

STRATEGIC PLAN REVISION 2013-16 STRATEGIC PILLARS SUMMARY



Approved by Governing Body on 19 September 2013

Minor typographical amendments 24 October 2013

September 2013

Strategic Development Plan

Mid-term Review 2013-2016

1. Introduction

The GMIT Strategic Development Plan “Your Place – Your Future” was designed to cover the period 2010-2015. The plan was built around five pillars:

- Learning & Teaching
- Student Environment
- Research & Innovation
- Student-Community Engagement
- Internationalisation & Collaboration

In the interim, there have been significant developments in higher education including, in particular:

- The publication of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Hunt Report) in 2011 and its adoption as government policy.
- The process of re-defining the higher education landscape by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) resulting in
 - The creation of regional clusters of higher education institutions (HEIs) by the Minister for Education & Skills in May 2013.
 - The potential for the creation of a new higher education institution to be known as ‘Technological University’ (TU) and publication of the criteria for TU designation.
- The introduction by the HEA of a new compact to be agreed between each HEI and the HEA for the period 2014-2016 as part of a new process of strategic development between the HEA and HEIs.
- Plans by the HEA that an increasing share of institutional funding will be linked to performance funding by each HEI in supporting national priority objectives and achieving the objective of institutional compact.
- The establishment of the National Forum for Learning and Teaching.
- The on-going economic situation which is severely impacting Institute budgets, with additional staffing constraints, requiring the Institute to seek new funding opportunities.
- The establishment of national student and employer surveys.
- The proposal by the HEA to review national and regional discipline provision.

2. Strategic Development Plan 2013-2016

As a result of the above, the Executive has undertaken a high-level mid-term review of the original Strategic Development Plan and proposes a revised plan for the period 2013-2016 to align with the timeframe of the new institutional compact to be agreed with the HEA (which will be finalised by the end of 2013).

The pillars of the original 2010-2015 plan align well with the National Strategy for Higher Education and with the structure of the new institutional compact and, overall, continues to provide a good framework for the second half of the plan (with an additional year to align with the institutional compact).

However, the strong emphasis on collaboration by HEIs to achieve the objectives articulated in the National Strategy and the creation of regional clusters by the Minister for Education & Skills, warrants a separate pillar on “Collaboration & Alliances”. The draft objectives and strategies document relating to this pillar has been considered by the Governing Body Collaboration & Alliances sub-committee.

The student is at the centre of Institute activities and developments, and the objectives in the Student Environment pillar in the original plan remain a focus across all strategic pillars. For example, the recent work of the Governing Body relating to the provision of sports facilities is now more focused on engagement between the student body and the local community, as are civic engagement activities; alternative modes of delivery are considered within the Learning & Teaching pillar through the activities in the recently created Centre for Educational Development; business incubation and applied research is considered within the RDI pillar; shared services is now within the Collaboration & Alliances pillar etc. It is proposed therefore to remove this pillar as a stand-alone entity in the revised plan.

Thus the proposed pillars for 2013-2016 are therefore:

- Learning & Teaching
- Collaboration & Alliances
- Research, Development & Innovation
- Student-Community Engagement
- Internationalisation

These pillars and the revised timescale will synchronise the strategic plan with the new Institutional Compact and facilitate reporting against the compact. The key objectives and strategies to achieve them have been updated, as have the performance indicators to be pursued over the period 2014-2016.

3. Institutional Compact and Performance Indicators

The objectives and strategies in the Strategic Plan 2013-2016 will be included in the institutional compact to be agreed with the HEA.

As part of that process, the HEA and GMIT will agree the key performance indicators to be used (a combination of nationally agreed indicators and GMIT related indicators) and the targets to be achieved in each of the years 2014, 2015 and 2016.

4. GMIT Identity, Mission, Vision and Values

It is important to note that the GMIT identity, mission, vision and values remain as outlined in the original plan, and as re-articulated in the submission by the Institute to the HEA in July 2012 as part of the landscape configuration process.

Identity

As GMIT plans its future in a volatile environment and reasserts its commitment to work to promote economic development, social cohesion and regional growth, the rationale for the establishment of the new higher education system in Ireland in the late 1960s. These aspirations remain core to the mission and values of GMIT.

Mission

At GMIT we develop life-long learning opportunities through our teaching and research, by supporting regional development consistent with national higher education policy.

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;
- GMIT will be an organisation characterised by its flexibility, creativity, responsiveness and a capacity to adapt.

Values

The Institute, in pursuit of its mission, values:

- Higher Education for the benefits it brings to society and the individual;
- Equity in support of social cohesion;
- The role of education as a catalyst for change;
- Participating in regional development.



Figure 1: The revised pillars arising from a review of "Your Place - Your Future"

LEARNING & TEACHING

OBJECTIVE AREA A	APPROACHES TO LEARNING & TEACHING
Provide leadership and support for innovative approaches to Learning & Teaching.	
1	Promote and support the Centre for Educational Development (CED).
2	Develop more flexible programme structures and delivery options.
3	Develop the relationship between research and teaching, and create new learning opportunities for students.
4	Facilitate student engagement with diverse learning styles.
5	Promote and support the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

OBJECTIVE AREA B	STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
Facilitate student engagement in their own learning.	
1	Make students aware of their learning responsibilities.
2	Provide engagement for the 'student voice' in assessment, teaching, programme planning, quality improvement and institute governance.
3	Devise and implement a student retention and achievement policy for all programmes.
4	Continue to grow the First Year Experience across the Institute.
5	Use technology effectively for engaging students.
6	Develop initiatives to prepare students for employment.
7	Increase and promote opportunities for students to study/work abroad and accredit this work and study.

OBJECTIVE AREA C	ASSESSMENT
Guide and support assessment for learning as well as assessment of learning.	
1	Develop a comprehensive policy on assessment to include Programme Assessment Strategy.
2	Ensure students promote and apply good academic practice.
3	Promote innovative and alternative assessment methodologies.
4	Ensure the Quality Assurance Framework adequately caters for the integrity of all assessment elements, e.g. continuous assessment, the role of the External Examiner.

OBJECTIVE AREA D	LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
Create a learning environment to underpin student-centred learning.	
1	Appropriately resource and maintain the wider learning infrastructure, which includes inter alia: library facilities, the IT learning centre, teaching venues, labs and computing access.
2	Establish a Maths Support Centre.
3	Improve access to learning, support and information resources using new technologies.
4	Develop the range and scope of Student Support Services to meet the needs of the diverse student body.

OBJECTIVE AREA E	STAFF DEVELOPMENT
Ensure that Staff are effectively supported in making their contribution to learning and teaching.	
1	Support staff to achieve relevant postgraduate qualifications.
2	Provide training and support on new teaching approaches that enhance engagement in the classroom.
3	Promote increased opportunities for staff teaching exchanges with partner institutions.
4	Promote collaborative staff development programmes of HEI partners in the cluster.

COLLABORATION & ALLIANCES

OBJECTIVE AREA F	REGIONAL CLUSTER
Establish and sustain the regional cluster of HEIs which collaborate in acting to address the needs of the region.	
1	Establish Regional Cluster MOU between HEIs in the region that provides governance and management structures.
2	Develop rolling 3-year Regional Cluster plan of coordinated provision that addresses the needs of the region.
3	Secure Strategic Innovation & Development funding from HEA for operation of Regional Cluster.
4	Formulate internal communications strategy that informs staff of Regional Cluster plans and potential impact on the Institute.
5	Formulate external communications strategy for the Regional Cluster plan with partners.

OBJECTIVE AREA G	STRATEGIC ALLIANCES
Establish and sustain current and future alliances that enable GMIT make a higher impact on the region.	
1	Develop and monitor a rolling implementation plan for each Strategic Alliance.
2	Secure Strategic Innovation and Development funding from HEA for operation of Strategic Alliance.
3	Formulate and implement internal communications strategy that informs and assures staff of Strategic Alliance plans and impact on the Institute.
4	Formulate external communications strategy for the Strategic Alliance.
5	Secure MOUs with additional HEIs and other organisations.
6	Establish a series of MOUs with the FE sector that promote and facilitate access, progression and transfer.

OBJECTIVE AREA H	THEMATIC CLUSTERS
Develop sustainable thematic clusters that enhance selected strengths of the Institute in serving the regional and national needs.	
1	Identify potential for new cluster groups with appropriate partners and external stakeholders.
2	Secure and assign seed-funding for new clusters if necessary.
3	Review cluster performances for sustainability.

OBJECTIVE AREA I	WORKING COLLABORATIVELY
Encourage and promote effective ways to collaborate with HEIs and other organisations in the region.	
1	Identify key areas of Institute activity where collaborative actions can enhance performance and increase the impact of GMIT and its reputation.
2	Give higher visibility to successful collaborative projects to enhance the reputation of the Institute and further promote collaboration, and disseminate collaboration project outcomes to all staff.
3	Provide staff development to promote collaborative working, and a virtual toolkit for all staff engaged on collaborative projects.

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION

OBJECTIVE AREA J	SPECIALISATION AND STRENGTH
Re-affirm and state GMIT's areas of research strength, differentiation and specialisation and identify possible emerging areas.	
1	Continue to support key priority research areas (KPRA's) and plan for their sustainable growth, based on criteria set down by the Institute.
2	Develop a mechanism for identifying further Key Priority Research Areas (KPRA).
3	Prioritise Institute support and funding to KPRA's which have or will have regional impact and/or national importance.
4	Use the KPRA model to enhance research capability which can attract the establishment of further funding.
5	Identify a fourth unrelated discipline area to meet regional needs and build on expertise of the Institute.
6	Ensure approval to operate at Level 10 for new key priority research areas, in collaboration with other providers where appropriate.
7	Adopt structured research Masters and PhD programmes in a collaborative arrangement with NUIG and other HEIs.

OBJECTIVE AREA K	SCHOLARSHIP AND TRAINING
Closely align research activities with learning strategy in order to develop pedagogical research and enhance student learning and experience.	
1	Foster research as a key activity among staff and encourage staff to pursue professional development through research.
2	Ensure inclusiveness of activities which might not be seen conventionally as research.
3	Develop the Centre for Educational Development.
4	Ensure students have opportunity to experience research methodology and process as part of their programme.
5	Clearly identify niche areas outside the Key Priority Research Areas for institutional support.

OBJECTIVE AREA L	PROMOTING RESEARCH AND MAXIMISING TALENT
Continuously develop structures and policies which encourage staff and students to be active in research and which are compatible with the financing of research.	
1	Restructure the management of RDI research strategy and support researchers.
2	Develop role of the contract researcher within the Institute.
3	Explore graduate school models and assess applicability to GMIT.
4	Explore Institute graduate scholarship schemes to sustain post-graduate activity and to take advantage of external funding opportunities.
5	Introduce adjunct and emeritus schemes to enhance research expertise available to the Institute.
6	Provide appropriate research training for staff and students on a collaborative basis with other HEIs to ensure quality standards.

OBJECTIVE AREA M	BUILDING RDI ALLIANCES
Build a network of strategic alliances so that GMIT offers leadership and complementarity in developing the region.	
1	Fully utilise research talent from outside the Institute to further research capability and capacity through, for example, adjunct appointments.
2	Work with the IOTI sector to further research of the IOTs in the context of regional and disciplinary clusters.
3	Identify and participate in Graduate Schools and other collaborative entities as approved by the Institute.
4	Continue to work with NUIG as part of the strategic co-development of both institutions across the range of research, development and innovation activities.
5	Develop strategic transnational linkages with incubators and services to enhance GMIT's offering to prospective clients.
6	Use strategic linkages with other HEIs to sustain and strengthen research centres, innovation centres, post-graduate programmes and innovation programmes.

OBJECTIVE AREA N	RDI AND ENTERPRISE
Consolidate and promote research which is driven by needs of enterprise and congruent with their needs.	
1	Benchmark current linkages with other similar institutions as a basis for an improvement plan.
2	Develop intellectual property awareness, policy and management.
3	Strengthen links with companies in the Innovation in Business Centres (IiBCs) and take advantage of their presence to progress enterprise-led research.
4	Ensure research is enterprise-related in addressing Enterprise needs.
5	Develop incentives and mechanisms for staff involved in industry-based research, for example, through innovation vouchers, partnerships and IP Development.
6	Leverage emerging technology or developments from client companies to inform relevant disciplines in programme development.

STUDENT-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE AREA O	LEARNING THROUGH WIDER ENGAGEMENT
Enable students to develop their capabilities through wider engagement.	
1	Develop a college-wide policy for professional practise/work placement.
2	Develop final year projects around problems/challenges sourced from the business and wider communities.
3	Promote and facilitate civic engagement modules.
4	Embed enterprise and entrepreneurialism in programme design.

OBJECTIVE AREA P	RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES
Contribute to the social, cultural and economic well-being of the communities served by the Institute.	
1	Encourage staff to undertake projects that will enhance the community.
2	Develop and promote ethical policies and practices.
3	Engage in environmentally responsible practices.
4	Promote positive relations with local communities in all campuses.

OBJECTIVE AREA Q	ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION
Meet the national targets for participation in higher education with particular reference to life-long learning and under-represented cohorts.	
1	Provide pre-entry supports and initiatives that will lead to increasing numbers of students entering through Access.
2	Provide a range of alternative entry routes to facilitate all students in accessing GMIT.
3	GMIT will grow the Access service internally to provide enhanced post-entry services and supports to all students.
4	Implement an Institute-wide Access policy to ensure best practices are extended to the entire student body.

OBJECTIVE AREA R	WORKING WITH BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY
Work with business and communities to enhance GMIT's reputation and role in the region.	
1	Develop effective models for industry and community engagement through course design and delivery.
2	Promote student and staff engagement with a broad based community and business organisations.
3	Work with communities to promote and use GMIT facilities.
4	Promote and enhance stakeholder engagement.

INTERNATIONALISATION

OBJECTIVE AREA S	CONSOLIDATION OF EU PARTNERSHIPS
Consolidate and deepen links with European institutions to promote staff and student exchange.	
1	Focus our attention over the next three years on a smaller number of strategically supportive institutions.
2	Encourage and facilitate academic units within the Institute to send staff and/or students abroad.
3	Make our programmes more internationally focused.

OBJECTIVE AREA T	DIVERSIFICATION OUTSIDE EUROPE
Increase and diversify international revenue base further.	
1	Develop links with a small number of key partners in selected non-EU markets who can consistently deliver viable numbers of students.
2	Work collaboratively with other HEI partners, state agencies and IOTI to develop and promote opportunities for non-EU students.
3	Develop relationships with English language training providers to prepare incoming students for GMIT programmes.
4	Seek to expand GMIT's presence in non-EU countries through the provision of programmes and/or management of institutions.

OBJECTIVE AREA U	INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO AND QUALITY SERVICE
Enhance international programme portfolio and provide quality service.	
1	Ensure that GMIT meets the criteria required for International Education Quality Mark accreditation.
2	Identify and then customise our international academic portfolio for international student recruitment.
3	Provide internationally focused and culturally sensitive training programmes to staff within the Institute.
4	Deliver to our incoming students the highest possible quality of service.
5	Provide our partners with appropriate support through relevant and accessible market expertise
6	Develop relationships with international recruitment agents, overseas higher education institutes, governmental bodies and regulatory agencies that are characterised by the highest standards of validation, annual monitoring and reviews.