

The Internationalisation of Irish Higher Education

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The authors are solely responsible for the content and the views expressed.



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Foreword

Dr. Graham Love, Chief Executive, Higher Education Authority

The concept of “international education” is not a new one. For over 1,500 years at least, scholars have travelled the globe in pursuit of knowledge and experience. This appetite for higher learning fed in part the formal establishment of universities in the late 9th century and ever since the movement of students and staff has been a feature of academic life in the estimated 25,000 higher education institutions currently in the world.

As an island nation, lying off the coast of mainland Europe, one could be forgiven for imagining that insularity might be a defining feature of Irish policy-making in this area. But that would be far from the truth. A pivotal shift in the approach to economic planning in the late 1950/early 1960s necessitated a sea-change in thinking in terms of educational provision at all levels. Responding to this challenge, Government and other planners were keen to ensure that whatever road Ireland followed would have the benefit of international wisdom in this area.

In a milestone report, *Investment in Education (1965)* produced by the OECD and others, a new vision of the future shape of Irish education, particularly at third-level, was charted. From the 1960s to the present, international forces such as – membership of the European Economic Community (now the European Union) in 1973; the establishment of the EU’s Erasmus Programme in 1987; the creation of the Bologna Process (now the European Higher Education Area) in 1999 and increasing mobility of students and staff to and from this country continued to impact on the Irish higher education landscape.

The authors of this landmark report – Associate Professor Marie Clarke, Dr. Linda Yang and David Harmon - have produced a document which is a most timely contribution to the national debate in this area which has been identified by the Government, the HEA and the sector as a key driver of quality teaching, learning and research.

The findings in this HEA-commissioned report will be an invaluable resource as Ireland seeks to realise the ambitious goals set by the Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton TD in the Government’s policy document, *“Irish Educated, Globally Connected, an International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016-2020”* when he stated *“This Strategy aims to support the development of global citizens through Ireland’s high quality international education system, by attracting talent from around the world to our education institutions, equipping Irish learners with the skills and experience they need to compete internationally, engaging in world-class research and international collaborations, and addressing global challenges.”*

I wish to thank the authors for their superb work, the Irish Research Council for its funding support and the Advisory Group for guiding this seminal report to a successful conclusion.



Dr. Graham Love
Chief Executive
Higher Education Authority (HEA)

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Acronyms

DES	Department of Education and Skills
EI	Education Ireland
GNIB	Garda National Immigration Bureau
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IOTI	Institutes of Technology Ireland
ICOS	Irish Council for International Students
THEA	Technological Higher Education Association
IUA	Irish Universities Association
MOU	Memoranda of Understanding
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland

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Executive Summary

There has been an explicit policy commitment to facilitate and support the development of Ireland as an international education centre for over twenty years (Clancy, 2015). Since 1987, Ireland has participated in the European Commission's Erasmus exchange programme, was a signatory to the Bologna Declaration in 1999 and set up a National Framework of Qualifications in 2003 thereby establishing a key system-level infrastructure for supporting international student mobility (Mernagh, 2010). Ireland has supported international student mobility through Erasmus for more than two decades, during which 44,944 students from Ireland have pursued an Erasmus study or work placement in one of 30 countries (HEA, 2016). International cooperation in teaching and administration has been supported through the Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus and Tempus programmes, now amalgamated into Erasmus+ (HEA, 2016). The publication of *Investing in Global Relationships: Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010-2015* set out the first coherent government strategy around internationalisation and was the first of its kind in Europe to set targets (Finn and Darmody, 2017). The majority of the actions focused on increasing the recruitment of international students and was successful in exceeding set targets. The recently published strategy document, *Irish Educated, Globally Connected, an International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016-2020* is specifically linked to the *National Skills Strategy 2025*, the *Foreign Languages Strategy*, the *Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy* and labour market strategies. The aim of the strategy is to increase the numbers of international students and researchers coming to Irish HEIs, increase outward mobility for Irish students and academics/researchers and connect the benefits of internationalisation with enterprises in support of national economic ambitions. The *Higher Education System Performance 2014-17* includes globally competitive and internationally oriented institutions as one of its seven pillars.

Despite operating during a period of prolonged cuts to resources, Irish HEIs have been very successful in their internationalisation efforts. Between 2000/01 and 2012/13 the number of international students attending Irish HEIs increased from 4,184 to 10,981 (Finn and Darmody, 2017). The Irish higher education sector has performed very well in increasing the recruitment of international students from a diverse range of countries such as China, India, Brazil, the U.S.A. and Saudi Arabia (HEA, 2016). In terms of outward mobility, the sector also enjoyed success. In 2011/12 ten per cent of NFQ level 8 graduates studied or undertook a placement abroad, a mobility rate which was in line with the European average (HEA, 2016).

Internationalisation forms a key component of institutional mission statements and international offices are now well established on higher education campuses. However, relatively little is known about how internationalisation is developing in Irish higher education institutions. This study explored the extent to which Irish tertiary education institutions have become internationalised and the range of strategies and approaches developed to attract and retain international students. The study focused on institutional strategies, curriculum, teaching and learning and the provision of supports for international students at institutional level. Combining survey data with interviews conducted with directors of international offices, faculty and students, both international and Irish, this is the first study of its kind to explore internationalisation in Irish higher education from a range of different perspectives. The study builds on international literature in the field and on previous studies conducted in New Zealand which addressed these issues.

Internationalisation Strategies in Irish Higher Education Institutions

Institutions acknowledged that they were not internationalising to the fullest extent but were constrained by the lack of resources. A recurring theme in the data was an emphasis on increasing numbers and revenue rather than using resources to meet the needs of international students. The reliance on this approach was viewed as problematic and there was a general awareness that other factors should also inform approaches to internationalisation. These included increasing mobility in the student market, the promotion of outward mobility, securing international accreditation for programmes and government policy.

The majority of institutions indicated that Ireland's *International Education Strategy 2016-2020*, the *National Education Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* and *QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners* influenced and shaped their internationalisation strategy. Some

institutions referred to other documents such as Education in Ireland Strategy and the Erasmus Charter and Erasmus policy statements. Institutions were conscious that government policy promoted outward mobility, and this was perceived as challenging. Students were reluctant to go abroad due to language issues, and socio-economic circumstances also played a role. This trend is also verified in the Eurostudent VI Report (2018). Some institutions acknowledged that they had not prioritised this area in the past as it did not generate income for the institution.

While government policy has focused on the promotion of Ireland as a destination for international students, a general view emerged that Ireland was not well known in key markets and this was attributed to a lack of government investment in the promotion of Ireland. It emerged from this study that strategic effort was not coordinated sufficiently at national level to promote Ireland as a destination and there was room for much more cooperation between institutions with reference to international markets. It may be that the reliance on student fairs where much of the resources are expended to promote Ireland as a destination is one that should be reviewed.

Internationalisation featured in the strategic plans of HEIs and was referred to in other documents such as such as business plans, the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, the HEA compact and mission statements. As HEIs have set targets with reference to internationalisation under the System Performance Framework, the degree to which the system performance framework has permeated is not clear. In the majority of HEIs, internationalisation was driven by the President and the senior management team. The majority of institutions wanted to grow the number of international students and used targets to achieve this, however such quantitative approaches were not viewed as reflecting the complexity of issues that impacted on internationalisation. The majority of institutions had business plans that focused on Asia, North America, Europe (EU) and the United Kingdom. Universities tended to focus on Asia, North America and the Middle East. Institutes of Technology and private colleges tended to focus on Asia.

Institutions prioritised formal links, agreements, articulation arrangements and memoranda of understanding. It was acknowledged that international agreements required time and effort, was a slow process and involved relationship building. A number of challenges were identified in relation to partnerships and agreements. Ensuring that actual collaboration occurred was difficult to monitor and required faculty time and effort. The majority of institutions did not set criteria to review and manage the effectiveness of exchange agreements against the strategic plans.

Over a third of institutions in this study delivered distance education courses to international students overseas and adopted a variety of approaches to deliver this distance education. The majority of institutions engaged in bilateral academic credit recognition which allowed students to undertake a substantial portion of their programmes offshore before enrolling in their institutions. Online delivery presented a number of challenges due to rapid changes in the online sector. Institutions, in the main, did not prioritise alumni chapters as part of their internationalisation efforts. Universities prioritised international alumni chapters more than either IOTs or Private Colleges. Institutions devoted much more effort to the involvement of alumni in student recruitment.

The different approaches to resource allocation for international activity revealed a mixed picture of qualified support and different resource allocation models. There was a general consensus that internationalisation was not incentivised enough within organisations and this impacted on the implementation of institutional strategy. Over half of those surveyed were of the view that incentives or reward programmes would contribute to increasing the number of international students coming to the institution. The directors of international offices were in favour of having incentivised schemes in relation to the provision of scholarships and discounted schemes for students. The majority of faculty felt that they were not supported to engage with internationalisation citing the additional work involved, the lack of recognition in the promotion process and the lack of respect for the time that is involved in such activity.

Institutions used a variety of internal communication approaches with reference to internationalisation. Newsletters and reports featured in the communication strategies as did direct meetings with faculty and staff. It emerged across institutions that there was a lack of clarity around the future direction of internationalisation within

institutions. Faculty were not clear about the implementation of the strategic plan concerning internationalisation. Faculty were unclear about the functions performed by colleagues responsible for internationalisation and it also emerged that not all faculty supported internationalisation in institutions. However, if they became directly involved in internationalisation, the strategy then had meaning for them. This was attributed to the changes that occur within institutions as a result of international students being present and the fact that the teaching and learning context can become difficult for some faculty as a result.

International students offered a range of reasons for studying abroad and for choosing Ireland. They recognised that studying abroad increased their career prospects, they enjoyed speaking English and wanted to study in an English-speaking country. Ireland's location in Europe, tuition fees which are cheaper than in other English-speaking countries and the ease of application through institutional websites gave Ireland advantages over other countries.

Internationalisation of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

The majority of institutions acknowledged that the internationalisation of curriculum was important. Institutions offered examples of curricular reform where they expanded traditional subject areas with internationally comparative approaches, delivered curricula that led to internationally recognised professional qualifications and designed curricula which prepared students for defined international professions. Institutions acknowledged that less emphasis was placed on articulating learning outcomes and clear learning goals which included international components. Some institutions used programmatic reviews to embed international approaches in modules and programmes. It was acknowledged that more needed to be achieved in this area to prepare graduates to enter a global working environment through an emphasis on the broader educational experience, including engagement with industry and social and community groups.

For the majority of faculty, the term internationalisation of the curriculum was unfamiliar, but they offered examples of their approaches to their subjects. Faculty offered mixed views about internationalising the curriculum, as some saw it as very important, but others did not see the need to explicitly state this in learning outcomes, and as the majority of students were domestic, programmes should focus on their needs.

A number of different views emerged in relation to assessment. The majority of institutions indicated that that they had encouraged staff to employ assessment tasks that were culturally sensitive. While institutions promoted the need for culturally sensitive assessment tasks faculty did not in the main include this dimension. Faculty members offered different views issues such as fairness and equality dominated the discussion about assessment. Some faculty used continuous assessment to check on the progress of international students and acknowledged the cultural differences that existed with reference to assessment experiences. Likewise, group work was viewed in a variety of different ways. On the one hand it was viewed as an important approach, but challenges arose where language was an issue and where international students tended to stick together and were reluctant to mix. International students were in the main positive about their teaching and learning experiences. They were struck by the different approaches to teaching and learning and learned much from the way Irish students viewed different issues.

Institutions recognised the benefits of having international students in their teaching and learning communities, referring to cultural engagement and broadening learner experiences. The presence of international students encouraged exchange opportunities and enhanced the teaching and learning experiences of faculty. The presence of international students was viewed positively the majority of faculty as they felt this enhanced the learning experiences of Irish students. Where Irish students had gained international experience, they were very favourably disposed to the presence of international students and understood their experiences of Irish campuses. They acknowledged that Irish students had more stability in their social and personal circumstances by virtue of being at home. However, they also felt that international students tended to stick together on campus and some domestic students felt that as they were busy with coursework they did not put effort into meeting new people. Some Irish students had not thought about the presence of international students in their classes.

The majority of institutions indicated that teaching and learning arrangements played an important role in promoting intercultural interaction and that faculty were encouraged to employ teaching strategies that engaged students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Institutions relied on Teaching and Learning Units to provide support for the internationalisation of teaching and learning, however the majority of institutions did not provide seed funding for the internationalisation of teaching and learning. Faculty members had different approaches to teaching and learning; some used fun activities to promote interaction in class, while others emphasised the importance of skills and competencies. Intercultural training was offered to teaching staff who were involved in programmes based around international student population. Faculty expressed mixed views with reference to intercultural training. Some viewed it as being very important but had not received this kind of support, while others did not see such training as being relevant to them. Two thirds of institutions indicated that they had provided professional development opportunities for staff that had an international dimension. Faculty who had experienced teacher exchange programmes found the experience very worthwhile as it provided them with greater insights into the needs of international students. Institutions were conscious of the challenges that the international dimension brought to the teaching and learning experience. These included managing the language needs of students and cultural awareness.

Institutions offered a range of academic supports to international students. These included English language programmes on a fee-paying basis and as courses taught for credit. The majority of universities offered English language programmes on fee paying basis, over half of private colleges offered this support on fee basis and just half of IOTs did so. Institutions tended to offer assistance to international students through learning centres that were offered at central level. Half of private colleges offered learning centres at faculty level. The majority of institutions emphasised study skills and career support at undergraduate level. At postgraduate level, the emphasis was on research skills, career support and study skills. International students expressed mixed views about the availability of academic supports. Some availed of the supports and benefitted from them, other students while aware of the services did not avail of the supports that were on offer.

International students offered a range of perspectives in relation to the international dimension of the curriculum as they had experienced it. Students commented on the broad curriculum offered, the applied and practical approaches promoted and the international mix in their classes. Reference was made to the challenges that the curriculum posed including citation conventions, in-class support for language development and essay writing.

Supporting international students: institutional and student perspectives

The majority of HEIs offered training for staff specifically involved in the support of international students. A majority of IOTs had formed links with local community organisations to provide support for international students, slightly over a quarter of private colleges, and just over ten per cent of universities did so.

Institutions offered a range of supports at institutional, faculty and departmental level to international students and emphasised the pastoral care dimensions of these supports. Less support was offered to offshore students. However, IOTs tended to prioritise support for this group compared to universities and private colleges. The majority of institutions offered orientation to students on arrival. The picture was somewhat mixed in terms of providing pre-arrival orientation. A higher proportion of IOTs tended to do this compared to universities and private colleges. The majority of institutions did not offer returning home programmes for their international students. International students were in general very happy with their orientation experience and supports that they had received. Those who were allocated to peer groups led by students who acted as mentors were very positive about their experience. International students commented negatively about access to the medical and counselling services available and felt that provision in these areas could be improved.

Accommodation was recognised as an issue for international students. The majority of institutions offered international students pre-departure accommodation information. The majority of universities offered long term accommodation on campus and offered assistance in finding private accommodation. All of the IOTs offered assistance in finding private accommodation, but just over a quarter offered international students long term accommodation on campus. Faculty also recognised the accommodation issue as one that international students found difficult. International students identified accommodation as being one of the biggest challenges that they faced when coming to Ireland, in terms of cost and suitability. International students also referred to the financial challenges that they faced and while HEIs had supports in place for students who experienced difficulties it was an area of concern for international students.

With reference to integration international students referenced a number of areas that impacted on their experience. Some international students found it difficult to make friends in the classroom context as there were so many different class groups present. They were of the view that a divide existed between international students and Irish students. International students had noticed a tendency for Irish students to go home at weekends instead of staying on campus and had also observed that when international activities were organised Irish students did not attend. Irish students referred to the use of the term 'international' when discussing activities organised by their institutions, expressing the view that these events were for international students only and they were reluctant to participate as a result. The general view was that this type of labelling was not helpful.

International students observed a number of cultural differences between themselves and Irish students. Reference was made to the drinking culture of Irish students which made it difficult for international students to participate in social events. The role of college societies was recognised by all students as important but even in that context different views emerged among international and Irish students about integration. International students valued having societies to join but found it easier to make friends with other international students. Irish students who had studied abroad were conscious of the experiences of international students, however other students suggested that time was a constraining factor in developing friendships with international students.

Implications for policy

The study findings indicate significant effort on the part of Irish higher education institutions in the area of internationalisation. The publication of *Investing in Global Relationships: Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010-2015* set out the first coherent government strategy around internationalisation and was the first of its kind in Europe to set targets (Finn and Darmody, 2017). The majority of the actions focused on increasing the recruitment of international students and was viewed as being successful in exceeding set targets. The most recently published strategy document *Irish Educated, Globally Connected, an International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016-2020* is specifically linked to the *National Skills Strategy 2025*, the *Foreign Languages Strategy*, the *Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy* and labour market strategies. The aim of the strategy is to increase the numbers of international students and researchers coming to Irish HEIs, increase outward mobility for Irish students and academics/researchers and connect the benefits of internationalisation with enterprises in support of national economic ambitions. HEIs are influenced by government policy documents in this area. Institutions acknowledged that they were not internationalising to the fullest extent but were constrained by the lack of resources. While government policy has focused on the promotion of Ireland as a destination for international students a general view emerged that Ireland was not well known in key "markets" and this was attributed to a lack of government investment in the promotion of Ireland. International students who participated in this study were influenced by Ireland's location in Europe, cheaper tuition fees and the ease of application through institutional websites which gave Ireland advantages over other countries. More investment and resources are required to develop Ireland as an international destination and there is room for much more cooperation between institutions at a national strategic level with reference to international markets.

The study findings also point to a need for greater clarity around the rationale and future direction of internationalisation within institutions. There was a general consensus that internationalisation was not incentivised enough within organisations and this impacted on the implementation of institutional strategy. The majority of faculty felt that they were not supported to engage with internationalisation citing the additional work involved, the lack of recognition in the promotion process and the non-recognition of the time that is involved in such activity. These are areas that institutions should consider with reference to promoting internationalisation internally within their organisations.

The study identifies the internationalisation of curriculum, teaching and learning as areas for further consideration. The internationalisation of the curriculum according to Leask (2015) is a critical component of any higher education institution's internationalisation strategy and discipline communities are central to the process. While the majority of institutions acknowledged that the internationalisation of curriculum was important, there was a lack of what this meant in the context of learning outcomes, curricular provision and pedagogy. This is an area that requires investment by government, through the provision of training and support by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning and the commitment of additional resources that will promote and incentivise teacher exchanges. Within the institutions, more consideration needs to be given to the process of curriculum design and development in general and with reference to internationalisation; securing commitment to internationalisation from a wider range of faculty through the provision of seed funding for teaching and learning activities that will support internationalisation should also be considered.

Finally, it is worth noting the importance of the student voice in relation to the provision of supports, the views of international and domestic Irish students in this study provide some very useful insights into issues of cultural differences and integration. It emerged from the study that Irish students who had gone abroad had gained many insights into the experiences of international students on their campuses and actively supported international students as a result. This supports the contention that outward mobility is not just important for students themselves but also contributes hugely to internationalisation at home. Institutions should actively encourage student reflection about their experiences of the supports available, whether they are adequate to meet their needs. It is clear from this study that medical and counselling services require more support. The active involvement of international and domestic students in the organisation of activities is required to promote successful integration.

01

Introduction



1.1 Background to the study

While research on internationalisation in higher education is growing, relatively little empirical evidence is available about this issue in Ireland. This study, commissioned by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) through the Irish Research Council (IRC) call for research on policy and society, addressed the following research questions:

- the extent to which Irish tertiary education institutions have become internationalised.
- exploring the mechanisms in place for the promotion, development and provision in relation to internationalisation at both sectoral and national levels.

An Advisory Board was established to provide guidance, direction and support over the lifetime of the study and met on three occasions to oversee the progress. Members of the Advisory Board included representation from the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the Department of Education and Skills (DES), Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), Irish Universities Association (IUA), Technological Higher Education Association (THEA), The Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA), the Department of Justice, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS).

Section 1.2 of this chapter places the study in the context of previous research, international and Irish, with reference to the internationalisation of higher education. Section 1.3 provides an overview of the data, the methodology employed, and the specific measures used in the study.

1.2 Internationalisation of higher education

Knight (2003) defines internationalisation as ‘the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education’ and is recognised as a key component of higher education institutions. Internationalisation has the capacity to enhance the learning environment for all students, deliver an internationalised curriculum and prepare students for future roles in a global economy and as global citizens (Warwick and Moogan, 2013). However, the term is contested (Robson, 2015), as internationalisation is influenced by the wider global context and institutional rationales and practices. The influences of changing political, economic, socio-cultural and academic needs have ensured that internationalisation is promoted in a variety of ways in different countries, institutions and the programmes offered (Teichler, 2004). Similarly, the future of internationalisation of higher education will become challenged by economic crises, and the need to justify international activities will be essential in an era of high student demand (Brandenburg et al., 2013). Furthermore, there are ethical implications to the internationalisation of higher education, as a balance is required in responding to local and national needs with international competitiveness in order to mitigate the inequalities between the developed and developing world (Naidoo, 2011).

In Australia, a focus on graduate attributes, such as ensuring students leave university with a global perspective, has underpinned much of the recent work on internationalisation in higher education (Crossling, Edwards, and Schroder, 2008), alongside efforts to internationalise the curriculum (Leask, 2007). Many of the recent internationalisation efforts on mainland Europe have concentrated on the delivery of academic programmes in English (Dobson and Holta, 2001) while in Scandinavian countries, internationalisation has focused on student mobility (Tossavainen, 2009). In the U.K., internationalisation has tended to focus on student recruitment (Warwick and Moogan, 2013).

Internationalisation in an institutional context can be challenging; in some cases, institutions adopt a symbolic approach to internationalisation and fail to address the needs of international students. For some faculty, international students are viewed as problematic, while international students experience culture shock (Kelly and Moogan 2012). According to Leask (2013), the internationalisation of the curriculum is a critical component of any university’s internationalisation strategy and discipline communities are central to the process. Leask defines internationalisation of the curriculum as the incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the preparation, delivery and outcomes of a programme of study (Leask, 2009). For Robson and Tuner (2007), internationalisation calls for a range of pedagogies and to be explicitly introduced into the discourse communities

of the institution. Jones and Killick (2013) suggest that the internationalisation of the curriculum needs to be linked to discussions about pedagogy and contexts that shape disciplines, however, there is still much to be achieved in this area (Marginson and Sawir, 2011).

Some institutions make little effort to internationalise the experience of domestic students (Hyland et al., 2008). The 'Internationalisation at Home' movement which developed in Europe (Nilsson, 1999) focuses on the local context, recognising that not all students can avail of study abroad opportunities (Beelen, 2007). Where internationalisation is promoted within an environment of equity, equality and diversity, the learning experience is enriched for students and faculty alike (Jones and Brown, 2007). However, government policies around internationalisation provide the context against which institutions formulate policy (Leask and Bridges, 2013) and this is the case in Ireland.

1.3 Internationalisation: policy and direction in the Irish context

There are more than 40 higher education institutions in Ireland: 24 are public higher education institutions of which 7 are universities, 14 are institutes of technology and 3 are specialist higher education colleges (HEA, 2017). In 2015/16, there were 222,618 student enrolments in public higher education institutions in Ireland: 119,978 in universities, 90,150 in institutes of technology and 12,670 in the specialist higher education colleges. In 2014/15, 8.8% of all full-time students (15,095) in HEA-funded higher education institutions were international students. Of these, 2,097 were undertaking advanced research (1,943 Ph.D. students and 154 research Masters' students) and 2,989 were enrolled on taught postgraduate programmes (HEA, 2016). In addition, there were 10,055 incoming exchange students, 48% of whom (4,900) were Erasmus students. There were also 2,501 outgoing exchange students, 73% of whom (1,835) were Erasmus students and there were 2,628 students registered on Irish programmes in campuses overseas (HEA, 2016).

Ireland has supported international student mobility through Erasmus for more than three decades, during which 44,944 students from Ireland have pursued an Erasmus study or work-placement in one of 30 countries (HEA, 2016). International cooperation in teaching and administration has been supported through the Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus and Tempus programmes, now amalgamated into Erasmus+ (HEA, 2016). There are a range of scholarship schemes which support international students to study in Ireland, including the Government of Ireland International Education Scholarships, the Brazilian Government's 'Science Without Borders' programme (2013-2016), the Saudi Arabian Government's King Abdullah Scholarship Programme (KASP), the U.S. Generation Study Abroad initiative, as well as the programmes of the Fulbright Commission of Ireland, the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD) and Campus France, with whom the HEA has signed an agreement in the area of hospitality management and culinary science (HEA, 2016).

There has been an explicit policy commitment to facilitate and support the development of Ireland as an international education centre for over twenty years (Clancy, 2015). Since 1987, Ireland has participated in the European Commission's Erasmus exchange programme, was a signatory to the Bologna Declaration in 1999 and set up a National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) in 2003, thereby establishing a key system level infrastructure for supporting international student mobility (Mernagh, 2010). Internationalisation comes under the remit of both the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and a wide range of government agencies. The publication of *Investing in Global Relationships: Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010-2015* set out the first coherent government strategy around internationalisation and was the first of its kind in Europe to set targets (Finn and Darmody, 2017). The majority of the actions focused on increasing the recruitment of international students and was viewed as being successful in exceeding set targets. In support of national objectives, the Irish Research Council (IRC) and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) have focused on collaborative research relationships between researchers in Ireland and researchers in partner countries (Yang, 2017).

The recently published strategy document, *Irish Educated, Globally Connected, an International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016-2020* is linked to the *National Skills Strategy 2025, Languages Connect - Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026*, and *Implementation Plan 2017-2022*, which aims to

enable learners to communicate effectively and improve their standards of competence in languages, the *Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy* and labour market strategies.

Reference is made to Ireland as an open economy, reliant on international trade to build sustainable long-term growth. It emphasises the economic value of the international sector, currently worth approximately €1.58bn per annum, and has set an annual income target of €2.1bn by 2020. The aim of the strategy is to increase the numbers of international students and researchers coming to Irish HEIs, increase outward mobility for Irish students and academics/researchers and connect the benefits of internationalisation with enterprises in support of national economic ambitions. The *Action Plan for Education* (2017) published by the Department of Education and Skills, commits to introducing the International Education Mark and amend the current 12 months stay back permission for international students to meet current skills and language shortages. Higher education institutions are expected to embed internationalisation within strategic plans and across their three core roles—teaching and learning, research and engagement.

1.4 Institutional responses to internationalisation: context and provision

The Irish higher education sector sustained severe cuts to resources during the period of economic austerity. Between 2008-15, state grants to the higher education sector declined by 38% (Clarke et al, 2015). The Employment Control Framework (ECF), introduced in 2008 remains in place today, and has resulted in a decrease of core staff by 12%, a reduction of 4,000 staff (Boland, 2015). Staff-student ratios in HEA-funded institutions have deteriorated significantly in recent years, rising from 1:15.6 in 2008, which was in line with the current OECD average, to a ratio of 1:19.8 in 2013/14 (HEA, 2017).

In addition to cuts to resources, successive governments recommended a number of reforms of the higher education sector through the publication of reports such as *The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030: Report of the Strategy Group*, and a series of policy initiatives including a performance framework where higher education institutions set targets and reflect progress towards national goals. The need for structural change and accountability within the sector was a recurrent theme and promoted the view that Ireland needed to be repositioned as an attractive knowledge-intensive economy underpinned by a research rich but restructured higher education system (Harkin and Hazelkorn, 2014). The domestic demand for higher education is expected to rise yearly until 2027 bringing a number of capacity and other challenges to the system.

The future funding of the sector is currently under review. The Department of Education and Skills (2017) has indicated that the funding approach will be underpinned by a series of core principles, including the need for it to be quantitative and outcome based and reflective of national education policy. A key consideration of the review will be the development of a funding model to ensure that higher education institutions are agile and responsive to meeting evolving skills needs (DES, 2017). Many HEIs have pointed to the challenges they currently face due to the lack of resources with increasing student numbers and the many demands made of institutions to meet national objectives. Under the *Higher Education System Performance Framework 2014–2016*, higher education institutions are expected to be globally competitive and internationally oriented, so that the country can be recognised as a world-class centre of international education (HEA, 2013).

Despite a period of prolonged cuts to resources, Irish HEIs have been very successful in their internationalisation efforts. The recruitment of international students was perceived as an important element of revenue generation in this context and as such, internationalisation is a key component of institutional mission statements and international offices are now well established on higher education campuses. The Royal College of Surgeons (RCSI) has a strong international presence with medical schools overseas (HEA, 2016). Other institutions have also developed important global relationships, establishing campuses and international officers overseas, and offering programmes in partnership with institutions and providers abroad. In 2014/15, 2,628 students were registered on Irish programmes in campuses overseas (HEA, 2016). The presence of international cultural centres on Irish campuses, such as the University College Dublin (UCD) *Confucius Institute for Ireland* and the Dublin City

University (DCU) *Ireland India Institute*, make important contributions to the internationalisation of the Irish higher education community at home (HEA, 2016).

The Irish higher education sector has performed very well in increasing the recruitment of international students from a diverse range of countries: such as China, India, Brazil, the U.S.A. and Saudi Arabia (HEA, 2016). Between 2000/01 and 2012/13, the number of international students attending universities increased from 4,184 to 10,981 (Finn and Darmody, 2017). In terms of outward mobility, the sector also enjoyed success. In 2011/12 ten per cent of NQF level 8 graduates studied or undertook a placement abroad, a mobility rate which was in line with the European average (HEA, 2016).

Irish higher education institutions have contributed to capacity building in countries with less developed higher education systems, through the Programme of Strategic Cooperation between Irish Aid and Higher Education and Research Institutes, as well as through initiatives previously funded through the Tempus programme (now the Erasmus+ Capacity Building Action) (HEA, 2016). This is complemented by national schemes such as the Irish Research Council's Ulysses Research Programme, which supports the exchange of Irish and French early stage researchers, and Science Foundation Ireland's US-Ireland Research and Development Partnership Programme (HEA, 2016). The development of a range of joint degree programmes by Irish and international higher education institutions is another indicator of success in the internationalisation sphere (McMahon, 2014).

Overall, international enrolments in Irish HEIs represent 10.6% of total enrolments in the sector. The majority (25%) of international students who come to Irish institutions study health and welfare. Just under one fifth (19%) of international students are studying Arts and Humanities, and the same proportion take business, administration and law programmes. Ten per cent take engineering, manufacturing and statistics programmes (HEA, 2017). 58% of international students taking full-time programmes are female, while 42% are male. In 2016/17, international students came to Ireland from the U.S.A. [4,696], China [2,153], Saudi Arabia [1,396], Malaysia [1,380] and Canada [1,356]. Tables 1-3 present the figures for international student enrolment.

Table 1 International student enrolments in universities

DCU	1,992
MU	780
NUIG	2,778
TCD	3,042
UCC	2,391
UCD	4,298
UL	1,408
Total	16,689

Source: Higher Education Factsheet Internationalisation Irish Educated, Globally Connected 2017.

Table 2 International student enrolments in IOTs

Athlone IT	343
Cork IT	196
DIT	1,262
IADT	51
Dundalk IT	569
Galway-Mayo IT	153
IT Blanchardstown	61
IT Carlow	287
IT Sligo	203
IT Tallaght	86
IT Tralee	285
Letterkenny IT	127
Limerick IT	148
Waterford IT	430
Total	4,201

Source: Higher Education Factsheet Internationalisation Irish Educated, Globally Connected 2017.

Table 3 International student enrolments in specialist and linked colleges

MIC Limerick	52
NCAD	108
RCSI	2,041
St Angela's College	36
Total	2,237

Source: Higher Education Factsheet Internationalisation Irish Educated, Globally Connected 2017.

Outgoing Intra-European mobility has increased under the Erasmus+ Programme. The majority (59%) of students going abroad to study and on placement are female, and the average age of Irish students on Erasmus+ is 21.7 years. The main areas of study are Business and Administration, Foreign Languages, Humanities, Social and Behavioural Science and Law. Therefore, the sectors which have the most placements are the business and administration, services, arts, health and foreign languages sectors. The majority of Irish students opt to study in France and Germany while those who go on placement tend to go to the U.K. and Spain, however the main language spoken tends to be English (62%) (HEA, 2017).

Under Erasmus+, a higher proportion of students come to Ireland to study. Students come from France, Germany and Spain and are older, as their average age is 22.6 years. Two thirds (66%) of incoming European students under Erasmus+ study at NFQ level 7 or 8 and over one fifth (23%) come to Ireland on Erasmus+ at NFQ level 9. Under Erasmus+, Irish higher education staff have the opportunity to go abroad on teaching assignments or for training. In 2016/17, 168 (63%) Irish staff engaged in outward mobility for teaching assignments and 97 (37%) engaged in mobility for training.

In the period 2015-2017, €3.6m was allocated to 15 HEIs to fund 994 mobilities to and from 51 countries outside the EU in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Middle East, Oceania and North America. At undergraduate level, over a third (37%) of international graduates were in employment in Ireland, over half (51%) who had higher and postgraduate diplomas were in employment in Ireland and over two fifths (41%) with masters and doctorates were in employment in Ireland. A quarter (25%) of undergraduate graduates were in employment overseas, less than ten per cent (8%) who held higher and postgraduate diplomas were in employment overseas and a third (33%) who held masters and doctorates were in employment overseas (HEA, 2017).

International students have indicated that they are generally very happy about their experience in Irish institutions. The data from the *I*-graduate survey (2016) indicates that Ireland is performing well on a range of indicators. Table 4 presents the data.

Table 4: Areas where Ireland is notably ahead on ISB student satisfaction

	Global ISB	Ireland ISB	Difference
Opportunities to teach**	73.0%	80.0%	+7.0%
Sports facilities	83.0%	89.0%	+6.0%
Host culture	85.0%	90.0%	+5.0%
Social activities	84.0%	88.0%	+4.0%
Host friends (arrival)	73.0%	77.0%	+4.0%

Source: *I*-graduate survey (2016) ** Opportunities to teach refers to postgraduate students

There are a number of areas where Ireland isn't performing as well as other countries internationally. These included the cost of accommodation, transport links and feedback on performance. Table 5 presents the data.

Table 5: Areas where Ireland is notably behind on ISB student satisfaction

	Global ISB	Ireland ISB	Difference
Accommodation cost	60.0%	43.0%	-17.0%
Transport links	84.0%	74.0%	-10.0%
Performance feedback	85.0%	75.0%	-10.0%

Source: *I* graduate survey (2016)

The majority (91%) of international students were satisfied with all aspects of their experiences at Irish institutions and over two-fifths (43%) of international students who have studied in Ireland indicated that they would actively encourage people to apply. International students' decisions to study in Ireland were informed by institutional reputation (92%), specific course title (91%), personal safety (89%), the cost of study (87%), research quality (87%), location (84%), cost of living (86%), earning potential (82%), social life (76%) and institution scholarship/bursary (71%). Over half (59%) indicated that the institution played a significant part in their decision to study abroad, almost a third (32%) indicated that the country played an important role. International students indicated that the average wait from application to an offer was 72 days for undergraduate and 42 days for research/professional doctorate. Over four-fifths of students were satisfied with this. International students were in general satisfied (87%) with their arrival experience.

Accommodation and living costs were problematic for international students studying in Ireland; just over half (55.6%) were satisfied with living costs and the availability of financial supports (54.3%). Less than half of international students were satisfied with the cost of accommodation (45.4%). The majority of students were very happy with the social aspects of their experience which included the availability of facilities, friendships and contacts. They were also very satisfied with their day to day experiences of living in Ireland (*I*-graduate, 2016).

1.5 Methodology

The study was a mixed methods study, combining information from a large-scale quantitative survey of public and private higher education providers with in-depth qualitative information collected from key stakeholders through semi-structured interviews. Full ethical approval was received from University College Dublin Research Ethics Committee [HS-16-03-Clarke: The Internationalisation of Irish Higher Education]. The survey component of the study was granted ethical exemption by University College Dublin Research Ethics Committee [REERN: HS-E-16-54-Clarke].

1.5.1 Survey

The survey used in this study was a modified version of a survey originally developed by McInnis et al. (2006) to investigate internationalisation in the New Zealand context [New Zealand Ministry of Education: Internationalisation in New Zealand Tertiary Education Organisations]. Permission was received to use and modify the survey in the Irish context. Amendments were made to each section of the survey with the approval of the Advisory Board. The finalised survey was presented to the Advisory Board for approval and was divided in four sections:

- Section 1 – Internationalisation strategy, student statistics and institutional responses
- Section 2 – Curriculum, teaching, learning and the student experience
- Section 3 – Internationalisation of Research
- Section 4 – Institutional Support

This study reports on sections 1, 2 and 4 of the survey. Participating institutions were provided with a guarantee that all data would be reported in aggregate form only and that no institution would be identified in any publication resulting from the study. The President/CEO of each institution was contacted by letter and invited to participate in the study. They were asked to forward the name of a primary contact person to liaise with the survey project team. That person allocated the sections of the survey to the appropriate individuals for completion. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants could withdraw at any stage. Respondents were given very clear information on the nature and purpose of the study, allowing them to make a fully informed decision regarding participation. The email to participate in the online survey was sent at the end of June 2016 and a period of 3 weeks was allocated to allow for completion of the survey. Feedback from the participating institutions was that it took a considerable amount of time to gather accurate responses to a wide range of topics covered. Following an extensive follow-up campaign by email and telephone with an extended deadline into 2017, a high response rate was achieved and is presented in Table 6. To assist comparisons and avoid identifying any individual responding institutions, some outputs have been categorised into three groups: Universities (including RCSI), Institutes of Technology and Private and Independent Colleges.

1.5.2 Survey Data

Insight SC managed the project and analysed the survey data. The survey was hosted by Insight SC on a secure server that supports secure HTTP communications using SSL (the Secure Socket Layer protocol). A secure link to access the online survey was disseminated to each institution via email. Each contact person entered their unique password (received separately) to access the survey. They were allowed to save and return to the survey at any time prior to the closing date to amend or complete the survey. Upon submission each institution was able to save a .PDF file to their local computer containing a record of their responses. The online survey allowed respondents to submit their response electronically and periodically save inputs. The data was downloaded from Qualtrics directly onto the internal Insight SC computer network system. Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com) is a robust survey tool with the ability to handle user and record load, validate information and ensure security of data. Table 6 presents the response rate.

Table 6: Response rate to the survey

Type	Population	Response	Rate
University (incl. RCSI)	8	7	88.0%
Institute of Technology	14	14	100.0%
Private & Independent College	14	11	79.0%
Specialist & Linked College	4	3	75.0%
Total	40	35	88.0%

The online survey contained open comment sections where the respondents could provide their comments. These are included in this study to provide further insight but contain no information which could be attributed to any institution. They are presented in this report as italicised blocks of text

1.5.3 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews were conducted with Directors of International Offices, Faculty, and Students. Table 7 presents the different categories of interviewees.

Table 7: Categories of interviewees

Type	Directors of International Offices	Faculty	Students
University (incl. RCSI)	3	15	17
Institute of Technology	3	15	24
Private & Independent College	1	5	10
Total	7	35	51

Note: A total of 33 international students and 18 Irish students were interviewed

The semi-structured interview schedules were developed from the literature review and were also informed by the analysis of the survey data. The schedules were reviewed by the Advisory Group and amendments were made based on suggestions and after completion of the pilot interviews. A number of broad themes were explored with directors and faculty which focused on institutional policies, organisation, activities, their perspectives on curriculum, teaching and learning, student profile and national policies. The student interviews focused on their own backgrounds, reasons for studying in Ireland, their overall experience, the benefits, challenges and supports they experienced as international students, the curriculum, teaching and learning experiences. Irish students were also asked similar questions including if they themselves had studied abroad and how they experienced international students on their campuses. The interview data was analysed using NVivo to organise the data to facilitate interpretation. This is an efficient tool which supports coding and analysis of qualitative data.

1.6 Outline of the report

Chapter 2 explores the strategies used by Irish HEIs to develop internationalisation. Chapter 3 focuses on internationalisation of curricula, teaching and learning. Chapter 4 examines the range of institutional supports on offer within Irish HEIs for international students. Chapter 5 reviews the main findings and considers the implications for future policy development.



02

Internationalisation Strategies in Irish Higher Education Institutions



2.1 Introduction

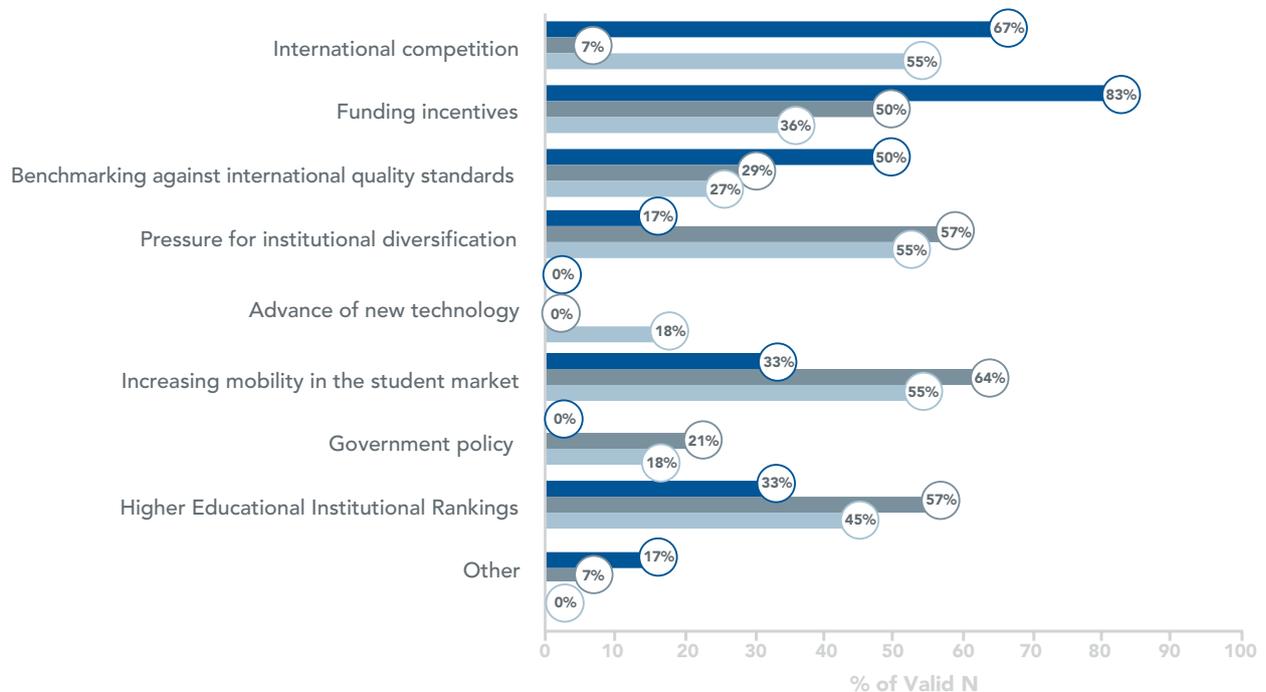
Internationalisation forms an important part of institutional strategy. When students were asked why they chose an institution, the following factors played a role: institution website (37%), education agent (23%), friends (28%), family (26%), alumni (17%), current students (14%), teacher/tutor where you studied previously (14%), staff at the institution (13%), social networking site (11%) and institution visit (16%). This chapter examines the rationale underpinning institutional strategies, the approaches to the implementation of strategy within institutions, the regions targeted by Irish institutions, and the role played by government policy in relation to internationalisation.

2.2 Rationale for internationalisation

From the survey it emerged that a range of factors influenced institutional policy around internationalisation: increasing mobility in the student market, funding incentives and government policy emerged as key drivers. Institutes of Technology (IOTs) cited increasing student mobility, pressure to diversify and institutional rankings. Universities cited funding incentives and international competition as being major influencing factors. For private colleges, it was international competition, followed by institutional diversification and increasing mobility in the student market. While government policy did not feature at all in the university responses, and to a limited degree in the responses from the IOTs and Private Colleges, many of the other elements that impacted on internationalisation policies can be viewed as government priorities for Irish higher education institutions.

Figure 1 presents the data.

Figure 1: "Please rank in order of importance the following elements in influencing your institution's internationalisation policy and practices? [Top 3 rankings]"



Funding as an incentive featured prominently as part of the rationale for internationalisation. The following comment illustrates the common view held by directors of international offices:

All our budgets are tight, every Department is under pressure... there is a financial incentive [Director, International Office, IOT].

For others, while the financial rationale was clear, it had hurt institutions in the past and limited the importance of the diversification of the student body. For one director, extra work was required to develop a more sophisticated approach to articulating the rationale around internationalisation:

In practice, there was a financial imperative - that put the cart before the horse in some ways and I suspect that we are still paying for that. The key performance indicator was actual revenue generation – that is not what we are doing here, generating revenue is important but what we really want to do is diversify the student body. We are working very hard to get a more sophisticated approach as to how we describe our policy objectives around internationalisation [Director, International Office, University].

While the importance of revenue generation was clear for private colleges, there was a move to broaden the horizons of Irish students, particularly with reference to the internationalisation of the curriculum and the promotion of outward mobility:

Here in [---] it is certainly one aspect. It allows the college to operate and continue to grow. International students are a source of income. We also invest significantly into those resources in the college, but also the college has grown, and we are using internationalisation to broaden the horizons of Irish students that come here, the internationalisation of the curriculum and outward mobility [Director, International Office, Private College].

Faculty offered a number of different perspectives with reference to internationalisation in their institutions. The issue of revenue featured in their comments. For one faculty member, the rationale for internationalisation was motivated by revenue and also to comply with HEA metrics:

I think it differs, management want to do it to tick a box. I don't think they have any real interest beyond that. It might bring in income and it's now one of their HEA metrics and they want to be seen to do it. I think they have a mixed-up policy. I think they would like to do this at the lowest cost and the greatest financial reward possible and it doesn't work like that. I don't think they realise how much time is required to do this in a way which is meaningful [Professor, Science, University].

Another faculty member broadly agreed with this view:

The cynical side of me wants to say that it is money and fees, non-EU fees... [Lecturer, Science, University].

Some faculty members expressed a different view, acknowledging the importance of international accreditation for programmes offered:

My view, and I think it would be fair to say, institution view, would be there's two sides to it. I know for accreditation. It's good economically. I think particularly for somewhere like [---] where we could pursue so I think this is something that connects us with the world directly [Lecturer, Business, University].

For one faculty member, internationalisation was a more nuanced process and part of competing rationales within his institution. This included revenue generation, the place of the university in an interconnected world, and the educational experience for students:

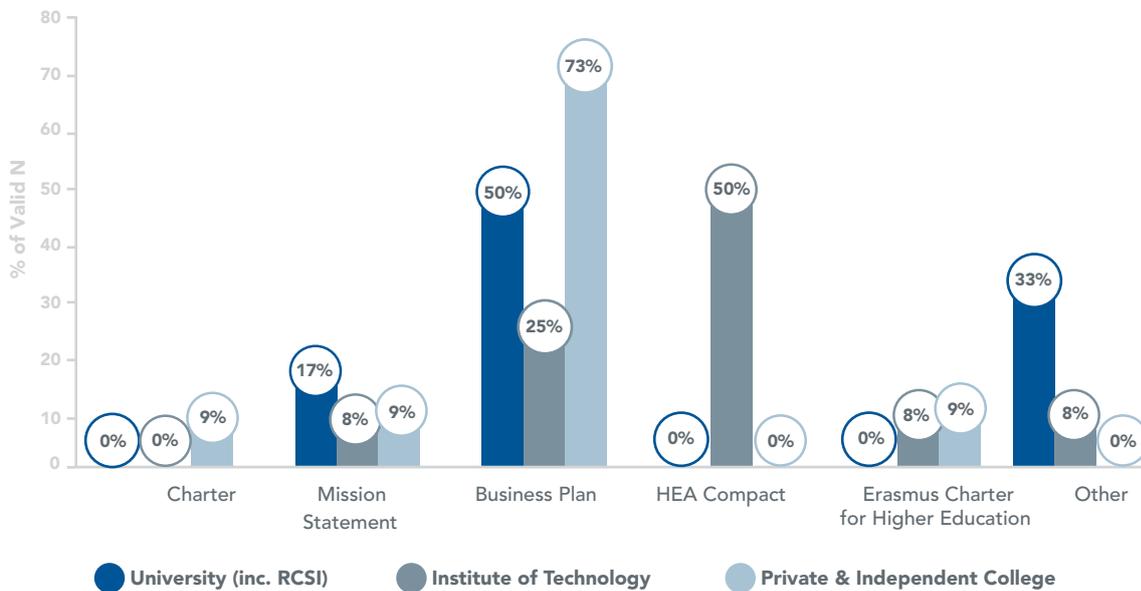
That's a very complex question. There is not one rationale. There are a number of rationales competing with each other. I think positioning ourselves as a leading university in an interconnected world is a driver. We need to provide for our students and for a growing proportion of our students. An educational experience transcends the campus and transcends national boundaries. But there is also a financial element to internationalisation in the current funding model of Irish higher education [Professor, Languages, University].

2.3 Internationalisation and university strategic planning

When asked if internationalisation was an important component of the strategic plan of the institution, the majority of respondents (81%) agreed that it was. Similarly, the internationalisation strategy of institutions was explicitly referred to in a range of other institutional documents. These included the institutional business plan (82%), the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (64%), the HEA compact* (61%) and the institutional mission statement (59%). Figure 2 presents the data.

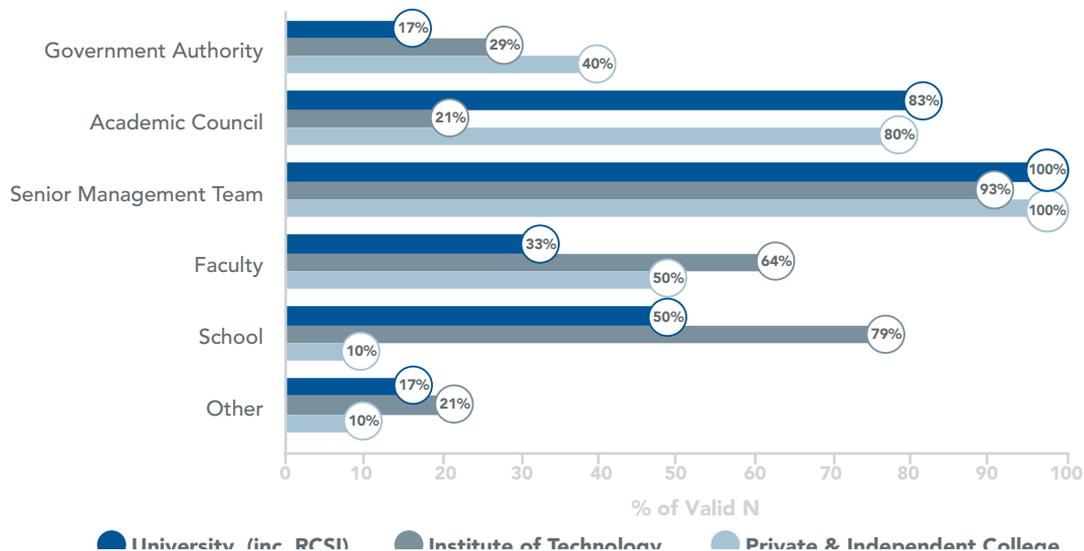
* System Performance Agreement between HEA and HEI.

Figure 2: “Which, if any, of the following is the key reference point for your internationalisation strategy?”



It emerged from the study that a range of different groups provided input into the internationalisation strategy. In the majority of institutions, the internationalisation strategy was decided at a central level (88%). In the university sector, it was the senior management team, academic council, and to a lesser degree, schools. In the Institute of Technology sector, it was the senior management team, the Schools and faculty. In private colleges it was the senior management team, academic council and faculty. Figure 3 illustrates the data.

Figure 3: “Which of the following provide input to the internationalisation strategy in your institution? [Top three rankings]”



Institutions offered a number of perspectives about decision-making concerning internationalisation. In some cases, strategy was decided by the President and the senior management team:

As the President deems necessary ... decisions go before the Executive Team in the first instance and occasionally require the authorisation of the Governing Authority.

Senior Management team formed a working group on internationalisation and feedback is provided to relevant stakeholders once per semester.

One institution reported that the governing authority played an important role:

The Governing Authority provide regular input to the Senior Management Team on internalisation matters.

In other institutions, the international office was viewed as directing the internationalisation strategy. In some cases, the international office worked closely with senior management, schools and academic departments. This is reflected in the following comment and refers to the targets set for international activity:

Our International Department propose a strategy after consulting with Senior Management, and each of the schools and academic departments. The strategy is then agreed at Senior level and carried out by the International Department. The strategy has to be in line with our compact targets for International.

In another institution, internationalisation strategy is determined by the international coordinator with the Heads of Schools/Departments:

Internationalisation strategy is determined by the International Coordinator in direct liaison with Heads of subject areas/departments. Bilateral agreements involving student study programme exchanges and staff mobilities are signed off on by the Director.

In one institution, schools played a central role in relation to the availability of programmes and student exchanges. These were then approved by the senior management team.

Schools inform availability of programmes, exchanges and research collaborations Senior leadership team approves all strategies and individual faculty members support specific actions.

The development and implementation of institutional strategies were perceived differently by those involved. One director of an international office was very involved in the development of the plan and she viewed her participation in focus groups as a very worthwhile experience providing her with insights that she would otherwise not have gained:

The strategic plan would have had a number of focus groups with research staff and faculty members and my view of internationalisation would be different from theirs and I found that process very worthwhile. So, you feel you were part of the formulation [Director, International Office, IOT].

In one private college, the approach is deliberately inclusive, clarity around the strategy is provided and people are encouraged to indicate their reservations about different approaches:

The strategy here is quite inclusive, a lot of people feed into it, so people feel involved. This is the direction, how do we do it, what are your reservations and how can we address them [Director, International Office, Private College].

However, in the majority of institutions, faculty were not clear about the implementation of the strategic plan for internationalisation. There was a general view that the strategy had not been explained to them, but if they became involved in internationalisation, the strategy then had meaning for them. One faculty member expressed the view that:

As a faculty member, no – before I took this role it wasn't explained to me. But now that I am doing it, I am in touch with people from the international office, with colleagues from other colleges who do the same as I do [Lecturer, Humanities, University].

While another faculty member was involved in internationalisation activities, she was of the view that the message about the future direction of internationalisation was not clear:

I would know a lot of people in the internationalisation space. Head of international office. He is doing what he can from that side of things. Don't think there is a clear message that something will happen.

She felt that while meetings took place to plan future direction, very little seemed to happen as a result of those meetings, and she attributed this to individuals working on different areas but not connecting with each other:

The taking stock of where we are and where we are going seems to happen but doesn't seem to happen or get carried through. I think what happens is that there is a lot of people doing individual things, but it is not all joined-up [Lecturer, Science, University].

This view was echoed by another faculty member who also spoke to the need for a more connected approach within the institution:

I think we are very big and we need to speak more to one another and to work together more. We tend to work wherever we happen to be, and we need to work more as a team [Senior Lecturer, English, University].

One faculty member found himself getting involved in internationalisation by accident. His role has now evolved to a leadership role on committees within his college, explaining the strategy. However, he admitted to not being clear as to how the strategy is communicated more broadly within the institution:

The whole thing is kind of organic. It just seems to be kind of emerging. In fact, I find myself now as the chair of the internationalisation committee for our college.

He continued:

It's not clear to me. Presidents have all said that internationalisation was the number one strategic goal even though I always would have questions about how that strategy was fed down to people [Lecturer, Marketing, IOT].

The survey showed that institutions had put considerable effort into communicating with faculty and staff about internationalisation within the institution. Newsletters and reports featured the communication strategies, as did direct meetings with staff. Many institutions used a combination of approaches, as illustrated in the following comments:

Internal communications are directed through staff information newsletters, usually 3 or 4 per year and supported by social media. We also have face-to-face meetings with various colleges etc.

Staff updates via internal newsletters, "town-hall" meetings, etc.

Town hall with all staff.

Institutions also referred to the submission of written reports to the various stakeholder groups within the organisation:

Written reporting by the International Office Manager to the Registrar on international activities. Written reporting by the Marketing Recruitment Officer to the Registrar on countries/markets visited and plans to develop a recruitment initiative. Reporting to the Registrar on international stats for the HEA Compact (annual) Promotion and dissemination of international activities within [---] (website, social media, handbooks, etc.) Email communication to Institute Staff and Students and to external Stakeholders (partner universities, agents etc.) on international updates.

While institutions dedicated a lot of time to communicate with faculty and staff about internationalisation activity within the organisation, it emerged in interviews that communication was a challenge. One director of an international office was of the view that communication was key but suggested that universities were very poor at internal communication. He had tried to address this issue by ensuring that members of his team served on the relevant college committees, and by holding workshops and seminars crafted around various themes within internationalisation. He commented:

Universities are notoriously bad at telling their story and talking to one another. The College of Business and the College of Science hardly acknowledge each other, yet in many ways, they are doing very similar things. My office brings together teams of academic faculty members and have pan-college discussions. A member of my team sits on the internationalisation committee of each college, so they are feeding information back and forth. I also hold an annual internationalisation workshop for internal stakeholders for which I pick a theme on internationalisation and reflect on what we are doing and educate them. We do a blue-skies thinking seminar and bring in speakers about economic and demographic trends and try to link how this matters in the classroom and in the jobs market and how it matters in the rankings and feeding back the benefits we see from these activities [Director, International Office, University].

For one director, contact with faculties who had the most international students was her priority and she linked with Heads of Departments in relation to international issues:

I'd have most contact with the faculties that have the most international students; Business, Engineering. Interacting a lot with Heads of Departments [Director, International Office, University].

The majority of faculty interviewed were unclear about the functions performed by colleagues responsible for internationalisation, and the following comment is illustrative of this view:

In the last year, the university has made the appointment of the Assistant Deans of Internationalisation for each of the colleges. I think that was more of a strategic recommendation and I think now that those individuals are in their positions, I think there is a general confusion about what their role is. Obviously, they are there to internationalise but in terms of how it necessarily works, I don't know [Associate Professor, Business, University].

It was acknowledged that not all faculty supported the process of internationalisation. One faculty member felt that his colleagues were not supportive:

I very much got the sense that most [of my] colleagues felt international students were more work and that it wasn't clear to them why they had to take on this work. So, I would have sensed some resentment towards internationalisation in the sense that this was just a money maker [Lecturer, Business, University].

This view was echoed by a director of an international office who pointed to the changes that occur within institutions as a result of international students being present and the fact that the teaching and learning context can become difficult for some faculty as a result of this:

Plenty of naysayers, they have valid points. Internationalisation starts to change the institution, and these are real questions. The work of teaching these students is difficult, the return to the programme is hard to see and it is not worth my while trucking around Asia with you for five days to recruit and they'd be right [Director, International Office, University].

While there were many dimensions to the implementation of strategy within different organisations, the majority of institutions indicated that target setting was a key element of strategic planning. Table 8 presents the data.

Table 8: "Are internationalisation targets a common feature of senior management teams' performance measures in your institution?"

	Number	Percent
Yes	20	62.5%
No	6	18.8%
Don't know	6	18.8%
Total	32	100.0%

The majority of institutions wanted to increase the number of international students, but the issue of target setting drew mixed responses from those interviewed. For one director, the aim was to increase international students, but also grow outward mobility and this activity was viewed as taking time and effort:

At a strategic level, we all have quite ambitious targets to achieve, to grow our international students. One of the targets of the strategic plan is to grow our outward mobility, and while growth of incoming students has been good year-on-year, our outward mobility has been low [Director, International Office, IOT].

Another director pointed to the fact that targets and metrics did not have the same meaning for all stakeholders, commenting:

People will look at it financially: here is your target, have you met it? How many partnerships do you have? How many are active? How many have two-way mobility? How many students are coming from this partner and how many are coming year-on-year from this partner? [Director, International Office, Private College].

One director found targets to be very problematic:

I'm happy to listen to targets. But frankly, the control levers I have: right we need five more in Science or we need four fewer in Business, I don't have that level of control. I inherited targets that were pulled out of the air and they were wishful. Stretch targets and they are divorced from reality. Now we have data collection mechanisms where I can demonstrate categorically, exactly where and at what level of study we have been growing at a consistent pace in percentage terms. That is the rate. Targets are nice exercises for financial planning, but if you get down to quotas, thinking of it like domestic students, put 15 here, 14 there, that is not how the international domain can and should work [Director, International Office, University].

While institutions did have rationales and strategic plans, the study highlights the complexities encountered by organisations with reference to communicating the rationale successfully and delivering the internationalisation strategy within the overall context of the organisation. The issue of resource allocation and incentivising international activity highlighted similar issues.

2.4 Internationalisation and resource allocation

The majority of institutions had procedures in place or costing models to determine the cost of international student places. Table 9 presents the data.

Table 9: "Does your institution have in place procedures or costing models to determine the cost of international student places?"

	Number	Percent
Yes	17	53.1%
No	11	34.4%
Don't know	4	12.5%
Total	32	100.0%

A number of institutions did not differentiate between domestic and international students:

As a HEI offering blended learning and online programmes, there is no discrimination between international students and EU students.

Costing models cover all types of student – Irish, other EU, non-EU, rather than operating on separate categories.

One institution indicated that international student places were calculated based on unit costs as opposed to student places:

International fees are calculated based on unit costs rather than available places.

Another institution included additional costs for English language support:

The cost of an EU student, plus any additional costs for English language tuition, extra academic support etc. as required.

Institutions did not tend to 'ring fence' funds generated from international student fees. Table 10 presents the data.

Table 10: "Is there a separate fund in your institution "ring-fenced" for revenues generated from the fees of international students?"

	Number	Percent
Yes	9	27.3%
No	23	69.7%
Don't know	1	3.0%
Total	33	100.0%

Institutions were also asked to indicate the proportion of revenue generated from the fees of international students that were allocated to the Faculties (or schools/departments) with the responsibility for international student programmes. Different approaches were adopted in relation to this. Table 11 presents the data.

Table 11: “Please estimate the proportion of revenues generated from the fees of international students allocated to the Faculties (or schools/departments) with the responsibility for international student programmes”

	Number	Percent
Between 76-100%	4	16.0%
Between 51-75%	4	16.0%
Between 26-50%	5	20.0%
Between 1-25%	5	20.0%
None (0%)	7	28.0%
Total	25	100.0%

In one institution, budget allocation to faculty included international activities where appropriate.

Faculty budgets are agreed annually, and the budget allocation will take into account international activities, where relevant. There is no direct link between fees and budgets, e.g. performance related incentives.

One director indicated that in his institution, budgeting was fixed and short-term and this had developed within a historical context:

Budget is a bit of fixed-term and short-term. In the last ten years there were concerns about long-term funding, so there is a mixture [Director, International Office, University].

In the IOT sector, one director indicated that she planned resourcing around Erasmus funding which focused on encouraging outward mobility:

Plan a year in advance for Erasmus funding and find out about new programmes. We would prioritise Erasmus funding where there are new placement opportunities with a view to encouraging our students to go out. Last year a budget was allocated to motivate our own students to participate in Erasmus and we got a budget for that for the first time, to encourage students to go out [Director, International Office, IOT].

In the private college sector, one director commented that the office was self-funding:

This office is self-funding outside of the faculty [Director, International Office, Private College].

The majority of institutions did not have incentives in place to reward initiatives focused on internationalisation activity. Table 12 illustrates the data.

Table 12: “Does your institution have in place any incentive or reward programmes in respect of initiatives involving internationalisation?”

	Number	Percent
Yes	6	19.4%
No	22	71.0%
Don't know	3	9.7%
Total	31	100.0%

Where incentives were in place, a number of examples were offered. These included commission payments for representatives and conference funding. Other institutions referred to incentives within current institutional funding mechanisms:

No current incentive programmes but the Registrar is looking into giving back 5% of the International fee to the schools. This is still under consideration.

The budgetary model incentivises generation of additional fee income, with formulaic sharing of incremental revenue between the School, the College and the institution. The same model covers both domestic and international fee income.

The internal resource allocation model does support a financial incentive for increasing international student numbers.

Over half (58%) of those surveyed were of the view that incentives or reward programmes would contribute to increasing the number of international students coming to the institution, one in ten (13%) disagreed and the same proportion expressed no opinion. Under a fifth (16%) did not see this as applicable. The directors of international offices were in favour of having incentivised schemes in relation to the provision of scholarships and discounted schemes for students:

[We offer] scholarships to foreign students, prioritise areas in line with our Research Institutes. Masters by research scholarships, we identify where the scholarship will be allocated. We offer about 5 related to research and 2 to students achieving excellent marks in the final year of their degree a fee waiver scholarship [Director, International Office, IOT].

In the university sector, one director gave an interesting perspective on discounted fees. Traditionally his institution did not do this but later adopted the policy and it worked for them:

We traditionally, in 2010, sought to play fairly, we were not going to gouge different markets. We know the Saudi Arabians will pay, we will set a price and not play the hotel rate game, here is the price, but here is a special deal to keep a price point down. We adjusted our price point higher and give a discount, there is a psychology to that that is fairly effective. Didn't seem to harm us at all [Director, International Office, University].

With reference to faculty and schools/departments, directors were generally of the view that international activities should be rewarded:

There should be a system where Departments feel that there is a reward. Feel there should be a process in place to reward Departments to promote internationalisation when successful [Director, International Office, IOT].

Just this week I got €50,000 from the President's Office to sponsor academics to go out and engage particular key markets - we will be able to fund them when their Schools might not [Director, International Office, University].

Faculty expressed mixed views about using incentives. The majority felt that they were not supported to engage with internationalisation, citing the additional work involved, the lack of recognition in the promotion process and the non-recognition of the time that is involved in such activity. The following comments illustrate those views:

The work isn't recognised for academics. I don't think we bothered to engage in this because they just see this as more work that is not recognised [Lecturer, Business, University].

This is not compatible at all with what is necessary in terms of getting ahead [Lecturer, Science, University].

I think protected time because that is where the resource needs to be protected. It means people going for four weeks, not two or three days, that's what I mean by resources. It can't be done cheaply. You need to do stuff when you are there. It isn't done in two days, it's done in a month [Professor, Engineering, University].

One faculty member expressed the view that such activities should not be incentivised but should be reflected in workload and promotional opportunities, commenting:

It's part of your job description anyway. So why would you want to be rewarded for doing your job? Let me rephrase this: it's not necessarily in your contract, but it's part of what the university wants [you] to do [Professor, Business, University].

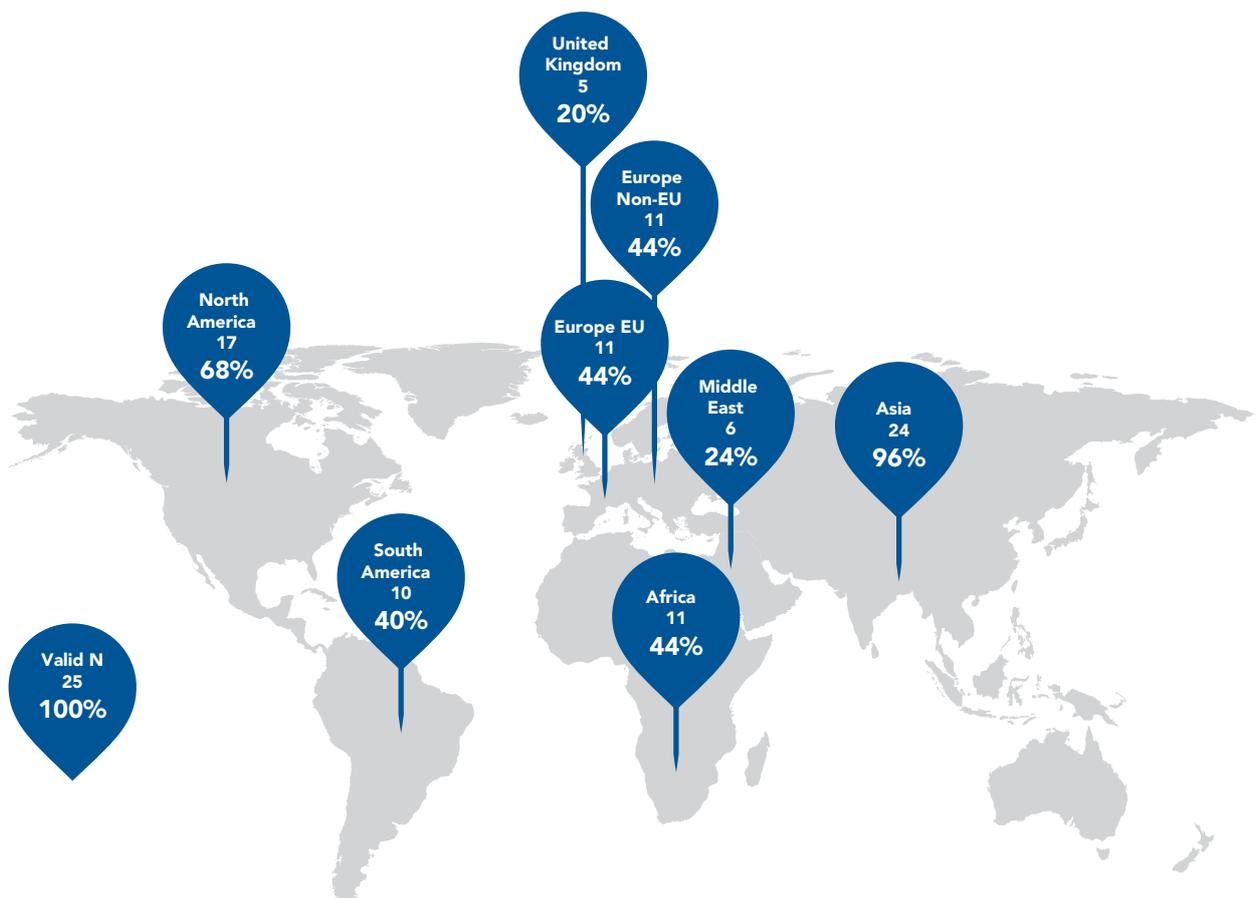
The different approaches to resource allocation for international activity reveals a mixed picture of qualified support and different allocation models. It is clear from the data that funds raised through internationalisation are, in the majority of cases, not put back into the internationalisation process. This can be attributed to the fact that the funding of the Irish higher education sector is at a critical juncture and institutions find themselves in the unenviable position of securing funds to sustain basic activities that are not currently supported through sufficient investment.

Long term reliance on funding from international students is not beneficial to Irish higher education institutions. There was a general consensus that internationalisation was not incentivised enough within organisations and this impacted on the implementation of institutional strategy. As part of strategic planning institutions developed a range of international activities including business plans which focused on specific countries, international agreements and a small number of institutions had campuses overseas and engaged in online provision.

2.5 International activities

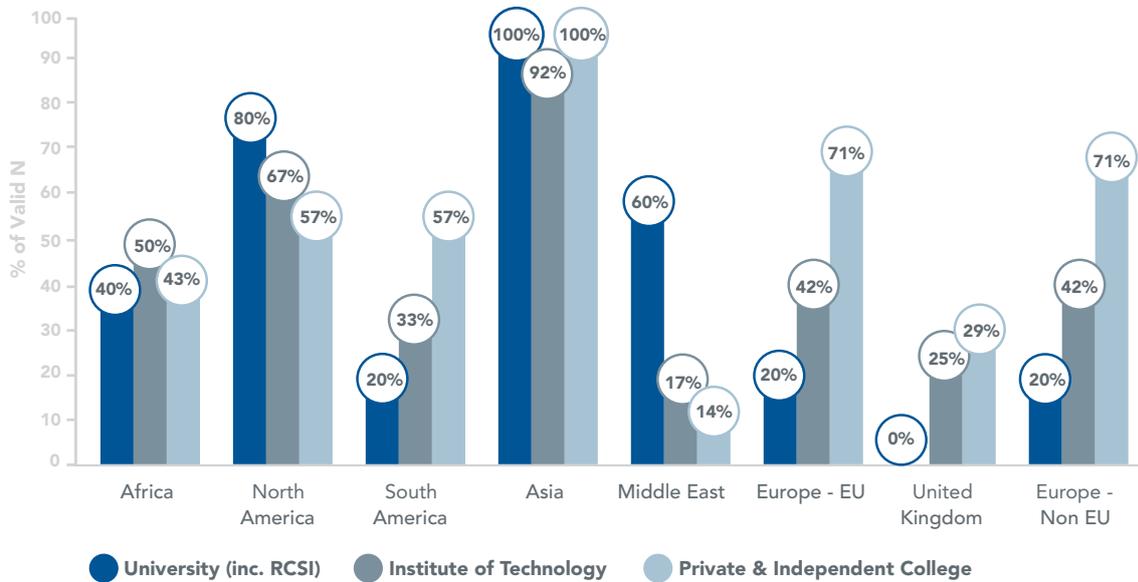
Over two-thirds of institutions (72%) surveyed had specific business plans for regions of interest in their internationalisation strategy. A number of regions were identified. Figure 4 presents the data.

Figure 4: "In which regions does your institution have country specific business plans in your internationalisation strategy?"



The majority of institutions had business plans focused on Asia, North America, Europe (EU) and the United Kingdom. Figure 5 illustrates the data.

Figure 5: “In which regions does your institution have country specific business plans in your internationalisation strategy?”



Universities tended to focus on Asia, North America and the Middle East, Institutes of Technology and private colleges focused on Asia, while a higher proportion of private colleges focused on Europe compared to universities and IOTs. This is noteworthy as our education system focuses primarily on the teaching of European languages. Erasmus investment during the period 2014-2020 approximates €100 million and as a member of the EU, Ireland has access to a market of 500 million consumers. The marketing strategies of institutions broadly followed this pattern. Table 13 presents the data.

Table 13: Most popular responses to the question “What are the five major countries on which your current international student marketing programme is focused?” by HEI type

University (inc. RCSI)		Institute of Technology		Private & Independent College	
Country	Percent	Country	Percent	Country	Percent
U.S.A.	100.0%	China	83.0%	China	71.0%
China	86.0%	Malaysia	83.0%	India	71.0%
India	86.0%	India	67.0%	Brazil	57.0%
Asia	43.0%	Canada	42.0%	Malaysia	43.0%
Middle East	29.0%	Brazil	33.0%	U.S.A.	43.0%
Valid N	7	Valid N	10	Valid N	7

China, India, Malaysia and the U.S.A. were countries that featured prominently in the marketing strategies. Over half (58%) of institutions were members of international networks, just under a third (32%) were not and ten percent (9.7%) did not know. Institutions indicated that membership of networks led to joint course proposals, facilitated the sharing of knowledge and resources, and were very good sources of information.

Has led to joint course proposal with European Partners. Has led to ongoing collaborations which may yield concrete student exchanges in due course.

Sharing knowledge, resources and brainstorming.

This network has meetings for different levels; Presidents, Registrars, International etc. Very good source of information and communication in relation to relevant sections nationally.

Institutions prioritised formal links, agreements, articulation arrangements and memoranda of understanding. However, the majority of institutions did not set criteria to review and manage the effectiveness of exchange agreements against the strategic plans. Table 14 presents the data.

Table 14: “Does your institution have an established cycle and set of criteria for reviewing the effectiveness of exchange agreements and network memberships against the strategic plan?”

	Number	Percent
Yes	12	41.4%
No	14	48.3%
Don't know	3	10.3%
Total	29	100.0%

One comment from an institution illustrates the general view:

Agreements/MoUs can be signed institutionally, or at the College/School levels. There is no master listing of all agreements, nor any unified tracking of activities across all. “Operational” can mean so many different things, including talking about potential collaboration. There is no central capture point for academic-to-academic conversations.

In another institution, collating this data at central level had started:

[---] has recently commenced a key project to centralise the university’s agreements on an organisational CRM. This project commenced in Q3 of 2016 and is currently nearing the end of phase one. It is envisaged this project will conclude in July 2017. The university’s management services unit is collaborating with the International Office on this project. Numbers that are recorded will be reviewed as part of this project. All agreements will be audited. The CRM will also allow internal stakeholders to report on the status of agreements.

The introduction of Erasmus+ had led one institution to initiate a review of its current agreements.

The Institute has a long-standing number of agreements with partners, since the inception of the ERASMUS programme. All agreements were reviewed in 2014 for the inception of the ERASMUS+ programme. Most agreements were kept, however, numbers were reviewed downwards in many cases in view of the discrepancy between Inbound/Outbound exchange flows.

International agreements were viewed as complex, while developing the agreements was viewed as being relatively easy:

The one we find easiest is the academic agreements, articulations and partnerships. We know from reviews and commendations about our processes that creating collaborative structures not joint awards, allows students to have transfer opportunities but also involve our learning outcomes transcribed into their syllabus and providing modules. Our heads know that our strategic collaborations form a core part of our strategic development. We have clear processes and procedures in place. The learning outcomes have to match, due diligence in the institution, can move through the process very easily if you can it will quite quickly move to the next step. Our processes are very streamlined [Director, International Office, Private College].

One director was of the view that the implementation of agreements was much more challenging and referred to the need for more clarity around the mapping of pathways, acknowledging that this was an area with which many academics were unfamiliar. He suggested that this aspect could be improved upon:

Developing them [international agreements] is easy, delivering on them is hard. We are creating MOUs... we can paper the walls with them. I can and will approach any university in the world if there is a good reason to do so. In other cases, an academic or a school will say, 'we would really like to work with X', that's easy. Once it comes to delivery upon agreed terms, that is more challenging. We do some tangled bureaucracy that comes from 2+2 or joint programmes, articulations... it is not rocket science. [We] could do a lot better in terms of mapping a pathway for this and doing some template work: this is how it goes, then drop that curriculum and insert this curriculum and this is what we offer. Very few Heads of Department or faculty have experience of mapping a curriculum or if they have they have done it, it's with an eye towards accreditation or some other QQI or licencing agreement [Director, International Office, University].

For others, it was acknowledged that international agreements required time and effort, was a slow process and involved relationship building. The following comment illustrates this view:

A lot of our students come through international partnership agreements. I suppose the process is slow. You have to be in for the long-term relationship. Takes a year for an agreement to be formulated and signed off and it might take a year or two before you would see students transferring. Often find with these agreements you need to take a long-term view - three years before you see a student on your campus. If you want rapid growth of international students, you won't get that from these agreements. What you will get is a higher quality of student [Director International Office, IOT].

There were a number of challenges identified in relation to partnerships and agreements. Ensuring that actual collaboration occurred was difficult to monitor and required faculty time and effort:

In many ways, the way our office is structured and placed within the institution, either myself or my team can drive the signing of any agreement, but after it is signed it becomes up to the Colleges and Schools to drive the activity in joint programmes but particularly to collaboration. We can do high-level monitoring but, in many ways, little criterion can happen, and this is where you need to buy out faculty to work on this and deliver [Director, International Office, University].

Institutions had formal arrangements in place for staff exchanges. The average number of formal arrangements is presented in Table 15.

Table 15: Average number of formal arrangements involving the international movement of staff

Number of programmes, exchange agreements or memoranda of understanding	Mean	N
– Involving academic staff	41	31
– Involving administrative staff	18	29

The majority of staff exchange links were based in Europe, China, and U.S.A. Table 16 illustrates the data.

Table 16: Most popular responses to the question “What are the five major countries for your international staff exchange links?”

University (inc. RCSI)		Institute of Technology		Private & Independent College	
Country	Percent	Country	Percent	Country	Percent
France	75.0%	France	75.0%	China	75.0%
U.K.	75.0%	Germany	50.0%	Denmark	50.0%
Germany	50.0%	Spain	50.0%	Germany	25.0%
Malta	50.0%	The Netherlands	42.0%	U.S.A.	25.0%
Poland	50.0%	China	33.0%	Austria	25.0%
Valid N	4	Valid N	12	Valid N	4

For many institutions, staff exchanges were Erasmus based:

The staff exchange links managed by the International Office are all Erasmus links. Staff must apply for a teaching mobility grant. We do not currently have a policy to promote particular countries for these Erasmus grants. It has, at times, been a struggle to use all of the grants and we have not attempted to prioritise particular countries for academic staff to visit on staff mobility. In the 2016 calendar year, 8 academic staff participated in Erasmus staff mobility and visited Els in Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, France and Malta.

The staff have outbound Erasmus staff mobility that they can do [Director, International Office, University].

In some cases, specific Schools or Departments had transfer agreements with similar Schools or Departments in other institutions. However, the huge effort required to engage in exchanges of this nature was also noted:

Our Business School has a lot of transfer agreements with China and their academics get the chance to go to China to lecture for one or two weeks. The lecturer going has to put in a lot of work to have everything in place. A lot of them go in May when our students are doing exams and they make sure that they have their papers set before they go [Director, International Office, IOT].

Overseas campuses as an international activity were not developed by the majority of institutions. A very small number of institutions engaged in this activity, but a fifth of institutions were considering the possibility. Table 17 presents the data.

Table 17: “Has your institution established a campus (or campuses) overseas?”

	Number	Percent
Yes	3	8.8%
No but it is being considered presently	7	20.6%
No	24	70.6%
Total	34	100.0%

Just over one-fifth (22.6%) of institutions indicated that they were participating in onshore or offshore consortia, delivering distance education programmes. Institutions adopted different approaches to this. Some worked with other institutions, others used a blended approach both to delivery and in developing new qualifications:

Collaborative provision arrangements, sanctioned by QQI, with two other HE providers in Ireland.

The College is a blended and online learning environment whereby students onshore and offshore are provided materials through and online learning environment.

We have been working with other Irish institutes on developing blended learning qualifications.

Over a third (36%) of institutions delivered courses to foreign international distance education students overseas. Institutions adopted a variety of approaches with reference to distance education. Table 18 presents the data.

Table 18: Which of the following models of offshore education delivery does your institution make use of?

	Yes	No	Don't know	Total (Valid N)
Bilateral academic credit recognition and matching arrangements with offshore institutions allowing students to undertake a substantial portion of their programmes offshore before enrolling in your institution	60.0%	36.0%	4.0%	100.0% (25)
Delivery of your own institutions qualifications or components of those qualifications, at your own offshore campuses using your own staff	12.0%	84.0%	4.0%	100.0% (25)
Delivery of your own institution's qualifications, or components of those qualifications, at other sites but using your own staff.	20.8%	70.8%	8.3%	100.0% (24)
Commissioning or franchising offshore institutions to deliver your qualifications or components of those qualifications on your behalf	16.0%	76.0%	8.0%	100.0% (25)
Delivering your programme primarily by distance education media (print, telecommunications, web, multimedia)	36.0%	56.0%	8.0%	100.0% (25)
Marketing your institution's distance education programmes and courseware to offshore institutions	20.8%	70.8%	8.3%	100.0% (24)

The majority of institutions engaged in bilateral academic credit recognition which allowed students to undertake a substantial portion of their programmes offshore before enrolling in their institutions. Just over one third delivered programmes primarily by distance education media. Institutions relied primarily on web-based approaches to course delivery. Table 19 presents the data.

Table 19: "Which of the following media and services do you make use of in your offshore distance education programmes?"

	Yes	No	Don't know	Total (Valid N)
Postal or courier services to deliver printed or digital study material	21.7%	60.9%	17.4%	100.0% (23)
Web to deliver courseware and course administration	60.9%	21.7%	17.4%	100.0% (23)
Web for student communication with peers and tutors	56.5%	26.1%	17.4%	100.0% (23)
Teleconferencing (voice and/or video) to support real-time tutorials	47.8%	34.8%	17.4%	100.0% (23)

One institution indicated their approach to online delivery:

Online programmes replicate the traditional face-to-face classroom by web-casting live classes over the Internet. During an online lecture students can hear the lecturer and see the board and/or class material that they are working on. All live lectures are recorded for those who may not be able to attend the lectures live. Students can download the recorded version and listen to it in their own time. Each programme and module has its own web page where lecturers post useful resources, students can submit assignments and get private feedback and where students can communicate with their lecturers and with each other. Some of the online programmes may require students to attend [---] for a number of practical classes, usually three or four times per year. We have enrolled students from many of the large multinational and SME companies in Ireland including the following: Intel, Coca-Cola, Boston Scientific, Abbott, Masonite, Eli Lilly, Janssen Biologics, Pfizer, Stiefel, a GSK company, and Merck, Sharp and Dohme (MSD).

Another institution used the virtual learning environment to provide students with course materials and online tutorials:

The college uses a virtual learning environment to provide students with course materials and online tutorials. A forum is also available for use for students' communication with peers and tutors.

Online delivery presented a number of challenges which was attributed in the main to the rapid changes in the online sector. For one director, the online option was promoted when offerings were strong, where there were issues concerning visas and where the calibre of student would not be considered the same as those who came to study on campus:

Part of our digital marketing campaign is to include online offerings and always have a range of options for discussion with partners and agents or individuals in a portfolio, but I wouldn't say that we would promote it very aggressively; we came fairly late to it. The entire marketplace for online learning moves and changes very quickly, we kind of have a place holder on online education partly in the Colleges and partly in Teaching and Learning. In the cases where we have strong online programmes, I am very quick to recommend that option if I sense that they are price sensitive, if they are coming from places where visas are an issue or are problematic or if they aren't quite the profile that we are looking for here. Online enrolment has not been terribly successful [Director, International Office, University].

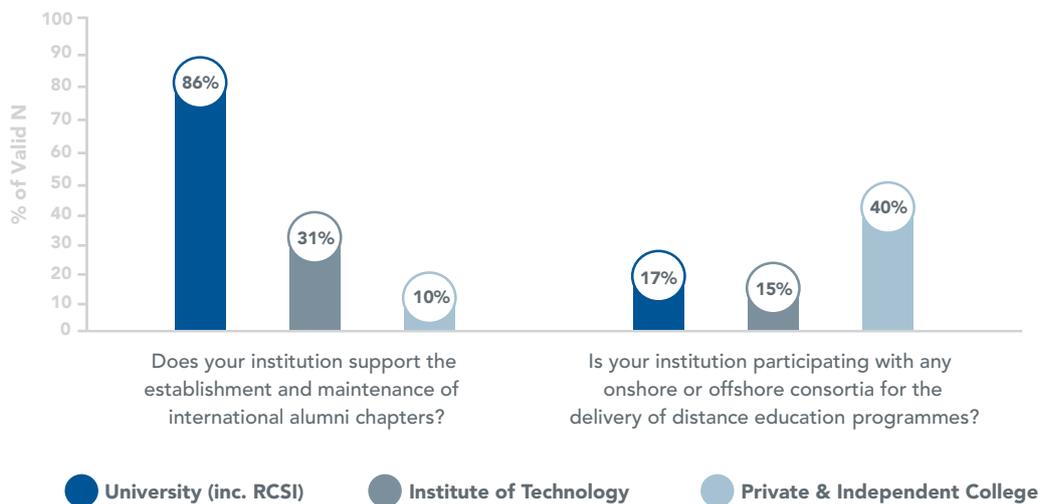
Institutions did not prioritise alumni chapters as part of their internationalisation efforts. Just over a third (34%) of institutions had established international alumni chapters in a range of countries globally. Table 20 presents the data

Table 20: Locations with the largest alumni chapters

	University (inc. RCSI)	Institute of Technology	Private & Independent College	Total
China	1	3	0	4
Gulf States	1	0	0	1
India	1	0	0	1
Korea	0	1	0	1
Malaysia	1	1	0	2
N. America	5	1	0	6
Singapore	1	0	0	1
Sri Lanka	1	0	0	1
U.K.	2	1	0	3
Valid N	5	3	0	7

The largest alumni chapters were located in North America and apart from the U.K., alumni chapters did not feature in Europe. The strategic choice of alumni chapters may suggest that this is driven by recruitment needs rather than the development of longer term relationships. Universities prioritised international alumni chapters more than either IOTs or Private Colleges. Figure 6 presents the data.

Figure 6: International Alumni & Distance Education



Less than one fifth (19%) of institutions which had international alumni chapters had an annual calendar of international alumni events and just over ten per cent (13%) regularly conducted fundraising with international alumni. Institutions concentrated on seeking the support of eminent alumni to promote the institutions (58%). Just over a fifth (22.6%) of institutions provided lifelong alumni services and just over ten per cent (13%) had a website dedicated to international alumni. Much more effort was devoted to the involvement of alumni in student recruitment with over half of the institutions indicating this activity (53%), while just under a third (30%) of institutions engaged international alumni in student career mentoring. Institutions adopted a variety of approaches in relation to the involvement of alumni with reference to recruitment:

International alumni participate in overseas recruitment fairs, institutional visits and Embassy Signings/events.

This is an area we need to expand on. We are using our alumni in U.S.A./Boston but not in other areas yet. We will look at this in 2016/17.

For other institutions, international alumni were involved in career mentoring:

Some schools in [---] often engage with alumni to assist with career mentoring, internship and graduate opportunities.

One institution involved their international student graduates in a Careers Preparation Day to share their experiences of working in Ireland:

The Institute hosted a new Careers Preparation Day in February 2016, especially for international students. [---] International graduates who are now working in Ireland were invited to return to share their experience with current students. It is intended to repeat this initiative in 16/17.

One institution, while recognising the importance of engaging with alumni, found it difficult to do so as it was small in size:

I certainly see the point of engaging our alumni, but we are a small organisation and we can't do everything.

A minority of institutions had overseas campuses, but this approach was under active consideration by a number of institutions. Online and blended approaches featured as part of international activity but was viewed as complex due to the rapid pace of change in that sector. Universities tended to develop international alumni chapters more actively than other higher education institutions. The national policy context impacted on the internationalisation strategies developed by institutions in Irish higher education.

Through their business plans and marketing strategies, institutions identified regions for student recruitment. Asia emerged as an important region for all institutions. The development of international agreements was viewed as important but challenging.

2.6 Policy context and internationalisation

Government policy is clearly focused on internationalisation in higher education. Many institutions agreed that they were not internationalising to the fullest extent. This was attributed, in part, to lack of funding and lack of government investment in the sector:

You can always do more, moving at a sustainable pace. Funding to do so costs money and people, revenue generated growing or shrinking doesn't change the game as far as my unit is concerned. Things can get worse ... government funding model needs to change [Director, International Office, University].

One director, while noting the lack of resources, was also cognisant of keeping a balanced approach to international student recruitment so that they did not all come from the one region or country:

For me, we try to have a balanced approach, meaning that in China we are successful there, but we cannot flood the institution with Chinese students [Director, International Office, IOT].

In the private college context, the view emerged that while they were doing well in terms of structures and processes, they needed to develop the research dimension within the institution:

I think that we are trying to do it to our fullest extent... we would certainly be ahead of the pack in terms of structures and processes. But if you look at the collaborative element in terms of research we would be at the bottom. Areas that we can do we are doing quite well [Director, International Office, Private College].

Government policy is focused on outward mobility and this is challenging for higher education institutions; a number of issues were identified. In the case of one IOT, students generally came from the lower socio-economic category, were rural-based and going abroad would involve a significant economic investment. However, the director felt that this was slowly beginning to change, and she had devoted time and energy to support students who wanted to go abroad:

Traditionally our student lives at home, they might be assisting on a farm in the evening. It is a big issue to be gone for a semester, there is the economic dimension. In the last year we increased our average, now we have 30 going out. I have spent time with them. While some faculty would say, 'you have to go', in some programmes it is mandatory, in some it is not. Some have chosen to go to get the cultural experience. Some of our exchanges are outside of Erasmus - China, Canada, America - traditionally it was France, Spain and Germany [Director, International Office, IOT].

For another director, outward student mobility was a real challenge and he attributed it to fears around using a foreign language:

From the outset, the least effective is outward mobility. I don't know why. From speaking to students, the trepidation seems to be over language, environment... 'China, how do I live and not speak the language?', and those who go and come back say they had a great experience and we use them as our champions for the next students. But they face the same challenges every year [Director, International Office, Private College].

As outward mobility did not generate revenue, it was an area that was somewhat neglected in the past. However, one director indicated that he was setting up a new unit in his department to develop this:

That is an area that we are just beginning to work on. It doesn't generate revenue, so we haven't paid much attention to it, but I am setting up a new unit to look at outward mobility so that our students get what they want and are getting something out of it [Director, International Office, University].

In relation to the influence that government policy exerted on institutional activity, the majority of institutions indicated that *Ireland's International Education Strategy 2016-2020*, the *National Education Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* and *QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners* influenced and shaped their internationalisation strategy. Some institutions referred to other documents such as *Education in Ireland Strategy* and the *Erasmus Charter* and Erasmus policy statements. Table 21 presents the data.

Table 21: "Please indicate to what extent you agree, or disagree, that the following documents shape your institution's internationalisation policy and practices?"

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Valid N
National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030	0.0%	6.0%	9.0%	70.0%	15.0%	33
Statement of Strategy 2015-17 Department of Education and Skills	0.0%	15.0%	12.0%	61.0%	12.0%	33
Ireland's International Education Strategy 2016-2020	0.0%	7.0%	7.0%	52.0%	34.0%	30
QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners	3.0%	3.0%	13.0%	44.0%	38.0%	32
Financial Performance Framework	3.0%	7.0%	20.0%	47.0%	23.0%	30
Other	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	4

Government policy on internationalisation was mediated to institutions through a range of sources. Networks were viewed as important sources of information:

Irish Universities Association - HEA Working Groups - Own institutional networks

Through usual channels of communication including HEA, IUA, EI, etc.

Network with other institutions in Ireland, through HECA, Conferences, National Forum for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning etc.

Institutions liaised with a variety of bodies involved in internationalisation:

Education Ireland, Irish Universities Association, Irish Council for Overseas Students, Immigration, Department of Foreign Affairs, and Trade HEA.

IOTI International Officer / Education Ireland / HEA

Other institutions referred to publications by government departments, other agencies and issues reported in the media.

QQI policy on transnational provision and the proposed introduction of the International Education Mark (IEM).

Related Government Policy documentation, including Department of Education publications.

We read all the HEA and government strategies/policies and news releases. We attend information sessions relating to International at various levels (Registrar, President, International Office). We are kept informed by THEA/IOTI and weekly News clippings round up of press stories regarding education. We are engaged with Enterprise Ireland.

One institution emphasised links with government contacts and overseas diplomatic missions:

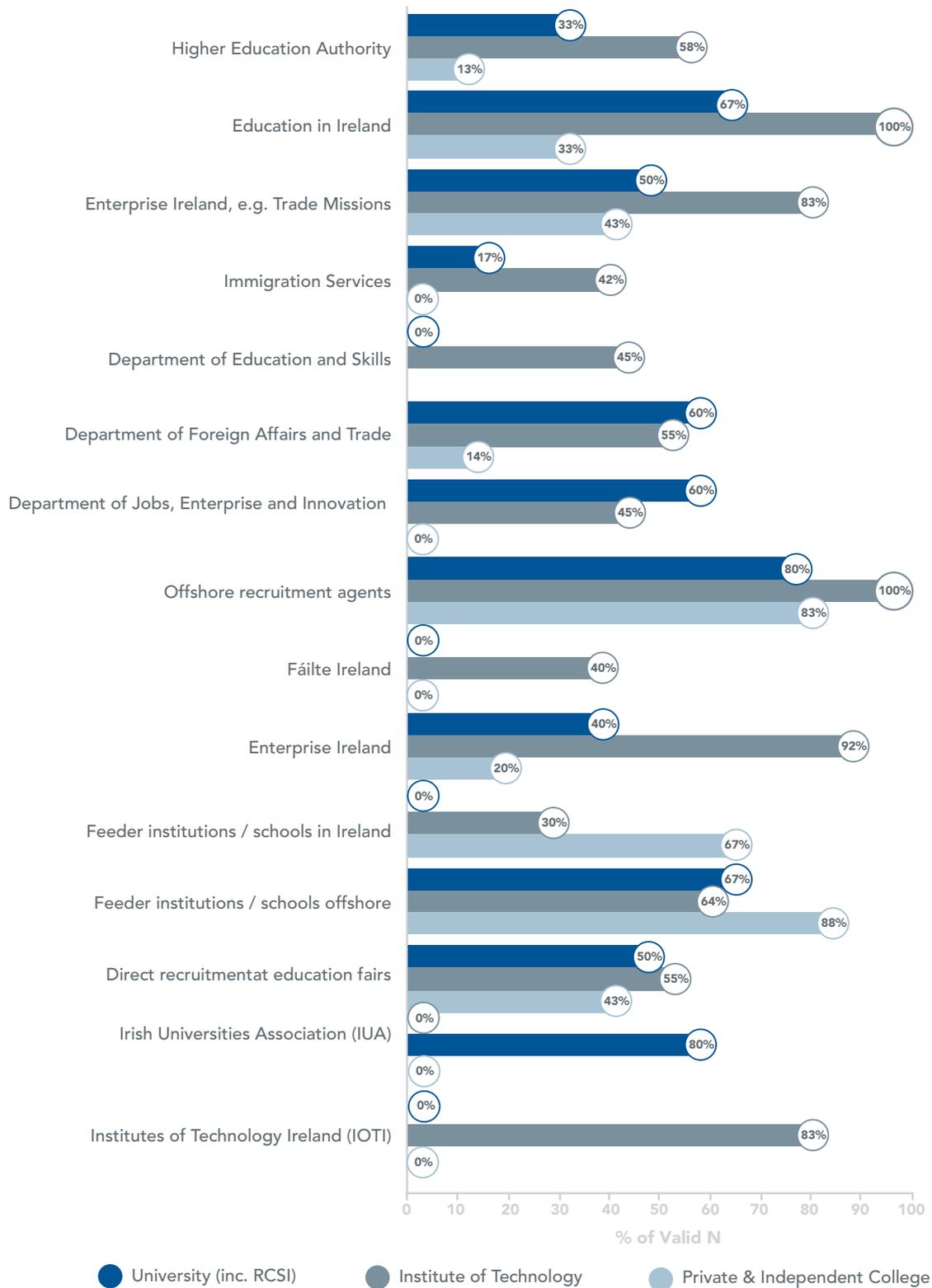
The [---] monitors Government publications and announcements relating to International students. The [---] also avails of its contacts within Government Departments and Agencies as well as overseas diplomatic missions when assessing international opportunities. Finally, the [---], through its network of Institutions and partners both nationally and internationally is kept apprised of developments in overseas markets.

Another institution specifically referred to the role played by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, with reference to new companies setting up in Ireland which creates a positive impression:

Initiatives from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment can influence students' and parents' decisions to choose to study in Ireland, e.g. incentives to attract companies to set up European headquarters in Ireland creates a favourable image for future job prospects. Any negative publicity about changes to employment practices can be negative, e.g. rumours about following changes can be negative, particularly when students are choosing which country to select for higher education - the right to work part-time for international students who are studying full-time, withdrawal of third level graduate extension scheme.

Institutions were asked to assess the effectiveness of other bodies in relation to their marketing efforts. Figure 7 presents the data.

Figure 7: Percentage of respondents who view relevant bodies as 'effective' or 'very effective' in supporting their marketing and recruitment (N=27)



While government policy has focused on the promotion of Ireland as a destination for international students, a general view emerged that Ireland was not well known in key markets, and this was attributed to a lack of government investment in the promotion of Ireland. One director's view illustrated the general consensus:

I think Ireland is still not very well known in key markets. Vietnam for example, is a new market in Asia with a growing middle class. I think there is a lack of awareness about Ireland; we are a small country on the periphery of Europe, [we] still have a lot to do to promote Ireland. [we are] restrained by resources; Education Ireland has two to three people carrying out a marketing function in totality [Director International Office, IOT].

Another director concurred with this view:

We find ourselves selling Ireland more so than the programme or the institution... where is Ireland, what is Ireland, etc. Unfortunately, it is funding, we have our national agency Education Ireland and Enterprise Ireland, all very talented and experienced people but have a tiny budget.

He also suggested that the strategic effort was not coordinated sufficiently at national level to promote Ireland as a destination:

If there were development committees, market committees, programme committees that got together once a quarter and Education Ireland drive it strategically. It is impossible to compete against the British Council. You have global competitors, how do we, with a tiny budget, compete? There is a funding gap, it is no one's fault; institutions put funds into it, the government put funds into it... For all the talk about it being a national strategy but it can't be done without funding [Director, International Office, Private College].

The lack of funding was echoed in the comments of another director, who tended to look outside of Ireland. He also felt that the competition in the university sector for international students was foolish:

I don't really care what the Irish government is doing. HEA reports, 'yeah, we will give you that bit of funding'. I will read the strategy, but you have to deliver on that before I get the funding. The competition between the seven universities is foolish; we're so much more alike than we are different and the capacity for all of us combined is not even a drop in the ocean. There are 7 million internationally mobile students at the moment [Director, International Office, University].

It was also suggested that a deeper interrogation of international markets was required. One director commented:

What is the demand for Ireland and third level education globally. As we saw with the Brazilians, and as is the case with the Malaysians and we see with the Saudi Arabians and other places, countries with their geopolitical locations will rise and fall. Uncertainty and unpredictability, and institutions don't like it, makes them nervous and rightly so. You throw money into a hole... sometimes you get a lot of money back and sometimes you don't [Director, International Office, University].

Another director agreed with this view, and highlighted Ireland's participation in the 'Science Without Borders' programme. The programme allowed Ireland to develop links in Brazil and establish a strong reputation there. However, he expressed the view that science was emphasised too much. His college, by contrast, made links with institutions who were interested in other areas and that was to their mutual benefit:

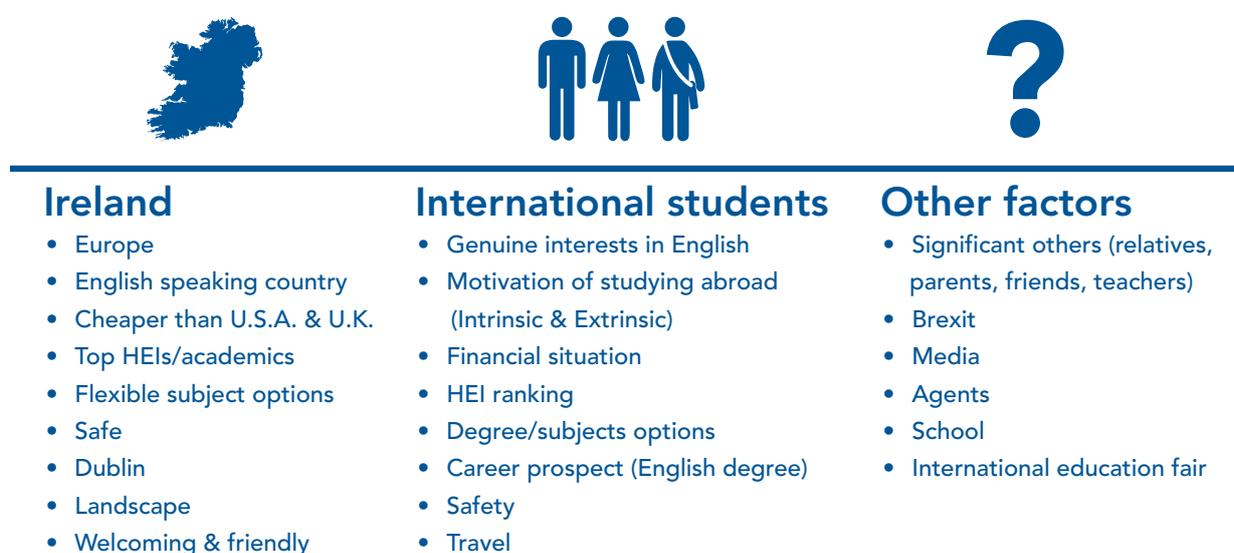
I think the Brazilian situation and the way Ireland handled it was very poor. I said at the outset we were moving too quickly as a nation re: Science Without Borders and the funding will go as quickly as it came, and I was right. Our numbers from Brazil have continued to increase. We never received Science Without Borders or science-based funding, but because of the national brand in Brazil we made solid links with the institutions that were not science orientated. Science Foundation Ireland were involved in bits and pieces, but it wasn't managed properly. We were able to grow our numbers independently of it [Director, International Office, Private College].

A general consensus emerged from the data that the Irish government, in order to promote Ireland as a destination for international students, needed to invest more in the process and also in the institutions themselves.

2.7 Reasons for choosing Ireland: International Students

The factors which impacted on international student decision making about choosing to study abroad and choosing Ireland is illustrated in figure 8.

Figure 8: Factors impacting on decision making around destination country



When asked, most of the international students (EU and non-EU), did not think of Ireland when considering studying abroad initially. In fact, some of them did not even know Ireland. This is especially the case with non-EU students. They had considered popular English-speaking countries such as the U.S.A., Canada and the U.K. One international student commented:

Ireland was never part of the plan. I had first applied to go somewhere in the U.K. and I got accepted but had trouble financially, then I had trouble with the visa and I got denied. I took a year off and I was just working in Brazil and I went to an international student fair in my city. They had a whole corner just for the Irish schools and my high school never told me about Ireland, it was always the U.K. or the U.S.A. So, when I saw that corner, I thought it was really, really interesting. There's no visa required for Ireland. Of course, once I come here I have to have a residence permit something like that. The GNIB card [Undergraduate, English and Drama, Brazil].

For one EU student on Erasmus, she chose Ireland as it was an English-speaking country, her university had links with the university she chose in Ireland, she had heard positive things about the university prior to coming to Ireland and she had wanted to stay in the European Union:

I thought Ireland would be really nice because I heard a lot of good things about the [...] campus and the university. It's a really nice country to travel a little bit. I was really excited to come here. I went on our website and looked up where I could go and then you have different programmes. I could also go to America and everything but it's just more expensive, so I thought I'll just stay in the European Union and then I just looked up all our partner universities and I saw Ireland and I thought, 'yeah, that's it.' [Undergraduate, Languages, Germany].

Another international student chose to study in an institution where there was a partnership agreement in place. She also focused on Ireland as she was aware that there was a strong Polish community in the country. She was reluctant to choose the U.K. due to Brexit:

There is this agreement between universities, there was one university in U.K. in a small village. You heard about Brexit and I know there's a lot of Polish there and I heard a lot of people feel insecure. So, I think I will not go to U.K. because I don't want to have those problems. And I know that I should be welcomed here, there's a lot of Polish people here as well they have really positive opinions about Ireland [Undergraduate, Humanities, Poland].

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the approaches adopted by Irish higher education institutions towards internationalisation. Funding emerged as a key issue in relation to internationalisation, particularly the scarce resources within institutions. The reliance on this approach was viewed as problematic and there was a general awareness that other factors should also inform approaches to internationalisation. These included increasing mobility in the student market, the promotion of outward mobility, securing international accreditation for programmes, and government policy.

Institutions acknowledged that they were not internationalising to the fullest extent,

but were constrained by the lack of resources. The majority of institutions indicated that *Ireland's International Education Strategy 2016-2020*, the *National Education Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* and *QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners* influenced and shaped their internationalisation strategy. Some institutions referred to other documents such as *Education in Ireland Strategy* and the Erasmus Charter and Erasmus policy statements. Institutions were conscious that government policy promoted outward mobility, and this was perceived as challenging. Students were reluctant to go abroad due to language issues, socio-economic issues also played a role and some institutions acknowledged that they had not prioritised this area in the past as it did not generate income for the institution.

Although government policy has focused on the promotion of Ireland as a destination for international students, a general view emerged that Ireland was not well known in key markets and this was attributed to a lack of government investment in the promotion of Ireland. It emerged from this study that strategic effort was not coordinated sufficiently at national level to promote Ireland as a destination and there was room for much more cooperation between institutions with reference to international markets.

The majority of institutions wanted to grow the number of international students and internationalisation was featured in their strategic plans. HEIs targets to increase their number of international students, however such quantitative approaches were not viewed as reflecting the complexity of issues that impacted on internationalisation. The majority of institutions had business plans that focused on Asia, North America, Europe (EU) and the U.K. Universities focused on Asia, North America and the Middle East. Institutes of Technology and private colleges focused on Asia. The tendency to focus on Asia and North America with less emphasis on the EU suggests that institutions are more focused on increasing funding through student fees.

It was acknowledged that international agreements required time and effort, was a slow process and involved relationship building. A number of challenges were identified in relation to partnerships and agreements. Ensuring that actual collaboration occurred was difficult to monitor and required faculty time and effort. The majority of institutions did not set criteria to review and manage the effectiveness of exchange agreements against the strategic plans. Institutions prioritised formal links, agreements, articulation arrangements and memoranda of understanding.

The majority of institutions engaged in bilateral academic credit recognition which allowed students to undertake a substantial portion of their programmes offshore before enrolling in their institutions. Over a third of institutions in this study delivered courses to foreign international distance education students overseas. They adopted a variety of approaches with reference to distance education. Online delivery presented a number of challenges which was attributed in the main to the rapid changes in the online sector. Institutions did not prioritise alumni chapters as part of their internationalisation efforts. Universities prioritised international alumni chapters more than either IOTs or Private Colleges. Much more effort was devoted to the involvement of alumni in student recruitment than engaging international alumni in student career mentoring.

The different approaches to resource allocation for international activity revealed a mixed picture of qualified support and different allocation models. It is clear from the data that funds raised through internationalisation are in the majority of cases not put back into the internationalisation process. This can be attributed to the fact that the funding of the Irish higher education sector is at a critical juncture and institutions find themselves in the unenviable position of securing funds to sustain basic activities that are not currently supported through sufficient investment. Reliance on funding from international students is not beneficial over the longer term to Irish higher education institutions. There was a general consensus that internationalisation was not incentivised enough within organisations and this impacted on the implementation of institutional strategy. Over half of those surveyed were of the view that incentives or reward programmes would contribute to increasing the number of international students coming to the institution. The directors of international offices were in favour of having incentivised schemes in relation to the provision of scholarships and discounted schemes for students. The majority of faculty felt that they were not supported to engage with internationalisation citing the additional work involved, the lack of recognition in the promotion process, and the non-recognition of the time that is involved in such activity.

Institutions used a variety of communication approaches internally with reference to internationalisation. Newsletters and reports featured in the communication strategies, as did direct meetings with faculty and staff. Within institutions, it emerged that there was a lack of clarity around the future direction of internationalisation. In the majority of HEIs internationalisation was driven by the President and the senior management team. Faculty indicated that they were not clear about the implementation of the strategic plan concerning internationalisation and that the strategy had not been explained to them. This suggests that internationalisation had become a top down agenda in many institutions. If faculty became directly involved in internationalisation, the strategy then had meaning for them. The lack of clarity around internationalisation suggests that higher education institutions as organisations need to develop appropriate strategies that can be clearly communicated to faculty and staff who are at the centre of internationalisation activities. Faculty were unclear about the functions performed by colleagues responsible for internationalisation, and it also emerged that not all faculty supported internationalisation in institutions. This was attributed to the changes that occur within institutions as a result of international students being present, and the fact that the teaching and learning context can become difficult for some faculty as a result.

International students offered a range of reasons for choosing to study abroad and for choosing Ireland. They recognised that studying abroad increased their career prospects, they enjoyed speaking English, and wanted to study in an English-speaking country. Ireland's location in Europe, tuition fees which are cheaper than in other English-speaking countries, and the ease of application through institutional websites gave Ireland advantages over other countries.

Chapter 3 examines the impact of internationalisation on curriculum teaching and learning in Irish higher education institutions.

03

Internationalisation of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning in Irish higher education

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the internationalisation of the curriculum and the way in which teaching and learning is perceived by both faculty and students from an intercultural perspective. Barnett and Coate (2005) note that studies of the higher education curriculum have been scarce and research on the internationalisation of the curriculum in higher education is very limited. Internationalisation of curriculum is not easily defined and has tended to focus on areas such as interculturalism (Leask, 2009), the provision of opportunities to explore different cultural perspectives, preparation for the world of work in a global context and preparation for responsible global citizenship (Clifford and Montgomery, 2014). As Robson (2015) suggests, the content and structure of the curriculum and the teaching and assessment methods employed will influence the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes. It is accepted that faculty play a key role in the internationalisation of a university (Leask and Bridge, 2013).

Within the higher education sector, it is difficult to find a definition of curriculum that is agreed upon. As a concept it is viewed as unstable and its boundaries uncertain (Barnett and Coate, 2005). Curriculum forms an important part of the prestige perceptions created by universities (Blackmore, 2016), but curriculum design within the landscape of higher education is often focused on programmes of study and as a process is regarded as both marginal and subservient to the needs of strategic planning and quality assurance (McNutt, 2012). While the outputs of the curriculum of higher education feature prominently in government policy documents, the term curriculum itself is conspicuous by its absence (Barnett and Coate, 2005; Hicks, 2007).

Curriculum in Irish higher education is not discussed explicitly in policy documents, but the expectations and outcomes of university programmes are (Hughes and Munro, 2012). Traditionally, curriculum design in Irish higher education has tended to focus on programme development, responding to professional accreditation requirements, the potential to develop centres of excellence and in some cases to advance the interests of individual academics (Hughes and Munro, 2012). Curriculum content was the main focus of these efforts.

Two models of curriculum design have dominated higher education: a narrow vertical model as represented in the U.K. and a broader curricular model that dominates in the U.S.A. Many countries have followed either one of these approaches (Blackmore, 2016). Universities in a competitive market place advertise their distinctiveness in relation to different indicators and emphasise such variables in programme-level learning outcomes (Gibbs, 2012). However, curriculum decisions are value laden and are conditioned by individual educational ideologies and cultural contexts (Trowler, 1998). Contextual factors shape faculty thinking about their discipline and subject areas (D'Andrea and Gosling, 2005). Many universities worldwide have revised their curricula (Blackmore and Kandiko, 2012) to meet the demands of a global world which requires citizens who can function effectively internationally, can deal with a range of cultures, and can solve complex problems that require the contributions of disciplines.

University academic departments are complex structures, which exist within an even more complex arrangement of organisation and structural configurations such as the wider university and national education systems (Henkel, 2000). Discipline-based cultures are the primary source of faculty members' identity and expertise and include assumptions about what is to be known and how tasks are to be performed, standards for effective performance, patterns of publication, professional interaction, and social and political status (Becher 1989). Loyalty to their discipline on the part of faculty is stronger than to the institution (Jenkins, 1996) and there is a strong tradition of mobility within the disciplinary communities that transcend national boundaries. Moore and Lewis (2004) suggest that new curriculum requirements make demands on faculty and necessitate curriculum management processes that faculty may not embrace or understand. When policies require faculty to change not only what they do, but who they are, they may become what Ball (2003) terms as ontologically insecure. Some disciplinary areas may be more privileged than others, especially those aligned to national (government) economic imperatives (Agnew, 2013).

University strategic plans highlight the skills, knowledge and attitudes that their graduates will bring to their lives and work in a globalised world. Knight (2003) contends that while the rhetoric has been positive, the internationalisation of the curriculum has been a low priority in the past and is poorly understood. Barnett and Coate (2005) suggest that approaches have been piecemeal and reactive rather than coherent. Many academic staff are either uncertain what internationalisation of the curriculum means or do not think it has anything to do with them (Stohl, 2007). Tensions arise where faculty oppose internationalising the curriculum because they see it as irrelevant to their academic programme, and it challenges their preferred identities (Robson and Turner, 2007). Internationalisation of the curriculum may mean different things in different disciplines because the international perspectives required by different professions vary (Leask, 2011). Openness to internationalisation of the curriculum varies across disciplines; representatives of 'hard, pure' disciplines are less open to it than their colleagues in 'softer' or more 'applied' disciplines (Clifford, 2009) and faculty who are interested in this process often do not have the required skills, knowledge, and attitudes to do so effectively (Childress, 2010). Equally, the multiple contexts in which curricula are formulated and enacted in different disciplinary areas results in a variety of interpretations of internationalisation of the curriculum (Leask, 2013). The ways in which faculty members think about internationalisation may influence how faculty members engage in the process of internationalisation and, specifically, how to internationalise their curricular content (Agnew, 2013). Some institutions make little effort to internationalise the experience of domestic students (Hyland et al., 2008). The 'Internationalisation at Home', movement which developed in Europe (Nilsson, 1999) focuses on the local context, recognising that not all students can avail of study abroad opportunities (Beelen, 2007). Where internationalisation is promoted within an environment of equity, equality and diversity, the learning experience is enriched for students and faculty alike (Jones and Brown, 2007).

The influences of changing political, economic, socio-cultural and academic needs have ensured that internationalisation is promoted in a variety of ways in different regions, countries, institutions and programmes offered (Teichler, 2004). In Australia, a focus on graduate attributes (ensuring students leave university with a global perspective) has underpinned much of the recent work on internationalisation in higher education (Crossling, Edwards; Schroder, 2008), alongside efforts to internationalise the curriculum (Leask, 2007). In Scandinavian countries, internationalisation has focused on student mobility (Tossavainen, 2009). Much of the recent internationalisation efforts on mainland Europe has concentrated on the delivery of academic programmes in English (Dobson and Holta, 2001). In the U.K., internationalisation has tended to focus on student recruitment (Warwick and Moogan, 2013).

The Bologna Process had a major impact on higher education systems and curriculum across Europe, including Ireland, laying the foundations for a European Higher Education Area (hereafter EHEA). Since its introduction in 1999, higher education systems have been restructured: learning outcomes and the European Credit Transfer System (the ECTS) – a standardised credit system – were introduced, quality assurance systems have been developed, and greater opportunities for student mobility across European higher education institutions have been introduced (Clarke, 2015). Irish universities responded to the requirements for Bologna compliance in different ways, with both mandatory, institution-wide, 'top-down' approaches and more informal 'bottom-up' approaches having been employed (O'Rourke et al., 2012). However, such change was not easily achieved with many faculty expressing concern about modularisation, outcomes-based curricula, and an over-emphasis on skills and competences (Hughes and Munro, 2012).

Since the start of the austerity period, curriculum planning has become more demonstrably linked to university strategic planning to ensure that programmes are aligned with institutional strategies and are viable in terms of market demand (Hughes and Munro, 2012). This is evidenced by the emergence of a new vocabulary in programme proposals such as key performance indicators, environmental scanning and unit costs (McNutt, 2012). Curriculum planning has also been influenced by the need to seek efficiencies and economies of scale, to develop opportunities for cross-programme teaching, and the merging of class groups for the teaching of common subjects.

According to the *I-graduate survey (2016)* the majority (88%) of international students coming to Ireland were satisfied with their learning experiences. They rated their experience of lecturers and lectures, learning support, course content and organisation, marking criteria and performance feedback highly. They also rated learning facilities highly.

When international students were asked to reflect on their curricular experience, almost three quarters (72%) indicated that they were challenged to analyse ideas and concepts in greater depth: four fifths (80%) felt they were challenged to do their best work, and just under three quarters were encouraged to use information, ideas and concepts from different topics to solve problems. A majority (86%) were of the view that they felt part of a student community committed to learning and were of the view (82%) that student feedback was taken seriously and acted upon (*I-graduate, 2016*).

3.2 Quality Assurance

The majority of institutions which responded to the survey indicated that they adhered to the QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to international learners. Table 22 presents the data.

Table 22: “Does the QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners inform support for international students at your institution?”

	Number	Percent
Yes	24	88.9%
No	2	7.4%
Don't know	1	3.7%
Total	27	100.0%

The majority of institutions (82%) indicated that the QQI *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training* to international learners contributed in the shaping of their organisation's internationalisation policy and practices. Over three quarters (78%) of institutions had formal quality assurance processes in place for their internationalisation activities. Just over one in ten respondents (12.5%) indicated that they did not have such processes in place and just under ten per cent were not aware of such processes. Three quarters (75%) of institutions indicated that they had risk management arrangements in place for current programmes. Over one in ten (12.5%) indicated that they did not, and the same proportion did not know. Institutions referred to different approaches that they adopted within their organisations. For many of the institutions, the quality assurance processes applied to all students in the same way:

All Quality Assurance processes are governed by the [---] Quality Assurance Handbook. This is for all students including International students.

Our quality assurance procedures apply to our international activities.

In terms of risk management, existing procedures were applied equally to international activities and risk management was carried out for the outward mobility of students:

Director is on Strategic Planning Committee, which monitors Risk Register and oversees current programmes. Working with Director of Quality to put quality assurance procedures in place. Currently reporting on various aspects of quality assurance through Strategic Planning Committee.

Quality Assurance procedures are updated by the Quality Office. Risk Management is carried out for outward mobility of students.

One institution made specific reference to ERASMUS and the quality assurance audit associated with that, its alignment with QQI and the role played by the institutional review:

Erasmus QA Audited, aligned with QQI, Institutional review from an academic prospective.

Another institution had quite detailed procedures in place:

The overall framework for quality assurance and enhancement in [---] is set-out in the [---] Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy. The University operates an integrated system for quality assurance and enhancement. The University is responsible for the academic standards of awards made in its name, including those delivered through its international activities. In order to discharge those responsibilities, the University has a range of systems and procedures for assuring and enhancing the academic standards of awards and the quality of its educational provision. These mechanisms include:

1. Regular Peer Review of Academic and Support Units
2. Robust programme approval and curriculum review processes
3. Robust approval, monitoring and review of collaborative taught programme arrangements
4. Module evaluation
5. External Examiner Reports
6. Established procedures for the appointment of staff and a comprehensive range of programmes for their ongoing professional development
7. Student Representation; e.g. Student/Staff Consultative Committees or equivalent; and membership of cross-institutional committees, such as Academic Council Committee on Quality University Programme Board; and Governing Authority. (Note: in international contexts student involvement will also reflect local cultural norms)
8. Systematic student participation and feedback in QA/QE processes
9. Regular review of QA/QE processes International Benchmarking arrangements. International benchmarking is typically achieved through the peer review elements of the quality assurance and enhancement framework and relevant KPIs.

The majority of institutions indicated that the quality assurance programmes in place were not specifically developed for their offshore activity in relation to teaching and learning. Table 23 presents the data.

Table 23: “Are the quality assurance programmes that your institution has in place specifically developed for your offshore activity, or the same as those on your Irish campuses?”

	Number	Percent
Specifically developed for your offshore activity	3	12.0%
Same as Irish campuses	4	16.0%
Don't know / Not applicable	18	72.0%
Total	25	100.0%

Institutions referred to a number of quality assurance approaches with reference to teaching and learning in overseas contexts. One institution had adopted quite a rigorous approach adopted by the governing authority of the institution:

In March 2000, the [---] Governing Authority established a number of General Principles for the Operation of Overseas Programmes. The agreed principles are as follows:

1. All overseas activity must take place within an institutional policy for international education, which is embodied in the University Mission Statement.
2. All overseas programmes must be subject of legally binding contracts, signed by the President of [---] with the partner institution.
3. All overseas activity should be based on a clear statement of the structures to be used for the delivery of the programme.
4. There must be a clear statement of financial and manpower implications of each and every programme.
5. Admission standards for overseas courses should be clearly spelt out in the Agreement.
6. Procedures for enrolment and registration at overseas locations should be, as far as possible, identical to those for domestic students.
7. The syllabus of overseas degrees must be approved by the relevant Departments, Faculties and Academic Council and should closely match degrees provided in Ireland.
8. Examination procedures should be subject to the regulations and control of the [---] Examinations Office.
9. There must be adequate quality control procedures and annual reports on each programme.
10. The financial arrangements for each programme should be transparent and ensure that the University administration is financed for work done. [---] established guidelines and procedures for the Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Taught Programmes. The guidelines provide a framework for the monitoring and review of taught collaborative and transnational arrangements and seek to assure standards and quality while minimising the associated risks.

Another institution has similarly robust arrangements and approached them in the same way as an institutional review:

[---] Internal Quality Assurance Reviews at our Irish base take place at the level of Faculties, Schools & Administrative/Support Units. Reviews of [---] international campuses take the form of full Institutional Reviews very similar in format to Institutional Reviews of Irish Designated Awarding Bodies conducted formerly by the Irish Universities Quality Board and now by Quality & Qualifications Ireland.

One institution did not have an offshore campus, but had applied for inclusion on the government sponsored *Interim List of Eligible Programmes* (2016) and had learned a lot from that in relation to their own quality assurance procedures:

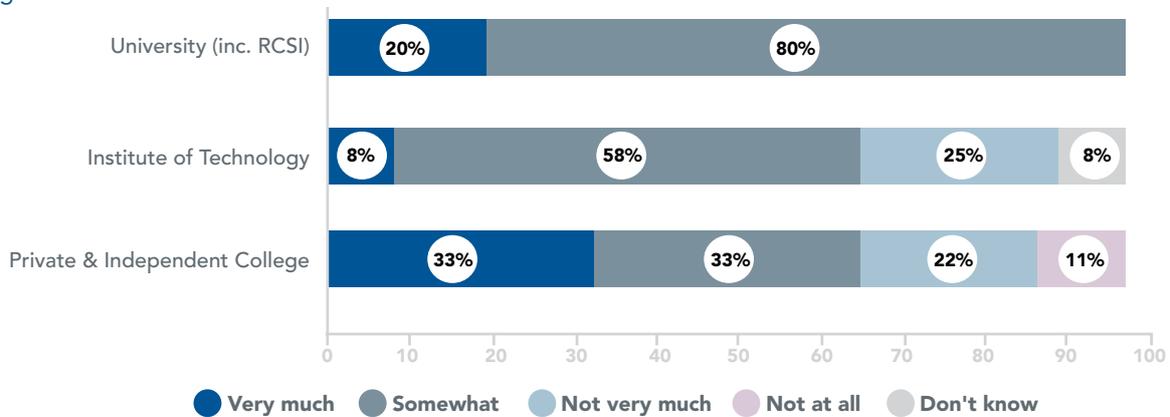
As we don't have an offshore campus, it would be premature to develop specific quality assurance procedures for one. However, we recently applied for inclusion on the Interim List of Eligible Programmes and this process highlighted areas in which our QA procedures may need to be updated to take account of the needs of international students.

Institutions were aware and conscious of the requirements for having robust quality assurance processes around teaching, learning and the curricular provision for international students. Institutions were also conscious of the need to focus on internationalising the curriculum.

3.3 Internationalisation of the curriculum

Over three quarters (82%) of respondents were of the view that the internationalisation of the curriculum at their institution was important. Over half (56%) were of the view that their institution was trying to educate students about other cultures and regions of the world, but less than a fifth (19%) felt that their institution was very committed to this process. Figure 9 illustrates the data.

Figure 9: “Do you believe that your institution is doing enough to educate students about other cultures and regions of the world?”



Courses dealing with global perspectives were viewed as important, and institutions (86%) prepared graduates to enter a global working environment. Over three-quarters (78%) indicated that the international dimension of the curriculum was included in the design and delivery of the curriculum. Many examples of degree programmes were provided to support this view. Institutions referred to the diverse nature of their curricula:

[...] intentionally designs modules and curriculum which are international in content, learning outcomes and assessment. Obviously, modules in Spanish and Chinese language meet our internationalisation aims but modules in Global Business, International Accounting, and Economics contain reading lists, case studies and examples that reflect current international research by design. Other modules and programmes contain universal design features in curriculum formation reflecting commonalities in Computer Science coding, Mathematics, Calculus, literary theory and writing. Moreover, thematic approaches that are universal and international are often used to frame the curriculum as it is taught. For example, sustainability is embedded within a Writing course and citizenship with in our Global Experience module.

One institution used programmatic reviews to embed international approaches in modules and programmes:

During the programmatic reviews in 2016 all faculties and departments were required to review programmes and modules against internationalisation criteria to ensure that international dimensions are delivered in all of our programmes.

Another institution focused on assessment practices to highlight approaches from different regions:

Where appropriate, assessment activities have an internationalisation agenda. This includes exploration of academic and professional practices common to different regions as well as consideration of how certain cultural interpretations or applications of knowledge are concomitant to Humanities, Sciences or Social Sciences and how they may vary from region to region. With regard to researching for assignment completion, learners are encouraged to access, scrutinise and analyse information from a variety of international sources and to evaluate contributions from visiting lectures or speakers and interaction with universally recognised bodies or accreditation bodies.

Institutions offered examples of curricular reform where they expanded traditional subject areas with internationally comparative approaches, delivered curricula that led to internationally recognised professional qualifications, and curricula which prepared students for defined international professions. With reference to programme learning outcomes two-fifths (41%) of institutions indicated that there was some clarity around international learning goals, aims and outcomes of programmes, and just over a quarter (30%) indicated that international learning goals were very clear. A fifth (22%) of institutions indicated that learning goals which emphasised an international perspective were not clearly defined or articulated. A number of different perspectives about the internationalisation of curriculum was offered by directors of international offices and faculty.

The director of an international office reflected on curricular change, and while welcoming programmes that were internationally focused, also expressed reservations about making such changes without consensus:

I get very nervous at major curricular changes without both broad consensus and vetting.

However, he did see many possibilities in this area:

I can imagine all kinds of programmes and curricula that could benefit from a few tweaks and would not only be better programmes, but also more marketable. We suffer from an inability to name our academic degree programmes appealingly or our modules. All that matters is what our degree programme is, can we name it differently? Think about the wider world because not only are you attracting students, but those students are going to be out in the world with that degree title.

He further cautioned that it would be unwise to develop programmes in a casual way because they represented something current:

You don't want to build a degree programme around a buzzword, by the time you get it written, approved, and students recruited, the buzzword is yesterday's news [Director, International Office, University].

For another director, the issue was less about the curriculum offered and more about the educational experience. He suggested that as international qualifications become more available to international students in their home countries, there was now less emphasis on the award type and more emphasis on engagement which took many forms including travel, engagement with industry and social and community groups:

As students can access high-quality international qualifications in their own country the need to travel is now reduced. Twenty years ago, they might not have had third-level opportunities in their own country or were not good enough; those gaps are drastically closing. People who are travelling are travelling for an experience – so what is the experience that you are giving them? It is not the award type, it is global engagement around that, engagement with industry, engagement with social or community projects, things they will bring back to their own country. I went abroad, and I stepped up to do this - this was outside my comfort zone, that is what they are looking for [Director, International Office, Private College].

For the majority of faculty, the term internationalisation of the curriculum was unfamiliar. They were unsure as to what the term meant but offered examples as to what their own experience represented. For one faculty member, the nature of the subject made internationalising the curriculum very easy, and as such, it happened by default:

It's easy because, particularly in my discipline, there's nothing but international finance, international banking, international capital markets, where there are international phenomena. The nature of the subject makes it easy to internationalise [Associate Professor, Business, University].

One faculty member was directly involved in the design of programmes specifically targeted at international students. One element of the programme which was mandatory but not credit weighted focused on cultural differences between East and West. She was of the view that this worked very effectively:

I'm very aware of the profile of students taking the [---] programme. We put in additional support, not just English language but culture, looking at differences between East and West. It worked really well. It was not credit bearing, but mandatory. They felt that they were able to understand what was going on. They were completely culture shocked when they came first [Lecturer, Management, Private College].

Other faculty did not feel that the internationalisation of the curriculum should be explicit, and the following comment illustrates that perspective:

For me, it doesn't have to be so obvious. It should already be designed to accommodate different learning styles, it shouldn't be so restrictive that only a particular person or group should be able to do it [Lecturer, Science, University].

Curricular design within the university context was viewed as a disjointed process and lacked coordination:

I think there is a need for more coordination at faculty level [Professor, Computer Science, University].

Another faculty member concurred with this view and attributed this to curricular inflexibility:

Our academic programmes are designed bottom up and often without clear incentivised structures, so schools are not necessarily ready to offer the kind of courses that will attract non-EU students. Some of our curriculum structures make us quite inflexible [Professor, Languages, University].

One faculty member offered the view that as the majority of students were domestic, then programmes should focus on their needs in the context of changes within Irish industry:

Curriculum has evolved to meet the needs of Irish students. We will always have more Irish students than we will have international students, and the course has evolved as the industry has. In that sense, ours is not an international programme [Professor, Engineering, University].

A number of different views emerged in relation to assessment. While over three-quarters (78%) of institutions indicated that they had encouraged staff to employ assessment tasks that are culturally sensitive, faculty members offered different views about the assessment process. One faculty member indicated that he did not think about this dimension in his assessment processes:

I don't really take it into account I must say [Senior Lecturer, Business, IOT].

Another faculty member spoke about fairness and that he evaluated all students in the same way:

They evaluated the same as everybody else. We generally find they don't do so well in the first semester because the English might be holding them back. I use the same criteria whether they are international or Irish [Lecturer, Business, University].

One faculty member referenced continuous assessment as a way of checking on the progress of international students and acknowledged the cultural differences that existed with reference to assessment:

I have continuous assessment in which I ask all of my students to do a few questions for me, just to see where they are at. If I notice problems, then I will meet with them individually. You know this is a person who did very well, and this is what they wrote, and we go through it step by step where they need to get to. They could be academically good, but oftentimes it is culture and is more about the expectation of what scientific writing is. In certain countries they would not have written exams at all [Lecturer, Science, University].

While institutions viewed the internationalisation of curriculum as being important, it was an area that still required more time and investment, from a curricular review and design perspective, to the marketing of certain areas.

The term 'internationalisation of the curriculum' did not resonate with faculty. Some relied on subject content to promote this aspect, and others felt that programmes should not cater for one particular cohort. One faculty member expressed the view that programmes linked to industry should be focused on the Irish context. While institutions promoted the need for culturally sensitive assessment tasks, faculty did not. One faculty member used continuous assessment to monitor international students and provided them with exemplars of materials that represented achievement.

3.4 International students' perceptions of the curriculum

International students were asked to comment on curricula and the emphasis on internationalisation and offered a range of perspectives in relation to the international dimension of the curriculum as they had experienced it. One undergraduate student from Poland who was on Erasmus was struck by the difference in approach to the subject in the Irish institution, compared to her experience in her home institution:

Here the study is mostly practical stuff, we do a lot of projects and surveys, it's supposed to be easy, but you need to analyse it. Sometimes, you can take a book to the exams or work on the text too. ... In Poland we learn a lot, but we don't use it as much [Undergraduate, Business, Poland].

An international student from Brazil commented on the broad curriculum that was on offer, allowing her the opportunity to study more than one subject. She also commented on the mix of international and Irish modules:

I do two subjects so for me that's really important, I couldn't choose just one subject, and in [---] they also had a broad curriculum programme. I would say it's more global but because we are in Ireland there are a lot of Irish specific courses and it's up to me to choose them or not. For example, in my first two years, almost all of my classes were compulsory and for theatre we had one Irish module which talked about the national theory in Ireland. But everything else was comedy, Greek theatre, modernism. I think that was a really nice mix and I would say it's definitely global [Undergraduate, Theatre Studies, Brazil].

Another international student from India concurred with this view and felt that the curriculum he had experienced at Masters' level was globally focused with some aspects specific to Ireland:

There are some modules that are very, very global in my course. For example, counselling skills is very global, and we talked about [the] cultural aspect of counselling skills. It's very huge; it's an amazing module. I can definitely put it in any country in the world and it's the same, but there are some modules that are very Irish specific. But I kind of feel that they should be Irish specific.

He also attributed the international emphasis to the class mix and had benefitted from the experience of different nationalities within the class context:

The class we had was pretty global, we had 6 Americans, 2 Canadians, some British and Irish. I was the only Asian guy there because not a lot of Asians study psychology abroad. It was very globalised, I learned a lot. Not even just from the course but from our class discussions. [Postgraduate, Psychology, India].

Some students referred to the different challenges that the curriculum posed. One student referred to referencing conventions:

When I first became a student, just like most other students, [I'd] never done referencing in [an] academic paper. So that was confusing at the start, where you have to understand how to reference. I did two subjects and they both had two different referencing systems, so I had to learn two systems of referencing at the same time [Undergraduate, English and Drama, Brazil].

International students recognised the different curricular approaches to those in their home countries, commented on the mix of international and global modules and were aware that the presence of other nationalities in the class had enhanced their curricular experience.

3.5 Teaching and Learning Approaches

Teaching and learning is fundamental to the mediation of curriculum and institutions recognised the benefits of having international students in their teaching and learning communities, referring to cultural engagement and broadening learner experiences.

Cultural engagement, understanding of international perspectives, understanding of differing religious beliefs. Better dynamic is created within multi-cultural groups.

International students bring a variety of knowledge, values, perspectives and experience to the community environment which allow for a richer experience for all students, international and domestic.

Some institutions referred to the fact that the presence of international students encouraged exchange opportunities and enhanced the teaching and learning experiences of faculty:

Broadens learner experience and exposure to other cultures. Adds to the relevance of programmes and modules with international dimension. Provides exchange opportunities. Enhances the teaching and learning experience of academic staff. Provides staff and learners with the opportunity to network internationally.

They provide an enrichment of the social and cultural life of the college and encourage cross-cultural interaction and understanding. In the classroom, they can change both the content and the process of education and bring an international perspective to discussions, and challenge and encourage teachers to consider alternate approaches to their teaching.

While the presence of international students was viewed as facilitating new approaches to teaching, one institution also observed this in the online context where students in a professional area learned much about other national systems:

Over the past five years, we have had a small number of international students on our [---]. This 100% online programme is for qualified teachers, teaching in different educational settings. The great value is that teachers bring a wealth of knowledge on different policies, for example, a teacher in South Africa was amazed that the Irish government had a policy for the social inclusion of children with ADHD. Students learn from each other. Our numbers have been small but include students from Japan, China, Canada, Australia etc. Typically, these students are Irish teachers working abroad, but in the last few cohorts we have had natives of those countries.

The presence of international students was viewed positively by the majority of faculty as they felt this enhanced the learning experiences of Irish students:

In terms of undergraduates, when I see the European students they come in and outperform the Irish students. Their work ethic, they are more mature, more driven, here for a year and want to get the best out of it and it raises the game for Irish students [Lecturer, Tourism, Private College].

3.6 Irish students' perspectives

Irish students who had been on Erasmus understood the experiences of international students on their campuses and were able to highlight the differences between international and domestic students.

One student acknowledged the investment made by international students and was conscious that domestic students had more stability in their social and personal circumstances by virtue of being at home:

There is a lot more to invest in for them. Especially if it's not their native language, if there's language barrier, if there's cultural differences, it can be a lot of time to invest I feel.

He continued that because domestic students had so much security they might not have the patience or interest in meeting international students:

In the university, one person here might have their boyfriends or girlfriends, their family, they have their network there and their security blanket, and are very happy that way. To meet an international person, if there is language barrier, cultural differences, it requires patience and you need a genuine interest. I feel that the people who have their security blanket here are at a loss because meeting international students broadens your mind [Undergraduate, Humanities, Ireland].

There was also the view that international students tended to stick together on campus:

Unfortunately, in classes, you don't get to associate with people really unless you are in a group project with international students. I do feel like a lot of times, international students in the university who are on Erasmus stick together. [When I was] on Erasmus it would have been just international students you'd be friends with, you wouldn't be friends with people from the Dutch university. International students stick with international students [Group Interview: Irish undergraduate students].

One director of an international office also commented on this aspect, particularly on the reluctance of first-year students' willingness to engage:

Sometimes first-years don't see the value of mixing with students from other cultures. A high percentage of mature students will participate. A student in more advanced years of study is more likely to mix than a first-year student. I suppose when you are in first-year you have lots of inhibitions [Director, International Office, IOT].

An Irish student who had experience as an international student on Erasmus appreciated the patience that others had shown him when he was learning French and German:

From people who had patience with me in France and Germany when I was learning French and German, I have more patience with people now if they are struggling with English.

This was echoed by another student who had benefitted from being on Erasmus and impacted on her interaction with international students on campus:

Before I went on Erasmus, I was always so nervous talking to people from other countries because I'd be afraid that because of the language barrier, I wouldn't be able to converse with them properly. Now I will make my best effort to try to talk to people. Before I went on Erasmus I was a very self-conscious person but going on Erasmus changed me; I just have to come out of my shell more and it's just been great [Undergraduate, Humanities, Ireland].

One Irish student was conscious of the need to make international students feel comfortable on campus:

You find yourself saying 'hello' to international students to make them feel a little bit more comfortable around the campus because you know that was you last year. It just took one person in the other country to say hello to you, to say 'oh, I can show you where this place is', and they feel more comfortable wondering around your campus [Undergraduate, Law, Ireland].

However, another student referred to the fact that as she was so busy with course work she did not put the effort into meeting new people:

Because we are spending more time studying, we are spending more time in classes together. I just haven't been going out there to meet new people [Undergraduate, Humanities, Ireland].

An Irish student who did not have international experience had not thought about the presence of international students in her class in terms of group participation or discussion:

I suppose I never really thought about it. There's always group discussion, and you guys talk to each other and that's where we are encouraged to engage in dialogue and that is something that I took for granted but it's always been something that I had in college and something I really benefit from.

She continued and stated that she had benefitted in her learning because international students were present:

I only realised this year that there's such a difference culturally in the way that we perform. Irish culture tends to be very much by the book, by the script, very naturalistic. Then this girl came in and she did her performance of an Irish classic and she changed the game. She broke up all the dialogue and did everything like nothing was natural, everything was very changed, and I loved it [Undergraduate, Drama, Ireland].

Another Irish student was of the view that lecturers who did not put their resources and slides on Blackboard (the VLE) made it difficult for international students who had problems with English:

You have Blackboard online resource where you can put up your slides and comments and things like that. Now they say to us all the time, that is the job of the student. But if you are a student struggling with English, taking notes can be very difficult. So, if they were able to put up notes, you would have a meeting afterwards about what was discussed and a few points that were raised I think that would be massive improvement. However, doing so is resource dependent [Postgraduate, Environmental Science, Ireland].

3.7 Intercultural approaches to teaching and learning

Over four-fifths (89%) of institutions indicated that teaching and learning arrangements played an important role in promoting intercultural interaction. The same proportion indicated that staff were encouraged to employ teaching strategies that engaged students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Faculty expressed different views in relation to teaching and learning approaches. One faculty member illustrated his approach:

I use fun in the class; interaction using examples. A lot of reflection of what goes on in the real world, but I try and contextualise it within marketing [Senior Lecturer, Marketing, IOT].

One faculty member emphasised skills and competencies:

All about skills, competency. For me, a big emphasis is getting people to reflect on their learning and what they have achieved [Lecturer, Communications, IOT].

Another faculty member expressed a different view, and did not adopt an intercultural approach as the number of international students in the class did not warrant such an approach:

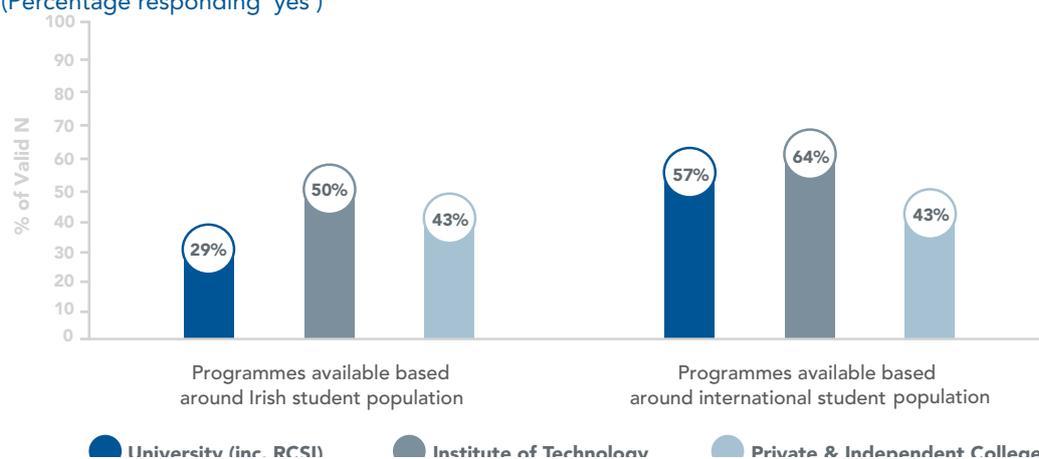
We don't have enough international students in our department for the Irish students to benefit from it. Out of 207 we have only 1, we can't dilute enough for it to be meaningful for the others [Professor, Engineering, University].

Institutions tended to make some provision with reference to intercultural approaches. One director of an international office indicated that cultural awareness programmes were offered through the institution's Teaching and Learning Unit:

Once a semester we run cultural awareness programmes, teaching international students in classrooms. Originally, we learned that academics need specific training programmes. We liaise a lot with the Teaching and Learning unit and what they are doing. For example, every year we take academics from a long-standing partner institution to participate in our Teaching and Learning programmes for a semester or a full year [Director, International Office, IOT].

Just over a quarter (29%) of universities indicated that they provided intercultural training to teaching staff referring to programmes available to Irish students, while over half of the universities surveyed offered intercultural training programmes to teaching staff who were involved in programmes based around the international student population. Half of the IOTs surveyed provided intercultural training programmes to teaching staff on programmes available to Irish students and over two-thirds of IOTs provided intercultural training to teaching staff which was focused on the international student population. Over two-fifths of private colleges offered training to teaching staff working on programmes focused on Irish and international students. Figure 10 presents the data.

Figure 10: "Does your institution make inter-cultural training programmes available for teaching staff?" (Percentage responding 'yes')



In general, faculty had not been offered intercultural training. Some viewed it as a good idea:

I wouldn't mind; everything has been self-learned. The first time I got on a flight abroad, I was going abroad for my first job. I know what it is like to get off a plane in a strange place and not knowing a word of the language. Get on and try to make yourself useful. I'm sure I would learn an awful lot through some formal learning process [Professor, Engineering, University].

Others indicated that they had not received training and would like to contribute to it based on their experiences:

No, I wouldn't mind contributing to it [Lecturer, Science, University, International Faculty].

A faculty member felt that it was extremely important and indicated that such a programme should focus on cultural awareness and involve staff and postgraduate students input into this area:

No, officially nothing. It's something I've been pushing for staff. I've said in a recent report that I think we absolutely have to have that. The first thing I would prioritise would be to look at the regions we actually have students from and then I would do cultural awareness for those particular regions. I would involve people from those regions, other staff members in [...] from those regions, or maybe some postgraduate students we have and we'd make sure our staff have an understanding of some of the issues [Lecturer, Business, University].

Other faculty members did not view intercultural training as being relevant to them. One felt that he needed training in how to make intercultural learner groups work:

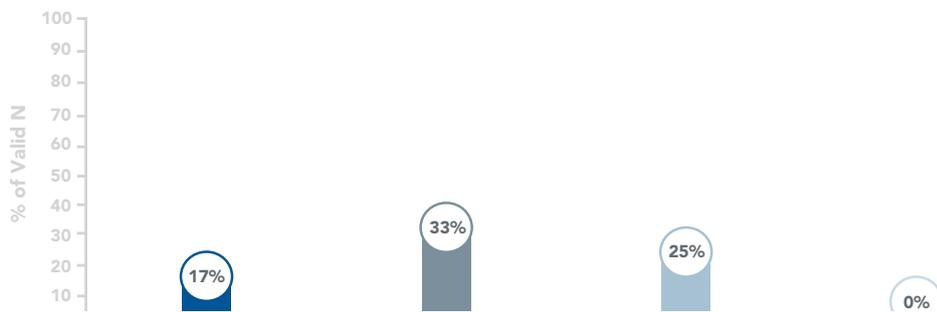
Through my various involvement with internationalisation I don't really think that I need intercultural training. But I could do with training, if I look at some of my colleagues, I think training to make intercultural learner groups work. I think help to address that for the lecturers would be good [Professor, Modern Languages, University].

Another faculty member indicated that he did not require training as his experience abroad was sufficient:

No, not that I wouldn't like it, it's just I don't need it. I've lived in several countries and I don't know what I could learn. I feel as comfortable in one environment as here [Associate Professor, Business, University].

The majority of institutions had centres for teaching and learning, and over half (58%) indicated that these units provided support for the internationalisation of the curriculum. Over a quarter (29%) indicated that these units did not support this activity. A minority (17%) of institutions provided seed funding for the internationalisation of teaching and learning, and almost three quarters (72%) indicated that they did not. Figure 11 illustrates the data.

Figure 11: "Does your institution provide seed funding for internationalisation of teaching and learning?"
(Percentage responding 'yes')



For one faculty member, the opportunity to participate in teacher exchange programmes was very worthwhile, while noting the formality of the teaching and learning context in other countries:

At this stage I have lectured over 53 nationalities. It is very interesting to see that other countries have the same issues and problems with slight variations. The main difference I experience is the informality of a rural Institute of Technology with the very formal experience of the Asian context [Lecturer, Business, IOT].

This view was shared by another faculty member who found the experience of working with students in their own culture beneficial and that is provided new insights:

Definitely, though we have a wide range of nationalities here, you get to see them in their own country and environment and it gives you a better insight into their cultures [Senior Lecturer, Accounting, Private College].

Another faculty member who had extensive experience lecturing abroad concurred with this view and argued that:

It is imperative in higher education that we are as international as we can be. It is absolutely crucial [Professor, English, University].

Institutions identified a number of challenges that the international dimension brings to the teaching and learning experience:

Language, cultural awareness, differences in teaching styles, management of expectations - marketing schemes and grading systems, integration with local students.

English language proficiency is the most commonly cited challenge. In the classroom, it can result in those students being left behind and/or slow the pace of delivery of course material. Integration of international students into the mainstream student social activity.

Linguistic differences in teaching and learning methods, differences in approaches to assessment and feedback. Unfamiliarity with social, cultural and academic norms, initially at least.

Challenges around cultural awareness were also identified:

Opposing cultural influences, particularly impacting upon modes of dress in the professional environment (e.g. disinclination to wear 'scrubs' on grounds of modesty) and upon social engagement (e.g. the Islamic prohibition on students socialising in environments where alcohol may be present).

Overcoming initial integration within groups; recognising religious holidays such as Ramadan, which can impact on student engagement at critical learning times.

Managing learner needs was also indicated as a potential area of challenge:

Managing learning needs of different learner groups. Linguistic challenges. Teaching and learning systems different to what many international students are used to (e.g. large amount of team/project work challenging for Chinese/Malaysian students used to a rote-learning, didactic approach. Large amounts of continuous assessment difficult for some international students. Cultural reserve among some international students' groupings. Tendency to remain in study-groups with fellow-country students on- and off-campus.

Faculty found that working with international students presented a number of challenges. One of the challenges was group work, and faculty viewed this differently. One faculty member illustrated the general perspective:

I encourage group projects, I don't enforce it, but encourage them to work in diverse groups and those who do benefit more [Professor, Computer Science, University].

For other faculty members, a different view emerged, as reflected in the following comment:

Groups where the Irish students are expected to do all the work. Irish students get frustrated trying to explain, telling them exactly what to do. I don't get the opportunity to have the one on one with students, only where difficulties arise [Senior Lecturer, Business, IOT].

For one faculty member, language was an issue and the fact that international students tended to stick together and not mix:

Language can often be one [issue]. Even though they are supposed to have a minimum standard, it's sometimes surprisingly bad and sometimes it's very good. [Another issue] is when a group of international students come here, they tend to congregate together outside of the class. I encourage them very, very strongly to join a club or society to interact with Irish or other students [Associate Professor, Business, University].

3.8 International students' perceptions of teaching and learning

International students were generally positive about their teaching and learning experiences. One postgraduate student liked the fact that independent work was encouraged and that he had positive interactions with faculty who responded to his queries:

It's independent work and very remarkable. Then administrative things, writing emails, even the professor responded within a day or two. That's amazing. Even my supervisor responded. Back in India, you just try to catch them, and you know they don't care. [Postgraduate, Psychology, India].

One student was less positive about his experience:

Imagine the presentation on the wall, you have a presentation on the screen, and they were just reading these bullets, exactly word by word. I don't need the teacher for this. I don't need anyone to read this for me, it's not inspiring and you are sleeping in this class [Undergraduate, Engineering, Uzbekistan].

This was echoed by another student who liked the structure of the programme, but suggested that lecturers need to become more au fait with technology, and the literature required updating. She was also unhappy when she did not get her choice of modules:

I really enjoy the idea of 6 weeks and a week off, 6 weeks and a month off. That week in the middle is so necessary for me with the amount of reading I have to do with my curriculum. I also find the international students always love it as an excuse to go to Europe for a week. In terms of course curriculum, am I happy with it? Yeah, I think a lot of our lecturers struggle with technology sometimes. I think maybe lecturers should be taught how to use the projectors. Maybe in some courses, the literature needs a little bit of updating. It's kind of stuck in the past. And then finally, the English department allocation of modules was so wrong. I got none of the modules that I wanted for my third year and that made me not want to do English in my fourth year [Undergraduate, English, Poland].

Another student was struck by the different approach to teaching and learning and the fact that she learned from the way Irish students viewed different issues which helped her own learning:

I had a group project with just Irish people and then with just international people and then mixed. It was really interesting, I felt that Irish students are not really excited about group projects, they are not really hard working, but you can work with them. I had a political group project and you see something the German way and then an Irish person says, 'but we think it's like that'. You'd maybe not thought of that before, so that's really interesting [Undergraduate, Social Science, Germany].

One student expressed surprise that her course did not include lectures:

It's very much seminar based, you do your readings in advance of the meeting, and then you discuss it. I know a lot of the people in the course were hoping that there would be a lecturing element to it and that wasn't the case at all. The only place where it almost forged on a lecturing element was in our research methodologies [Undergraduate, English and Drama, Brazil].

Another student spoke about the support that she received in relation to essay writing:

When I entered, my drama department gave us X amount of study skills classes to help us be prepared for X essay style, proper academic essays. Some other modules didn't offer that, and I would have definitely struggled without that support. The difference between a secondary school essay and a college essay is so vastly different that I would have sank [Undergraduate, Drama, Germany].

International students were conscious of the different approaches adopted by Irish students with reference to the completion of projects and assignments. From the perspective of international students, Irish students did not worry about deadlines, were not concerned about the presentation of projects, and do not communicate or share their work. One student commented:

The major difference is that European students are very afraid of deadlines. They think that they do not have enough time and they ask a lot of questions. I really didn't like this because I know that I can do it. Irish students are not afraid of tight deadlines; it's the opposite, the tighter is the deadline, the better the work. For Irish students it doesn't matter how the project looks... For Europeans, they will be very worried because it's English and about how it looks. Irish students do not really communicate. Officially, it's a team project but finally it's a part-project. Europeans are sharing, all the time. We really try to communicate because it's a project and you need to work together [Undergraduate, Engineering, Belarus].

For Irish students, working with international students brought new challenges. One student commented:

If everyone comes from a different country and different universities, every university has their own way of doing things. People have different ways of learning and even writing an essay is different, the structure and the layout of things. If you are working with Irish students you know what's expected of you and everyone is going to have their own opinions about what you should write about: X, Y and Z, but when you are with international students you have that extra challenge of coming from different backgrounds [Undergraduate, Humanities, Ireland].

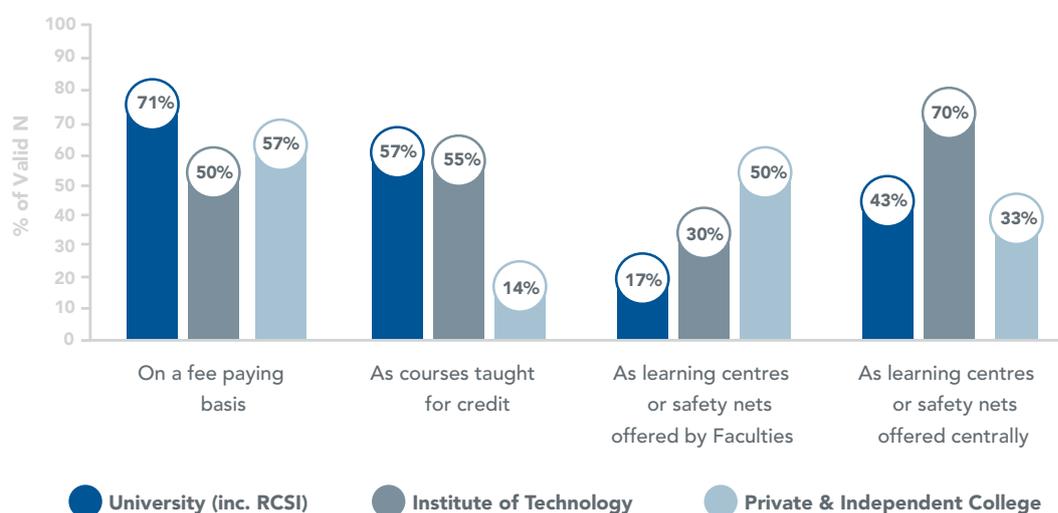
Another Irish student who participated on a programme with an international mix of students was initially reluctant to work with international students in groups:

To be honest, if you are doing a 3 or 4-year course, for the first year, maybe the first half of second year, you don't want to do something that you think might be risky, like working with a group of international students because you don't know how it's going to turn out. But this slowly disappears, when you get to fourth year and third year and you have to form groups, there's no problems because you've seen the ability of international students [Undergraduate, Business, Ireland].

3.9 Academic supports

Institutions offered a range of academic supports to international students. These included English language programmes on a fee-paying basis and as courses taught for credit. Figure 12 presents the data.

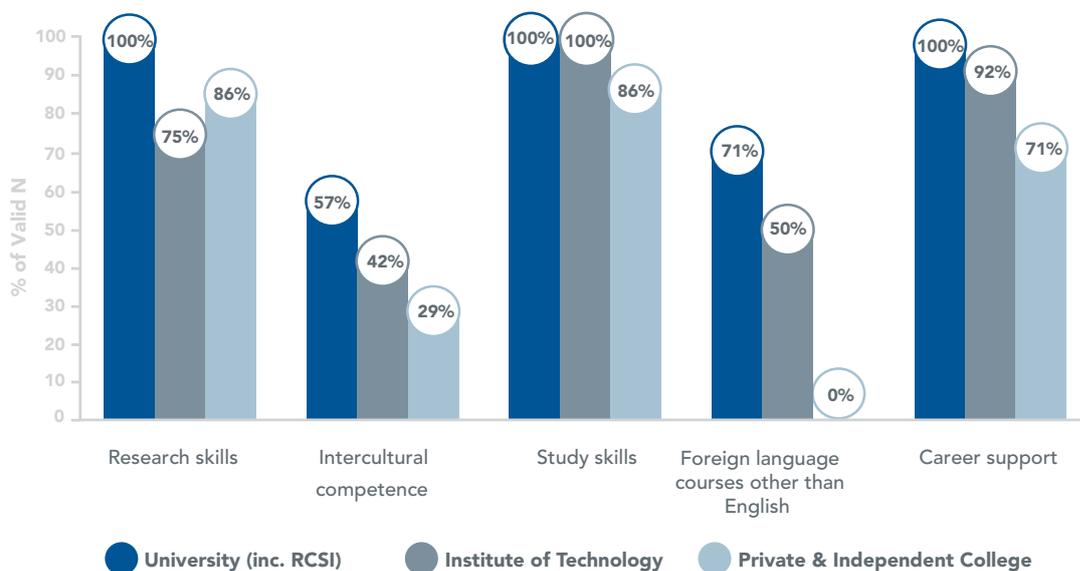
Figure 12: "Does your institution offer English language programmes or assistance for international students enrolled in or enrolling in award courses? (Percentage of respondents answering 'yes')



The majority of universities offered English language programmes on a fee-paying basis, over half of private colleges offered this support on a fee-paying basis and just half of IOTs did so. Institutions offered assistance to international students through learning centres that were offered at central level. Half of private colleges offered learning centres at faculty level.

Institutions were asked to indicate what supports they offered international students who were at undergraduate level. Figure 13 illustrates the data.

Figure 13: "Please indicate which of the following competency supports are offered to international students at undergraduate level at your institution"



The majority of institutions emphasised study skills and career support at undergraduate level. At postgraduate level, the emphasis was on research skills (88%), career support (77%), and study skills (73%). At doctoral level, research skills were emphasised (84%), career support (74%), and study skills (58%).

International students expressed mixed views about the availability of academic supports. Some availed of the supports and benefitted from them:

I have used three or four of them. The first was how to write a research proposal to your supervisor. The orientation week that was organised by the Graduate Students' Union for the postgraduates is amazing. How to write a thesis and supervisory relationships are problems. The supervisory relationship for international or national students. I'm going for a summer programme to learn how to write your research paper so that it can get published [Postgraduate, Psychology, India].

Other students, while aware of the services, did not avail of the supports that were on offer. One student illustrates the common view but pointed to the fact that it helped when she was treated equally to all of the other students:

I've never looked for the academic support, but there's student learning services. I think it's really cool what they do. I always get their emails and notifications, I liked them on social media just so that I know what's on offer if I need it. They did mock exams for people as well. They also have one-on-one drop-in sessions if you have specific questions. In my course, in my first year we had a study skills module for the entire year. So, in the first semester they explained a little about academics, there was even a small grammar test and the entire class had to do it. There's maybe 3 or 4 people who were not from Ireland from my course. So, it was nice because it's not like I felt 'oh the international students need help', no, it's actually for all the students. They did a short one-hour session explaining how the bibliography and citations should be for the English department. On the academic side, these two things definitely helped me a lot. I think [---] offers so much, it's just up to the students to actually get up and go and sign up [Undergraduate, English and Drama Studies, Brazil].

Another student was of the view that more in-class supports could have been offered to students. He commented:

I feel like it might be a bit difficult for students who are still learning English, and in some classes, it might be more difficult than others. We have student representatives in each class and ideally students who are having trouble could go to their class representatives who would be a liaison between the lectures and the students. From my experience, the student reps don't really do that much. I think that'd be something to improve next year because you are supposed to have those in-class supports. I think that's really important [Undergraduate, Business, U.S.A.].

3.10 Conclusions

This chapter focused on the internationalisation of the curriculum and teaching and learning in Irish higher education institutions. The majority of institutions acknowledged that the internationalisation of curriculum was important. Institutions offered examples of curricular reform where they expanded traditional subject areas with internationally comparative approaches, delivered curricula that led to internationally recognised professional qualifications, and designed curricula which prepared students for defined international professions. Institutions acknowledged that less emphasis was placed on articulating learning outcomes and clear learning goals that included international components. Some institutions used programmatic reviews to embed international approaches in modules and programmes. It was acknowledged that more needed to be achieved in this area. Institutions were also conscious of the need to prepare graduates to enter a global working environment and the need to emphasise the broader educational experience beyond the curriculum which included engagement with industry and social and community groups.

For the majority of faculty, the term internationalisation of the curriculum was unfamiliar to them, but they offered examples of their approaches to their subjects. Faculty offered mixed views about internationalising the curriculum, for some, it was very important, others it did not see the need to explicitly state this in learning outcomes, and as the majority of students were domestic, programmes should focus on their needs.

A number of different views emerged in relation to assessment. The majority of institutions indicated that they had encouraged staff to employ assessment tasks that were culturally sensitive. While institutions promoted culturally sensitive assessment tasks, faculty did not include this dimension in their courses. Faculty members offered different views; issues such as fairness and equality dominated the discussion about assessment. Some faculty used continuous assessment to check the progress of international students and acknowledged the cultural differences that existed in relation to assessment experiences.

International students offered a range of perspectives about the international dimension of the curriculum as they had experienced it. Students commented on the broad curriculum offered, the applied and practical approaches promoted and the international mix in their classes. Reference was made to the challenges that the curriculum posed: referencing conventions, in-class support for language development and essay writing.

Institutions recognised the benefits of having international students in their teaching and learning communities, referring to cultural engagement and broadening learner experiences. The presence of international students encouraged exchange opportunities and enhanced the teaching and learning experiences of faculty. The presence of international students was viewed positively by the majority of faculty as they felt this enhanced the learning experiences of Irish students.

Where Irish students had gained international experience, they were very favourably disposed to international students and understood their experiences of Irish campuses. They acknowledged that Irish students had more stability in their social and personal circumstances by virtue of being at home. However, they also felt that international students tended to stick together on campus and some domestic students felt that as they were busy with coursework, they did not put effort into meeting new people. Some had not thought about the presence of international students in their classes.

The majority of institutions indicated that teaching and learning arrangements played an important role in promoting intercultural interaction and that faculty were encouraged to employ teaching strategies that engaged students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Faculty expressed mixed views in relation to teaching and learning approaches. Some used fun activities to promote interaction in class, while others emphasised the importance of skills and competencies. A minority of institutions provided intercultural training to faculty and teaching staff in general. Intercultural training was offered to teaching staff who were involved in programmes based around international student population. Faculty expressed mixed views with reference to intercultural training. Some viewed it as being very important but had not received this kind of support. Others did not see such training as being relevant to them.

Institutions relied on Teaching and Learning Units to provide support for the internationalisation of teaching and learning. The majority of institutions did not provide seed funding for the internationalisation of teaching and learning. However, institutions indicated that they had provided professional development opportunities for staff that had an international dimension. Faculty who had experienced teacher exchange programmes found the experience very worthwhile as it provided them with greater insights into the needs of international students.

HEIs were conscious of the challenges that the international dimension brought to the teaching and learning experience. These included managing the language needs of students and cultural awareness. Faculty also pointed to a number of challenges with reference to working with international students which included group work and different views emerged with reference to using it. On the one hand, it was viewed as an important approach, but challenges arose where language was an issue and where international students tended to stick together and were reluctant to mix. International students were mainly positive about their teaching and learning experiences. They were struck by the different approaches to teaching and learning and learned much from the way Irish students viewed different issues.

Institutions offered a range of academic supports to international students. These included English language programmes on a fee-paying basis and as courses taught for credit. The majority of universities offered English language programmes on fee paying basis, over half of private colleges offered this support on fee basis and just half of IOTs did so. Institutions tended to offer assistance to international students through learning centres that were offered at central level. Half of private colleges offered learning centres at faculty level. The majority of institutions emphasised study skills and career support at undergraduate level. At postgraduate level the emphasis was on research skills, career support and study skills. International students expressed mixed views about the availability of academic supports. Some availed of the supports and benefitted from them, other students while aware of the services did not avail of the supports that were on offer.

Curriculum, teaching and learning is a complex area and even more so in the context of internationalisation. While Irish institutions have made a lot of progress in these areas and international students are broadly satisfied with their experiences, it is clear that these areas require more consideration and resourcing in the context of growing numbers of international students attending Irish higher education institutions.

04

Supporting international students: institutional and student perspectives

4.1 Introduction

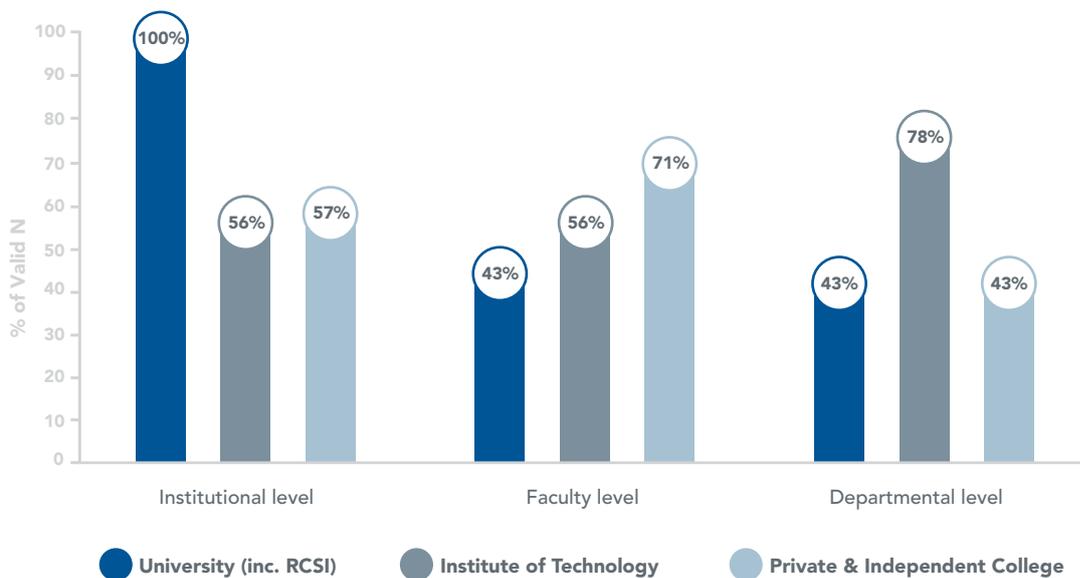
This chapter explores the range of supports that institutions have put in place for international students and the perceptions of international students about the suitability of the supports available. It will also document the reflections of both international and Irish students about cultural differences and integration. The majority of international students (90%) studying in Ireland were satisfied with the support services available to them in the institutions where they studied (*I-Graduate*, 2016). These services included clubs and societies, students' unions, chaplaincy, student advisers, IT services, career services, residential assistants, international office, personal tutors, student health services and counselling services.

4.2 Range of supports available

Institutions offered international students a range of supports at institutional, faculty and departmental level. Universities provided this support at institutional level, IOTs provided it at departmental level and private colleges provided it at faculty level.

Figure 14 presents the data.

Figure 14: Does your institution offer specific support programmes, involving peer support, mentors pairing or buddy systems or other similar systems to international students enrolled in award courses at faculty or institutional levels? (Percentage of respondents answering 'yes')



A number of institutions referred to the role played by the International Office, where dedicated support officers for international students were appointed to provide pastoral care support. In one institution, the support officer was responsible for coordinating pre-arrival orientation and airport pick up:

Dedicated international student support officer, significant pre-arrival communications plan, pre-arrival orientation in China, buddy programme, airport pick-up, orientation programme, and pre-departure engagement.

Another institution indicated that international engagement officers met frequently with international students:

International Engagement Officers know the students and have frequent meetings with them to check in on life outside of the classroom. Feedback from these meetings informs decisions, actions and changes if required. All schools in 2016/17 will have International Coordinators to support international students in addition to existing teams. Special orientation for international students in addition to schools' programmes. The SU have an international society supporting all International students and 'fun activities' are organised throughout the year.

One institution had a dedicated pastoral care administrator who is a Chinese national. This institution provided hands-on support for students. This support was not just for college-related issues, but also for visa documentation and banking issues. Out of hours support is also provided in contexts where it is required:

The International Office employs a Chinese national pastoral care administrator. New arriving students are collected at Dublin Airport on arrival and brought to their Accommodation, which is arranged by the International Accommodations Officer, in the International Office. Students attend a specially arranged [---] International Welcome Days post-arrival. They are supported with registration and admissions formalities on arrival. They are also supported with opening an Irish bank account, and with their first Immigration Appointment to get a GNIB card. Out-of-hours cover is in place by International Office Manager, for crisis situations. Students are provided with medical and counselling supports at the Institute, during college hours, and in out-of-hours. Where a student requires hospitalisation, transport is arranged. Students are also visited in hospital by International Office Staff.

Another institution indicated that they actively help students to secure accommodation:

We collect students at the airport and bring them to their accommodation. We help them find accommodation. We have an induction programme for them which is specifically for international students, as well as the department-specific induction. They have 2 bus tours in the first week to help orientate them. The international office has an open-door policy for ongoing pastoral support.

One institution prepared Erasmus students for international placements. This institution had a large cohort of Chinese students and employed a dedicated officer to support their needs:

For Erasmus, there is a dedicated International Office to support the identification of exchange opportunities and to support students in the preparation for international placement. They also support incoming students academically and personally with finding accommodation, accessing services etc. For Chinese students, the largest cohort of international students by far at [---] there is a dedicated Administration Officer to support them in their adjustment to life in Ireland and at [---].

A mentor system is used in one institution where students are in weekly contact with a mentor. Faculty also meet with students, and group meetings are held frequently during each semester:

Students are supported as follows: online during the application/admissions process. There is a three-day orientation upon arrival. Each student is assigned a mentor who is in weekly contact. Two members of academic staff are available to students and students meet as a group 4 times per semester with academic and mentor staff in attendance. There is also a comprehensive Living in Ireland Guide with a Student Well-Being and Emergency Policy.

In many other institutions, reference was made to the supports available to all students in the institution:

In line with Irish Students

Full access to the complete set of student experience services on offer at the institution. Peer mentoring and (major) nationality clubs active.

A wide range of measures are in place to provide pastoral support including: a buddy system for new students, personal tutors from academic staff, a team of Student Welfare Officers and related staff, free access to a confidential external counselling service funded by [---], free access to GP and nurse services and free access to acute psychiatric services when necessary.

Academic Support / Year Heads / Peer Mentoring / Student Welfare Officer / Confidential Counselling Referrals Service / Dedicated International Office / Visa Advisory Service / Emergency Support Service / Hardship Fund / Peer Mentors / Careers Guidance and Supports / Class Reps / Dedicated Welfare and Support Officers on Student Union.

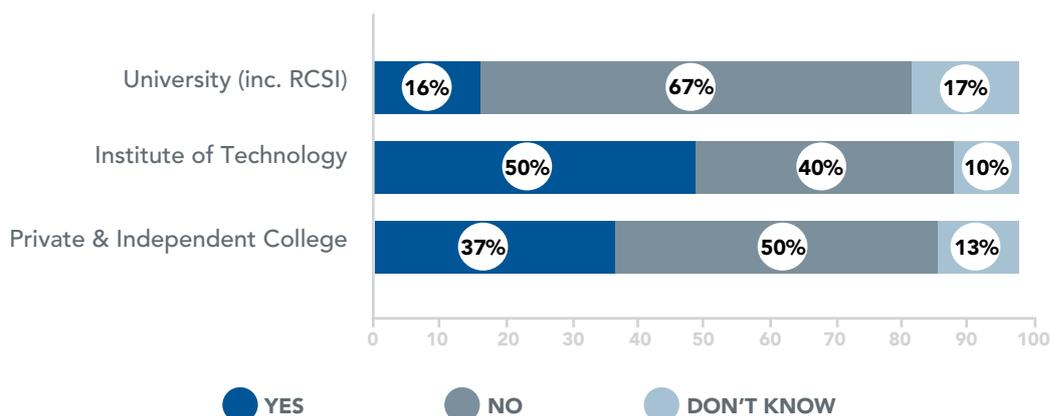
Institutions were asked to indicate the pastoral care support offered to overseas students. Table 24 presents the data.

Table 24: "Does your institution have in place pastoral care arrangements for offshore students?"

	Number	Percent
Yes	10	40.0%
No	12	48.0%
Don't know	3	12.0%
Total	25	100.0%

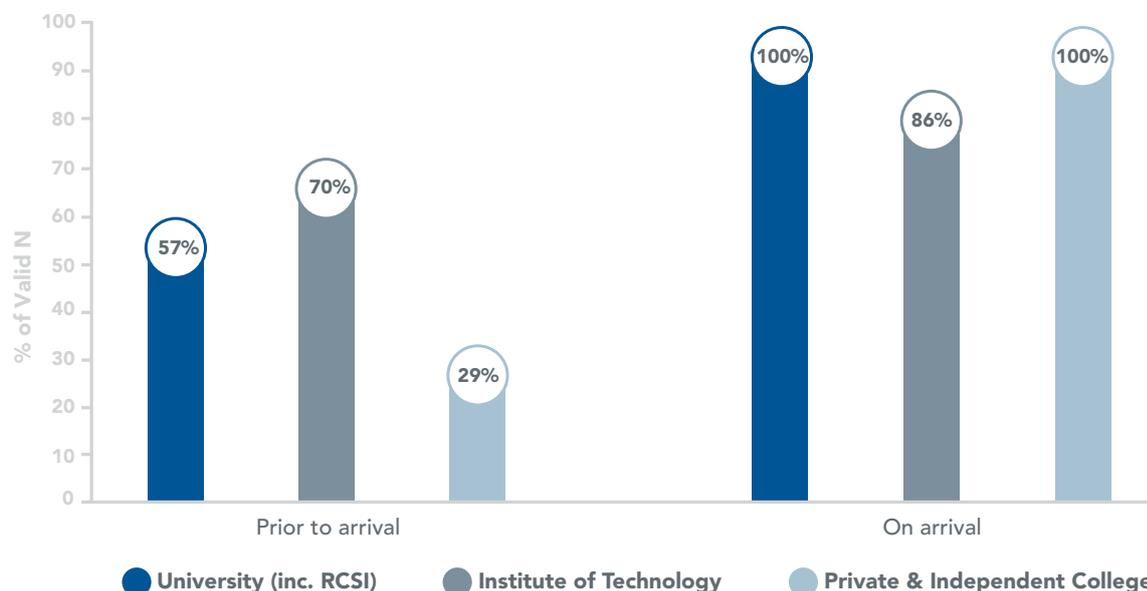
More than half of the IOTs provided pastoral support to offshore students, over a third of Private and Independent Colleges did so and less than a fifth of universities did so. Figure 15 illustrates the proportions.

Figure 15: "Does your institution have in place pastoral care arrangements for the offshore students?"



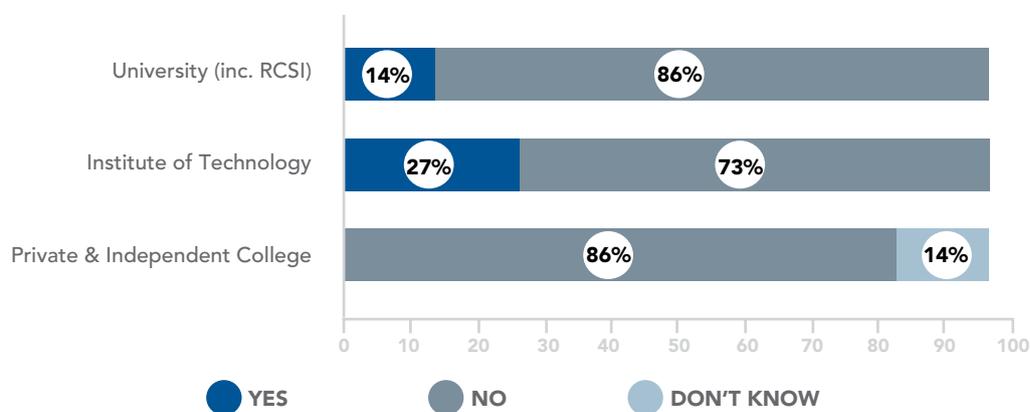
The majority of institutions offered orientation to students on arrival. However, the provision of pre-arrival orientation or support was lesser, with a higher proportion of IOTs offering pre-arrival orientation compared to universities and private colleges. Figure 16 presents the data.

Figure 16: "Does your institution offer orientation programmes in Ireland for international students about to commence their courses?" (Percentage of respondents answering 'yes')



The majority of institutions did not offer returning home programmes for their international students. Over a quarter of IOTs did so. Figure 17 illustrates the data.

Figure 17: "Does your institution (alone or as part of a consortium) offer returning home programmes for international students about to leave Ireland on completion of their courses?"



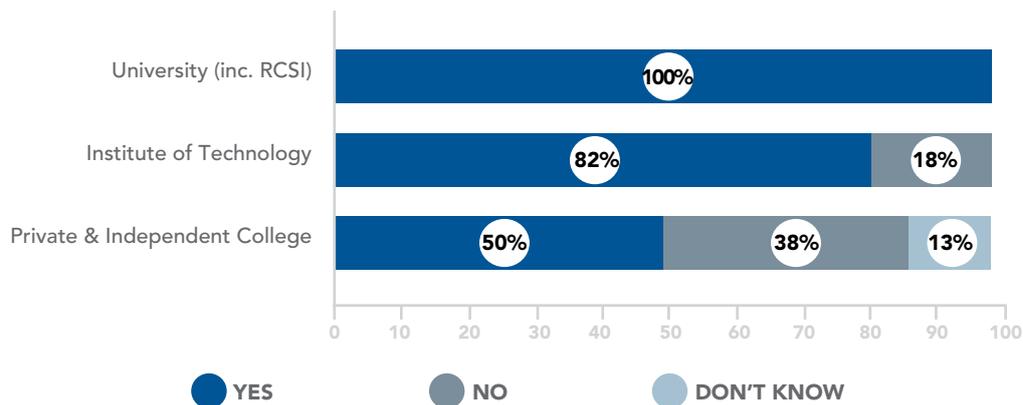
Institutions were asked to indicate if they had structures in place to support international students financially in instances of personal hardship or emergency. Table 25 presents the data.

Table 25: "Does your institution have structures in place to support international students financially in instances of personal or other emergency or hardship?"

	Number	Percent
Yes	20	76.9%
No	5	19.2%
Don't know	1	3.8%
Total	26	100.0%

All of the universities that responded indicated that they had financial supports in place and the majority of IOTs also had supports in place while half the private colleges indicated that such supports were available. Figure 18 presents the data.

Figure 18: “Does your institution have structures in place to support international students financially in instances of personal or other emergency or hardship?”



Institutions referred to a range of supports that are in place. These included emergency funds:

A very limited emergency fund; application process and evaluation protocol operational.

All International students have access to staff in the International Office who can provide emergency accommodation and access to the [---] hardship fund if required.

Other institutions dealt with each issue on a case-by-case basis:

Case-by-case basis predicated upon the circumstances of the individual's difficulty or emergency.

Each case of personal difficulty is dealt with individually. Funds are available to assist and sustain students who find themselves in short-term financial difficulty (i.e. within an academic year) and fees may be deferred or waived in certain circumstances.

Students in emergency situations will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the International Office and student services department to determine what assistance is required, up to and including, financial assistance if deemed appropriate.

The International Office in institutions was identified as playing a key role in this area:

The International Office earmarks some of its operating budget each year for instances of financial hardship amongst international students. A student must submit an application for emergency assistance, which is reviewed by the Dean of International Affairs in line with policies developed by the University's Student Financial Support Steering Committee for the general student body.

The International Office regularly advises students going through financial worries and will at times seek help from the Students' Union or Hardship Fund or Chaplaincy.

The Students' Union maintains a hardship fund.

For some institutions, the provision for international students was the same as that for domestic students:

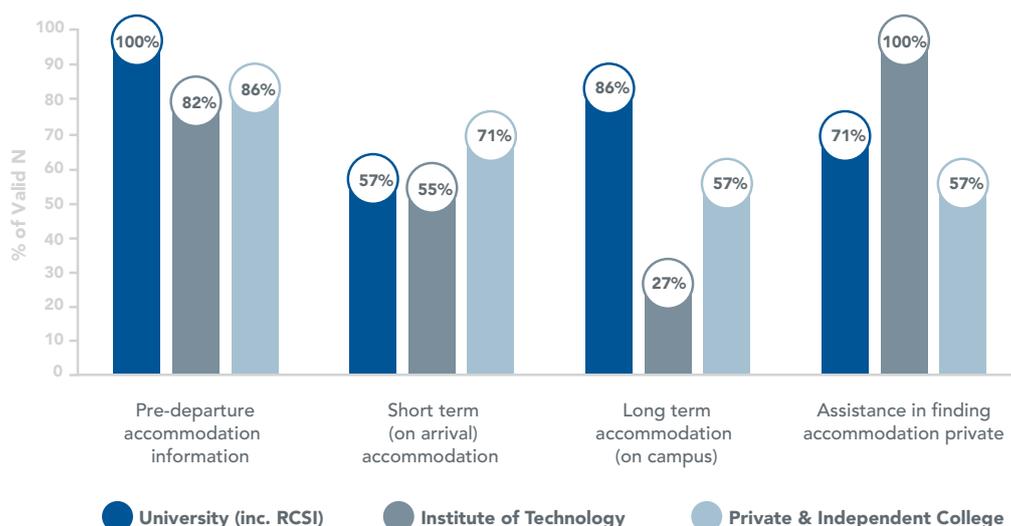
Same as other students. They can apply to the hardship fund or speak to the International team for advice and guidance. The Institute has programme plans in place to help any student with financial difficulties and the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar is most supportive of student experiences.

Student Hardship fund available through the Students' Union which International students can apply for when experiencing financial difficulty.

4.3 Accommodation

The majority of institutions offered international students pre-departure accommodation information. The majority of universities offered long-term accommodation on campus and offered assistance in finding private accommodation. All of the IOTs surveyed offered assistance in finding private accommodation, but just over a quarter offered international students long-term accommodation on campus. Figure 19 presents the data.

Figure 19: "What accommodation assistance does your institution provide for international students?"



Faculty were of the view that securing accommodation was challenging for international students coming to study in Ireland. One faculty member commented:

They have many challenges but the first one they face is accommodation. It is a problem for everyone, but for students all the more so, because of their budget and landlords tend to be reluctant, think that they will ruin properties, have parties and loud noise [Senior Lecturer, Languages, University].

Another faculty member agreed that accommodation was an issue for international students:

I think students are finding it difficult to get adequate accommodation and that's another capacity constraint that I've been raising. We don't want to try and grow our international student numbers and not have appropriate accommodation. That something I often get asked about, particularly from female students coming is, 'do you have secure accommodation?' [Lecturer, Business, University].

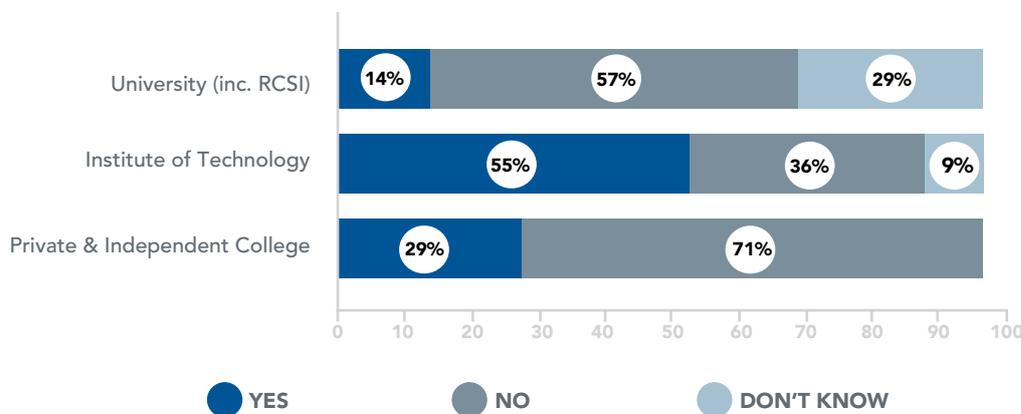
One faculty member was in contact with a Chinese student who indicated that he had secured accommodation, but she was not sure about the nature of the website and checked it on his behalf:

I had one Chinese student in my class and he wrote and said that he would be living in such a place, but the website looked odd and I felt that he was going to get scammed, so I checked with [...] accommodation who reassured me that he had got accommodation [Lecturer, Science, University].

4.4 Local Organisations

The majority of IOTs had formed links with local community organisations to provide support for international students, slightly over a quarter of private colleges did so and just over ten per cent of universities did so. Figure 20 presents the data.

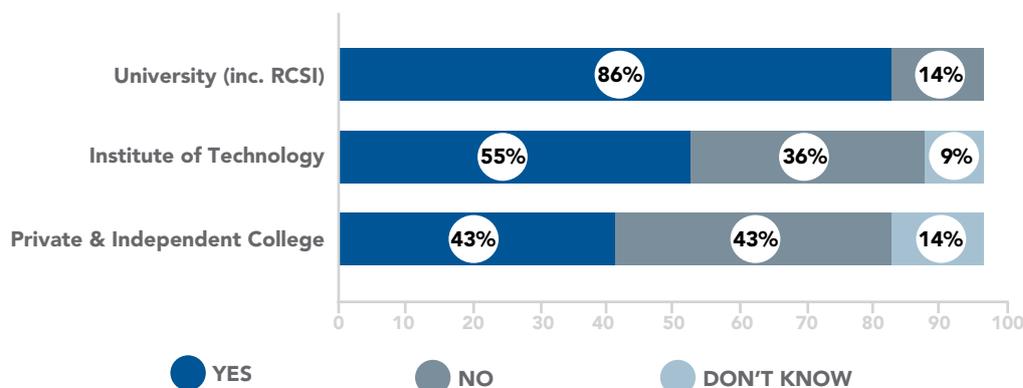
Figure 20: "Does your institution have any formal links with local community organisations to provide support for international students on your campus?"



4.5 Staff training

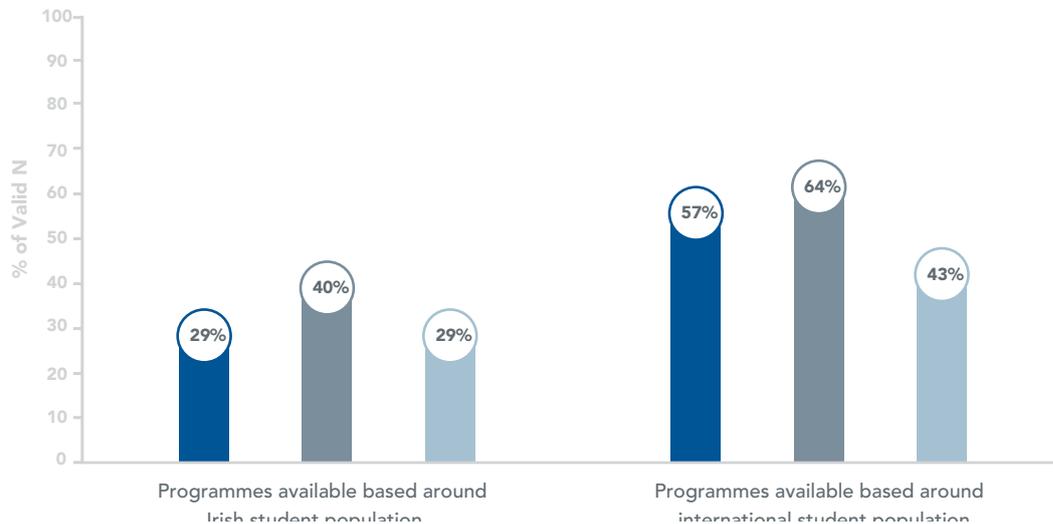
The majority of universities offered training for staff specifically involved in the support of international students, just over half of IOTs did so and just over two-fifths of private colleges provided this type of training. Figure 21 presents the data.

Figure 21: "Does your institution provide training specifically to staff involved in support of international students?"



Less emphasis was placed on the provision of intercultural training programmes for administrative staff for programmes aimed at Irish students, but more emphasis was placed on this for programmes based around the international student population. A higher proportion of IOTs provided intercultural training programmes for administrative staff involved in programmes based around international student populations. Figure 22 presents the data.

Figure 22: "Does your institution make inter-cultural training programmes available for administrative staff?" (Percentage responding 'yes')



A number of challenges were identified relating to the provision of intercultural training programmes for administrative staff. One director of an international office commented:

How do we train on the ground staff? We don't, and we should. So many of those things that are in the best practice are also those that are really impossible to track back to revenue generation, and that is where we fall on our faces. Not everything contributes directly to new enrolment, it contributes indirectly to the market and to our long-term viability, but no one will accept that as a funding claim [Director, International Office, University].

Another director referred to efforts that were made at institutional level:

We can do more, some of the staff have done intercultural training with ICOS but we don't do enough [Director, International Office, University].

4.6 Challenges faced by international students

Students, international and domestic, identified a number of issues that they perceived to impact upon integration. International students indicated that financial pressures were a real challenge. One international student who benefited from a scholarship in her first-year experienced difficulties in funding her second year of study:

I would say one of the biggest challenges I've had was financial, because I can't really afford it. I was able to get support from [---]. In the first year it was great that they gave me €5000, but then my second year was approaching, and I got quite anxious because I wasn't sure if I was able to pay again. A part of me felt like I just have to figure out myself.

She acknowledged that she was supported by the institution in securing employment:

I actually got a lot of support from the College, a lady called [---], very helpful. She showed me all the options for working in [---] and an internship over the summer and that's how I was able to get the job in the [---]. So even though they couldn't help me financially, they did help me to get a job.

For her, the financial challenge was very problematic as she found it difficult to get a job which allowed her the flexibility to study and retain outside interests:

The financial challenge is definitely one of the biggest challenges because as a student, with the hours we have, it's quite hard to get a job that would allow you to be flexible. If you get a job in the evening, I play volleyball and for me that's a big part of my life. I think the financial side can be quite challenging because it's something extra at the back of your head with everything else that you have to do. 'How am I going to pay the rent now' [Undergraduate, Drama, Brazil].

International students found securing accommodation very difficult. One student stayed in hostel accommodation for nearly three weeks until he got a place:

Accommodation crisis is very bad. There is no denying that fact. When I came here I stayed in a hostel for 20 days until I found a house.

This student indicated that he did not want campus accommodation as it was expensive, and students had to leave in May which did not suit him as a postgraduate student:

It was very expensive, and you have to leave the campus in May [Postgraduate, Psychology, India].

Language also emerged as an issue, particularly understanding dialect. One student commented:

Some people have a different dialect so for example my landlord, at the beginning, I was wondering if he was speaking English? He was, but had an Irish accent.

She also missed her family:

Not seeing your family and friends anymore. It's not that I'm home-sick but for a whole year you sometimes miss home and think it would be nice to see them [Undergraduate Student, Humanities, Germany].

4.7 International students' perception of institutional supports

International students were happy with their orientation experiences and were put into groups that were led by other students. One student described her experience:

The student-to-student leaders meet you during orientation, and then they take you out and they talk to you, and they say who they are and what they're doing. They give us their emails and say to contact them if you need them. They also organise an event every two weeks, something small like coffee and meet up with their students to answer questions [Undergraduate, Languages, Poland].

Another student was very happy that she had a student mentor allocated to her from her own subject area:

In first year everybody gets a mentor, undergraduate students, they get a student mentor, and for me it was great because I'm one of those people who has lots of questions. The idea of the mentor is that they are going to have events to meet with their groups, so it's usually 12 people in one group with one to three mentors. And these mentors study the same thing as you, just in higher years. It was great because once the first exam came I was quite anxious and being able to sit down with my mentor and her tell me look, 'don't worry, you don't need to read everything, this is how it works'. That was extremely helpful, and it was for all of first year, which is usually the hardest year [Undergraduate, Drama, Brazil].

A number of students referred to the medical and counselling services available on campus. For some, these services could be vastly improved. One student commented:

I have used both physical and normal student clinics and I've also been to counselling sessions before. The workers are very good, very professional and they understand the students' needs a bit more than the GP outside of the college. But if you weren't going for an emergency appointment and you call up to book an appointment, you may have to wait for two or three weeks to get a scheduled appointment, but they do have emergency appointments every weekday for those who need something urgent. For the health clinic, it is quite small, the waiting room might only fit 20 students to 30 students. Sometimes there's a line going outside and every time you wait for an emergency appointment you have to go there in person. You have to be there maybe an hour earlier than the clinic opens. You have students lining up outside, which is fine if the weather is okay but not if you get caught in the rain or are physically ill [Undergraduate, Business, Ireland-Malaysia].

These sentiments were echoed by another student:

There's definitely room for improvement. I think they are all incredible, and the people who work there are genuine people who do so much for students. I would love to see a day where the counselling centre can offer more sessions to students. I don't think anything major can be solved in 8 to 12 sessions, but I understand that because of the finances that's all they can offer at the moment. They are obviously doing their best, but I'd love to see a day when they offer more [Undergraduate, Languages, Poland].

4.8 Cultural differences and integration: Perceptions of international and Irish students

International students observed a number of cultural differences between themselves and Irish students. Reference was made to the drinking culture of Irish students. One student from Poland indicated that her friends from other countries found this aspect of student life difficult to understand:

I know some people find culture different because Irish people drink a lot. I think Polish people also drink, so it's not really like something that bothers me. Other international students say that they cannot have fun because Irish people only drink. I am in a society and we organise activities, and people have said they prefer more non-alcoholic events. When we organise something it's not our goal, but they order beer or Guinness. The people here drink a lot, it could be a shock. I have a friend from Vietnam, she was quite shocked. Also, students from the Middle East, they also like something non-alcoholic. That was the goal for us to organise something. Or even people from India, when we organise Holi Festival there was no alcohol so [Undergraduate, Languages, Poland].

The role of college societies was recognised by all students as important, but even in that context, different views emerged among international and Irish students about integration. International students valued having societies to join but found it easier to make friends with other international students:

Some just don't like sports, so they just join the international society, so they just hang out with international people and that's basically why they don't have that many Irish friends I think.

She also made a distinction with reference to making friends in societies as opposed to in class.

Basically, you are going to class and you listen to the teacher. You don't really talk to other people when you are in a group project, so that's harder to get to know them [Undergraduate, Humanities, Germany].

This view was echoed by another international student who felt that she met different groups in the classroom context which made it hard to make friends:

Every class I have is with different groups, so it's really hard to keep going with these people because you see them once a week and that's all. But with societies, every week you will go out with them, and they become your friends [Undergraduate, Languages, Poland].

For one Irish-Malaysian student, the classroom context was very important in terms of making friends, but she acknowledged that there was a divide between international students and Irish students:

There is a separation. You see Irish people hanging out with Irish people and people of similar cultures hanging out together. In my class I'm the only Asian, I am the only non-Irish person in my whole class, so obviously I have to hang out with my class, but even if you just walk around who's having lunch together? You tend to see similar skin with similar skin colour unfortunately. And then you have that exception group who is Irish and interested in other cultures and those are the friends that I'm close with. [Undergraduate, Humanities, Ireland-Malaysia].

Another student agreed that societies are important but indicated that this took up time which she did not have now due to having a part time job:

The clubs and societies are great places to meet other students from a lot of departments. I didn't participate at all this year to be honest because I was so busy with part-time job and assignments [Undergraduate, Drama, Brazil].

A number of Irish students echoed this view, suggesting that time was a constraining factor in developing friendships with international students:

I think it's because we have other things to do. It's not always that it doesn't concern us or that we are not interested. It's just that we have other things to do [Undergraduate, Business, Ireland].

Referring to Erasmus students, she commented:

A lot of them have pass or fail Erasmus and they don't have to work as hard as us. They don't have as many hours. It's kind of a semester off, you can choose any subjects you want. We have jobs, we have more to do, we have more hours, we have more classes, we have more to do. [Undergraduate, Humanities, Ireland].

Irish students also referred to the use of the term 'international' when discussing activities organised by their institutions. The general view was that this label was not helpful:

Because it's always called something international, something. I think Irish people or Irish students think, 'oh it's for the international students rather than for all the students'.

He also expressed the view that Irish students could be quite insular:

We are very bad like that. I just feel our people in general are very uncultured. We like to stick to Irish people. We like to stick to our Irish food. We don't think leading with the word international is helping them.

He did not feel comfortable attending holidays that were not Irish, but had no difficulty attending a food fair, as he understood that this was for everybody:

If it's a special holiday I feel like I shouldn't be there because it's not an Irish holiday. It depends on what it is, but they have an International Fair and I went to the food fair because I knew that was for everybody [Undergraduate, Languages, Ireland].

One international student also observed that Irish students did not attend international events in the college:

There are some international events, and some international students are coming but not Irish students [Undergraduate, Languages, Germany].

4.9 Conclusions

This chapter examined the support structures put in place by institutions for international students and the views of international students about these supports. The chapter also presented the reflections of both international and Irish students about cultural differences and integration.

Institutions offered a range of supports at institutional, faculty and departmental level to international students and emphasised the pastoral care dimensions of these supports. Less support was offered to offshore students. However, IOTs tended to prioritise support for this group compared to universities and private colleges. The majority of institutions offered orientation to students on arrival. The picture was somewhat mixed in terms of providing pre-arrival orientation. A higher proportion of IOTs tended to do this compared to universities and private colleges. The majority of institutions did not offer returning home programmes for their international students. International students were in general very happy with their orientation experience and supports that they had received. Those who were allocated to peer groups led by students who acted as mentors were very positive about their experience. International students commented negatively about access to the medical and counselling services available and felt that provision in these areas could be improved.

Accommodation was recognised as an issue for international students. The majority of institutions offered international students pre-departure accommodation information. The majority of universities offered long term accommodation on campus and offered assistance in finding private accommodation. All of the IOTs offered assistance in finding private accommodation, but just over a quarter offered international students long-term accommodation on campus. Faculty also recognised the accommodation issue as one that international students found difficult. International students identified accommodation as being one of the biggest challenges that they faced when coming to Ireland, in terms of cost and suitability. International students also referred to the financial challenges that they faced and while HEIs had supports in place for students who experienced difficulties it was an area of concern for international students.

International students found a number of areas that impacted on their integration experience. Some international students found it difficult to make friends in the classroom context as there were so many different class groups present. They were of the view that a divide existed between international students and Irish students. International students observed a number of cultural differences between themselves and Irish students. Reference was made to the drinking culture of Irish students which made it difficult for international students to participate in social events. The role of college societies was recognised by all students as important, but even in that context, different views emerged among international and Irish students about integration. International students valued having societies to join but found it easier to make friends with other international students. Irish students who had studied abroad were conscious of the experiences of international students, however, other students suggested that time was a constraining factor in developing friendships with international students. International students had noticed a tendency for Irish students to go home at weekends instead of staying on campus and had also observed that when international activities were organised Irish students did not attend.

Irish students referred to the use of the term 'international' when discussing activities organised by their institutions, expressing the view that these events were for international students only and they were reluctant to participate as a result. The general view was that this type of labelling was not helpful.

05

Conclusions



5.1 Aims of the study

This study explored the extent to which Irish tertiary education institutions have become internationalised and the range of strategies and approaches developed to attract and retain international students. Combining survey data with the views of directors of international offices, faculty and students, both international and Irish, this is the first study to explore internationalisation in Irish higher education from a range of different perspectives, such as curriculum, teaching and learning, and provision of support for international students. The study builds on international literature in the field and on previous studies conducted in New Zealand which addressed these issues.

5.2 Main Findings

International literature suggests that changing political, economic, socio-cultural and academic needs have ensured that internationalisation is promoted in a variety of ways in different regions, countries, institutions, and programmes offered (Teichler, 2004). The future of internationalisation of higher education will be challenged by economic crises. Similarly, the need to justify international activities will become essential in an era of high student demand (Brandenburg et al., 2013). However, some faculty view international students as problematic, while international students do experience culture shock (Kelly and Moogan, 2012).

Internationalisation in an institutional context can be challenging. In some cases, institutions adopt a symbolic approach to internationalisation and fail to address the needs of international students. According to Leask (2013), the internationalisation of the curriculum is a critical component of any university's internationalisation strategy and discipline communities are central to the process. Jones and Killick (2013) suggest that the internationalisation of the curriculum needs to be linked to discussions about pedagogy and contexts that shape disciplines, yet there is still much to be achieved in this area (Marginson and Sawir, 2011). Where internationalisation is promoted within an environment of equity, equality and diversity, the learning experience is enriched for students and faculty alike (Jones and Brown, 2007).

Government policies around internationalisation provide the context against which institutions formulate policy (Leask and Bridges, 2013). This is the case in Ireland where there has been an explicit policy commitment to facilitate and support the development of Ireland as an international education centre for over twenty years (Clancy, 2015). The publication of *Investing in Global Relationships: Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010-2015* set out the first coherent government strategy around internationalisation and was the first of its kind in Europe to set targets (Finn and Darmody, 2017). The majority of the actions focused on increasing the recruitment of international students and was deemed successful in exceeding set targets. The most recently published strategy document, *Irish Educated, Globally Connected, an International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016-2020* is specifically linked to the *National Skills Strategy 2025*, the forthcoming *Foreign Languages Strategy*, the *Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy* and labour market strategies. The aim of the strategy is to increase the numbers of international students and researchers coming to Irish HEIs, increase outward mobility for Irish students and academics/researchers and connect the benefits of internationalisation with enterprises in support of national economic ambitions. An academic mobility scheme launched by the Government in 2017 worth €500,000 is a new model for the government scholarship scheme as part of an evolving response to Ireland's internationalisation agenda.

Irish HEIs operating during a period of prolonged cuts to resources have been very successful in their internationalisation efforts. The Irish higher education sector has performed very well in increasing the recruitment of international students from a diverse range of countries, such as China, (the British Council noted Ireland as one of the top ten partner countries for co-operative education institutions in China), India, Brazil, the U.S.A. and Saudi Arabia (HEA, 2016). In terms of outward mobility, the sector also enjoyed success. Between 2000/01 and 2012/13, the number of international students attending universities in Ireland increased from 4,184 to 10,981 (Finn and Darmody, 2017). In 2011/12 ten per cent of NFQ level 8 graduates studied or undertook a placement abroad, a mobility rate in line with the European average (HEA, 2016). Internationalisation forms a key component of institutional mission statements and international offices are now well established on higher education campuses.

Funding emerged as a key issue in relation to internationalisation, particularly with reference to scarce resources within institutions. The reliance on this approach was viewed as problematic and there was a general awareness that other factors should also inform approaches to internationalisation. These included increasing mobility in the student market, the promotion of outward mobility, securing international accreditation for programmes and government policy.

The majority of institutions indicated that *Ireland's International Education Strategy 2016-2020*, the *National Education Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* and *QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners* influenced and shaped their internationalisation strategy. Some institutions referred to other documents such as *Education in Ireland Strategy* and the Erasmus Charter and Erasmus policy statements. Institutions were conscious that government policy promoted outward mobility, and this was perceived as challenging. However, students were reluctant to go abroad due to language issues and socio-economic circumstances also played a role. Some institutions acknowledged that they had not prioritised this area in the past as it did not generate income for the institution.

It emerged from this study that strategic effort was not coordinated sufficiently at national level to promote Ireland as a destination and there was room for much more cooperation between institutions with reference to international markets. A general consensus emerged from the data that Irish governments needed to invest more resources in the promotion of Ireland as a destination for international students and in the Irish higher education sector more generally.

Internationalisation featured in the strategic plans of HEIs and was referred to in other documents such as business plans, the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, the HEA compact and mission statements. In the majority of HEIs, internationalisation was driven by the President and the senior management team. The majority of institutions surveyed wanted to increase the number of international students attending and set targets to achieve this, however, such quantitative approaches were not viewed as reflecting the complexity of issues that impacted on internationalisation. The majority of institutions had business plans that focused on Asia, North America, Europe (EU) and the United Kingdom. Universities focused on Asia, North America and the Middle East, while Institutes of Technology and private colleges focused on Asia.

Institutions prioritised formal links, agreements, articulation arrangements and memoranda of understanding. It was acknowledged that international agreements required time and effort, was a slow process and involved relationship building. Ensuring that actual collaboration occurred was difficult to monitor and required faculty time and effort. The majority of institutions did not set criteria to review and manage the effectiveness of exchange agreements against the strategic plans.

Over a third of institutions in this study delivered courses to foreign international distance education students overseas. They adopted a variety of approaches with reference to distance education. The majority of institutions engaged in bilateral academic credit recognition which allowed students to undertake a substantial portion of their programmes offshore before enrolling in their institutions. Online delivery presented a number of challenges due to rapid changes in the online sector. Institutions did not prioritise alumni chapters as part of their internationalisation efforts. Universities prioritised international alumni chapters more than either IOTs or Private Colleges. Institutions devoted much more effort to the involvement of alumni in student recruitment.

The different approaches to resource allocation for international activity revealed a mixed picture of qualified support and different resource allocation models. There was a general consensus that internationalisation was not incentivised enough within organisations and this impacted on the implementation of institutional strategy. Over half of those surveyed were of the view that incentives or reward programmes would contribute to increasing the number of international students coming to the institution. The directors of international offices were in favour of having incentivised schemes in relation to the provision of scholarships and discounted schemes for students. The majority of faculty felt that they were not supported to engage with internationalisation, citing the additional work involved, the lack of recognition of this work in the promotion process, and the disregard of the time that is involved in such activity.

Institutions used a variety of communication approaches internally in relation to internationalisation. Newsletters and reports featured in communication strategies, as did meetings with faculty and staff. It emerged across institutions that there was a lack of clarity around the future direction of internationalisation within institutions. Faculty were not clear about the implementation of the strategic plan concerning internationalisation, however, if they became directly involved in internationalisation, the strategy then had meaning for them. Faculty were unclear about the functions performed by colleagues responsible for internationalisation and it also emerged that not all faculty supported internationalisation in institutions. This was attributed to the changes that occur within institutions as a result of international students being present and the fact that the teaching and learning context can become difficult for some faculty as a result.

International students offered a range of reasons for studying abroad and for choosing Ireland. They recognised that studying abroad increased their career prospects, they enjoyed speaking English and wanted to study in an English-speaking country. Ireland's location in Europe, tuition fees which are cheaper than in other English-speaking countries, and the ease of application through institutional websites gave Ireland advantages over other countries.

The majority of institutions acknowledged that the internationalisation of curriculum was important. Institutions offered examples of curricular reform where they expanded traditional subject areas with internationally comparative approaches, delivered curricula that led to internationally recognised professional qualifications and designed curricula which prepared students for defined international professions. Institutions acknowledged that less emphasis was placed on articulating learning outcomes and clear learning goals that included international components. Some institutions used programmatic reviews to embed international approaches in modules and programmes. It was acknowledged that more needed to be achieved in this area. Institutions were also conscious of the need to prepare graduates to enter a global working environment, and the need to emphasise the broader educational experience beyond the curriculum which included engagement with industry and social and community groups.

For the majority of faculty, the term internationalisation of the curriculum was unfamiliar to them, but they offered examples of their approaches to their subjects. Some faculty viewed internationalising the curriculum as important, while others said they did not see the need to explicitly state it in their learning outcomes as the majority of their students were domestic and as such programmes should focus on the needs of these students. A number of different views emerged in relation to assessment. The majority of institutions indicated that they had encouraged staff to employ assessment tasks that were culturally sensitive. While institutions promoted the need for culturally sensitive assessment tasks, faculty did not include this dimension. Faculty members were concerned with issues such as fairness and equality in relation to assessment. Some faculty used continuous assessment to check on the progress of international students and acknowledged the cultural differences that existed with reference to assessment experiences.

International students offered a range of perspectives in relation to the international dimension of the curriculum as they had experienced it. Students commented on the broad curriculum offered, the applied and practical approaches promoted, and the international mix in their classes. Reference was made to the challenges that the curriculum posed, including: referencing conventions, in-class support for language development, and essay writing.

Institutions recognised the benefits of having international students in their teaching and learning communities, referring to cultural engagement, and broadening learner experiences. The presence of international students encouraged exchange opportunities and enhanced the teaching and learning experiences of faculty. The presence of international students was viewed positively by the majority of faculty as they felt this enhanced the learning experiences of Irish students. Where Irish students had gained international experience, they were very favourably disposed to the presence of international students and understood their experiences of Irish campuses. They acknowledged that Irish students had more stability in their social and personal circumstances by virtue of being at home. However, they also felt that international students tended to stick together on campus, and some domestic students felt that as they were busy with coursework, they did not put effort into meeting new people. Some Irish students had not thought about the presence of international students in their classes.

The majority of institutions indicated that teaching and learning arrangements played an important role in promoting intercultural interaction, and that faculty were encouraged to employ teaching strategies that engaged students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Faculty expressed mixed views in relation to teaching and learning approaches. Some used fun activities to promote interaction in class, while others emphasised the importance of skills and competencies. A minority of institutions provided intercultural training to faculty and teaching staff in general. Intercultural training was offered to teaching staff who were involved in programmes based around the international student population. Faculty expressed mixed views with reference to intercultural training. Some viewed it as being very important but had not received this kind of support. Others did not see such training as being relevant to them. Institutions relied on Teaching and Learning Units to provide support for internationalisation of teaching and learning.

The majority of institutions did not provide seed funding for the internationalisation of teaching and learning. However, two thirds of institutions indicated that they had provided professional development opportunities for staff that had an international dimension. Faculty who had experienced teacher exchange programmes found the experience very worthwhile as it provided them with greater insights into the needs of international students. Institutions were conscious of the challenges that the international dimension brought to the teaching and learning experience. These included managing the language needs of students and cultural awareness. Faculty also pointed to a number of challenges with reference to working with international students which included group work. Different views emerged with reference to using group work. On the one hand it was viewed as an important approach, but challenges arose where language was an issue, and where international students tended to stick together and were reluctant to mix. International students were in the main positive about their teaching and learning experiences. They were struck by the different approaches to teaching and learning and learned much from the way Irish students viewed different issues.

Institutions offered a range of academic supports to international students. These included English language programmes on a fee-paying basis and as courses taught for credit. The majority of universities offered English language programmes on fee-paying basis, over half of private colleges offered this support on fee basis and just half of IOTs did so. Institutions tended to offer assistance to international students through learning centres that were offered at central level. Half of private colleges offered learning centres at faculty level. The majority of institutions emphasised study skills and career support at undergraduate level. At postgraduate level the emphasis was on research skills, career support and study skills. International students expressed mixed views about the availability of academic supports. Some availed of the supports and benefitted from them, other students while aware of the services did not avail of the supports that were on offer.

The majority of HEIs offered training for staff specifically involved in the support of international students. A majority of IOTs had formed links with local community organisations to provide support for international students, slightly over a quarter of private colleges, and just over ten per cent of universities did so.

Institutions offered a range of supports at institutional, faculty and departmental level to international students and emphasised the pastoral care dimensions of these supports. Less support was offered to offshore students, IOTs tended to prioritise support for this group compared to universities and private colleges.

The majority of institutions offered orientation to students on arrival. The picture was somewhat mixed in terms of providing pre-arrival orientation. A higher proportion of IOTs tended to do this compared to universities and private colleges. The majority of institutions did not offer returning home programmes for their international students. International students were in general very happy with their orientation experience and supports that they had received. Those who were allocated to peer groups led by students who acted as mentors were very positive about their experience. International students commented negatively about access to the medical and counselling services available and felt that provision in these areas could be improved.

Accommodation was recognised as an issue for international students. The majority of institutions offered international students pre-departure accommodation information. The majority of universities offered long-term accommodation on campus and offered assistance in finding private accommodation. All of the IOTs offered assistance in finding private accommodation, but just over a quarter offered international students long-term accommodation on campus. Faculty also recognised the accommodation issue as one that international students found difficult. International students identified accommodation as being one of the biggest challenges that they faced when coming to Ireland, in terms of cost and suitability. International students also referred to the financial challenges that they faced and while HEIs had supports in place for students who experienced difficulties it was an area of concern for international students.

With reference to integration, international students referenced a number of areas that impacted on their experience. Some international students found it difficult to make friends in the classroom context as there were so many different class groups present. They were of the view that a divide existed between international students and Irish students. International students had noticed a tendency for Irish students to go home at weekends instead of staying on campus and had also observed that when international activities were organised Irish students did not attend. Irish students referred to the use of the term 'international' when discussing activities organised by their institutions, expressing the view that these events were for international students only, and they were reluctant to participate as a result. The general view was that this type of labelling was not helpful.

International students observed a number of cultural differences between themselves and Irish students. Reference was made to the drinking culture of Irish students which made it difficult for international students to participate in social events. The role of college societies was recognised by all students as important but even in that context different views emerged among international and Irish students about integration. International students valued having societies to join but found it easier to make friends with other international students. Irish students who had studied abroad were conscious of the experiences of international students, however other students suggested that time was a constraining factor in developing friendships with international students.

5.3 Implications for policy

The study findings indicate significant effort on the part of Irish higher education institutions in the area of internationalisation. The publication of *Investing in Global Relationships: Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010-2015* set out the first coherent government strategy around internationalisation and was the first of its kind in Europe to set targets (Finn and Darmody, 2017). The majority of the actions focused on increasing the recruitment of international students and was successful in exceeding set targets. The most recently published strategy document, *Irish Educated, Globally Connected, an International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016-2020* is specifically linked to the *National Skills Strategy 2025*, the forthcoming *Foreign Languages Strategy*, the *Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy* and labour market strategies. The aim of the strategy is to increase the numbers of international students and researchers coming to Irish HEIs, increase outward mobility for Irish students and academics, and connect the benefits of internationalisation with enterprises in support of national economic ambitions. HEIs are influenced by government policy documents in this area. Institutions acknowledged that they were not internationalising to the fullest extent but were constrained by the lack of resources. While government policy has focused on the promotion of Ireland as a destination for international students, a general view emerged that Ireland was not well known in key markets and this was attributed to a lack of government investment in the promotion of Ireland. International students who participated in this study were influenced by Ireland's location in Europe, cheaper tuition fees and the ease of application through institutional websites which gave Ireland advantages over other countries. More investment and resources are required to develop Ireland as an international destination, and there is room for much more cooperation between institutions at a national strategic level with reference to international markets.

The study findings also point to a need for greater clarity around the rationale and future direction of internationalisation within institutions. There was a general consensus that internationalisation was not incentivised enough within organisations and this impacted on the implementation of institutional strategy. The majority of faculty felt that they were not supported to engage with internationalisation citing the additional work involved, the lack of recognition in the promotion process and the non-recognition of the time that is involved in such activity. These are areas that institutions should consider with reference to promoting internationalisation internally within their organisations.

The study identifies the internationalisation of curriculum and teaching and learning as areas for further consideration. According to Leask (2015), the internationalisation of the curriculum is a critical component of any university's internationalisation strategy and discipline communities are central to the process. While the majority of institutions acknowledged that internationalisation of curriculum was important, there was a lack of clarity as to what this meant in the context of learning outcomes, curricular provision and pedagogy. This is an area that requires investment by government, through the provision of training and support by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning, and the commitment of additional resources that will promote and incentivise teacher exchanges. Within the institutions, more consideration needs to be given to the process of curriculum design and development in general, and with reference to internationalisation; securing commitment to internationalisation from a wider range of faculty through the provision of seed funding for teaching and learning activities that will support internationalisation should also be considered.

Finally, it is worth noting the importance of the student voice in relation to the provision of supports, the views of international and domestic Irish students in this study provide some very useful insights into issues of cultural differences and integration. It emerged from the study that Irish students who had gone abroad had gained many insights into the experiences of international students on their campuses and actively supported international students as a result. This supports the contention that outward mobility is not just important for students themselves but also contributes hugely to internationalisation at home. Institutions should actively encourage student reflection about their experiences of the supports available, whether they are adequate to meet their needs. It is clear from this study that medical and counselling services require more support. The active involvement of international and domestic students in the organisation of activities is required to promote successful integration.

5.4 Potential for further research

As this is the first study of its kind in the Irish context, consideration should be given to developing a longitudinal approach to data collection which would provide a basis to track internationalisation in at national and institutional levels. This approach would also yield useful data on the experiences of both international and domestic students. This kind of data would provide a rich source of information and a crucial evidence base for planning future provision and policy direction.

06

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