National Report regarding the Bologna Process implementation 2009-2012

Ireland

Part 1.0 BFUG Data Collection: administrative information

For which country do you fill in the questionnaire?

Ireland

Name(s) of the responsible BFUG member(s)

Laura Casey

Email address of the responsible BFUG member(s)

laura_casey@education.gov.ie

Contributors to the report

Government representatives = Department of Education and Skills, Higher Education Authority, National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

Contributors to the report

Employer representatives =

Contributors to the report

Student representatives =

Contributors to the report

Academic and other staff representatives = Irish Universities Association (IUA)

Contributors to the report

Other (please specify) =

Part 1.1 BFUG Data Collection on Context and Structures

1. Do your steering documents for higher education policy explicitly take account of demographic projections for your country?

Yes

2. How do these projections affect higher education policy planning?

In the recently published National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, the Department of Education and Skills predicts that demand for higher education in Ireland will double over the next twenty years, and that most of this increase in demand will come from late entrants, mature students, and international students. This increased demand will arise partly because, since the introduction of free secondary education in 1967, increasing numbers of school-leavers have progressed to higher education in Ireland. (As noted by the OECD, Irish adults who are in possession of tertiary education are four times more likely to participate in continuing education than their less-educated peers.) Higher unemployment, and increasing insecurity in respect of employment in Ireland will also fuel demand from adults for higher education. Meeting this demand will require an increase in flexible learning opportunities, part-time provision, work-based learning, e-learning, and short, intensive skills programmes. It will also necessitate revision of the higher education funding policy to ensure parity of funding for full-time and flexible-learning provision. The consolidation of quality and qualifications assurance agencies across the further and higher education sectors will help to establish agreed learning outcomes, clearer routes of transfer and progression, and binding standards of quality assurance in the upper half of Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications. This will also help to improve access to further and higher education opportunities for people throughout their lives. A major review of the apprenticeship scheme will also be undertaken to seek to address the recent decline in recruitment to apprenticeship programmes. (See http://www.hea.ie/en/node/1303.)

3. Which of the following statements correspond to your higher education system?

- ☑ Higher education institutions can be either academically or professionally oriented

- ☐ Higher education institutions are only academically oriented

- ☑ Higher education institutions are either public or private

- ☐ All higher education institutions are public

4. What is the number of institutions in the categories identified?

In the Republic of Ireland there are 40 publically funded higher education institutions (HEIs), including 7 universities (and their affiliated colleges) and 14 institutes of technology. Whilst the universities and institutes of technology offer academically and professionally oriented courses, many of the smaller HEIs, such as teacher training colleges, only offer professional courses. There are also a number of privately-funded HEIs in Ireland offering both academically and professionally oriented courses.

5. GENERAL DATA ON HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS

5.1. Please provide the (approximate) percentages of first cycle study <u>programmes</u> across the following categories:

180 ECTS = 51

240 ECTS = 49

Other number of ECTS = 0

5.2. Please provide the (approximate) percentage of the total number of first cycle students enrolled in programmes of the following length:

180 ECTS = 44

240 ECTS = 56

Other number of ECTS = 0

5.3. Do degree programmes exist outside the typical Bologna 180-240 ECTS first cycle model (and/or calculated in years rather than credits)?
These may include integrated/long programmes leading either to a first or a second cycle degree.

Yes

5.4. In which study fields do these study programmes exist?

Medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine

5.5. What is the typical length of these degree programmes outside the Bologna 180-240 ECTS model?

300-360 ECTS

5.6. What (approximate) percentage of all students studying for a first degree (including students enrolled in the Bologna cycle structures) is enrolled in these programmes?

1%

5.7. Please provide the (approximate) percentage of second cycle (master) programmes of the following length:

60-75 ECTS = 0

90 ECTS = 86

120 ECTS = 14

Other = 0

5.8. Please provide the percentages of the total number of second cycle students enrolled in programmes of the following length.

60-75 ECTS = 30

90 ECTS = 60

120 ECTS = 10

Other = 0

5.9. Do second cycle degree programmes exist in your country *outside* the typical Bologna model (i.e. other than 60-120 ECTS and/or calculated in years rather than credits)?

No

5.10. What is the typical length of these second cycle programmes outside the typical Bologna model?

5.11. What percentage of all second cycle students is enrolled in these programmes?

0

5.12. In which study fields to these programmes exist?

5.13. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding general data on your country's higher education system.

N/A

6. PROGRESSION BETWEEN CYCLES

6.1. What percentage of first cycle programmes give access to at least one second cycle programme?

>75%-<100%

The Higher Certificate (intermediate qualification within the first cycle) and Ordinary Bachelor degrees do not give direct access to second cycle programmes.

6.1.1. Please provide a source for this information.

HEA data

6.2. What percentage of first cycle students continue to study in a second cycle *programme* after graduation from the first cycle (within two years)?

>25-50 %

Data is based on the position of Irish graduates nine months after graduation. Currently enrolment data for second cycle programmes is collected but it is not possible to isolate those who have enrolled following completion of a first cycle programme within the previous 2 years.

6.2.1. Please provide the source for this information.

What Do Graduates Do? The Class of 2008 http://heatest-drupal6.heanet.ie/en/statistics%20publications

6.3. What are the requirements for holders of a first cycle degree to access a second cycle programme?

	Yes	No	Some	No answer
All students (Scale 1)	○ Yes	● No	○ Some	○ No answer
All students (Scale 2)	○ Yes	● No	○ Some	○ No answer
Holders of a first degree from a different study field (Scale 1)	○ Yes	○ No	● Some	○ No answer
Holders of a first degree from a different study field (Scale 2)	○ Yes	○ No	● Some	○ No answer
Holders of a first degree from a different higher education institution (Scale 1)	○ Yes	● No	○ Some	○ No answer
Holders of a first degree from a different higher education institution (Scale 2)	○ Yes	● No	○ Some	○ No answer

6.3.1. When you selected 'some' in any of the answers above, please explain.

Students are generally required to have a 2.1 honours degree at UG level to enrol in a PG programme - but admission is at the discretion of higher education institutions.

6.4. What percentage of all second cycle programmes give access without further studies to third cycle studies?

>50-75 %

6.4.1. Please provide a source for this information.

HEA data

6.5. What percentage of second cycle graduates eventually enter into a third cycle programme?

Currently enrolment data for third cycle programmes is collected but it is not possible to isolate those who have enrolled following completion of a second cycle programme. Some may enter directly from first cycle.

6.6. Is it possible for first cycle graduates to enter a third cycle programme without a second cycle degree?

Yes, for some graduates

6.6.1. Under which criteria is this possible?

The requirements vary from institution to institution, but often a first class or a 2:1 Bachelor's honours degree (first cycle) is deemed sufficient for direct entry to a third-cycle programme.

6.7. What percentage of third cycle students enter into that cycle without a second cycle qualification?

0%

Data not available

6.8. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding the progression between cycles.

N/A

7. LINKING BOLOGNA AND NON-BOLOGNA PROGRAMMES

7.1. Is access to degree programmes outside the typical Bologna model organised in a different manner than for Bologna first cycle programmes?

Please choose..

7.1.1. Please explain the differences.

7.2. Is access to the second cycle specifically regulated for students holding a degree from a programme outside the typical Bologna model?

No

7.2.1. Please specify how it is regulated.

7.3. Is it possible for graduates of a first cycle degree outside the typical Bologna model to enter a third cycle programme without a second cycle degree?

Yes, for some graduates of these programmes

7.3.1. Please specify for which graduates.

It should be noted that all degrees in Ireland follow the Bologna model (we would consider that courses such as medicine do also, eventhough they are slight longer in duration). Access to second cycle programmes is a matter for individuals HEIs but generally requires a first cycle degree. In relation to third cycle, it is possible to access a third cycle programme with only a first cycle degree.

8. DEVELOPMENT OF THIRD CYCLE PROGRAMMES

8.1. What types of doctoral programmes exist in your higher education system? (These may include, but are not restricted to, traditional supervision-based doctoral education, structured doctoral programmes, professional doctoral

programmes etc).

In Ireland doctoral programmes include traditional supervision-based doctorates, structured Ph.D. programmes, and professional doctoral programmes.

8.2. Do doctoral and/or graduate schools exist in your higher education system?

Yes

8.2.1. What are the main features of these schools and how many doctoral schools are there?

Some graduate schools are essentially administrative structures within HEIs through which taught modules and seminars are delivered to graduate students. Other graduate schools are inter-institutional initiatives through which collaborative Ph.D. programmes are offered. UCD's Graduate Schools are an example of the former (see http://www.ucd.ie/graduatestudies /graduateschools/); the 'Texts, Contexts, and Cultures' Ph.D. programme illustrates the latter (see http://www.textscontextscultures.ie/). These are instances of good practice rather than system-wide phenomena.

8.3. Is the length of full-time third cycle (PhD) study programmes defined in your steering documents?

No

8.3.1. Please specify the number of years.

8.3.2. What is the average length (in years) of full-time third cycle (PhD) study programmes?

4

8.4. Are doctoral studies included in your country's qualifications framework?

Yes

Doctoral degrees and Higher Doctorates comprise the highest level (level 10) of Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications (see http://www.nfq.ie/nfq/en/).

8.5. Are ECTS credits used in doctoral programmes?

Yes, for taught elements only

8.6. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding development of third cycle programmes.

It is higher education policy to develop critical mass in insitutions providing PhD programmes and to advance a structured framework for competence development. There is an increasing trend towards 4-year structured phd programmes and national research funding programmes are supporting this development.

9. TREATMENT OF SHORT CYCLE HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

9.1. In your system, do short cycle programmes linked to the first cycle of higher education exist?

Yes

9.2. How are short cycle higher education programmes linked to the Bologna structures? Please tick the most appropriate case(s) for your country.
Holders of short cycle qualifications when continuing their studies in the same field towards a bachelor degree....

☑ gain full credit for their previous studies

☐ gain full credit, but only if there is agreement between the institution providing the short cycle programme and the institution where the bachelor programme is taught

☐ gain full credit for their previous studies but in professional bachelor programmes only

☐ gain substantial (>50%) credit for their previous studies

☐ gain some (<50%) credit for their previous studies

☐ gain little (<5%) or no credit for their previous studies

9.3. Are short cycle programmes legally considered to be an integral part of your higher education system?

Yes, part of higher education

9.4. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding the treatment of short cycle higher education programmes.

Short cycle programmes are a very important part of higher education provision in Ireland. The national strategy highlights the importance of short cycle programmes in terms of maintaining diversity of provision and in advancing flexible learning and upskilling opportunities.

10. INTERNATIONAL JOINT DEGREES AND PROGRAMMES

10.1. Does national higher education legislation mention joint degrees?

No

10.1.1. Please provide a reference to the legislation and/or cite the relevant articles.

10.2. Does higher education legislation allow:

Establishing joint programmes	○ Yes ○ No	○ Legislation not clear	○ Legislation doesn't mention joint degrees	
	◉ No answer			
Awarding joint degrees	○ Yes ○ No	○ Legislation not clear	○ Legislation doesn't mention joint degrees	
	◉ No answer			

10.3. Please estimate the percentage of institutions in your country that award joint degrees / are involved in at least one joint programme.

Award joint degrees	○ > 75-100%	○ > 50-75%	○ > 25-50%	○ > 10-25%	◉ > 5-10%	○ > 0-5%
	○ 0%	○ No answer				
Participate in joint programmes	○ > 75-100%	◉ > 50-75%	○ > 25-50%	○ > 10-25%	○ > 5-10%	○ > 0-5%
	○ 0%	○ No answer				

10.4. Please estimate the percentage of students in your country that graduated in the academic year 2009/10 …

with a joint degree	○ < 10%	○ > 7.5-10%	○ > 5-7.5%	○ > 2.5-5%	◉ > 0 -2.5%	○ 0%	○ No answer
from a joint programme	○ < 10%	○ > 7.5-10%	○ > 5-7.5%	○ > 2.5-5%	○ > 0 -2.5%	◉ 0%	○ No answer

10.5. Do you have information about study fields in which joint programmes / joint degrees are most common?

No

10.5.1. Please explain briefly.

10.6. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding your joint degrees and programmes.

The level of programmes/awards that are offered jointly by two of more institutions is growing. Participation in Erasmus Mundus and other joint programme consortia is supporting this. Data is not available in relation to the number of students graduating from joint programmes.

Part 1.2 BFUG Data Collection on student-centred learning

1. Do your steering documents mention the concept of student -centred learning?

Yes

1.1. How do steering documents in your country define student-centred learning in higher education?

- The needs of learners have been central to the development and implementation of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. This is illustrated in the concept that the NFQ is designed to incorporate all kinds of learning, wherever and however it has been gained. - The National Higher Education Strategy to 2030 (publsihed in January 2011)highlights the major contribution that students should make in influencing the design of curricula, and in reviewing and providing feedback on them. It recommends that HEIs should put in place formal structures to capture feedback from students, and use this feedback to inform institutional and programme management eg national student survey system with published results and an anonymous student feedback system for each HEI.

1.2. How important ('1' not important, '5' very important) are the following categories in your steering documents and national policies?

	1	2	3	4	5
Independent learning	○	○	○	○	●
Learning in small groups	○	○	○	●	○
Initial or in-service training in teaching for staff	○	○	○	●	○
Assessment based on learning outcomes	○	○	○	○	●
Recognition of prior learning	○	○	○	○	●
Learning outcomes	○	○	○	○	●
Student/staff ratio	○	○	○	●	○
Student evaluation of teaching	○	○	○	○	●

1.3. Are there any other important concepts on student-centred learning in your steering documents?

Yes

1.4. Please specify.

The NFQ sets the overall standards for the qualifications it includes. The Framework's descriptors are designed around the expected level of the learners's knowledge, skill and competence; keeping the learner and his/her needs at the centre of the design of the qualifications system. It is expected that providers, designing awards for inclusion in the Framework, continue this learner-centred focus into programme design, and support it with a suitable teaching, learning and assessment strategy which enables the learner to demonstrate his/her acquisition of the stated learning outcomes.

2. Please provide a reference for your steering documents covering student-centred learning.

Policies and Criteria for the Establishment of the NFQ; Determinations for the Outline National Framework of Qualifications (NQAI); Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recogntion of Prior Learning (NQAI): Assessment and Standards (HETAC)

3. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding the student-centred learning.

N/A

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

4.1. Are learning outcomes defined in your national steering documents? If so, please provide the definition.

Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do after completion of a process of learning.

4.2. Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes in higher education programmes in your country?
(This means that learning outcomes are formulated for all programme components and credits are awarded only when the stipulated learning outcomes are actually acquired.)

In all programmes

4.3. Does national policy steer and/or encourage the use of learning outcomes in developing curricula?

Yes, this is done through advisory measures (guidelines, recommendations etc)

4.3.1. Does your country provide specific support measures on the national level?

A Framework Implementation Network has been established for the university sector by the Irish Universities Association and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI). This is a cross-university sector network which comes together to discuss the implementation of matters relating to the NFQ, including the design of learning outcomes and of appropriate assessment methods. The network is currently compiling a report on case studies of RPL in the university sector.

4.4. Does national policy steer student assessment procedures to focus on learning outcomes?

Yes, this is done through advisory measures (guidelines, recommendations etc)
However, in the case of the HETAC sector (non-university), student assessment procedures are set out in the document Assessment and Standards (2009) - this can be considered a regulation.

4.5. Is there an offer of training programmes on topics such as student-centred learning and learning outcomes for academic staff?

Compulsory	○ Yes for all academic staff	● Yes for some academic staff	○ No	○ No answer
Voluntary	○ Yes for all academic staff	● Yes for some academic staff	○ No	○ No answer

4.5.1. Please specify for whom and give approximate % that participate.

This training is not provided at a national level. Training is provided by teaching and learning centres and supports across the higher education sector. In some institutions it is compulsory. In the majority of instances it is voluntary development.

4.6. Is the use of learning outcomes in curricula development and student assessment monitored by Quality Assurance procedures?

Yes

4.6.1. Please explain how, and provide a reference to further information.

The Higher Education and Training Awards Council is the QA/QE body for higher education provision outside of the university sector. In its Guidelines and Criteria for QA/QE Procedures in Higher Education and Training it sets out the expectation that provider QA will address the design and development of programmes in terms of quality assurance. The effectiveness of these procedures is considered as part of HETAC's Institutional Review Policy. Both documents are available here: (http://www.hetac.ie/publications_pol04.htm) The Irish Universities Quality Board undertakes external QA of the universities. Its Institutional Review of Irish Universities procedures makes explicit reference to learning outcomes in sections 7 and 35 http://www.iuqb.ie/info/iuqb_publications.aspx?article=9eb53995-c4b4-47d5-a7d4-fe4d565865bf. It is also captured in the docuemnt A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities: concerted action for institutional improvementhttp://www.iuqb.ie/info/iuqb_publications.aspx?article=174bd944-3893-4a53-84a1-a438a2fdedd8 The NQAI is the QA body for the Dublin Institute of Technology. In its terms of reference for the recent review of the DIT it refers to the external review of learning outcomes: http://www.nqai.ie/DITReview2010-2011.html.

4.6. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding learning outcomes.

N/A

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER AND ACCUMULATION SYSTEM (ECTS)

5.1. In your country, do you use

ECTS

5.1.1. Please provide details of how it is linked to ECTS (when applicable) and its main characteristics (e.g. how credits are calculated and whether the system is based on learning-outcomes).

5.2. In your country, what percentage of higher education institutions use ECTS for accumulation and transfer for all elements of study programmes?

75-99%

5.3. In your country, what percentage of programmes use ECTS for accumulation and transfer for all elements of study programmes?

75-99%

5.4. In the majority of higher education institutions and/or programmes, what is the basis to award ECTS in your country?

Combination of learning outcomes achieved and student workload

5.4.1. Please specify.

5.4.2. For student workload, is there a standard measure for the number of hours per credit?

Yes

5.4.3. What is the number of hours per credit?

25

5.4.4. What is the number of student teacher contact hours per credit?

0

5.4.5. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding ECTS implementation.

"Principles and operational guidelines for the implementation of a national approach to credit in Irish higher education and training" were published in 2004: http://www.nqai.ie/publication_nov2004.html

6. DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT

6.1. Is the Diploma Supplement issued in higher education institutions and to students in all fields of study?

All students	◉ >75% of HEIs	○ 50-75% of HEIs	○ 25-49% of HEIs	○ 0-24% of HEIs	○ 0% ○ No answer
Some students	○ >75% of HEIs	○ 50-75% of HEIs	○ 25-49% of HEIs	○ 0-24% of HEIs	◉ 0% ○ No answer
Upon request	○ >75% of HEIs	○ 50-75% of HEIs	○ 25-49% of HEIs	○ 0-24% of HEIs	◉ 0% ○ No answer

In certain fields of study	○ >75% of HEIs	○ 50-75% of HEIs	○ 25-49% of HEIs	○ 0-24% of HEIs	● 0% ○ No answer
No students	○ >75% of HEIs	○ 50-75% of HEIs	○ 25-49% of HEIs	● 0-24% of HEIs	○ 0% ○ No answer

6.1.1. Please identify those fields.

6.1.2. Please specify to which students.

6.2. Is there any monitoring of how employers use the Diploma Supplement?

No

6.2.1. Please provide the most recent results regarding the level of satisfaction of employers.

A survey has not taken place, but

6.3. Is there any monitoring of how higher education institutions use the Diploma Supplement?

Yes

6.3.1. Please provide the most recent results regarding the level of satisfaction of institutions.

Levels of satisfaction have not been monitored. Dialogue has been entered into with institutions however through an EDS national stering group set up to assist in the implementation of the Diploma Supplement across the higher education sector.

6.4. In what language(s) is the Diploma Supplement issued?

English

6.5. Is the Diploma Supplement issued

free of charge

6.5.1. Please provide the amount and the reason for the fee.

6.6. Please provide an example of your national Diploma Supplement (in pdf or similar format) and send it to data.collectors@ehea.info

6.7. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding your diploma supplement.

In Ireland the EDS is issued to students graduating from 1st and 2nd cycle Bologna programmes. Until 2009, the EDS was issued only to major award holders that were considered compatible with Bologna fist and second cycle descriptors. Today, all graduates who complete a programme of learning based on a minimum of 60 ECTS are expected to be issued with an EDS. In 2009 the national guidelines for completion of the EDS were updated to reflect the self certification of the referencing of Irelands NFQ to EQF. It is currently considered good practice to include programme or qualification learning outcomes in EDS issued by HEIs in Ireland, although this is not a mandatory requirement.

7. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS (NQFs)

7.1. Have you started the process to develop a National Qualification Framework in your country?

Yes

7.2. The BFUG working group on qualification frameworks has developed the following steps to assess the progress made in establishing a national qualification framework.

Please choose below the stage that best describes your national situation.

10. The Framework has self-certified its compatibility with the European Framework for Higher Education

7.2.1 Please provide the date when the step was completed.

30.11.2006

7.2.2. Please provide a reference for the decision to start developing a NQF.

The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1999/en/act/pub/0026/index.html

7.2.3. Please provide a reference outlining the purpose of the NQF.

7.2.4. Please provide a reference to a document establishing or outlining the process of NQF development. Please also report, which stakeholders have been identified and which committees have been established.

7.2.5. Please provide a reference describing the agreed level structure, level descriptors and credit ranges.

7.2.6. Please provide a reference outlining the form and the results of the consultation.
Please provide a reference for the design of the NQF as agreed by the stakeholders.

7.2.7. Which stakeholders have been consulted and how were they consulted?

7.2.8. Please provide a reference document for the adoption of the NQF.

7.2.9. Are ECTS included in the NQF?

Please choose..

7.2.10. Please provide a reference for the decision to start the implementation of the NQF, including a reference to the roles of the different stakeholders.

7.2.11. Please provide a reference for the redesign of study programmes based on learning outcomes.

7.2.12. Please provide a reference outlining how qualifications have been included in the NQF.

7.2.13. Please provide a reference to the self-certification report.

The self-certification report is available at the following link:http://www.nqai.ie/publication_nov2006.html

7.3. Does a website exist in your country on which the National Qualification Framework can be consulted?

Yes

7.3.1. Please provide the link to that website.

www.nfq.ie; www.nqai.ie;

8. RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

8.1. Which institution/organisation makes final decisions on recognising foreign qualifications for the purpose of academic study and work in your country?

Recognition for academic study   ● Higher education institution   ○ Central government authority (e.g. ministry)   ○ Regional government authority (e.g. ministry)   ○ National ENIC/NARIC centre   ○ Regional/local specialised independent institution   ○ Social partner organisation (employers' organisation, trade union etc)   ○ Individual employers   ○ Other   ○ No answer

Recognition for professional employment   ○ Higher education institution   ○ Central government authority (e.g. ministry)   ○ Regional government authority (e.g. ministry)   ○ National ENIC/NARIC centre   ○ Regional/local specialised independent institution   ● Social partner organisation (employers' organisation, trade union etc)   ○ Individual employers   ○ Other   ○ No answer

8.1.1. Please specify.

8.2. Which of the following statements is specified in national legislation?

Recognition of qualification provided that no substantive differences can be proven

The Lisbon Convention for recogniton has been ratified by the Irish Government. The Irish NARIC works on the principle of implementing the Convention in its practice.

8.2.1. Please provide a reference to the relevant legislation.

Ireland ratified the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region in March 2004.

8.3. What measures exist to ensure that these legal statements are implemented in practice?

Internal quality assurance in the NQAI. Also a subject of the external review of the organisation which took place in 2006/7.

8.4. Do higher education institutions typically:

Other

8.4. Do higher education institutions typically:

Typically made at central level with advice from faculties and departments

8.5. Are higher education institutions' recognition policy and practice typically evaluated in external Quality Assurance processes?

No

8.5.1. Please explain.

8.6. What measures exist to ensure that higher education institutions have fair recognition procedures for study and training periods abroad?

Normally conducted on the basis of learning agreements between institutions.

8.7. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding your system of recognition of qualifications.

The Irish ENIC/NARIC is based in the NQAI. Its website is www.qualrec.ie. In addition, processes have been agreed for the alignment of the awards of international awarding bodies with the NFQ, which aids the recognition process. Information regarding same is availble here: http://www.nqai.ie/applications.html Finally, reports regarding the verification of qualifications frameworks with the Bologna Framework and with the EQF greatly contribute to the recognition process.

Part 1.3 BFUG Data Collection on Quality Assurance

1. CHARACTER OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

1.1. Which situation applies in your country?

Several independent agencies operate legitimately.

A number of agencies (NQAI, HETAC, IUQB, HEA) currently have a responsibility for the external quality assurance of higher education institutions. It is anticipated that these will be amalgamated to form one single agency, under the remit of the Department of Education and Skills, by the end of 2011.

1.1.1. Please explain the main elements of your external quality assurance system. Which ministry or government-dependent agency is responsible for quality assurance? How is this responsibility managed in practice? If there are external evaluations of institutions and/or programmes, by whom are these evaluations undertaken, how often, and how are the outcomes of evaluation used?

1.1.2. Please explain the main elements of your external quality assurance system (if it exists). If there is no system of quality assurance, please state this explicitly.

Despite the fact that a number of organisations currently have responsibility for quality assurance in the higher education sector in Ireland, the processes in place for external review are broadly the same. All institutions are expected to have internal quality assurance/enhancement processes and procedures. External Review procedures are in place for all institutions. The quality assurance body is also subject to external review. Each of these processes is expected to be consistent with the European Standards and Guidelines.

1.2. What are the main outcomes of an external review undertaken by the different QA agencies?

Formative advice on strengthening and enhancing quality

1.3. What is the main outcome of an external review?

Please choose..

1.4. Does the outcome of an external review normally have an impact on the funding of the institution or programme?

No

1.4.1. Please specify the normal impact of an external review.

1.5. Does the agency cover:

Please choose..

1.5.1. Collectively, do the agencies cover:

All higher education institutions

1.6. What is the main "object" of the external evaluations undertaken?

Institutions

1.6.1. Are all institutions subject to external evaluation?

Yes

1.6.1.1. Please specify

1.6.2. Are all programmes in all cycles subject to external evaluation?

Please choose..

1.6.2.1. Please specify

1.6.3. Are all institutions and all programmes subject to external evaluation?

Please choose..

1.6.3.1. Please specify

1.7. How are the positive outcomes of Quality Assurance evaluations made available to the public?

Requirement that all reports are published.

1.8. How are the negative outcomes of Quality Assurance evaluations made available to the public?

Requirement that all reports are published.

1.9. Which of the following issues are typically included in external quality assurance evaluations?

- ☑ Teaching
- ☑ Student support services
- ☑ Lifelong Learning provision
- ☑ Research
- ☑ Employability
- ☑ Internal Quality Assurance/Management system
- ☐ Other (please specify)

1.9.1. For those issues that are typically included in external Quality Assurance evaluation, please briefly explain the approach.

All external reviews have the same approach - Terms of reference for review agreed between agency and institution - Institution completes a self-evaluation report - external panel is appointed to review institutions - external panel completes report based on review - institution has opportunity to respond to report - report and institution follow-up plan published.

1.10. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding your external Quality Assurance system.

N/A

2. CROSS-BORDER EVALUATION

2.1. Does your national quality assurance system or legislative framework allow higher education institutions to choose a quality assurance agency from outside your country (instead of your national quality assurance agency)?

No

2.1.1. If some institutions are able to choose, please specify which ones.

2.1.2. If no, please go to section XVII.

2.2. Which conditions apply to the choice of a quality assurance agency from another country?

Other (please specify)
N/A

2.3. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding Cross-Border Evaluation.

3. EVALUATION OF THE EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM AGAINST THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HYIGHER EDUCATION AREA (ESG)

3.1. Has the agency been evaluated against the European Standards and Guidelines?

☑ Yes, for the purpose of ENQA membership

☑ Yes, for an application to EQAR

☐ Yes, independently of ENQA/EQAR

☐ Such an evaluation is planned but has not yet taken place

☐ No

3.2. If an evaluation has been conducted, was the application successful?

As stated above, there are a number of organisations responsible for external quality assurance in Ireland. The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) have been evaluated successfully for ENQA membership and for the EQAR. The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) has been evaluated successfully for ENQA membership. The Higher Education Authority is a candidate member agency of ENQA.

4. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS IN EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

4.1. Is there a formal requirement that students are involved in any of the following? For each answer, please specify the relevant source.

☑ Student involvement in governance structures of national quality assurance agencies

Universities Act 1997; Qualifications (Education and Training) 1999;

☑ As full members in external review teams

Not formally required but used in practice in institutional reviews

☐ As observers in external review teams

☐ In the preparation of self evaluation reports

☑ In the decision making process for external reviews

Yes, if member of external review panel.

☐ In follow-up procedures

☐ Other, please specify

4.2. Is there a formal requirement that international peers/experts are involved in any of the following:

☑ In governance structures of national QA agencies

☑ As full members in external review teams

☐ As observers in external review teams

☑ In the decision making process for external reviews

☐ In follow-up procedures

☐ Other (please specify)

4.3. Is there a formal requirement that academic staff are involved?

- ☑ In governance structures of national QA agencies
- ☑ As full members in external review teams
- ☐ As observers in external review teams
- ☐ In the preparation of self evaluation reports
- ☑ In the decision making process for external reviews
- ☐ In follow-up procedures
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4.4. Are there any formal requirements regarding the involvement of employers in external QA processes.

Yes

It is considered important that employer groups are involved in QA processes. For instance, the Boards of agencies responsible for QA include representation from employer organisations.

4.5. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding the involvement of stakeholders in external QA.

5. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

5.1. Are there formal requirements for higher education institutions to develop internal quality assurance systems?

Yes

5.1.1. Please specify these requirements and the relevant source.

These are established in the following documents: Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 and the Univerities Act, 1997. In addition, the following documents are relevant: IUQB: Institutional Review of Irish Universities http://www.iuqb.ie /info/iuqb_publications.aspx?article=9eb53995-c4b4-47d5-a7d4-fe4d565865bf HETAC: Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance Procedures http://www.hetac.ie/docs/hetac_guidelines_and_criteria_for_qa_procedures.pdf

5.2. Who is primarily responsible for deciding the focus of internal quality assurance processes?

Quality Assurance agency

5.2.1. Please specify.

5.3. Are there formal requirements for students to be involved in internal quality assurance systems?

Yes

5.3.1. Please go to Question 5.6.

5.3.2. Is there a requirement for students to be involved in the preparation of self evaluation reports?

Yes

5.3.2.1. Is there a requirement for students to be involved in decision-making as an outcome of evaluation?

Yes

5.4. How many higher education institutions have published a strategy/policy for the continuous enhancement of quality in the past 5 years?

More than 75%

5.5. How many higher education institutions have arrangements in place for the internal approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards?

All

5.5.1. Please describe what kind of arrangements are in place.

The requirements for each are set out in the documentation cited above.

5.6. How many higher education institutions publish up to date and objective information about the programmes and awards offered?

More than 75%

5.7. How many higher education institutions publish critical and negative outcomes of quality assurance evaluations?

50-<75%

5.7.1. Please provide a source for this information, and links to examples of critical/negative evaluations.

The question above isn't explicit in terms of internal or external reviews. The outcomes of external reviews are all published by the provider and the quality assurance agency. IUQB: http://www.iuqb.ie/info/quality_reviews_introduction.aspx HETAC: http://www.hetac.ie/publications_instit.htm NQAI: http://www.nqai.ie/award_dit.html Providers are encouraged to publish the results of internal reviews. Practice varies in this regard. Examples of published internal reviews include: DIT: http://www.dit.ie/services/qualityassuranceandacademicprogrammerecords/quality/validation-review-reports/ University sector: http://reviews.iuqb.net/uni_search.html

5.8. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding Internal Quality Assurance.

N/A

Part 1.4 BFUG Data Collection on Lifelong Learning

1. Do steering documents for higher education in your country contain a definition of lifelong learning?

No

2. How do your steering documents define lifelong learning?

3. What is the common understanding of lifelong learning in your country?

Lifelong learning is understood to be the engagement of an individual in the acquisition of skills and knowledge throughout their lifetime.

4. What are the main forms of lifeling learning provision in which higher education institutions are involved in your country?

Higher education institutions (HEIs) generally provide part-time courses and evening courses, as well as full-time programmes. There is also some provision in more flexible modes of delivery, such as distance learning and blended learning. The recently published National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 envisages an increase in course delivery through such flexible modes. (See http://www.hea.ie/en/node/1303.)

5. Is lifelong learning a recognised mission of higher education institutions?

Yes, of all institutions

Since 2000, an excellent architecture for lifelong learning has been put in place through the National Framework of Qualification. The interface between further education and higher education is of particular interest in the promotion of greater access and lifelong learning.

6. For which institutions is lifelong learning a recognised mission?

Lifelong learning is a recognised mission of Ireland's 7 universities. It is also an important part of the work of the 14 institutes of technology as well as of many smaller, more specialised HEIs.

7. Are there legal requirements for higher education institutions to offer lifelong learning provision?

Yes

8. Please provide a reference to the relevant legislation or regulation.

Part 3, Chapter 1, Section 12 of the Universities Act (1997) states that 'the objects of a university shall include [...] (j) to facilitate lifelong learning through the provision of adult and continuing education'.Similar requirements are contained in the IOT Act 2006.

9. Are there legal restrictions or constraints for higher education institutions to offer lifelong learning provision?

No

10. Please explain these restrictions, and provide a reference to relevant legislation/regulations

11. Which are the three (maximum) most significant groups of intended users of lifelong learning services offered by higher education institutions?

☑ Adults in employment

☑ Unemployed adults

☐ Retired citizens

☐ Part-time students

☑ Adults without higher education qualifications

☐ Other, please specify

12. Where does the funding of lifelong learning provision in higher education come from?

☑ general higher education budget

☐ special budget for lifelong learning

☑ private contributions from students

☑ private contributions from business and industry

13. To what degree is the provision of lifelong learning in higher education funded from the public budget?

In recent years, part-time provision is being publically funded insofar as the core grant allocated by the state to public HEIs supports all of their course provision and infrastructure and are allocated in a manner that takes account of students on most part-time learning programmes. In addition some targeted public funding has been made available to support initiatives pertaining to the provision of lifelong learning. However tuition fees for part-time study are currently paid for by the individual students, or in some cases by their employer. Also, the broader range of flexible learning is not currently publicly funded (distance learning, e-learning etc.). Following the National Strategy for Higher Education published in early 2011, parity of funding will be introduced in core grant allocations to acknowledge the importance and legitimacy of all forms of flexible learning in Irish higher education.

Part 2.1 BFUG Data Collection on policies to widen participation and increase flexibiltiy

1. Do you want to answer this section now or later?

Now

2. Do individuals that meet higher education entry standards have a guaranteed right to higher education?

No

2.1 Please specify.

3. Which statement best describes your country's policy approach regarding the goal that the student body entering, participating and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of the population?

Underrepresented societal groups in higher education are identified, and specific, targeted measures are taken to counteract underrepresentation.

4. UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

4.1. Please describe how your country's steering documents define underrepresented groups (e.g. based on socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, disability, geography, other).

Under-represented groups are defined as follows Socio-economic: based on the occupational background of the students parents. Mature students: students 23+ in the January prior to their entry to higher education. Students with a disability: students with a verifiable disability.

4.2. For each of these groups, please briefly describe the national/regional policies and measures that are put in place to address under-representation. These may include, but are not restricted to laws, regulations, campaigns, incentives, other actions etc.

The Equal Status Act (2000-2004) outlaws discrimination based on the following nine grounds: Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Age, Race, Religion, Disability, Sexual Orientation, membership of the Traveller community. The Act relates also to the provision of services including education services. Education services are broadly defined and include private and public schools from pre-school through to higher education. When it comes to education this relates to: admission or the terms and conditions of admission to school; access of a student to a course or facility or benefit; terms or conditions of participation; expulsion or other sanction. Ireland published a second National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education in 2008, covering the period 2008-2013. This plan set out national targets for higher education participation rates for the groups outlined above in 5[I.3]. Some of the actions outlined in the plan which are being implemented to achieve these targets include; •All higher education institutions will develop and implement an institutional access plan •Investment in widening access to higher education/institutional funding for access •Diversification of entry routes into higher education •Expansion of part-time and flexible learning opportunities.

4.3. How does your higher education system determine whether an individual belongs to a particular group (e.g. self-declaration)?

From 2007, higher education institutions began gathering additional information (known as Equal Access data) as part of registration on students' social, economic and cultural background. The information is collected from new entrants to higher education. Students are then classified (e.g. socio-economic status) according to their responses to the Equal Access survey.

4.4. Is there any funding reserved for measures to increase participation of under-represented groups?

Yes

4.4.1. Please specify.

Higher education institutions receive state funding on an annual basis through the Higher Education Authority's recurrent grant allocation model. Specific funding for access, based on Equal Access data, will now form a part of this yearly allocation. Twenty seven higher education institutions will receive (from 2011 onwards) a premium of .33% on top of the standard allocation per student for each student who is from one of the targeted under-represented groups, thereby incentivising institutions to widen access to higher education for these students. €19.3m of funding was allocated on this basis in 2011. In addition there are a range of programmatic funding in place to support students from under-represented groups. These

include: Student Assistance Fund The Student Assistance Fund provides financial assistance for higher education students who are experiencing financial difficulties whilst participating in college. Students can be assisted towards their rent, childcare costs, transport costs and additional tuition. The operation of the Fund is devolved to the recurrently funded third-level institutions and allocations are based on a combination of total enrolments and equal access data. The Fund amounted to over €5m in 2009-10. Fund for Students with Disabilities The Fund for Students with Disabilities provides funding for students with a disability attending recurrently funded and non-recurrently funded institutions who require additional supports and services while studying at further or higher education. Funding is provided for students who have serious sensory, physical, learning and/or communicative disabilities. The fund amounted to over €12.2m in 2009-10. Dormant Accounts Funding for Access Initiatives in Institutes of Technology sector Activities and actions designed to enhance access to and participation in the Institute of Technology sector by educationally disadvantaged groups commenced in 2008, funded by Dormant Accounts (This is a special fund initiated by the government using available funds from dormant accounts). €2.4m has been approved for the initiative by government. The proposal aims to develop and embed a series of new access and retention initiatives throughout the sector. A primary objective for the project is to ensure continuity through the mainstreaming of programmes and other activities.

4.5. Do you have national targets/goals for participation of those groups that you identify as under-represented in higher education?

Yes

4.5.1. Please explain these targets briefly and name the groups to which they apply.

The following national targets are set: •The evidence base and relevant data collection systems will be enhanced. •Institutions will develop and implement access plans and processes for evaluation. •A national participation rate of 72 per cent of the relevant age cohort will be achieved by 2020 (55 per cent in 2004). •All socio-economic groups will have entry rates of at least 54 per cent by 2020 ('Non-manual' group at 27 per cent and 'Semi-skilled and unskilled manual' group at 33 per cent in 2004). •Mature students will comprise at least 20 per cent of total full-time entrants by 2013 (13 per cent in 2006). •Mature students will comprise 27 per cent of all (full-time and part-time) entrants by 2013 (18 per cent in 2006). •Flexible/part-time provision will increase to 17 per cent by 2013 (7 per cent in 2006). •Non-standard entry routes to higher education will be developed so that they account for 30 per cent of all entrants by 2013 (estimated at 24 per cent in 2006). •Ireland will reach EU average levels for lifelong learning by 2010 and will move towards the top quartile of EU countries by 2013. •The number of students with sensory, physical and multiple disabilities in higher education will be doubled by 2013.

4.6. Does your country offer more public funding to higher education institutions to stimulate access for underrepresented groups?

Yes

4.6.1. Please specify and identify variation between different groups, where they exist.

See information provided above

4.7. Is the effect of measures to increase participation of each of the groups monitored in your country?

Yes

4.7.1. Please specify.

Yes through evaluation and data collection. Progress on the implementation the action plan and the achievement of set targets and outcomes for widening participation of the target groups is monitored and reported on and is underpinned by the collection of comprehensive information by each higher education institution on the level of access and participation by students from under-represented groups. Since 2007, higher education institutions are gathering additional information as part of registration on students' social, economic and cultural background. This information provides a more consistent evidence base for national policy, in particular by supporting an assessment of progress to date, as well as the setting of new national and institutional targets for admission and participation. It also advises the allocation of the financial resources required to attract more students from target groups in participating to higher education. The 'Equal Access' data is published as part of the Higher Education Authority's (HEA) 'Key Facts and Figures' each year. In 2006 an Evaluation of Access Programmes was conducted in twenty-seven higher education institutions. Included as a central objective of the 2008-2013 National Access Plan is to establish 'institution-wide approaches' to access and lifelong learning in Irish higher education. As part of this objective, all higher education institutions were requested to develop plans for access that formed an integrated part of their overall strategy and provide an opportunity to evaluate access in their institution. In 2010, a progress report was prepared on access and lifelong learning since publication of the evaluation in 2006. The information provided in the progress reports supplements institutional access plans, including participation targets set, information on key inputs such as

staffing and financial resources, and also feedback on matters of concern locally and regionally.

4.8. Please provide details on how the higher education participation and graduation of each of the groups that you identify as underrepresented is monitored in your country.

Progress on the implementation of the action plan and the reaching of national and institutional targets on equity of access to higher education is monitored and reported on. Since 2007 twenty-six higher-education institutions have gathered information on the social, economic and cultural background of students entering higher education in a standardised format. The questions are based on the wording used in the 2006 national census by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). An initial analysis of the data collection is published as part of the annual Key Facts and Figures by the HEA. Analysis of the data gathered is linked to three critical areas of work: reviewing progress in widening access and the achievement of national targets; providing timely data to inform the allocation of access funding through the HEA Recurrent Grant Allocation model; and supporting the process of strategic planning at institutional level, including the development of institutional access plans. Graduation of the target groups is not currently monitored but will progress as systems to monitor progression and retention are further developed.

4.8.1. What data is collected?

Data is collected on the numbers of students participating in higher education. The Equal Access Data collection process collects specific information on the following groups •Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds •mature students •students with a disability •learners from the Traveller community

4.9. Is there a system to monitor the composition of the student body (in terms of groups identified as under-represented) by subject?

Yes

This information is available but it is currently not published as part of the HEA Annual Statistical publication Key Facts and Figures.

4.10. When are data generally collected?

At entry into higher education

4.10.1. Where an approach different from the general approach is used for any group, please specify.

As noted previously the data would be used to allocate additional access funding per student to institutions. Institutions were also advised that this would be reviewed in light of the data that would be gathered. Mature Students - Funding will be allocated on the basis of numbers of students who are 23 years or older on the 1 of January of the year of first time undergraduate entry to higher education and who are in the first and second years of undergraduate study. Students from Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds - Funding will be allocated for each registered student from the 'other non-manual' worker group and the semi and unskilled manual worker group in the first and second years of undergraduate study. Funding will also be allocated for each student who has indicated they are a member of the Traveller Community in the first and second years of undergraduate study. The approach for students with disabilities is slightly different. Students with disabilities: Funding will be allocated in respect of each registered student who has completed a verified, standardised needs assessment that identifies an educational need arising from a disability. The process for completing the assessment of need will be the same as that developed for the Fund for Students with a Disability. Funding is calculated based on the number of students in receipt of the Fund for Students with Disabilities in all years of undergraduate study.

4.11. Where is information provided by this monitoring system published (provide a reference and link)?

Key Facts and Figures by the HEA http://www.hea.ie/files/files/file/HEAFacts0708.pdf; National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008-2013 http://www.hea.ie/files/files/file/New_pdf/National_Access_Plan_2008-2013_(English).pdf

5. GENERAL POLICY APPROACH TO WIDENING PARTICIPATION

5.1. If your country has a general policy approach to increase and widen participation and to overcome obstacles to access, please explain your approach briefly and provide reference to relevant documents.

5.2. How does your country's policy explicitly identify the obstacles that it addresses?

5.3. What are the criteria used to measure and evaluate the success of specific initiatives and measures?

5.4. In your country, is the composition of the student body monitored according to certain criteria?

Please choose..

5.4.1. Who monitors on the basis of which criteria?

5.5. How is this data used in higher education policy?

5.6. How are measures to remove obstacles to access primarily funded? If your country has a mixed system, please choose all adequate boxes. Please only indicate the most important source(s).

☐ From the general higher education budget

☐ From a specific budget

☐ From university budget

☐ There are no measures to remove obstacles to access

6. DIFFERENT APPROACH TO WIDENING PARTICIPATION

6.1. Please explain the characteristics of your country's policy to achieve the goal that the student body reflects the diversity of the population.

6.2. Does your country's policy approach explicitly identify obstacles to higher education?

Please choose..

6.2.1. Please describe these obstacles.

6.3. Does your country's policy approach make reference to parts/groups in the population?

Please choose..

6.3.1. Please describe these groups.

6.4. What measures does your country's policy take?

6.5. How does your country assess whether its policy has been successful?

7. COMPLETION OF STUDIES

7.1. Does your country have policies aiming to increase the level of completion of studies?

Yes

7.1.1. Please describe the main features of these policies.

- Higher education institutions implement academic and personal supports for students. These would include, but not be limited to, maths skills support, literacy tuition, mentoring support and institutional counselling services. - Drop in centres in HEIs are funded through HEA targeted funding in computer science and maths to improve progression levels in ICT/technology disciplines. - A Study of Progression in Irish Higher Education was undertaken by the HEA in 2010 and presents empirical evidence relating to the issue of progression through higher education in Ireland. The report is intended as a reference document that will serve to inform policy and the development of interventions to improve rates of completion and graduation. http://www.hea.ie/en/node/1386 - The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 highlights the importance of the first-year student experience on completion rates. It recommends the reform of first year curricula, to include the provision of induction and preparation programmes and to more broad-based course with more interdisciplinary learning opportunities in the first year.(http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?maincat=&pcategory=10861& ecategory=10876§ionpage=12251&language=EN&link=link001&page=1&doc=51976)

7.2. Are student completion rates monitored in your country?

No

7.2.1. What use is then made of the data?

7.3. Are there any incentives for higher education institutions to improve student completion rates?

No

7.3.1. Please specify the nature of these incentives.

7.3.2. Are there any other incentives (e.g. it is a subject covered in external quality assurance procedures)?

N/A

8. STUDENT SERVICES

While higher education institutions offer multiple services, in the following questions, the focus lies on academic guidance services, career guidance services and psychological counselling services.

8.1. What kind of student services are commonly provided by higher education institutions?

- ☑ Academic guidance services
- ☑ Career guidance services
- ☑ Psychological counselling services
- ☑ Other
- ☐ No services

8.1.1. Please specify.

Disability services, Medical services, Pastoral care

8.2. Who are the main users of the services?

All students

8.2.1. Please specify.

8.3. Please provide the main source(s) of funding.

Every student pays a student contribution which is intended to cover the costs of a variety of student services including registration and exam fees and students services such as those listed above.

8.4. What are the main tasks of the services?

To provide support services to students

8.5. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding your national policies to widen participation.

9. Do you want to answer this section now or later?

Now

10. Does your country's higher education policy focus on promoting the flexible provision of higher education (e.g. changing the intensity of study programmes according to personal circumstance through part-time study, distance learning and e-learning)?

Yes

10.1. Please provide details of specific policy measures.

- The National Strategy for Higher Education recognises that the future delivery of higher education in Ireland must be characterised by flexibility and innovation. HEIs must accommodate and serve the needs of an increasingly diverse student body. The Strategy recommends that resources allocated to and within HEIs should support all students equally, whether they are full-time or part-time, on campus or off-campus. Actions are underway to implement this recommendation, including changes to the funding allocation model. - All higher education institutions provide part-time courses. The advent of the Government's Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) supported bluebrick.ie portal has seen the development of a centralised resource for part-time or flexible learners in the Institute of Technology sector. - The HEA has also committed to further enhancing access by encouraging the development of more varied approaches to open and distance learning (see www.hea.ie/odl for further information). - Most higher education institutions now provide a modularised approach to courses. - Higher education institutions provide foundation/access courses. - All 7 universities and a number of other higher education institutions participate on the Higher Education Access route (HEAR) and the Disability Access to Higher Education (DARE). The HEAR scheme provides places to students in higher education on a reduced points basis, on the basis of socio-economic criteria. The DARE scheme also provides places in higher education, on the basis of a disability. - In addition, since 2009, a number of new flexible learning initiatives were taken by the higher education sector to support unemployed people return to education and engage in upskilling. This included the provision of newly developed transition programmes to prepare those who have been out of formal education for some time for studying in higher education as well as a range of part-time undergraduate and postgraduate places in areas that support the goals of the 'Smart Economy'.

11. Does your country's policy on flexible provision of higher education contain a special focus linked to the goal of widening participation for underrepresented groups?

Yes

11.1. Please explain how higher education policy aims to attain this goal.

Flexible approaches to higher education provide the opportunity for under-represented students to participate in higher education. For example, mature students often have family commitments which inhibit full-time participation in education. Another example is where a student with a disability is unable to participate full-time. In addition, the increasing use of adaptive technologies, offer greater opportunities for the integration of students with specific needs on a case by case basis. An access/foundation course allows students to avail of a one year course, in a further or higher education institution, to prepare them for the beginning of a higher education qualification.

12. Are there regulations or other policy measures regarding the relationship between employers and higher education institutions in fostering flexible learning?

Yes

13. Please provide details of these measures.

- Targeted funding has been provided under the Strategic Innovation Fund for a range of programmes aimed at providing flexible learning opportunties for those already in the workplace. HEIs have worked with employers in this regard. - In particular is the Roadmap for Employment – Academic Partnerships Project (REAP - http://reap.ie/) which examines existing practice in these relationships and will propose a roadmap for development of successful education-industry partnerships.

REAP suggests that this action can best be achieved by coherent, consistent and well developed tripartite relationships between Learners, Employers and Higher Education Institutions.

14. Please describe up to five main access routes to higher education (including, but not limited to, entry with a school leaving certificate, entry with a vocational education certificate, entry without formal certification) and, if possible, provide approximate percentages of students entering through this route in parenthesis ().
If less than five main routes exist, please write "n/a" in the remaining fields.

Route 1: = School Leaving Certificate

Route 2: = Foundation-level certificate

Route 3: = Mature student entry route (formal certification not necessary)

Route 4: = Further Education Certificate

Route 5: = HEAR and DARE Access routes

15. Do higher education regulations and steering documents promote flexible entry to higher education, e.g. through alternative access routes?

Yes

15.1. Please briefly describe these measures.

HEI Access Programmes eg TAP in TCD

16. PART-TIME STUDY

16.1. In your country, is there any official status other than full-time student?

Yes

16.1.1. If yes, what formal status does exist?

part-time

16.1.2. How do you define it?

A full-time student is one who takes 60 ECTS credits per academic year and a part time student is someone who takes less than 60 credits. A typical part-time student will take 30 credits per year.

16.1.3. What are the reasons for offering a different student status?

Flexibility of provision, to increase participation, to respond to diverse demand

16.1.4. How are these students treated differently (e.g. fees, student support, etc.)?

At present, part-time students are not eligible to participate in the Free Fees Initiative which provides that tuition fees are paid for full-time EU undergraduate studnets by the Exchequer. Part-time students are also not eligible for maintanence grants/student support grants. However, the National Strategy has recommended that disincentives to flexible provision are removed and work in on-going on this.

16.1.5. Please describe the most common understanding/concept of part-time studies.

16.2. In your country, do you have an explicit policy to encourage part-time study provision by higher education institutions?

Yes

16.2.1. Please describe briefly the main elements and provide the source.

Please see above

16.3. Which one of the following statements best describes the current situation in your country?

Higher education institutions have autonomy to decide, but most of them offer part-time studies

16.3.1. Please specify

17. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

17.1. In your country, is there a legislation regulating recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning?

No

17.1.1. How does your legislation in higher education define prior learning?

17.1.2. Do your steering documents in higher education define prior learning?

Yes

17.1.3. How do your steering documents in higher education define prior learning?

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is not regulated in Ireland. However, the Qualifications Act (Education and Training) 1999 enables individuals to seek qualifications made by relevant awarding bodies in Ireland (HETAC and FETAC) on the basis of RPL. - The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) facilitates the recognition of prior learning for access, credit and exemptions. The NFQ provides a reference point for RPL. - In 2005, the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland published Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning Prior learning is defined as 'learning that is acquired through formal, non-formal or informal routes.' This definition is in accordance with the definition commonly used in principles and guidelines developed by the EU with regard to the validation of non-formal and informal learning. (see http://www.nqai.ie/publication_jun2005.html).

17.2. In your country, apart from formal learning, what can be taken into account and recognised as prior learning in higher education?

☑ Prior non-formal learning (e.g. various non-certified courses)
☑ Prior informal learning (e.g. work experience)

17.3. Prior learning as defined by your steering documents can …

☑ be used to gain admission to a higher education study programme
☑ be taken into account as partial fulfilment of a higher education study programme (e.g. to reduce the required amount of courses to be taken/credits to be gained)
☑ Other: in very limited cases, to gain full qualifications

17.4. Based on your steering documents or legislation, can applicants for higher education have prior non-formal or informal learning assessed and recognised?

Legislation expressly permits higher education institutions to implement procedures for validation of non-formal and informal learning

17.5. If recognition of prior non-formal or informal learning is permitted by legislation but is not a right, is it:

Standard practice in most higher education institutions (75% +)

17.6. What measures are in place to ensure that assessment of learning is based on reliable and valid evidence?

Institutional policies and guidelines, supplemented in many cases by quality assurance policies and procedures, ensure that RPL assessment is based on reliable and valid evidence. The majority of higher education institutions have such policies in place.

17.7. Is institutional practice in recognition of prior learning explicitly included in the quality assurance processes used to evaluate institutions and/or programmes?

Yes

17.8. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding flexibility of higher education studies.

Part 2.2 BFUG Data Collection on student contributions and support

1. STUDENT FEES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The focus of the questions is on students, and is not limited to full-time daytime students. Furthermore, all first and second cycle students are included. Third cycle students are excluded except when explicitly mentioned. Similarly, the focus is on home students or equivalent. International students are only included when explicitly mentioned.

1.1. Do you want to answer this section now or later?

Now

2. In your country, does any higher education home student at a public higher education institution have to pay a fee of any kind?
Contributions to student unions are not included!

Yes

3. In which currency are contributions to higher education institutions and other study costs paid in your country?

Euro

4. In principle, which home students at public higher education institutions have to pay fees?

During studies   ⦿ All students   ○ Specific groups of students   ○ No answer

After studies   ○ All students   ⦿ Specific groups of students   ○ No answer

4.1. Which main exemptions to this principle exist in your country?

There are two types of fees applying to students in Ireland - a student charge and tuition fees. All students must pay the student charge (€1500 in 2010/11). Students in both 1st and2nd cycles who are entitled to means-tested grant support do not pay the charge - it is covered as part of the grant. Full-time (first-time) EU/EEA/Swiss first cycle students are exempt from paying tuition fees. These are paid on their behalf by the exchequer. Part-time students, non-EU/EEA/Swiss, repeat students and 2nd cycle students must pay tuition fees. No student pays fees after study, but this is not an option on the form above.

4.2. Which of the following criteria determine whether a student has to pay fees?

☑ Need — Students who qualify for means tested support do not have to pay any fees, including the student charge.

☐ Merit

☑ Part-time/Full-time/Distance learning — Full time 1st cycle students do not pay tuition fees, where as part time students do

☐ Field of study

Cycle — Full time 1st cycle students are exempt from tuition fees, 2nd cycle students are not.

5. With regard to fees, are home students in the second cycle treated differently to those in the first cycle?

Yes

5.1. In principle, which second cycle students at public higher education institutions have to pay fees?

During studies	⊙ All students	○ Specific groups of students	○ No answer
After studies	○ All students	⊙ Specific groups of students	○ No answer

5.2. What main exemptions to this principle exist in your country?

Students that qualify for means tested grant support are exempt from fees Please note that no students pay fees After Studies - the survey question does not provide for this response.

5.3. Which of the following criteria determine whether a student has to pay fees?

☑ Need   Students may get means tested support

☐ Merit

☐ Part-time/Full-time/Distance learning

☐ Field of study

6. What is the minimum, maximum and most common amount of fees payable by home students in the first cycle? Please multiply any annual fees (including registration, tuition, administration, graduation and other fees) by the most common length of programmes in this cycle and add fees to be paid only once to that amount.

Minimum amount = €3000

Maximum amount = €6000

Most common amount = €4,500

6.1. Which home students pay the minimum and the maximum amount in the first cycle? (e.g. students in certain subjects, students in need, students with good academic performance, part-time students, other…)

- Students that qualify for maintenance grants pay nothing - this is the real minimum - These figures are based on full-time students, these are the majority of students in first cycle. Figures therefore based on the student charge only as these students are exempt from tuition fees. Figures therefore dependent on lenght of course. - Minimum amount paid by students attending level 6 courses (short cycle certificate award within the 1st cycle -generally 2 yrs duration). This figure represents the student charge of €1,500. - Maximum amount paid by students attendinglevel 8 coures (normally 3 or 4 yrs duration).This figure represents the student charge of €1,500. - Please note that some courses in the professional disciplines eg medicine are for a longer duration but only a small percentage of overall students undertake these courses. - If you want details of tuition fees also, please contact us.

6.2. Please provide the percentage of students paying the minimum and the maximum amount in the first cycle. If precise data are not available, please provide an estimate.

Approximately 10% pay the minimum (i.e. are level 6 students) Approximately 80% pay the maximum (i.e. are level 8 students) This is an estimate only.

7. What is the minimum, maximum and most common amount of fees payable by home students in the second cycle? Please multiply any annual fees (including registration, tuition, administration, graduation and other fees) by the most common length of programmes in this cycle and add fees to be paid only once to that amount.

Minimum amount = €4,000

Maximum amount = €25,000

Most common amount = €6,000

7.1. Which home students pay the *minimum* amount in the second cycle? (e.g. students in certain subjects, students in need, students with good academic performance, part-time students, other…)

Students studying research arts postgraduate programmes

7.2. Which home students pay the *maximum* amount in the second cycle? (e.g. students in certain subjects, students in need, students with good academic performance, part-time students, other…)

Students studying MBA programmes (Master of Business Administration)

7.3. Please provide the (approximate) percentage of students paying the minimum and the maximum amount in the second cycle. If precise data are not available, please provide an estimate.

About 15% pay the minimum and less than 1% pay the maximum.

8. Concerning fees, are international students treated differently in your country from home students?

Yes

8.1. What is the minimum, maximum and most common amount of fees (including registration, tuition, administration and graduation fees) payable by international students in the first cycle?

Minimum amount = €15,000

Maximum amount = €40,000

Most common amount = €25,000

8.2. According to your country's steering documents, students from which countries are considered international students?

Students from outside the European Union/EEA/Switzerland

9. Who defines the fee amounts for any student in the first cycle?

☐ Each higher education institution defines its own fees

☑ Higher education institutions can define their fees, but there are limits set by the central/regional authority   The Minister for Education & Skills agrees annual % increase limits in undergraduate fee rates

☐ Higher education institutions can define their fees, but they have to be approved by the central/regional authority

☐ Central/regional authority defines the value range of fees

10. Who defines the fee amounts for any student in the second cycle?

☑ Each higher education institution defines its own fees

☐ Higher education institutions can define their fees, but there are limits set by the central/regional authority

☐ Higher education institutions can define their fees, but they have to be approved by the central/regional authority

☐ Central/regional authority defines the value range of fees

3

11. Do students have to pay compulsory contributions to student unions/representations?

No

11.1. Please provide the payable amounts and explain differences between cycles and students, where they exist.

For 2010/11 first cycle students pay a student charge of €1,500 to cover examinations, registration and student services. Some other charges for e.g. sports centres (e.g. €100) may apply.

12. Do you want to answer this section now or later?

Now

12.1. Please identify the main focus of your country's student support system.

A combination of grants for students and tax benefits for parents

The Department of Education & Skills provides funding towards a means tested student grant scheme. In addition, where students do not qualify to have tuition fees paid on their behalf (i.e. are not first-time, full-time EU undergraduate students), tax relief is available at the standard rate of tax for tuition fees paid in respect of approved full/part-time courses in both private and publicly funded third level colleges and universities. Further details and conditions in relation to this tax relief are available from the Revenue Commissioners.

12.2. The following questions deal with public grants and loans separately. If there is a combined system of grants and loans in your country, please provide information about your system here. In this case, please still answer the questions on grants/scholarships and loans, keeping in mind the relevant parts of your combined system.

N/A

13. PUBLIC GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

13.1. Does any student receive public financial support in the form of grants and/or scholarships?

Yes, students of all cycles

All students are eligible to apply provided they are attending higher education. They must be attending an approved course in an approved institution. In addition they must satisfy the terms and conditions of the scheme.

13.2. Which first cycle students are eligible for grants and/or scholarships?

Specific groups of students

13.2.1. Which groups of students receive grants and/or scholarships?

☑ Need-based   Grants are means-tested

☐ Merit-based

☑ Part-time/Full-time/Distance learning   Only full-time students are eligible for the grant schemes

☐ Field of study

13.2.2. What percentage of first cycle students receives a grant and/or scholarship?

0

13.3. What is the minimum, maximum and most common value of grants/scholarships available to first cycle students in higher education?

Minimum = €315

Maximum = €6100

Most common = €2623

13.4. Which second cycle students are eligible to receive grants and/or scholarships?

Specific groups of second cycle students

Students that qualify for a means tested grant are exempt from fees.

13.4.1. Which groups of students receive grants and/or scholarships?

☑ Need

☐ Merit

☐ Part-time/Full-time/Distance learning

☐ Field of study

13.4.2. What percentage of second cycle students receives a grant and/or scholarship?

0

13.4.3. What is the minimum, maximum and most common value of grants/scholarships available to second cycle students in higher education?

€315, €6100 and €2623

13.5. What percentage of all students receives a grant and/or scholarship?

45

14. STUDENT LOANS

14.1. In your country, can any student take out publicly subsidised or guaranteed loans to cover their expenses of higher education studies?

No student

14.2. Are all first cycle students eligible to receive loans?

Please choose..

14.2.1. On what criteria are the groups of first cycle students eligible for loans differentiated?

☐ Need-based criteria

☐ Merit-based criteria

☐ Full-time, part-time, distant learners, etc.

☐ Field of studies

☐ Based on cycle the student is enrolled in

14.2.2. What is the minimum, maximum and most common value of loans that first cycle students receive? Please provide the amount per year.

Minimum first cycle =

Most common first cycle =

Maximum first cycle =

14.2.3.Are all second cycle students eligible to receive loans?

Please choose..

14.2.4. On what criteria are the groups of second cycle students eligible for loans differentiated?

☐ Need-based criteria

☐ Merit-based criteria

☐ Full-time, part-time, distant learners, etc.

☐ Field of studies

☐ Based on cycle the student is enrolled in

14.2.5. What is the minimum, maximum and most common value of loans that second cycle students receive? Please provide the amount per year.

Minimum second cycle =

Most common second cycle =

Maximum second cycle =

14.3. If different types of loans exist in your country, please provide the details here.

14.4. What percentage of students takes out loans?

In the first cycle = 0

In the second cycle = 0

Of all students = 0

14.5. Are student loans publicly subsidised or guaranteed?

Please choose..

14.5.1. Please explain the form of this guarantee/subsidy.

14.5.2. What conditions govern the cancellation or reduction of a state guaranteed/subsidised debt incurred by students after completion of their study period?

- ☐ Income too low

- ☐ Studies successfully completed on time

- ☐ Exceptional merit in studies

- ☐ Age or length of period in debt

- ☐ Disability

- ☐ Parenthood

- ☐ Death

- ☐ Early repayment of loan

- ☐ No debt cancellation

- ☐ No debt reduction

14.6. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding your grants and loan system.

It is not possible to break down the percentage of students in recipt of a grant between first cycle and second cycle - 45% of all first and second cycle students receive a grant

15. Do you want to answer this section now or later?

Now

16. Do any student's parents receive tax-related benefits (tax relief of any kind, which is not limited to income tax) for tertiary education expenses?

1st cycle   ⦿ Yes   ○ No   ○ No answer

2nd cycle   ⦿ Yes   ○ No   ○ No answer

17. Which students' parents are eligible to receive such non-tax based benefit?

All

17.1. What are the criteria upon which eligibility is decided?

- ☐ Income of parents too low
- ☐ Income of student too low
- ☐ Age of student (child)
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Parenthood of student (child)
- ☐ Other

17.1.1. Please specify.

17.2. Are parents of students in the first or in the second cycle treated differently?

No

17.2.1. Please explain the difference.

18. Can the parents of any student enrolled at a higher education institution receive tax-based financial benefits (tax relief)?

Yes

19. What are the forms and values of the granted tax relief? The information you enter may be an absolute amount or a share of a person's taxable income expressed as percentage.

Tax relief can be claimed at standard rate of taxation - 20%

19.1. Is there a difference for parents whose children are first or second cycle students?

No

19.2. Please explain the difference.

20. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding your benefits for students' parents (including guardians).

Tax relief is available to either the student or the parent, depending on who pays the fee.

21. Do you want to answer this section now or later?

Now

22. Does any student receive tax-related benefits (tax relief of any kind, which is not limited to income tax) for tertiary education expenses?

1st cycle   ⦿ Yes   ○ No   ○ No answer

2nd cycle   ⦿ Yes   ○ No   ○ No answer

22.1. What are the criteria to determine who is eligible?

☑ They are enrolled as a student at a recognised higher education institution

☐ They are under a certain age (please specify)

☐ They have another particular civil status (e.g. married, parenthood, other)

☑ Income-dependent

23. In your country, do any forms of public non-cash student support exist?

1st cycle   ○ Yes   ⦿ No   ○ No answer

2nd cycle   ○ Yes   ⦿ No   ○ No answer

24. What forms of public non-cash student support exist?

Subsidised accommodation:1st cycle   0

Subsidised accommodation:2nd cycle   `0`

Subsidised health insurance:1st cycle   `0`

Subsidised health insurance:2nd cycle   `0`

24.1. Please specify the details of existing subsidies.

25. Who is eligible to receive such non-cash support?

Subsidised accommodation	○ All students	○ Specific groups of students based on pre-defined criteria	⊙ No answer
Subsidised health insurance	○ All students	○ Specific groups of students based on pre-defined criteria	⊙ No answer
Other subsidies	○ All students	○ Specific groups of students based on pre-defined criteria	⊙ No answer

25.1. What are the criteria to determine who is eligible?

☐ Income of parents too low
☐ Income of student too low
☐ Age of student
☐ Disability
☐ Parenthood of student

25.2. Is there a difference in eligibility between first and second cycle students?

Please choose..

25.3. Please explain the difference.

26. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding public non-cash student support.

27. Do you want to answer this section now or later?

Now

28. What is the typical status of a candidate preparing a third cycle (PhD) qualification?

☑ Student   All PhD candidates in Irish HEIs are classified as students.

☐ They hold and employment contract with a HEI

28.1. Please explain why you selected multiple options?

N/A

28.2. Are there differences between students of different subject areas?

No

28.3. Please explain the difference.

29. What are the main funding sources for candidates preparing a third cycle (PhD) qualification?

- A large percentage of PhD students are in receipt of research funding. The funding grant will generally cover the students fees, and will have a stipend - the amount of the stipend varies depending on the funding source. - PhD students may also be eligible for a means tested maintenance grant under the national scheme.

30. Please explain any differences in the fees they are required to pay, compared to your answers for first and second cycle students, as well as differences in grants, loans and other support that may be provided.

Fee levels vary across institutions and disciplines, with higher fee levels for SET subjects than HSS subjects. The maximum fee allowable currently under the means tested maintenace grant is €6,270. The student has to pay any excess.

31. Please explain the nature of the contracts candidates preparing a PhD have with their higher education institution.

32. Please specify any fees third cycle candidates that are typically neither "fully student" nor "fully employee" have to pay, as well as any support that may be provided.

N/A

33. Please provide any additional relevant comments for consideration regarding your doctoral education.

In relation to means-tested maintenance grant support for PhD students, the student must be pursuing a full time course in an approved institution in Ireland.

Questionnaire on student and staff mobility

A   Preliminary remarks

In the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, the European Ministers responsible for higher education agreed that "mobility shall be the hallmark of the European Higher Education Area". They called upon each country to increase mobility of students, , to ensure its high quality and to diversify its types and scope. At least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad in 2020". They also called for mobility of teachers, early-stage researchers and staff At the same time, the Ministers underlined the importance of more balanced mobility across the European Higher Education Area. The findings of the Bologna Process Independent Assessment which were presented on the occasion of Bologna Ministerial Anniversary Conference in Budapest/Vienna on 11/12 March 2010 again underlined the need for action to enhance and better balance student and staff mobility.

This questionnaire on mobility is part of the general questionnaire used to collect information for the 2012 integrated implementation report. To give the BFUG Working Group on Mobility sufficient time and the necessary material to fulfil its terms of reference of drafting a European Higher Education Area Strategy for Mobility to be decided by the Ministers in 2012, the questions on mobility are being asked a few months earlier than the questions on the other themes. However, when the general questionnaire is sent out in early 2011, each country will have the opportunity to update its responses to the mobility questions should any significant changes have occurred.

When completing this questionnaire, please pay particular attention to the following two points:

- Information provided in this questionnaire should be supported by references whenever they are available. Please include the title and internet links, where available, for all publications and texts (national policy documents, national and/or international empirical surveys etc) which you have used to provide your responses to the specific questions.

- When providing a response for your country, please be aware that different stakeholders in the higher education system may have varying opinions or experience with regard to the issue at hand. Please make every effort to consult with stakeholders before finalising your answers to ensure that a balanced and consensual response is provided.

Please return this questionnaire to the Bologna Secretariat until 30 September, 2010 at the latest. If you have any queries on the questionnaire, please contact: secretariat@ehea.info.

B Details on the completion of the questionnaire

B.1. **Who contributed to the completion of this report? Please provide the names and functions.**

B.1.a Government representatives

Gerry O'Sullivan

LLP: Erasmus National Agency

Higher Education Authority

Brooklawn House

Shelbourne Road

Dublin 4

B.1.b Stakeholder representatives

B.1.c Other contributors

C National strategies and action plans

The following questions look at national quantitative targets and at policies aiming to foster mobility.

C.1. **Does your country have national strategies or action plans to foster mobility?**

        ☒ Yes

        ☐ No → please continue with section C.6.

C.1.a If yes, please provide a reference.

Investing in Global Relationships: Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010-15 -

http://www.eurireland.ie/_fileupload/2010/Investing%20in%20Global%20Relationships
%20September%202010.pdf.

C.1.b If yes, when was the national strategy or action plan adopted, and when was the most recent revision?

Adopted: September 2010

Most recent revision: NA

C.2. **Does the strategy include national quantitative targets for the different forms of student mobility in higher education?**
Please specify the target, including the date, in the appropriate box (e.g. 20% by 2020).

	All forms of mobility	Credit mobility[1]	Degree mobility[2]
Inbound	38,000 (full-time, part-time and exchange by 2015, an increase of 12,000 of 50%)		25,500 by 2015, an increase of 8,500 or 50% on current numbers
Outbound	20% (Bologna Target)		
No target			

---

[1] Mobility to a different country in the context of a programme in the home institution for which credits are awarded

[2] Mobility for an entire degree programme

C.2.a Please provide a reference for the target.

Investing in Global Relationships: Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010-15 -

http://www.eurireland.ie/_fileupload/2010/Investing%20in%20Global%20Relationships%20September%202010.pdf.

C.2.b Are these targets the same for students in all cycles or are there differences?

☒ Same

☐ Differences

C.2.b.i If there are differences according to the degree cycle, please specify.

C.3. **Does your country's national strategy/action plan include staff mobility in higher education?**

☒ Yes

☐ No

C.3.a If yes, does it include quantitative targets for staff mobility?

☐ Yes

☒ No

C.3.a.i If yes, please specify

C.4. **Does your national strategy/action plan prioritise particular geographic regions for student and/or staff mobility?**

☒ Yes

☐ No

C.4.a If yes, please complete the following table by ticking the boxes where applicable.

Priority Region	Incoming students	Outgoing students	Incoming staff	Outgoing staff
EHEA	x	x	x	x
USA/Canada	x	x	x	x
Latin America				
Australia, New Zealand				
Middle East				

Africa				
Asia	x	x	x	x
Other (please specify)				

C.4.b   If you have regional priorities, please give reasons.

C.5. **Does your country monitor the impact of your national strategy or action plan?**

☒ Yes

☐ No

C.5.a If yes, please provide information on how this monitoring is undertaken. Who is responsible, how regularly is monitoring conducted, and what have been the most recent results?

The High-Level Group on International Education is reponsible for monitoring the implementation of the international strategy. The strategy will be monitored on an annual basis. Since the strategy has only been launched in September 2010, there are no monitoring results as of yet.

C.6. **Are there, in your country, any strategies or programmes below the national level (e.g. regional, institutional) to foster mobility?**

☒ Yes

☐ No

C.6.a If yes, please explain and/or give examples.

Most higher education institutions would have a commitment to higher education. See for example the Strategic Plan 2009-2012 of University College Cork - http://www.ucc.ie/en/strategicplanning/strategic/UCC%20Strategic%20Plan%202009-2012.pdf. There is also a Chinese language version of this plan - http://www.ucc.ie/en/strategicplanning/strategic/UCC%20Strategic%20Plan%202009-2012%20Chinese%20Version.pdf

C.7. **Can national students who study in a higher education institution in another country receive a grant/scholarship under the same conditions as students studying in the country?**

☐ Yes, for degree mobility

☐ Yes, for credit mobility

☐ Yes, for both

☒ No

C.7.a If yes, do the following restrictions apply?

	Degree mobility	Credit mobility
Grants/scholarships are restricted to specific countries (if so, please specify which countries, e.g. EU member states, EHEA countries, other countries/world regions)		
Grants/scholarships are restricted to specific programmes (if so, please specify)		
Other restrictions apply (please specify)		
No restrictions apply		

C.8. **Has your country implemented any of the following financial support measures to foster student mobility?**

Measure	Credit mobility	Degree mobility
loans for incoming students		
grants/scholarships for incoming students		
Loans for outgoing students		
Grants/scholarships for outgoing students	Students on Erasmus are entitled to continue to receive their state funded higher education grant while on a mobility period.	
Other: (please specify)		

C.9. **Has your country implemented other support measures or programmes to foster student mobility? (Measures may include, but are not restricted to, accommodation/transport subsidies for international students, improvements in recognition practice, exchange programmes, targeted guidance services etc.)**

The international offices of the higher education institutions (HEI) offer guidance and advice to outgoing and inward students. HEIs and students unions will assist with locating accommodation. Incoming students are entitled to the same public transport concessions as native students.

D   Identifying and removing obstacles to mobility

D.1. **Has your higher education policy been informed by any surveys or research that have considered obstacles to student mobility?**

☒ **Yes**

☐ **No**

D.1.a **If yes, please provid**e references to those surveys and/or research that have influenced your policy on mobility?

The strategy has been informed by data collected by the former International Education Board Ireland (now Education Ireland within the state agency Enterprise Ireland) and published as part of the annual series "International Students in Higher Education in Ireland"

http://www.eurireland.ie/_fileupload/2010/International%20Students%20in%20Higher%20Education%20in%20Ireland%202010%20_final.pdf.

The Annual Statistics report of the Higher Education Authority has also been useful.

http://www.hea.ie/webfm_send/2508

Work conducted under the aegis of Irish Higher Education Quality Network and published in the Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Irish Higher Education Institutions has also informed thinking in this area.

http://www.eurireland.ie/_fileupload/2010/Provision_of_Education_to_International_Students%5B1%5D.pdf

The strategy would also have taken cognisance of international work in this area.

D.2. **In this context, please rank the three most important obstacles to incoming and outgoing student mobility addressed in national programmes and measures? (Most important = 1, second most important = 2, and third most important = 3)**

Obstacles to student mobility	Incoming mobility	Outgoing mobility
Funding	1	2
Recognition	2	
Language		1
Curriculum/Study organisation	3	3

Legal issues		
Motivating and informing students		
Other, please specify:		

D.3. **Are at least some of the obstacles that you ranked above particularly important in specific study cycles?**

☐ Yes

☒ No

D.3.a If yes, please specify.

D.4. **Are at least some of the obstacles that you ranked above particularly important in specific fields of studies?**

☒ Yes

☐ No

D.4.a If yes, please specify.

There would appear to be greater challenges in promoting mobility in the medical sciences, natural sciences, engineering than in say humanities, social science, business and law.

D.5. **Are the obstacles that you ranked above particularly relevant for credit mobility?**

☒ Yes

☐ No

D.5.a If yes, please specify.

Integrating mobility into some courses can be difficult and it is suspected that

finance can be a major obstacle for those who do not apply in the first instance

D.6. **Are the obstacles that you ranked above particularly important for degree mobility?**

☒ Yes

☐ No

D.6.a If yes, please specify.

In the absence of any research in this area it is difficult to be precise but clearly finance would be a key issue and most Irish students taking full degree programmes abroad would seek to do this through the medium of English.

D.7. **What measures/programmes has your country implemented to tackle and remove the obstacles to student mobility that you mentioned?**

A range of initiatives under the new International Education strategy are planned including the development of the Education Ireland national brand; a statutory code of practice and

Quality Mark; scholarship programmes; internationalised curricula; a strengthened immigration and visa regime; outward mobility of Irish staff members and students will be encouraged.

D.8.   **Has your country monitored the effects of these measures/programmes?**

☐ Yes

☒ No

D.8.a   If yes, please provide information on how this monitoring is undertaken. Who is responsible, how regularly is monitoring conducted, and what have been the most recent results?

The strategy has only been launched in September 2010.

D.9.   **Has your higher education policy been informed by any surveys or research that have considered obstacles to staff mobility?**

☐ Yes

☒ No

D.9.a   If yes, please provide references to those surveys or research that have influenced your policy on staff mobility?

D.10. **In this context, please rank the three most important obstacles to incoming and outgoing staff mobility? (Most important = 1, second most important = 2, and third most important = 3)**

Obstacles to staff mobility	Incoming mobility	Outgoing mobility
Immigration restrictions		
Recognition issues	1	2
Language issues	2	1
Incompatibility of pension and/or social security systems		
Legal issues		
Other, please specify:	Finding time to fit a mobility period into their work programme	Finding time to fit a mobility period into their work programme

D.11. **What measures/programmes has your country implemented to tackle and remove the obstacles to staff mobility that you mentioned?**

The International Education Strategy will focus on Ireland enhancing its performance through partnership and collaboration; building a national brand; improving visa, immigration and labour access policies; outward mobility of Irish staff members will be encouraged.

D.12. **Has your country monitored the effects of these measures/programmes?**

☐ Yes
☒ No

D.12.a If yes, please provide information on how this monitoring is undertaken. Who is responsible, how regularly is monitoring conducted, and what have been the most recent results?

Strategy only launched in September 2010

E   Balanced student mobility flows

When looking at global and intra-European mobility flows, significant imbalances between continents, countries, regions and institutions become visible. In the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, the European Ministers therefore asked the BFUG to consider how balanced mobility could be achieved within the EHEA. With the 2009 Bologna Policy Forum Statement, Ministers from across the world declared that they "advocate a balanced exchange of teachers, researchers and students between [their] countries and promote fair and fruitful 'brain circulation'".

The following questions aim at collecting information on the understanding of the term "balanced mobility and on national strategies and measures to achieve more balanced mobility.

E.1.   Which of the following situations for student mobility applies to your country?

	Total mobility	Credit mobility	Degree mobility
more incoming than outgoing students		x	
more outgoing than incoming students			x
approximately the same number of incoming and outgoing students			
No information available			

E.1.a   What is the statistical source for this information? Please supply statistical data.

Higher Education Authority

E.2.   Is the situation described above regarded as balanced mobility?

☐ Yes

☒ No

E.2.a   Please explain and include a definition of "balanced mobility" as it is used in your country.

At present in the area of credit mobility, Ireland receives about 2.5 times more incoming students. In relation to degree mobility about 10,500 students from outside of Ireland study in Ireland and about the same number of Irish students study abroad almost entirely in the UK and USA.

E.3. **Does your country have significant imbalances of student mobility flows with particular countries or regions?**

☐ Yes

☒ No

E.3.a If yes, with which countries or regions are mobility flows most imbalanced?

E.4. **Does your mobility strategy/action plan for higher education address the issues of balance of student mobility flows?**

☐ Yes

☒ No

E.4.a If yes, what are the main concerns addressed?

It is planned to review the matter in the near future.

E.4.b If yes, which measures have been undertaken to address these concerns regarding the balance of student mobility flows?

Space for Comments: