GMIT
GALWAY-MAYO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA NA GAILLIMHE-MAIGH EO

STRATEGIC PLAN 2004-2009

**DESIGNING THE FUTURE OF LEARNING
DEVELOPING THE REGION**

MISSION... *At GMIT we develop life-long learning opportunities through our teaching and research and by supporting regional development.*

THE FOUR STRATEGIC DRIVERS
2004-2009

student

The GMIT **Student Strategy** places the student at the centre of the organisation. Our key goal is the flexible provision of life-long and life-wide education to an increasingly diverse student body.

regional

The GMIT **Regional Strategy** promotes the development of a learning region by stimulating economic and cultural innovation and by promoting social cohesion.

staff

The GMIT **Staff Strategy** will enable all employees of the Institute to continue their professional development in support of our students' learning and our region's growth.

research

The GMIT **Research Strategy** will integrate research, teaching and regional development as we develop a critical mass of research capacity in targeted areas.

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introduction

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

When the last Strategic Plan was developed in GMIT in 1999, its by-line was the phrase 'moving forward'. Over the five years of that plan, GMIT has certainly lived up to this aspiration. The period 1999-2004 was characterised by strong student enrolments, the development of many new courses, a substantial evolution of its research activity, the strengthening of its multi-campus structure and the completion of a major new building at the Dublin Road campus.

All of these developments have resulted from the work of the governing body, the director and executive, the staff and students of the Institute. In this work, we have been supported by national government and its agencies and by our regional business and community partners.

The new GMIT Strategic Plan will build on our achievements to date and will focus on where we can do more for our students and our region. As an Institute of Technology, we are committed to keeping our focus on the original mission of the Institutes to promote economic growth, social cohesion and regional development. The Institute has re-evaluated how best it can serve this mission by improving the educational opportunities of its students and supporting the growth of its region.

This plan will be subject to continuous review and it will be reconfigured to meet new opportunities and demands. This will require the ongoing collaboration of the governing body, the executive and the student and academic communities.

I want to thank the executive, the staff, and the students of GMIT for their extraordinary willingness to embrace change and for their commitment to working in new ways. I believe that the implementation of this strategic plan will provide opportunities for students of all ages and from all backgrounds to engage in life-long and life-wide learning. Their achievements and successes will be the real measure of the successful implementation of this plan.

THE GMIT MISSION

At GMIT we develop life-long learning opportunities
through our teaching and research and by supporting
regional development.

THE GMIT VISION

- Learning is and will be the core activity of the Institute, bringing students, staff and the region together to share, apply, test and create knowledge,
- GMIT will continue to develop as a regional organisation with an international focus committed to the personal and professional enrichment of its students, the needs of its region, national priorities and global opportunities;
- GMIT will both shape and respond to the perspectives and expectations of its stakeholders and will work in collaboration with them to meet their needs;
- As a publicly-funded organisation GMIT will be accountable for its implementation of national policy and funded on its ability and capacity to meet national targets. It will augment its public funding through its entrepreneurial activities and all income generated will be used to enhance services to our students.

THE GMIT IDENTITY

GMIT is proud of its identity and role as an Institute of Technology. It is proud of its people and achievements and has confidence in its ability to meet the challenge of the future.

The Institute is committed to:

- Developing a learning community working to challenging and clear standards of achievement and accountability;
- Promoting the professional orientation of all our programmes of study so that they give our students a passport to the workplace;
- Facilitating access and progression through our multicampus, multidisciplinary and multilevel award structures;
- Supporting the development of an organisation embracing and promoting change, challenge, innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Sustaining openness, flexibility and collaboration through the promotion of team-based working and partnership;
- Enhancing the climate of mutual and reciprocal respect in the organisation.

OUR STUDENTS

Our commitments to our students are that we will provide a responsive and flexible service to enable them to access, progress through and achieve the highest possible academic standards on all our programmes of study. We will ensure and assure the quality of the academic programmes we provide. We will consult our students about their experiences in GMIT, provide them with opportunities to evaluate our services and respond to issues which they raise. All our students will be given an opportunity from the outset to understand the academic and ethical standards to which they are expected to aspire.

OUR STAFF

The Institute will provide opportunities for its staff to continue their personal and professional development and it will continue to be an organisation that attracts and retains people of outstanding ability. GMIT is committed to ensuring that all our staff have a clear understanding of the mission, vision and values of the Institute and that all members of the organisation operate to the highest professional and ethical standards.

OUR GRADUATES

The Institute will always work to ensure that all our graduates have a comprehensive understanding of relevant disciplines, professional knowledge and skills appropriate to their awards. Our graduates will be characterised by their ability to:

- Apply their knowledge in the workplace;
- Learn and work independently and collaboratively;
- Contribute to their community and wider society;
- Exercise reflective and critical judgement;
- Understand the importance of continuing personal and professional development.

1994 - Opening of GMIT Castlebar Campus

1994 - Establishment of GMIT Cluain Mhuire Campus

1990 - I.D.A. Student Enterprise Award won by RTC Galway for the first time.

1972 - RTC Galway Opens

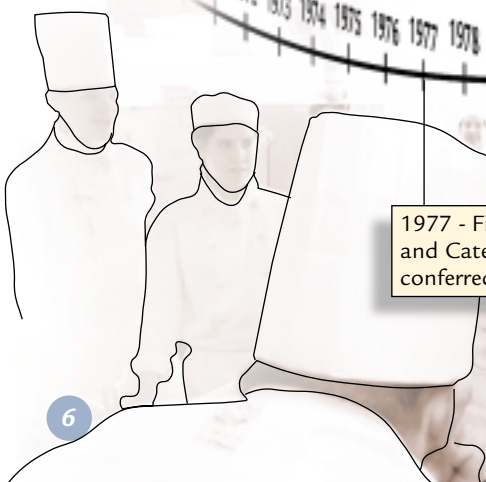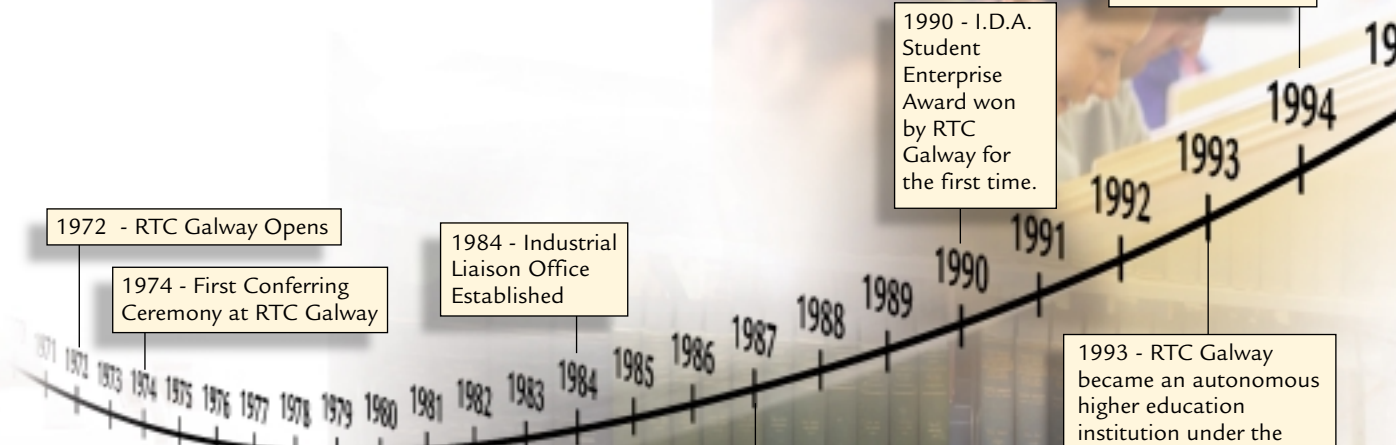1974 - First Conferring Ceremony at RTC Galway

1984 - Industrial Liaison Office Established

1993 - RTC Galway became an autonomous higher education institution under the Regional Technical Colleges' Act 1992 5310 students enrolled
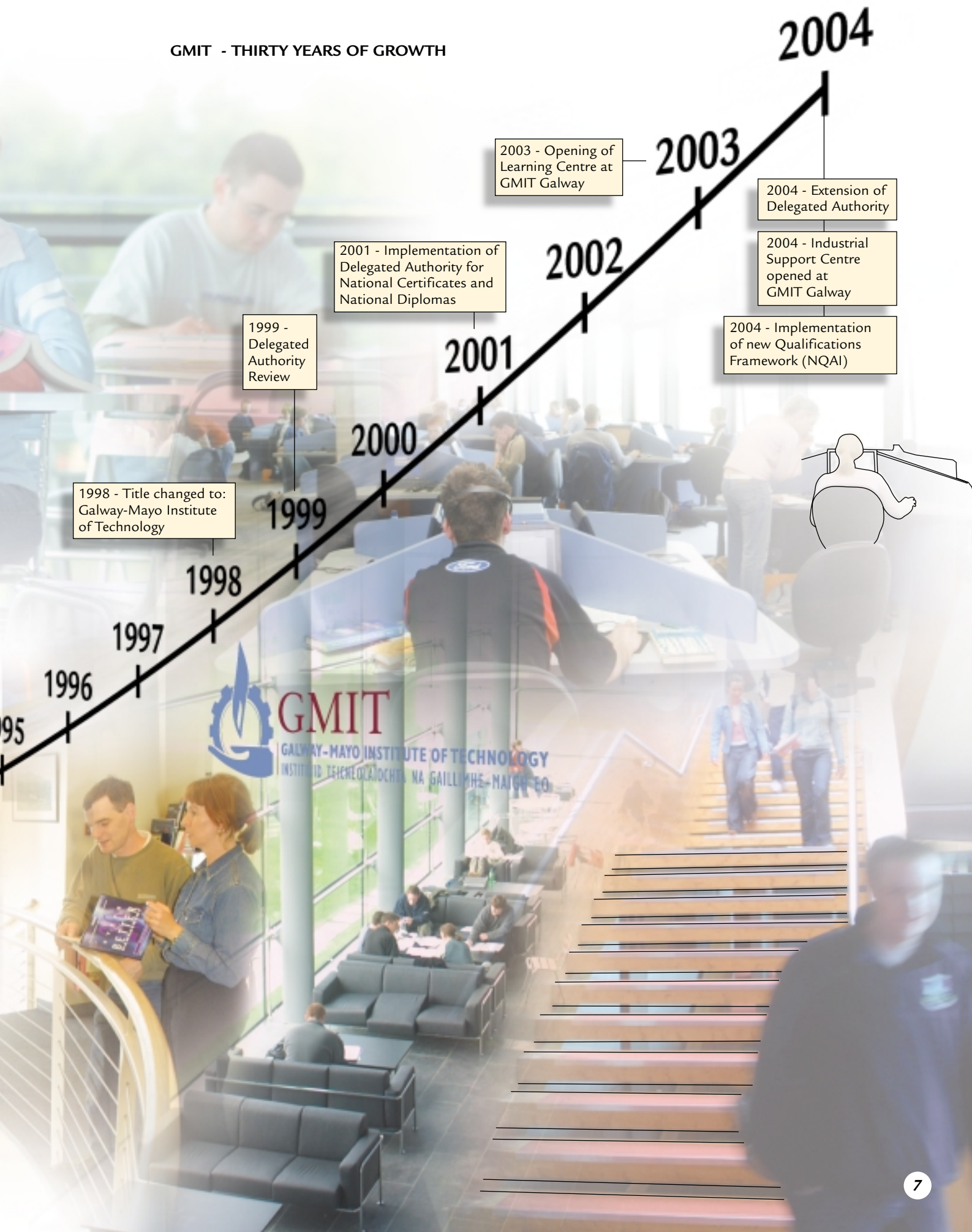
1987 - Partnerships with Franciscan Agricultural College, Mountbellew and with Connemara West at Letterfrack

1977 - First Degrees in Hotel and Catering Management conferred, the first in an RTC

1993 - Partnership with Galway Film Centre

1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 19

GMIT - THIRTY YEARS OF GROWTH

2004

2003

2002

2001

2000

1999

1998

1997

1996

995

2003 - Opening of Learning Centre at GMIT Galway

2004 - Extension of Delegated Authority

2004 - Industrial Support Centre opened at GMIT Galway

2004 - Implementation of new Qualifications Framework (NQAI)

2001 - Implementation of Delegated Authority for National Certificates and National Diplomas

1999 - Delegated Authority Review

1998 - Title changed to: Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology

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THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The content of this plan is the result of a year-long process which has involved:

- Executive framing of mission and key strategic areas;
- An Institute-wide consultation process with staff, students and governing body;
- Wide-ranging consultation with external stakeholders;
- Formation of an advisory team to the director which prepared the draft plan;
- Executive final authoring of report;
- Approval of process by Governing Body.

From the outset, GMIT will align this strategic plan with its budgetary processes. A formal operational plan with detailed targets and evaluation measures will be used to ensure a coherent focus on the four major strategic goals of this plan. Timelines have been developed for each target and an annual review of this plan's implementation will be published.

The Institute's resources will be aligned with this plan and its organisational capacity and structures reconfigured to ensure successful implementation.

THE FOUR STRATEGIC DRIVERS 2004-2009

The GMIT Student Strategy places the student at the centre of the organisation. Our key goal is the flexible provision of life-long and life-wide education to an increasingly diverse student body.

The GMIT Regional Strategy promotes the development of a learning region by stimulating economic and cultural innovation and by promoting social cohesion.

The GMIT Staff Strategy will enable all employees of the Institute to continue their professional development in support of our students' learning and our region's growth.

The GMIT Research Strategy will integrate research, teaching and regional development as we develop a critical mass of research capacity in targeted areas.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING

Implementing this strategic plan is contingent upon the following infrastructural developments at GMIT:

- The development of the Creative Industries campus at Cluain Mhuire;
- The provision of a new School of Engineering;
- The development of Incubation Centres at Galway and Castlebar;
- The acquisition of additional land to develop the social and cultural infrastructure in Galway;
- The refurbishment and upgrading of existing facilities;
- The provision of dedicated research space at the Dublin Road campus and Cluain Mhuire campus;
- The completion of the Health Sciences Unit at Castlebar;
- The development of student services throughout the Institute.

Over the five years of this plan, a public investment of €30 million will be required to initiate these developments. The Institute will need to raise a further €3 million through its commercial and fundraising activities.

STUDENT STRATEGY

The GMIT Student Strategy places the student at the centre of the organisation. Our key goal is the flexible provision of life-long and life-wide education to an increasingly diverse student body.

LIFELONG LEARNING

- Mainstream the provision of flexible, accredited adult and continuing education programmes;
- Prepare and implement school-based plans for adult and continuing education programmes;
- Further implement APEL;
- Promote flexible learning initiatives to improve access and retention.

MODULARISATION

- Specify a framework for the introduction of modularisation;
- Develop project plan for implementation of modularisation including academic, administrative and financial dimensions;
- Link modularisation to training and development plan and deliver programme of seminars and workshops for staff to aid implementation.

ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

- Identify the needs of socially and economically disadvantaged groups and participants in the region;
- Develop capacity of existing multicampus centres.

STUDENT SERVICES

- Carry out detailed review of existing student services;
- Integrate student services with teaching and learning activities
- Provide Student Services Centre, based on review and integration as above;
- Integrate support services for students with physical and/or learning impairments;
- Further develop administrative capacity aligned with the requirements of a diverse student body.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

- Review the current cultural and social life within GMIT and recommend initiatives for improvement.

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

- Research opportunities in the international student market, establish a presence and develop competitive capability;
- Further develop supports at GMIT for international students;
- Develop initiatives to promote and support international student and staff mobility.

ALUMNI

- Focus alumni development on building life-long associations with our graduates.

REGIONAL STRATEGY

The GMIT Regional Strategy promotes the development of a learning region by stimulating economic and cultural innovation and by promoting social cohesion.

DEFINING REGIONAL ROLE

- Review current regional role and impact and develop new policy in this area;
- Develop and implement a framework for an annual GMIT Regional Impact Report;
- Identify clearly how GMIT's unique multicampus framework can best be used in the context of regional development and access across the region;
- Be a recognised leader in the region for innovative thought and action and act as a resource to the region;
- Respond to skill shortages through clear diagnosis with stakeholders, introduction of relevant programmes, and targeted marketing.

MARKETING

- Develop a marketing plan which integrates the distinct needs of students and the region.

COLLABORATION AND LINKAGES

- Develop business incubation centres at Galway and Castlebar and identify initiatives to support them;
- Establish models for Regional Centres in designated disciplinary areas;
- Promote and encourage the development of the Irish language (including implementation of Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003) and heritage and culture programmes in the region;
- Develop programmes for linkage and collaboration with secondary and primary schools in the region;
- Promote environmentally friendly initiatives and further develop rational use of energy;
- Develop new programmes in music and media-rich technologies.
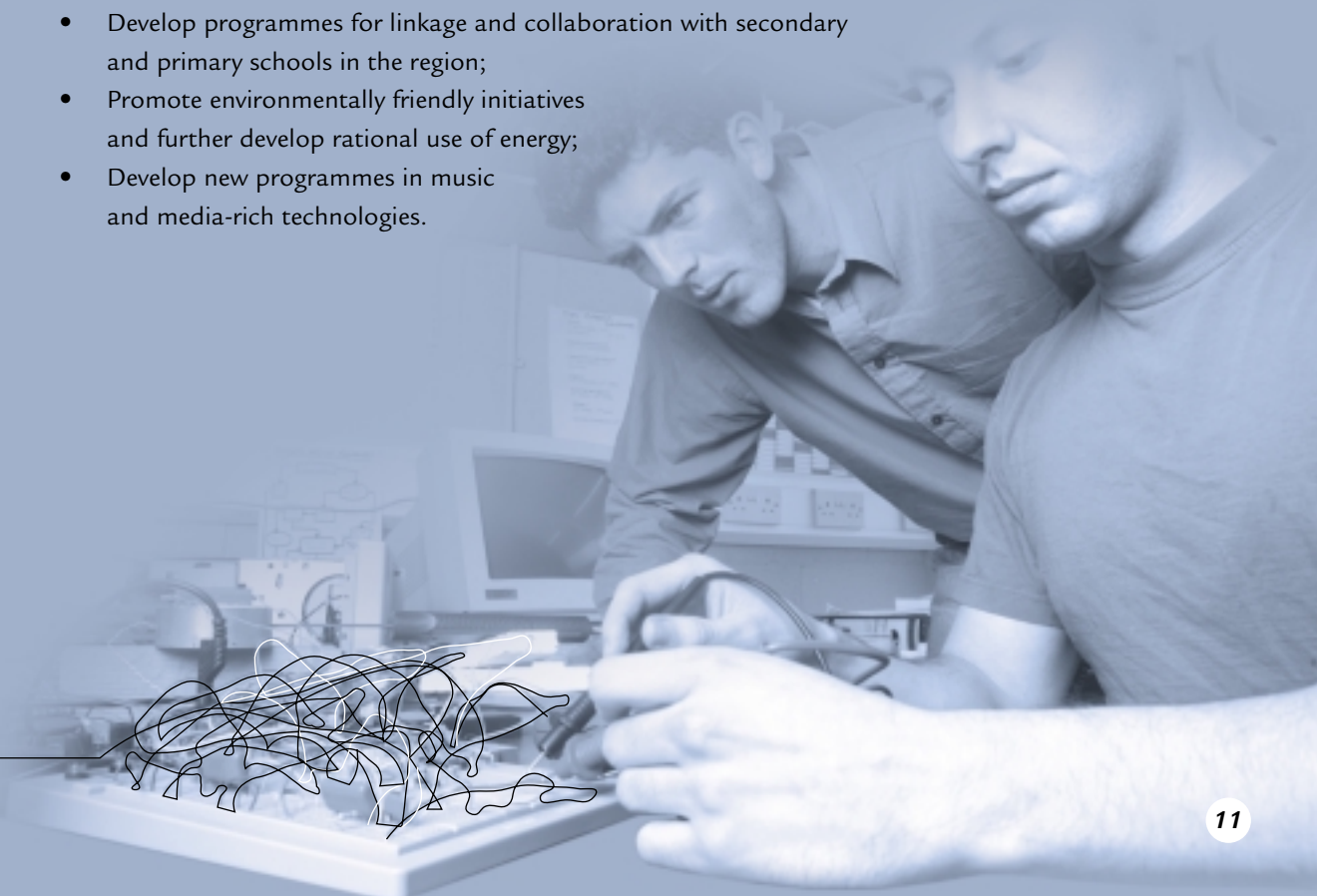
staff strategy

STAFF STRATEGY

The GMIT Staff Strategy will enable all employees of the Institute to continue their professional development in support of our students' learning and our region's growth.

WAYS OF WORKING
- Develop flexible organisational structures to respond to the changing environment;
- Devise initiatives aimed at enhancing existing good industrial relations;
- Use partnership principles as a way of working;
- Devise a new communications policy and framework to improve all forms of communication within the Institute.

LEARNING CULTURE AND INNOVATION
- Identify the requirements for developing a 'learning culture' and integrate with the staff development programme;
- Explore feasibility of innovation as part of all programmes;
- Develop innovative methods in teaching and learning which will, in turn, stimulate innovation in our students;
- Develop the Learning Resource Centre as a repository of learning for all GMIT students and staff;
- Devise mechanisms to facilitate innovation in programme design, delivery and assessment;
- Promote the use of the Learning Resource Centre as a regional knowledge base.

GOVERNANCE AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR
- Develop and implement a code of professional ethics;
- Implement "best practice" corporate governance;
- Ensure induction practices place due emphasis on professional ethics.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT
- Continue and expand the existing staff development programme, increasing the level of accreditation, and initiate systematic review of progress.

The GMIT Research Strategy will integrate research, teaching and regional development as we develop a critical mass of research capacity in targeted areas.

STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS

- Undertake an internal baseline study of research activities and infrastructure within the Institute as a basis for reviewing GMIT's Research Policy;
- Improve research facilities with emphasis on accommodation and facilities for post-graduate students;
- Target initiatives across disciplinary areas, aimed at "getting people together", to generate and incubate ideas, stimulate interest in research activity, promote innovation and build support networks;
- Review systems and procedures with a view to encouraging and facilitating research.

FUNDING

- Re-engineer and introduce Internal Research Fund;
- Actively pursue funding to support research activities in targeted areas of advantage;
- Support the expansion of research and teaching activities associated with the built environment;
- Characterise and develop, where appropriate, international activity in selected areas of research.

measuring

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

As the strategic plan advances, there will be a need to develop relevant and targeted measures which will be a true indicator of progress. At the start of the plan, some of these indicators are not clear and it is part of the work in the plan to develop these over the first year of its lifetime. In the meantime, we will continue to focus on a number of areas which contribute to the overall performance of the Institute.
These include:

- Student numbers and the composition of the student body
    - Proportion of ACCS and other part-time modes
    - Proportion of international students
    - Proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Research Capacity
    - Number of post-graduate students
    - Research revenues and publications
    - Number of staff engaged in research
- Regional Development
    - Number of programmes targeted to industry and business in the region
    - First destination statistics of our graduates
    - Links with appropriate bodies in the region
- Staff
    - Qualifications' profile of staff
    - Indicators from staff development programme
- Programmes
    - Student retention
    - Total number of programmes and the proportion in modularised format
    - Programmes offered through non-traditional modes

planning

INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, the third-level education sector in Ireland has enjoyed significant and continuous growth and development. This was driven primarily by demographic factors, increased participation and a booming economy. The energies and capacity of the Institute of Technology sector were focused on the inter-related challenges of providing the skills required by the developing economy, rationing demand for entry and subsequently managing the rapid expansion of capacity and diversity. The sector now faces major new challenges arising from the increased globalisation of knowledge, the requirement that as a nation we improve the qualifications' profile of our existing and future workforce, the ongoing challenge of ensuring that further and higher education promotes social equity and the need to promote sustainable regional development.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES, NEW DEMANDS

There are opportunities for GMIT to realign its activities in order to meet national needs and individual aspirations. Sources of opportunity include:

- A demand for education as a basis for a second career, for a parallel career and for holistic personal development;
- The national commitment to increased participation and achievement in higher education;
- Ireland's determination to move up the knowledge-chain and the requirement that higher education plays a pivotal role in achieving this national aspiration;
- The growth of the knowledge-based economy creates opportunities for partnerships between academic institutions and industry, not only in education provision but also in the development of research and consultancy activities;
- Opportunities for third-level "knowledge institutions", as essential elements of regional infrastructure, to assume leadership roles in regional economic and social development. The National Spatial Strategy and the proposals for the development of the BMW Region enhance these opportunities;
- Opportunities arising from the internationalisation and commercialisation of third-level education provision.

In attempting to meet these opportunities, GMIT will:

- Engage with a more diverse student body in terms of age, abilities, interests, experience and capacity to engage in education on a full or part-time basis;
- Facilitate students whose expectations are higher and more defined by recognising the importance of learner convenience, accessibility, quality of service, cost and multiple accreditation pathways;
- Adopt a concept of education that is less "front-loaded" by creating seamless and permeable access and accreditation structures;
- Facilitate closer connections between the worlds of learning and of work;
- Continue to promote a concept of education as life-long and life-wide;
- Enable different modes of delivery including use of on-line facilities, ICT and multi-media;
- Facilitate an education process that is individualised and divergent rather than uniform and convergent;
- Embrace flexibility and innovation in programme design, delivery and assessment;
- Develop a greater emphasis on inter-disciplinary education.

FUNDING

The long term financing of tertiary education is currently a major issue of debate. Third-level institutions are facing ever-increasing costs and a relative decline in state financial support. For the foreseeable future, the state will remain the main patron of third-level education in Ireland. However, support is unlikely to increase in real terms and will be conditional on increased transparency, accountability, comparability and the delivery of "value for money". As publicly funded organisations, providers will be accountable for the implementation of national policy and funded on their ability and capacity to meet nationally agreed criteria.

The challenge for GMIT will be:
- To balance the maintenance of academic standards and high quality with financial efficiency;
- To generate new and additional sources of independent revenue through, for example, commercial service provision, research income, industrial partnerships and collaboration and fund-raising activities.

Funding is also a critical issue for the individual learner. The increasing cost of living away from home and the expense of third-level education is a barrier to participation. The Institute will focus increased attention on local access to its programmes and collaboration with other organisations in meeting regional needs.

NEW POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The policy and legal framework for tertiary education in Ireland is undergoing radical change. This reflects developments at EU and national level. In particular:
- The commitment by Ireland to implement the Bologna process and participate in the creation of a European Higher Education Area;
- The ongoing developments arising from the full implementation of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, including institutional arrangements and the specification of a national awards and quality assurance framework;
- The proposed inclusion of Institutes of Technology under the HEA umbrella;
- The current debate on institutional governance and developments in this regard.

Compliance with these developments presents a challenge for all engaged in higher and further education. Institutions will be increasingly challenged to explain what they are doing, how they are doing it and how well they are doing it.

summary

SUMMARY

The nature of the third-level education sector in Ireland will change greatly over the next decade. The sector is facing a change in its traditional student base, increasing competition, funding difficulties and new societal and economic demands. Central to meeting this challenge is the need to develop the capacities and harness the energy required to succeed in the new environment.

conclusion

DIRECTOR'S CONCLUSION
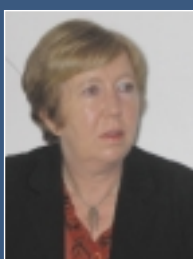
Here at GMIT, we have set ourselves a difficult task: to design the future. In doing so, we have had an opportunity to reflect on our philosophy, our mission, our values, our achievements and our failings. Through reviewing where we have come from and where we want to be in five years' time, we have re-focused on the twin core of our existence and purpose: our students and our region.

All elements of this Strategic Plan are directed towards providing an enhanced educational experience for our students and our role in supporting the development of the region. Everybody who worked on this plan realised that a five-year time-frame is simply an organising mechanism. We have developed key targets for each year of this plan but we also have a longer perspective: the evolution of the Institute and the region over the next twenty years.

The only certainty for all involved in strategic planning is change. We are designing our future in the context of that one certainty. The plan will evolve, be refined and implemented so that it is always focused on the needs of our students. Over our thirty-year history, we have developed the most regionally dispersed structure in the country. We will now build on that infrastructure to improve our service to the region. We now offer awards at apprentice, higher certificate, ordinary and honours degree, master's and Ph.D. level. Over the next five years we will continue to focus on our academic quality, the personal development of our students and the appropriateness of our range of programmes.

This Strategic Plan is centred on people, not buildings. It is deliberately designed to encourage innovation and responsiveness. As a public-service organisation we want to both foster and respond to change; we want to be measured on our responsiveness to national policy and we want to promote the life-enhancing benefits of education.

Many people inside and outside the organisation have contributed to this plan. As Director, I would like to thank all of them for their contributions. I look forward to working with all of them to create the future we envisage.