications in advanced taught courses and research, while improving the quality of the educational experience.

3. Strategic targets are to reach a total projected research cohort in 2013 of 545 (PhD SET: 265; PhD HSS: 205; and Research Masters: 75). Targets set for 2011 in the NUI, Maynooth Strategic Plan are: that we will have 7% of national cohort of research students by 2011; that we will increase the number of PhD graduations to *c*.80 per annum; 90% of research students will have taken generic skills programmes by 2011 and 75% of PhD students will complete within 4.5 years by 2011. Specific actions, both immediate and underpinning are identified to reach these goals and targets. Currently PhD graduations have increased from 24 in 2003 to 51 in 2008 (target 91 in 2013). PhD registrations have increased from 303 in 2004/05 to 400 in 2007/08 (target 470 by 2010).

4. In line with the overall approach of the university sector NUI Maynooth is currently in the process of enhancing and restructuring its current PhD programmes by moving towards a four-year structured graduate education programme.

5. The structured PhD programme builds on NUI Maynooth's well developed Masters'programmes, but clear routes into PhD programmes at Faculty level need to be further developed.
6. The University has changed its organizational structure to support and implement the delivery of the above vision by creating a Dean of Graduate Studies and one Maynooth Graduate School. The Graduate School, coordinated by the Dean of Graduate Studies will provide university-wide support for student recruitment and the development of policies and procedures for graduate studies as a whole.
7. The NUI, Maynooth School of Graduate Studies brings together a number of active and successful research themes. These map on to Faculties, Research Institutes and Departments, but also cut across them as befits cutting edge research which is often transdisciplinary. The University will identify the key strategic themes it intends to present to the outside world as areas of strength at graduate level.
8. Implementation of a strategy to achieve these goals involves setting up a Graduate Studies Sub-committee of Academic Council chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Its membership is to consist of Faculty Deans and the Deans of Teaching and Learning and International Education, the post-graduate coordinators of the academic units (Departments and Research Institutions) and graduate student representatives from each of the three Faculties. This sub-committee is to act effectively as a Graduate Studies Council to drive implementation and to act as a consultative forum with all relevant stakeholders.
9. Infrastructural requirements to be addressed to facilitate implementation are namely: Provision of adequate physical space for graduate students in their Department/Institution location and provision of common graduate space in the form of a Meeting Room or a Study Room; Provision of web space in the form of a webportal for Graduate Studies with features such as Researcher@Maynooth.ie, Individualised Research Student Profiling/Portfolios, On-line Training Needs Assessment Questionnaires for systematic needs identification exercises; Provision of an appropriate ITS space in the form of a Research Module in addition to our current ITS system.
10. Quality Assurance, Equality of Access and internationalization, and cooperation with other national institutions all inform and underpin our graduate education strategy.
11. The main challenge for the University in shifting the structures and procedures for a more efficient graduate education system centers around costs and creating sustainability for the new model.

The Teaching and Learning Strategy interacts with the Graduate Education Strategy and also with the University Strategic Goals 2 and 3.

3. Fostering access, fostering lifelong learning

Introduction

The University is committed to opening access to higher education to non-traditional students and more generally, to providing lifelong learning for all (SG5). The Addendum to the University's Strategic Plan establishes the following targets in relation to the annual intake of undergraduates: mature students at 16%, access students at 5%, students registered with the Disability Office at 4%, and flexible/part-time undergraduates at 20% by 2011. Demographic trends in the Maynooth region, as well as the recent changes in the economy, indicate that large numbers of professional people may seek opportunities to develop and extend their formal qualifications in the near future. This Strategy seeks to identify and build on the innovative work already undertaken by departments in this area, and in particular the existing programmes offered both at Maynooth and at the Kilkenny Campus. Collaborative work in the Dublin region under SIF2, and with partners in the midlands in SIF1, has sought to build provision for lifelong learning.

Actions completed since 2007

1. Ongoing work to strengthen both the student and graduate experience for non-traditional students and students returning to learning.
2. Ongoing and expanding support for staff and students using a greater range of methods and media to facilitate delivery, for example, through online learning.
3. Foundation programmes strengthened to facilitate disadvantaged students in entering the University.
4. Extension of outreach programmes to primary and secondary schools as a means of encouraging students from non-traditional backgrounds to come to university and to continue with their studies.
5. Supports for all students, including students with disabilities, and further development of the Assistive Technology Centre as a resource for these students and for the whole institution.
6. To enhance and develop further the alternative entry routes to the University and incentives for students in disadvantaged socio-economic groups, mature students, and students with disabilities.
7. To develop alternative models for graduates to enter postgraduate programmes.

Goals to 2011

1. To continue to improve the range of pedagogic and other supports provided to non-traditional students.
2. To continue to develop more flexible modes of teaching and learning which can be fully extended beyond existing programmes, and outside the years spent full-time on campus.
3. To continue to expand the range of methods used to deliver teaching, learning and assessment to non-traditional students and students returning to learning.
4. To develop further the provision in e-learning as a means of enhancing self-directed learning by students with support where appropriate from staff.
5. To develop further the outreach programmes, modes of entry to programmes
6. To develop continuing professional development programmes, accreditation of prior learning and prior experiential learning.

7. To continue, develop and expand where funding allows the support given by the Access Office, Assistive Technology Centre, and other services to students from non-traditional backgrounds, mature students and students with disabilities.

4. Pedagogical innovation and transformation

Introduction

Innovation in teaching practice is an essential part of the University's primary objective to educate students. Pedagogical innovation and transformation can happen at the level of the individual academic, within departments, or across the institution. The concern of this theme is to develop teaching practice collaboratively (both within and outside the institution), to enhance support for teaching development, and to encourage innovation (including the use of new technologies). By enhancing the teaching environment, we seek to enhance student learning, and the student's abilities to analyse concepts and theories, and to be able to structure and represent knowledge in their disciplines. In recent years, innovations including alternative teaching methodologies and e-learning have been piloted and mainstreamed. This was supported initially by funding under the Strategic Initiatives programme, with further provision for teaching and learning development offered through the Staff Development Programme. In 2007, the first cycle of SIF funding enabled a range of innovative projects to enhance teaching. Our revised goals here align with those for the second cycle of SIF funding, commencing in 2008, and involving close partnerships with institutions in the Dublin region.

Actions completed since 2007

In 2007, funding received under the first SIF cycle supported the launch of two accredited courses, the *Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education*, and the *Professional Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (Tutors and Demonstrators)*. Access to teaching materials was enhanced through the funding of the Library's Core Texts project, and new initiatives in e-learning were piloted across all Faculties. Faculty-aligned initiatives were implemented, including the development of academic writing, the provision of support for mathematics across all subjects, and additional support for teaching large groups.

In the second cycle of SIF funding, received in 2008, NUI Maynooth is committed to a range of projects in collaboration with partners in the DRHEA under its *Enhancement of Learning* strand. These projects will enable work in specific strategic areas including:
- Revision of curricula from a learning outcomes perspective.
- Support for research-enabled and enquiry-based learning at undergraduate level.
- Support for innovative methods in teaching very large groups.
- Collaborative development of new approaches in e-learning.
- Partnership in the Dublin Centre for Academic Development.

Goals to 2011

1. The University is committed to the establishment of the Dublin Centre for Academic Development under the DRHEA partnership in SIF2. This will enable innovation in a range of areas, as well as exchange of best practice in teaching development across the partner institutions.
2. The University is committed to addressing teaching and learning in large groups: targeted work in this area is already underway to ensure that the best possible teaching and learning environment can be provided even in a large group context.
3. The University will engage with teaching staff to foster methods which enable enquiry-based and research-focused learning amongst students.

4. Methods to enhance teaching and learning online will be shared with partners in the DRHEA under its emerging e-learning network of excellence.
5. A number of fellowships will be introduced across all Faculties to permit academic staff to engage on a longer term basis with an area of innovation in their teaching, and to research this.
6. Outside the scope of formal projects, and those projects undertaken as part of the DRHEA, teaching staff will be provided with support in using innovative methods for teaching, learning and assessment.
7. The University will continue the accredited *Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education* for staff undertaking teaching.
8. The University will continue the accredited *Professional Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* for tutors and demonstrators undertaking teaching.
9. Opportunities to expand access for students to course materials and electronic services from off-campus will be identified.
10. The University will identify further opportunities to provide a physical environment that encourages and supports pedagogical innovation through its flexible design, and through wireless access to electronic resources.
11. Links will be renewed between teaching development and opportunities for staff development provided by the Staff Development Office.
12. Data gathered via emerging standardised student feedback processes will be drawn upon in order to inform teaching development in programmes.

Consultation, Review and Quality Assurance

Implementation and Monitoring

The Teaching and Learning Committee of the Academic Council has responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of this Strategy throughout the University.

The Teaching and Learning Committee is chaired by the Dean of Teaching and Learning, who in turn is supported by the Manager and Staff of the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

The Dean and Committee will be assisted by the three Faculties working in collaboration with the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

The revisions to the Strategy for 2009-2011 will be implemented as outlined within this document.

Its implementation will be subject to the existing quality assurance processes of the University, with which it interacts. These processes include: Quality Review and quality assessment; gathering of feedback from students; monitoring and analysis of examinations and results of assessments; quality assurance processes of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB); evaluative feedback from the Student Services; evaluative data in respect of e-learning. Programme development and renewal is, furthermore, subject to existing processes of external and international review.

Lifecycle of this Strategy

This Teaching and Learning Strategy will pertain for the life of the University's Strategic Plan, that is, until 2011.

Appendix A and Appendix B highlight the key sections of the Addendum to the University's Strategic Plan which have relevance for this Strategy. These tables include specific targets for the areas of work described in the earlier sections of this Strategy.

Appendix A: Relevant Text from the Addendum to the Strategic Plan, 2009-2011

Strategic Goals, Objectives and Actions for period 2009-2011

SG 1. Maintain a quality undergraduate population by becoming a university of choice for increasing numbers of students
Focus for 2009-2011: Provide a teaching environment and a learning experience that will continue to attract high calibre undergraduates and support modest expansion

Objectives	Actions 2009-2011	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Performance Indicators	Targets & Timelines
Manage increase in student numbers in order to avoid negative impacts on quality of the student experience	Restrict number of first year undergraduates to 1,900 on average for 2009-2011	Better match between number of students, staff, buildings and other resources	NUI Maynooth will continue to be a university of first choice for *c*.60% of the annual intake	No. of first year students	5,260 FT undergraduates by 2010/11
	Devise strategies to ensure more balanced distribution of students across departments, and innovative pilot projects to assist with teaching very large classes	Less variation in staff/ student ratios

New approaches to teaching large classes | Higher quality teaching and learning environment

Academic standards are maintained and threats to quality of teaching and learning experience are reduced | Reduction in variance in staff / student ratios

Increase in no. of departments devising new approaches to teaching large classes | Less variance in staff / student ratios

2009 – |
	Prioritise new staffing to Departments with consistently high staff / student ratios	Further improvement in staff / student ratios in targeted departments		Trend in staff / student ratios for depts with high ratios	No departments with ratios >30 by 2011
Ensure successful development of recently establish-ed programmes	Consolidate resources for recently established programmes	Additional staff and other resources to support further development of recent programmes	Enhanced reputation for NUIM based on a broader portfolio of programmes	Sustainable recruitment of high calibre students to these programmes	Increase average entry CAO pts to 420 by 2011/2012
Improve quality of teaching and learning environment	Provide additional and more varied teaching rooms and provide extension to Library – **see SG 8**	Better facilities for teaching and learning	Significant improvement in teaching and learning environment	Facilities delivered on schedule	Additional teaching rooms and library by 2011

SG1. Maintain a quality undergraduate population by becoming a university of choice for increasing numbers of students
Focus for 2009-2011: Provide a teaching environment and a learning experience that will continue to attract high calibre undergraduates and support modest expansion

Objectives	Actions 2009-2011	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Performance Indicators contd.	Targets & Timelines
Enhance learning experience for all students	Review modules and programmes according to a learning outcomes perspective	Revised curricula with greater clarity re expected learning outcomes and assessment methods	Paradigm shift from teaching to learning in design and delivery of all programmes	Learning outcomes identified for all programmes by 2011	75% of modules revised by 2011
	Progress further transition to a more complete model of modularisation	New programme structures with possibility of new first year module(s) to assist transition to university, and requirements that are more responsive to needs of part-time students	Shift from traditional degree structures to more flexible third level learning experience Increased participation of part-time students	No. of students taking modules outside core degree disciplines No. of part-time students No. of academic staff using MOODLE and other EL media	1150 flexible / part time students by 2011 90% of staff using MOODLE by 2011
	Extend E-Learning expertise of all academic staff and students	Effective cooperation between academic staff, learning specialists, and technical support staff	On line collaboration in learning; more flexible delivery at intra and inter-institutional levels	Decline in no. of students that leave in first year;	<3% of 1st year students leave before taking exams by 2011
	Provide specialist support in relation to core competencies: maths, academic writing and information literacy	Support materials for tutors; Drop-in centres for weak students in targeted areas	Enhanced academic performance; lower fail rates; higher retention and completion rates; graduates with core competencies required in the workplace;	Increase in percent of students eligible to progress to second year of prog.	85% of 1st years will be eligible to progress to 2nd year of studies by 2011
	Support development of a cadre of expertise in Teaching and Learning in Dublin region	Accredited training programmes for academic staff and tutors	Enhanced skills in design and delivery of programmes	NUIM Centre for T&L collaboration with DRHEA Centre for Academic Development	

SG1. Maintain a quality undergraduate population by becoming a university of choice for increasing numbers of students
Focus for 2009-2011: Provide a teaching environment and a learning experience that will continue to attract high calibre undergraduates and support modest expansion

Objectives	Actions 2009-2011	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Performance Indicators	Targets & Timelines
Strengthen links between undergraduate and postgraduate education	Encourage departments to ensure that all under-graduate degree programmes will contain a research component; Maintain student internship programme	90% of undergraduates develop basic research skills; Opportunities for undergraduates to work on research projects with experienced staff	Enhanced supply of high calibre undergraduates to undertake postgraduate level research	Increased percentage of undergraduates that progress to postgraduate research degrees	Provide 40 student internships each year to 2011
Expand and strengthen the international profile of the University through its teaching programmes Promote and foster a multicultural environment for all students	Review all ERASMUS agreements to achieve more balanced in & out movements of students Encourage more NUIM students to study abroad for a period; Increase no. of international students taking degrees at NUIM; Increase supports for international students	Revise and curtail list of inter-institutional agreements More NUIM students studying abroad for part of their degree; Increased international students in targeted disciplines Enriching experience for international students	More efficient ERASMUS programme Stronger international collaborations Enhanced international profile for NUIM; Sustainable international dimension to University Increased income Reinforcement of attraction of NUIM	Ratio of in-coming to out-going ERASMUS students No. of NUIM students studying abroad No. of full degree international students International fee income	Reduce ratio to 3:1 by 2011/12 Increase to 100 by 2011/12 Increase to 200 by 2011/12 Increase international fee income to €4.2m by 2011/12
Monitor quality of student experience	Conduct periodic student surveys on academic and extra curricular aspects of student experience; Prepare Student Services Plan	Evidence base to enable better decisions on matters affecting students Integrated and more efficient delivery of services	Less risk of decline in a key source of comparative advantage for NUIM in recruitment of students; Enhanced reputation for NUIM as student centred University	Summary satisfaction scores on key areas of interest to students and the University; More cooperation between service providers	Surveys in 2009 and 2011 Improve overall satisfaction rating Complete Plan by end 2009

SG2. Refine and enhance the provision of taught postgraduate activities
Focus for 2009 – 2011: Become a national leader in the provision of taught postgraduate programmes in targeted areas

Objectives	Actions 2009-2011	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Performance Indicators	Targets & Timelines
Become a national leader in the provision of taught postgraduate programmes in targeted areas	Identify areas where NUIM has a distinct source of comparative advantage	Further expansion of existing niche programmes and development of new programmes	Greater differentiation of NUI Maynooth

Additional income | Evidence from peer reviews of programmes and student performances | 2009 - |
| | Review and benchmark all programmes to ensure consistency in design, credit value and delivery of programmes | Suite of programmes that are broadly consistent in regard to structure, credits and expected student workloads | Programmes that are compatible with national and international frameworks | Template for all taught postgraduate programmes | Complete review by end 2009 |
| Increase number of taught postgraduate students | Improve marketing of taught p/g programmes; Incentivise departments recruit additional taught p/g students;

Develop new modes of flexible delivery to cater for part-time and other students;

Develop programmes to attract more international students;

Greater use of technology for delivery of modules | Increase in number of taught postgraduate students; Additional income for Departments;

Additional international students

Increase in number of part-time students (e.g., industry based) and flexible courses tailored to their needs | Improvement in balance between undergraduates and postgraduates at NUIM More entrepreneurial departments;

University is able to cater for more diverse groups of students;

Additional income for University and greater cultural diversity | No. of taught postgraduates | 1150 taught postgraduates by 2011

Increase total postgraduates to 23% of all students by 2011, and 25% by 2013, on assumption that total number of undergraduates will not increase significantly |

SG2. Refine and enhance the provision of taught postgraduate activities
Focus for 2009 – 2011: Become a national leader in the provision of taught postgraduate programmes in targeted areas

Objectives	Actions 2009-2011	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Performance Indicators	Targets & Timelines
Devise courses with shared modules between taught & research programmes, and across departments	Review structure and content of taught postgraduate programmes; Align academic needs of taught and research postgraduates	More cost effective provision of postgraduate teaching	More efficient and effective use of University resources	Instances of integrated delivery of components of taught and research postgraduate programmes	Increase in no. of cases from 2009

SG 3. Develop and enhance postgraduate research
Focus for 2009-2011: Provide graduate education programmes of international standing

Objectives	Actions 2009-2011	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Performance Indicators	Targets & Timelines
Increase postgraduate research activity in line with SSTI objectives	Continue to support and develop further structured PhD programmes within NUIM Graduate School Continue to seek funding and other supports for research students Increased external input and involvement in PhD programmes (e.g., industry partners, governmental organisations, relevant placements)	Graduate Studies Strategy Structured PhD programmes that accord with international models of good practice Increased number of PhDs in HSS and SET in line with SSTI targets Increased capacity to recruit more research students	High quality and broadly trained PhD students that are well prepared for careers outside academia as well as academic careers More very highly skilled graduates	Complete Strategy by mid 2009 Annual PhD graduations Employment rate for research postgraduates No. of PhD funding awards	Complete Strategy by mid 2009 Increase no. of PhD graduations to c.70 per annum Maintain employment rate NUIM will have 7% of national cohort of research students and annual graduates by 2011

SG 3. Develop and enhance postgraduate research
Focus for 2009-2011: Provide graduate education programmes of international standing

Objectives	Actions 2009-2011	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Performance Indicators	Targets & Timelines
Increase postgraduate research activity in line with SSTI objectives contd.	Provide training in relevant generic skills to all research students	Broader range of skills training for all research students	Graduates with transferable skills that are more employable	Percentage of research students completing generic skills programme	90% of research students will have taken generic skills programme by 2011
	Implement university policy on research supervision informed by IUQB guidelines	More structured approach to supervision, less risk of delays in completion	NUIM recognised as a strong host institution for PhD students	Level of satisfaction of PhD students with supervision provided; Percent completing within 4.0 and 4.5 years after first registration;	
	Improve completion rates within four years of study	Students adopt a more structured approach to their research thesis	Greater efficiency in respect of funding and inputs of supervision		75% of PhD students will complete within 4.5 years by 2011
	Collaborate with DRHEA institutions in design and delivery of graduate programmes	Shared modules and Masterclasses in selected areas	Transferable inter-institutional PhD model; Efficiency gains through attainment of critical mass	No. of new modules and new graduate programmes via SIF Project	Commence 2009

SG5. Improve offerings as leader in the provision of access & lifelong learning
Focus for 2009-2011: Further develop NUI Maynooth's reputation as the national leader in the provision of access programmes and in catering for part-time students while also extending offerings in lifelong learning

Objectives	Actions 2009-2011	Expected outputs	Expected outcomes	Performance Indicators	Targets & Timelines
Support HEA objective that by 2013 non-standard entrants will account for at least 30% of all entrants	Develop NUI Maynooth Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education	Strategy with actions to support entry routes and progression for access students, mature students, part-time students, and those with disabilities	Broadening of participation and greater equity in access and support for all students	Completion of Plan	Produce NUIM Plan by end of 2009
Continue to improve the provision of opportunities by developing and enhancing access programmes	Refine existing and develop new foundation programmes to enhance access opportunities to all major programmes. Build improved liaison with DEIS schools communities	Increased participation of non-standard students in programmes provided by NUI Maynooth	Broadening of participation and greater equity in access and support for all students	Share of non-standard students in total; Share of part-time / flexible students in total	The annual undergraduate intake by 2011 will include: Access students: 5% Mature students: 16% Students registered with Disability Office: 4% Flexible/ part-time undergraduates: 20%
Continue to improve the range of pedagogic and other supports provided to non-standard students	Develop the Assistive Technology Centre (ATC) as a teaching and learning support for all students requiring assistance with particular emphasis on promoting inclusive teaching through the use of technology Develop online resources (website, Moodle) to provide wider access to	Enhanced approach to Teaching and Learning Greater use of Assistive Technology by students requiring assistance Further migration of	Improved academic performance by students in target groups Enhanced learning experience for students and improved academic	Progression rate No. of students using Assistive Technology Completion rate for students in target groups	2009 – Provide support to all students in need of assistance Monitor from 2009

	learning support and learning technology for target groups and beyond	current supports to online spaces such as Moodle	performance		
	Review provision of non-academic support services for non-standard students	Identify areas where support services can be improved and how this can be achieved	Enhanced student experience at NUI Maynooth and increased capacity to attract additional non-standard students	Measure of student satisfaction via periodic surveys	Improve level of student satisfaction
Develop a Strategic approach to provision and support for Continuing Education	Prepare Continuing Education Strategy Collaborate with DRHEA members in preparation of a Dublin Region Higher Learning Network Strategy	Increased provision and greater participation in Continuing Education	Enhanced provision of learning opportunities and further development of capacity building of participants	Increased provision of Continuing Education opportunities	Finalise Strategy Q2 2009 Increase number of programmes

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Appendix B: Actions and Targets from the Addendum to the Strategic Plan, 2009-2011

SG 1. Maintain a quality undergraduate population by becoming a university of choice for increasing numbers of students
Focus for 2009-2011: Provide a teaching environment and a learning experience that will continue to attract high calibre undergraduates and support modest expansion

Action	Action description	Target	Responsibility	Status* H M L
1.1	Manage number of first year undergraduate entrants at 1,900 on average for 2009-2011	5,260 FT undergrads by 2010/11	Registrar, Bursar, President, Deputy President, Admissions Officer	**H**
1.2	Devise strategies to ensure more balanced distribution of students across departments, and innovative pilot projects to assist with teaching very large classes	Less variance in staff/student ratios		**H**
1.3	Prioritise new staffing to Departments with consistently high staff / student ratios	No departments with ratios >30 by 2011;	Registrar, Bursar, President, Deputy President	**M**
1.4	Consolidate resources for recently established programmes	Increase average entry CAO points to 420 by 2011/2012;	Admissions Officer	**M**
1.5	Provide additional and more varied teaching rooms and provide extension to Library – see SG 8	Additional teaching rooms & library by 2011;	Registrar, Dir. Corporate Services	**H**
1.6	Review modules and programmes according to a learning outcomes perspective	75% of modules revised by 2011;	Dean Teaching and Learning	**M**
1.7	Progress further transition to a more complete model of modularisation	1150 flexible / part time students by 2011 (excluding continuing education students)	Registrar, Heads of Departments	**M**

- Action points which if not implemented in time would adversely impact on the ability of the University to achieve its objectives or comply with its statutory obligations are accorded High status. Conversely those action points for which delays or failure to implement would not impact on the ability of the University to achieve its objectives or comply with its statutory obligations are accorded Low status.

SG 1. Maintain a quality undergraduate population by becoming a university of choice for increasing numbers of students
Focus for 2009-2011: Provide a teaching environment and a learning experience that will continue to attract high calibre undergraduates and support modest expansion contd.

Action	Action description	Target	Responsibility	Status H M L
1.8	Extend E-Learning expertise of all academic staff and students	90% of staff using MOODLE by 2011	Dean Teaching and Learning	M
1.9	Provide specialist support in relation to core competencies: maths, academic writing and information literacy	<3% of 1st year students leave before taking exams by 2011; 85% of 1st years will be eligible to progress to 2nd year of studies by 2011;	Dean Teaching and Learning, Registrar	M
1.10	Support development of a cadre of expertise in Teaching and Learning in Dublin region			M
1.11	Maintain student internship programme	40 student internships each year to 2011;	VP Research	M
1.12	Review all ERASMUS agreements to achieve more balanced in & out movements of students	Reduce ratio to 3:1 by 2012;	Dean International Studies	M
1.13	Encourage more NUIM students to study abroad for a period; Increase no. of international students taking degrees at NUIM; and income from international students;	Increase to 100 by 2011/12; Increase to 200 by 2011/12; Increase international fee income to €4.2m by 2011/12	Dean International Studies	M
1.14	Conduct periodic student surveys on academic and extra curricular aspects of student experience;	Surveys in 2009 and 2011 Improve overall satisfaction rating	VP Innovation, Institutional Research Officer	H
1.15	Prepare Student Services Plan	Complete Plan by end 2009	Director Student Services	H

SG2. Refine and enhance the provision of taught postgraduate activities _Focus for 2009 – 2011: Become a national leader in the provision of taught postgraduate programmes in targeted areas_				
Action	**Action description**	**Target**	**Responsibility**	**Status** **H M L**
2.1	Review and benchmark all programmes to ensure consistency in design, credit value and delivery of programmes	Complete review by end 2009	Dean Graduate Studies	**M**
2.2	Improve marketing of taught p/g programmes and incentivise departments recruit additional taught p/g students;	1150 taught postgraduates by 2011	Dean Graduate Studies	**H**
2.3	Develop new modes of flexible delivery to cater for part-time and other students;	Increase total postgraduates to 23% of all students by 2011 and 25% by 2013	VP Research and Dean Graduate Studies	**H**
2.4	Review structure and content of taught postgraduate programmes; Align academic needs of taught and research postgraduates	Increase in no. of cases aligned from 2009	VP Research, Registrar, Dean Graduate Studies	**M**

Action	Action description	Target	Responsibility	Status H M L
SG 3. Develop and enhance postgraduate research *Focus for 2009-2011: Provide graduate education programmes of international standing*				
3.1	Continue to support and develop further structured PhD programmes within NUIM Graduate School	Prepare Graduate Studies Strategy	VP Research Dean Graduate Studies	**H**
3.2	Increase external input and involvement in PhD programmes	NUIM will have 7% of national cohort of research students and annual graduates by 2011	VP Research Dean Graduate Studies	**H**
3.3	Increase number of research students in line with SSTI targets	Increase no. of PhD graduations to *c*.70 p.a.;	VP Research Dean Graduate Studies	**H**
3.4	Continue to seek funding and other supports for research students	NUI Maynooth will win 7% of IRCHSS and IRCSET awards	VP Research Dean Graduate Studies	**H**
3.5	Provide training in relevant generic skills to all research students	90% of research students will have taken generic skills programme by 2011	VP Research Dean Graduate Studies	**H**
3.6	Implement university policy on research supervision informed by IUQB guidelines		VP Research Dean Graduate Studies	**H**
3.7	Improve completion rates within four years of study	75% of PhD students will complete within 4.5 years by 2011	Dean Graduate Studies Heads of Departments	**H**
3.8	Collaborate with DRHEA institutions in design and delivery of graduate programmes	4 new DRHEA graduate programmes	Dean Graduate Studies	**H**

SG5. Improve offerings as leader in the provision of access & lifelong learning
Focus for 2009-2011: Further develop NUI Maynooth's reputation as the national leader in the provision of access programmes and in catering for part-time students while also extending offerings in lifelong learning

Action	Action description	Target	Responsibility	Status H M L
5.1	Develop NUI Maynooth Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education	Produce NUIM Plan by end of 2009	Registrar, Access Office, academic departments	**H**
5.2	Refine existing and develop new foundation programmes to enhance access opportunities to all major programmes.	The annual undergraduate intake by 2011 will include: Access students: 5% Mature students: 16%	Registrar, Admissions Officer	**M**
5.3	Continue to develop solutions to barriers to higher education for all non-standard students	Students registered with Disability Office: 4% Flexible/ part-time undergraduates: 20%		**M**
5.4	Build improved liaison with DEIS schools and disadvantaged communities			**M**
5.5	Engage in research to identify barriers and investigate good teaching and learning practices for target groups	2009 –	Dept. Adult and Community Education	**M**
5.6	Develop the Assistive Technology Centre (ATC) as a teaching and learning support for all students requiring assistance	Provide support to all students in need of assistance	Access Office	**H**
5.7	Develop online resources (website, Moodle) to provide wider access to learning support and learning technology for target groups and beyond	Monitor from 2009	Teaching and Learning Centre	**M**
5.8	Review provision of non-academic support services for non-standard students	Improve level of student satisfaction	Director Student Services	**M**