

Higher Education Authority**Report of Meeting of the Board of the HEA held on Tuesday 24th January 2023 in the
Dublin office.**

Present: Mr Tony Donohoe (agenda items 1-12)
Dr Judith Eaton (agenda items 1-12)
Professor Orla Feely, Deputy Chair (agenda items 5-12)
Mr Michael Horgan, Chairperson (agenda items 1-12)
Ms Darina Kneafsey (agenda items 1-12)
Dr Sinéad O’Flanagan (agenda items 1-12)
Mr Pól Ó Móráin (agenda items 1-12)
Dr Lynn Ramsey (agenda items 1-12)

Apologies: Dr Sharon Feeney
Ms Beth O Reilly
Dr John Wall

In attendance: Dr Alan Wall (agenda items 1-12.1)
Ms Orla Nugent (agenda items 1-11)
Mr Padraic Mellett (agenda items 1-11)
Mr Tim Conlon (agenda items 1-11)
Ms Pearl Cunningham (agenda items 1-11)
Dr Vivienne Patterson (agenda items 1-11)
Dr Louise Callinan (agenda items 1-11)
Ms Eilis Noonan (agenda items 1-11)
Dr Victoria Brownlee (agenda item 4)
Ms Teresa Gallagher (agenda item 4)
Dr Ross Woods (agenda item 5)
Ms Valerie Harvey (agenda items 6, 7)
Mr David Reilly (agenda item 7)

Conflicts of Interest

The Chair reminded all Board members of potential conflicts of interest and asked members to highlight any items that may require attention. None were raised.

Quorum

The quorum for HEA Board meetings, six members, was met.

Opening Remarks

The Chair noted that this was Dr Ramsey’s last meeting as a HEA Board member, following her appointment as Director of the Teaching Council. The Chair, the Board and the HEA Executive thanked Dr Ramsey for her very significant contributions to the work of the Board and of the National Forum for Teaching and Learning, and her invaluable advice and guidance. Dr Ramsey noted that it was a privilege to serve as a member of the Board and thanked her fellow members for their support, and remarked on the consistent quality of the work of the HEA Executive.

1. Report of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on December 13th 2022 were agreed.

2. Matters arising

No issues raised.

3. Membership of HEA Standing Committees

3.0.1. The Chair presented this report. The Board was requested to approve memberships of the HEA standing committees as per below.

Currently, the Minister appoints the Chair and members of the Irish Research Council and unless otherwise advised this will also be a Standing Committee of the HEA Board.

Audit & Risk Committee	Finance Committee	Student Engagement & Teaching and Learning Committee
Ms Darina Kneafsey (Chair)	Dr Sinead O’Flanagan (Chair)	Dr Sharon Feeney
Mr Tony Donohoe	Dr Judith Eaton	Dr Sinead O’Flanagan
Dr Sharon Feeney	Dr John Wall	Dr John Wall
Mr Pól Ó Móráin	Mr Pól Ó Móráin	Ms Beth O’Reilly
Professor Orla Feely	Ms Darina Kneafsey	Up to 13 external members
Ms Anne Brady (external)	Ms Anne Brady (external)	

Members were also requested to approve an amendment to the Terms of Reference of the Student Engagement and Teaching & Learning Committee (SETLC), in relation to the chair of the Committee and providing for a minimum of four Board Members and up to thirteen external members on the Committee. An external chair of the SETL Committee is currently being sought. The Terms of Reference for all the Committees plus the Board will be reviewed having regard to the new HEA legislation.

The Board also agreed to invite the Chair of the IRC and the Chair of the SETL Committee to attend Board meetings.

Decision: The Board agreed the above membership of the HEA Standing Committees, the changes to the Terms of Reference of the SETLC and the attendance of the respective Chairs of the IRC and SETLC attending Board meetings.

4. St Angela's incorporation process

4.1. Members were requested to consider and approve the report and recommendation of the Advisory Panel of the HEA Board tasked with undertaking an assessment in relation to the Section 44 technological university application from the Atlantic Technological University and St Angela's College, Sligo. The Chair provided a summary of the visit of the Advisory Panel to St Angela's College, Sligo, which took place on the 16th and 17th January, and presented the report as circulated.

The feedback from the visit was positive; the Chair noted that the documentation provided by the institutions was extensive and helpful, meetings were productive, and this was clearly a collaborative process with enthusiastic and cooperative staff in both institutions. The Panel also met the Board of St Angela's who were very supportive.

Members were briefed on a small number of matters that remain to be resolved, however, the Panel was satisfied, based on the information provided by STAC/ATU, that these will be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.

It was noted that academic staff of both institutions are already working closely together, as well as support offices, HR, and Finance Units, and the Panel have no major concerns regarding a successful integration.

The Panel were assured that ATU recognises the value and opportunity of St Angela's. Mr Donohoe noted expertise in St Angela's in Teaching and Learning, the opportunity that the additional students and research staff bring, as well as its international reputation in home economics education, and highlighted the panel's recommendation that ATU reconsider the structure and framing of the university's four emerging faculties in light of St Angela's expertise.

The Panel also heard from the student community, which were very impressive, and articulated an overwhelmingly positive response to the proposed merger. This was also reflected in the balloted response from staff representatives. It was noted by the Panel that professional and support staff were eager for further consultation as the project developed, especially with regard to how their roles will be affected. This would be appropriate when the Implementation Plan has been finalised.

Dr Eaton remarked that the enormity of the task was recognised, and that she was impressed by those the Panel met. The time that this project will take should not be underestimated, and a large amount of effort is needed to align the different cultures.

4.2 Members raised the following points:

- Members were advised that the issue of STAC pension liability has been addressed by DFHERIS.

The CEO acknowledged the outstanding work from Dr Brownlee, Mr Conlon and Ms Gallagher. The Panel added their thanks to the Executive for their preparation and for ensuring the visit went smoothly.

The Advisory Panel recommends to the HEA Board that it reports to the Minister that the consortium has satisfactorily met the conditions stipulated and has presented compelling evidence of its compliance with Section 44B and 44D of the TU Act, 2018.

Decision: The Board approved the report and the recommendation of the Advisory Panel and will now report its findings to the Minister for consideration and ultimate decision.

5. Anti-racism Principles for Irish HEIs

5.1. Dr Woods presented this report. Members were requested to provide feedback on the draft HEA Anti-Racism Principles for Irish HEIs. The Principles are currently out for wider consultation, following which they will be circulated to Members for electronic approval after 10th February and launched at the national conference on Race Equality in collaboration with the University of Galway on 20th March 2023.

Following best practice on terminology, it was decided to frame the document as a set of Principles. These Principles, which have been developed in consultation with the National Athena Swan Intersectionality Working Group, will address the recommendations in the Race Equality Report, which call on HEI leadership to actively embed a culture of race equality within HEIs by:

- taking responsibility, accountability and ownership of race equality issues at HEIs;
- actively acknowledging that race inequality exists in HEIs;
- acknowledging that Irish HEIs are not keeping pace with wider demographics and assertive action is required to catch up; and

- acknowledging the power of HEIs to influence Irish society in general.

5.2 Members raised the following issues:

- Statements on equality within institutions for staff should also include students.
- Clarity was sought on the use of the terms "Race and Anti-racism" as a way to call out the issue of Ethnic discrimination and inequality. Members were advised that the term aligns with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth's National Anti-Racism Action Plan.
- It was suggested that a glossary be included at the end of the document.
- The Principles should acknowledge the positive influence of ethnic diversity in Ireland.
- There should be an explicit reference to Ireland's equality legislation.
- Do we have a sense of the response to HEIs on this topic? Dr Woods advised that there was an increased activity in this area, not as advanced as gender equality plans in this area but definitely developing.
- Healthy campus charter model could be replicated in terms of an awareness campaign.

The Board and CEO commended Dr Woods on his work in this area which is challenging and highly necessary.

Decision: The Board provided feedback on the Principles as requested in the Memorandum.

6. Graduate Outcomes and Socio-Economic Status Report

6.1 Ms Harvey presented this report. Members were asked to consider and approve the Graduate Outcomes and Socio-Economic Status report for publication. The report will be available in the form of an interactive, digital report, published on the HEA website. This includes the use of interactive tables facilitating more detailed analyses.

The analysis in this report is obtained by linking the HEA Graduate Outcomes Survey Class of 2020 data with graduate Deprivation Index Scores (DIS).

The Graduate Outcomes Survey is a national survey, conducted annually, and distributed to graduates of higher education institutions (HEIs), nine months after graduation. The response rate to the 2020 survey was approximately 50%, with just under 30,000 graduates providing detailed information on their main graduate destination nine months after graduation.

This analysis is limited to Irish domiciled graduates only, as DIS information is not available for graduates with a home address outside of Ireland. Removing non-Irish domiciled graduates reduced the sample to 25,531. Of the remaining sample, DIS coverage stood at just over 88%, providing a final analytical sample of 22,401 graduates.

Areas of focus in the report included an in-depth examination of fields of study, main graduate destination, differences in employment outcomes, and a sectoral analysis of employment outcomes.

6.2 Members raised the following issues:

- What are the main factors in terms of salary differential? Field of study makes a big difference as higher-scoring DIS graduates tend to study various courses that will lead to bigger salaries.
- Is there a correlation for students with parents who went to higher education? Members were advised that the report did not include this data but the forthcoming report on Eurostudent survey will look into this. This will be released next month and the Executive will bring this to the next Board meeting.
- Do we engage with secondary schools with a view to increasing participation? Yes, HEA representatives sit on DFHERIS groups in terms of producing guidance. The HEA also manages the PATH programme – PATH 1 is concerned with access to Initial Teacher Education, PATH 3 supports the development of regional and community partnership strategies for increasing access to higher education by specified groups.
- HEA is also looking at developing policy for a to devise research & policy questions and bring stakeholders together. Ongoing work on tertiary education is very important in this regard.
- It was noted that Eircode coverage is improving all the time. For new entrant records, Eircode coverage is in the high 90%.
- Members noted that the HEA has provided leadership in creating evidence base-work of Statistics Unit is exemplary in this regard and should be publicised more strongly. Roadshows would be helpful. The Statistics Unit confirmed that they have been running roadshows for the last year with relevant stakeholders.
- Members suggested the release of some funding for researchers for further analysis on the data. Dr Patterson confirmed HEA would welcome suggestions from members for particular areas of inquiry.
- It was suggested that the HEA could suggest topics for HEIs to look at using their own data. Dr Patterson indicated that this was already underway to some extent but the capacity to carry out further analysis varied across the different HEIs.
- Use of the term “undergraduate degree”- can we look at “primary degree”? HEA will look into the international best practice to decide on terminology.

Members thanked Ms Harvey for the presentation. The Executive will work with the Head of Communications to develop a communications strategy for the national report. This includes informing the Department, HEIs, media and other stakeholders of the content of the report in advance of publication.

Decision: The Board approved the Report for publication.

7. Graduate Outcomes and Disability Report

7.0 Mr Reilly presented this report. Members were asked to consider and approve the Graduate Outcomes and Disability report for publication.

This report explores the graduate outcomes for graduates with a disability. It explores main graduate destinations and occupations, the impact of Covid 19, and earning analysis.

7.1 Members raised the following issues;

- Is there a breakdown of type of disability? The report breaks down disability categories into learning, blind/deaf, emotional/psychological, physical.
- To what extent does outcome vary depending on the nature of disability? Mr Reilly noted those with multiple disabilities have the lowest employment outcomes. Within disability, nature of your disability does seem to have an impact on your outcome.
- Does the Equal Access Survey ask any questions re: DARE? Members were advised that DARE is an alternative admissions scheme, the survey did not ask respondents if they came through the DARE route.
- Were any particular sectors likely to employ graduates with a disability? The hospitality sector is more likely to avail of such schemes than other sectors. It was noted that salaries in this sector are lower.
- The extent to which AI software could extract specific data that could be used to offer incentives to employers? Dr Patterson advised this was currently not an option. These two reports serve as an input into the National Access Plan.
- Opportunities for placements for students with disabilities? Mr McDermott advised [that AHEAD](#) published a report on reasonable accommodations on professional placements based on a survey of student experiences. It was noted that the National Forum is also doing work with its course on Universal Design (oversubscribed 5 times).
- Members noted that the use of novel datasets by the Statistics Unit are feeding HEA policy recommendations, which in turn will influence Access Policy and guidance to HEIs.
- Apprenticeship education - some of the data from these reports will feed into the work of the NAO.

The Executive will work with the Head of Communications to develop a communications strategy for the national report. This includes informing the Department, HEIs, media and other stakeholders of the content of the report in advance of publication.

Decision: The Board approved the report for publication.

8. Implementation of HEA 2022 Work Plan

8.1 The Board was requested to note progress made on the implementation of the 2022 Work Plan. Members also noted that discussions around the 2023 Performance Delivery Agreement with DFHERIS have been progressing.

8.2 Members raised the following issues;

- A three-year corporate plan will have some retrospective aspects due to stipulations in the HEA Act 2022. It was noted that the new Act refers to a Corporate Plan, it is assumed that a Corporate Plan will be addressed under the new HEA Strategy which is required under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

Decision: The Board noted the report on the 2022 Work Plan.

9. 2022 Funding Final Allocations

9.1 2022 Recurrent Grant (B4) Outturn

Ms Nugent presented this memo. The Board was requested to note the final 2022 grant allocations, as well as Covid-19 and pension payments made in 2022. In December 2022, the Department provided the HEA with a once-off €25,000,000 additional funding to be allocated as an instalment towards undergraduate fees.

The total 2022 recurrent grant outturn can be summarised as follows:

B04 Grant	€1,112,903,000
NTF-EFHE Focused Provision	€148,352,000
Original Total	€1,261,255,000
Dept of Health /HSE Nursing Contribution	€7,507,581
Total 2022 Recurrent	€1,268,762,581
<i>Additional Allocations</i>	
Student Contribution	€147,657,000
Wellbeing/Mental Health	€3,000,000
Senior Secondment Posts	€349,565
2022 Pay Agreements B4	€30,659,000
2022 Pay Agreements NTF	€4,203,000
Cost of Living Pressures (non-pay)	€7,051,000
Ukrainian Tuition Fees & grant	€2,129,000
Additional Mental Health Supports (including displaced Ukrainian students)	€900,000
PhD Stipend Increase for IRC	€667,000
Additional Free Fees Funding	€25,000,000
Interest earnings	€100,000
transferred from B3 to B4 (National Forum and North/South Research)	€2,000,000
Allocations from 2021 paid in 2022 (IReL and North/South Research)	€1,300,000
Balance returned to HEA in respect of National Forum (paid in 2022)	€790,823
Balance returned in respect of Landscape funding (paid in 2022)	€801,524
Total 2022 Recurrent Allocations including Year End Allocations	€1,495,370,493
NTF Apprenticeships (Craft & Overheads)	€48,110,073
Total including Apprenticeship allocation	€1,543,480,566

9.2 Policy & Strategic Planning, System Development & Performance Management, Research, Teaching and Learning, International, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion 2022 Funding Outturn

Mr. Conlon presented this memo. These allocations relate to final 2022 outcomes in respect of National Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Projects, Healthy Campus, Research Capacity, IReL, Covid Costed Extensions, Technological Universities and Teaching & Learning.

At the December 2022 meeting, Board Members approved a number of funding approaches and allocations in respect of policy, research, TUs, international and EDI. Further final details on these payments along with information on additional allocations as sanctioned by the Department in late 2022 are provided here.

- Ukrainian Student Supports - €900,000
- National Research Capacity Support Funding - €6,368,000
- COVID Costed Extensions - €306,198

- Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning (SATLE 2022) - €1,300,000
- National Resilience and Recovery Fund (NRRP) - €190,000
- TU Transformation Fund (TUTF) - €1,118,000

Decision: The Board noted these reports, the contents of which were circulated for electronic approval in December 2022, with minor adjustments.

10. National Apprenticeship Office - Progress Report 2022 and Proposed Business Plan 2023

Dr Mary Liz Trant, Director of the National Apprenticeship Office was welcomed to the meeting by the Chairperson. The Progress Report 2022 and the Proposed Business Plan for 2023 had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

10.1 Dr Mary Liz Trant presented this report. The Board was requested to discuss the draft progress report for 2022 by the National Apprenticeship Office (NAO) and the proposed business plan for 2023.

Dr Trant summarised progress to date as follows:

- The National Apprenticeship Office (NAO) was formed with a Director and a transition team,
- A temporary office premises was secured for the NAO June-December 2022 and arrangements are underway to secure more long-term location from Q1 2023,
- An MOU was signed between SOLAS and the HEA to underpin the governance and operations of the NAO,
- A new national advisory group for apprenticeship, the National Apprenticeship Alliance (Alliance) was formed. The Alliance met 5 times in 2022 and provided strong support to the National Apprenticeship Office in the year's agenda of work.
- Eight additional staff for the NAO are being recruited and are due to take up their roles from January 2023, a complement of 19 personnel.
- A 2022 budget was agreed and allocated and formed the basis for agreement of a budget for 2023.

10.2 Members raised the following issues:

- Do you have a roadmap to increasing enrolments? Key to this is increasing the number of employer providers to 10000 by 2025, currently it is approx. 8500.
- Members noted that it was encouraging to see consortia-led apprenticeships are increasing.
- Challenge of integrating the current funding model for craft apprenticeships with the model in place for new consortia.

- Apprenticeship online portal- why has a separate portal been established? Different pathways. Practical platform where people can apply etc. the portal and the website are linked.
- Development of “green” apprenticeships should be emphasised.
- Demand is outstripping supply in terms of apprenticeships -great interest from Higher Options and other student-focused events. The difficulty is in securing placements with employers.
- Availability of statistical data – Dr Trant noted there is a lot of apprenticeship data that could be used to inform future policy and this should be further explored, the NAO has just appointed a senior manager to assist with this.
- NAO are looking into transition year “taster” courses.
- How is oversight of the quality of on-the-job training managed? Solas have authorised officers who can audit all premises, employers are also required to complete assessments. Apprenticeships also complete feedback surveys in some consortia.
- The suggestion that NAO introduce a scheme whereby applicants can secure a training grant and approach employers directly can be explored.

Decision: The Board noted this report and thanked Dr Trant for her presentation.

11. AOB

11.1 *Research Bill*

Members noted a letter received by the Chair from Dr Lillis. AGS at DFHERIS, with responsibility for Research, on the progress of the development of the new Research Bill. It was agreed to invite Dr Lillis to the March Board meeting to provide an update.

11.2 *Visit to UCC/MTU in June*

A proposed approach to the June Board meeting being held offsite in Cork and coinciding with meeting with UCC/MTU representatives will be brought to the next Board meeting.

12. Members only session

12.1 **CEO Contract Renewal**

Arising from an enquiry from Dr Feeney and a conversation with Dr Alan Wall, the Chair informed the Board that it would be required to make a decision on the renewal of Dr Wall’s contract in the near future. To commence the process and develop recommendations, the

Chair invited members Judith Eaton and Darina Kneafsey to join him on a Panel to bring proposals to the Board as soon as possible.

Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Tuesday 14th March 2023 at 10:00am.

Chairperson

Date