European Investment Bank ADVISORY

Jaspers Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions

European Commission

Good practices for modernisation in higher education based on Irish experience

Presenter: Dr. Michael Tobin

March 31, 2026
Sofia, Bulgaris

GDSI TRAINING

Context:
Key System Objectives (Objectives)

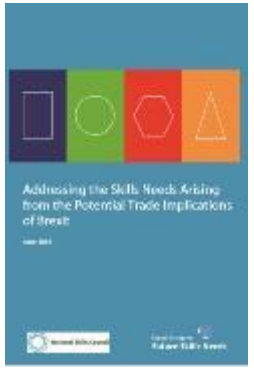
1. Providing a **strong talent pipeline** combining knowledge, skills & employability which responds effectively to the **needs of our enterprise, public service and community sectors**, both nationally and regionally, and **maintains Irish leadership in Europe for skill availability**;
2. Creating **rich opportunities** for national and **international engagement** which enhances the learning environment and delivers a strong bridge to enterprise and the wider community;
3. Excellent **research, development and innovation that has relevance**, growing engagement with external partners and impact for the economy and society and strengthens our standing to become an Innovation Leader in Europe;
4. Significantly **improves the equality of opportunity** through Education and Training and recruits a student body that reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population;
5. Demonstrates **consistent improvement in the quality of the learning environment** with a close eye to international best practice through a strong focus on quality & academic excellence;
6. Demonstrates **consistent improvement in governance, leadership and operational excellence**.

IRELAND'S NATIONAL SKILLS STRATEGY 2025

Evidence Based

- Policy
  - Higher Education
  - Sustainability
  - Technology
  - Employer
  - Government
  - Research
  - Future Skills
- Regional Skills Fora
- Industry Involvement
- Representative Bodies
- Academics (All domains)
- National, European and International Trends

Policy Documents



EGFSN – Digital Transformation / Brexit/ ICT

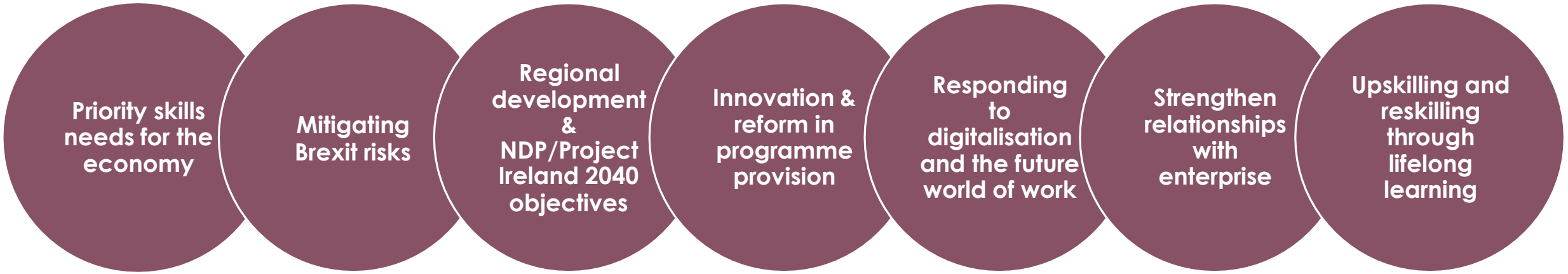
Evidence Base

Overview of the HCI

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Increase provision in areas of identified skills need for enterprise
- Future-proof graduates with industry-relevant skills for emerging technologies
- Promoting and embedding transversal skills, across all Higher Education
- Incentivise continued reform and innovation in higher education provision building on best practice available nationally and internationally.

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS FOR ACTIONS



Ireland V’s Bulgarian Framework Comparison

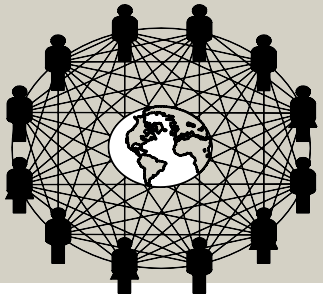
EQF Level	Ireland (NFQ)	Typical Irish Awards	Bulgaria (NQF/BQF)	Typical Bulgarian Awards	Notes / Key Differences
EQF 1	**NFQ Level 1**	**Level 1 Certificate**	**NQF Level 1**	**Basic education stage**	Both represent initial/basic learning
EQF 2	**NFQ Level 2**	**Level 2 Certificate**	**NQF Level 2**	**Primary education completion**	Comparable early-stage education
EQF 3	**NFQ Level 3**	**Junior Cycle**	**NQF Level 3**	**Lower secondary education**	Similar transition to secondary
EQF 4	**NFQ Level 4–5**	**Leaving Certificate**	**NQF Level 4**	**Upper secondary education**	Ireland splits into 2 levels (4 & 5)
EQF 5	**NFQ Level 6**	**Advanced Certificate, Higher Certificate**	**NQF Level 5**	**Vocational college diplomas**	Both represent short-cycle / vocational HE
EQF 6	**NFQ Level 7–8**	**Bachelor’s degrees (Ordinary & Honours)**	**NQF Level 6**	**Bachelor’s degree**	Ireland distinguishes ordinary vs honours
EQF 7	**NFQ Level 9**	**Master’s Degree, Postgraduate Diploma**	**NQF Level 7**	**Master’s degree**	Broadly equivalent
EQF 8	**NFQ Level 10**	**Doctorate (PhD)**	**NQF Level 8**	**Doctorate (PhD)**	Fully aligned highest level

Graduate Conversion Courses

Pillar 1

Additional Places on Existing Courses

Pillar 2



Innovation & Agility

Pillar 3

Pillar 1 prioritised labour-market-aligned programme creation, Pillar 2 focused on scalable expansion of existing provision, while Pillar 3 emphasised system-level innovation, collaboration, and long-term transformation, each with progressively increasing expectations around partnership, complexity, and strategic impact.

Pillar *1*

Graduate Conversion Courses

Pillar 1 – Graduate conversion programmes

Full-Time Graduate Conversion Courses in areas of identified skills needs

Courses at **Level 8** Higher Diploma or **Level 9** Post-Graduate Diploma.

Pillar 1 Identified Skills AREAs

Environmental Sciences (ISECD 0521), Biochemistry (0512), Chemistry (0531)

Information and Communication Technologies (ISCEDs 0610; 0611; 0612; 0613)

Engineering (ISCEDs 0710; 0711; 0712; 0713; 0714; 0715) and Manufacturing (ISCEDS 0720; 0721)

Construction (ISCEDs 0732) including Building Information Management (full content) and Sustainable Building

Other: (Business Information Systems, Data Analysts, Data Scientists, Financial Analysis, Medical Technology, Biopharmaceutical Sciences/Technology, Validation, Automation))

Conversion courses for language graduates to address high skill needs areas

Proposals for courses in target ISCED areas outlined which have a project management or a strategic design/design thinking component are welcomed.

Target (Level NFQ L8/ BFQ L6)

Category	Criteria
Recent graduates	Who hold level 8 qualification.
The employed	Who hold a level 8 qualification and wish to upskill or reskill to meet required skill needs across a range of sectors.
Those in receipt of eligible DEASP payment	Who hold a level 8 qualification and may require additional upskilling or reskilling in order to re-enter employment.
Previously self employed	Who hold a level 8 qualification and may require a new qualification to return to self-employment or to entre employment.
Returners	Who hold a level 8 qualification who may require additional upskilling or reskilling in order to re-enter employment

Fill rates and graduation rates for courses examined each year

Objectives/Actions/ Requirements/Criteria to be successful (What was asked)

- Universities and programme designers must **engage with Industry**.
- **One year and 18 months** full-time Graduate Conversion courses in areas of identified skills needs
- Include **a dedicated accredited work placement** or work-based project
- Reskilling courses contain **a dedicated job readiness component** on their course to facilitate their transition into a new area of employment
- Full-time can be interpreted that they **can be working and attending college** through perhaps one day a week and then supported online.
- **Credits** 60ECTS for a Higher Diploma / 90 ECTS for a Postgraduate Master's (60 ECTS) for a Postgraduate Diploma.
- **Programme must be new** – They cannot have been offered by the Institute in the past. Must be new provision.

Evaluation Criteria **(What we were told)**

- **Stage 1:** All proposals will be checked for eligibility and completeness as per the call terms and conditions by the HEA executive. Proposals which do not fulfil the eligibility criteria and/or are incomplete and do not address all questions as set out in in the online application portal will not progress.

- **Stage 2:** Based on published evaluation criteria

** Will include consideration of the overall programmatic composition of projects by quality, type, size and duration, as well as geographical spread.* ***(Took a system-wide approach)***

	Core Evaluation Criteria	Evidence
1	**Alignment with Skills Needs (Critical Priority)**	Evidence that the programme addressed **identified national and regional skills shortages**
	Clear linkage to: National Skills Strategy; Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) reports	Demonstrated **labour market demand**
2	**Employer Engagement & Industry Relevance**	Active involvement of employers in Programme design; Curriculum content
	Real engagement, not just endorsement	Work placements / industry projects
		Letters of support / partnerships
3	**Programme Design & Academic Quality**	Appropriate Learning outcomes; Level (typically Level 8/9)
	Clear structure as a **conversion programme** (non-cognate entry)	Strong pedagogy fo Intensive, 1-year delivery; Transition learners into new disciplines
4	**Accessibility & Target Learners**	Flexibility in: Delivery (online/blended/part-time)
	Designed for: Graduates seeking career change; Unemployed / underemployed learners	Consideration of: Barriers to participation; Inclusion and widening access

	Core Evaluation Criteria	Evidence
5	**Scale, Demand & Value for Money**	Cost efficiency: Use of funding; Cost per student
	prioritised **programmes that could scale quickly and efficiently**	Projected: Student numbers; Demand pipeline
6	**Institutional Capacity & Delivery Capabilit**	Evidence that the institution could: Deliver at scale; Recruit students; Provide appropriate staffing and infrastructure
		Track record in Similar programmes; Online / flexible delivery
7	**Impact & Outcomes**	Clear expected outcomes: Graduate employment in target sectors; Contribution to skills shortages
		Defined: KPIs / success metrics
8	**Innovation & Flexibility (Secondary but Im**	Novel approaches to: Curriculum design; Delivery (e.g. online, modular, accelerated)
		Responsiveness to: Changing skills needs

Pillar 1 Evaluation Criteria

Labour market relevance, employer partnership, scalability, and rapid, high-quality delivery of conversion programmes aligned to national skills needs.

Criteria No.	Evaluation Criteria
1.	Course description, modules, delivery and other relevant details. Digital skills, transversal skills, management and leadership skills and the workplace of the future should be addressed under this criteria.
2.	Course details relating to industry collaboration and support for the course proposal
3.	Course details relating to supports for course participants
4.	Cost and value for money

Outcomes Pillar 1(2023)

It **significantly expanded Ireland's capacity to reskill graduates into high-demand sectors.**

- Programmes that **provided flexible, industry-informed learning** for graduates to transition to emerging sectors
- **10,573 places on 163 courses** (additional added due to COVID) *(+ 5000 to 2025*) - In **2020, 5,891** places were offered across 93 courses over three years funded with approximately €68m
- Focus on **critical skills shortages** (ICT, engineering, sustainability, data, biopharma, etc.) - Courses covered high-demand areas such as Artificial Intelligence, smart factory technology, sustainable energy, medical device technology and cybersecurity

*"**not just course delivery**, but a **structural shift in Irish higher education toward flexible, targeted reskilling**, with thousands of graduates successfully redirected into areas of national skills need."*

What Pillar 1 achieved in Practice

1. **Large-scale reskilling pipeline**
    1. Created a **national system of 1-year conversion programmes (Level 8/9)** for graduates to switch fields.
    2. Enabled people from non-STEM backgrounds to move into **digital, green, and technical careers**.
2. **Direct response to labour market needs**
    1. Courses targeted **identified enterprise skills gaps** (e.g. AI, data analytics, construction, climate).
    2. Strong alignment with **national strategies** (digital economy, climate action, housing, etc.).
3. **Accessibility and participation**
    1. Free for unemployed participants
    2. **~90% subsidised for those in work**
    3. Included **work placements / industry projects**, improving employability.
4. **Contribution to wider HCI impact**
    1. Part of a broader HCI programme.

At a system level

- **Diversified graduate skills supply** (especially into STEM/digital areas)
- Supported career mobility and lifelong learning
- Strengthened links between higher education and industry
- Helped **future-proof the workforce** for digital and green transitions
- Shifted programme design from **academic-led** → **demand-led**
- Required HEIs to:
  - **Co-create with industry**
  - **Use labour market data**
- Favoured institutions with:
  - **Flexible delivery capability** (e.g. CPODL-type units)

Annual Returns/Monitoring/Engagement

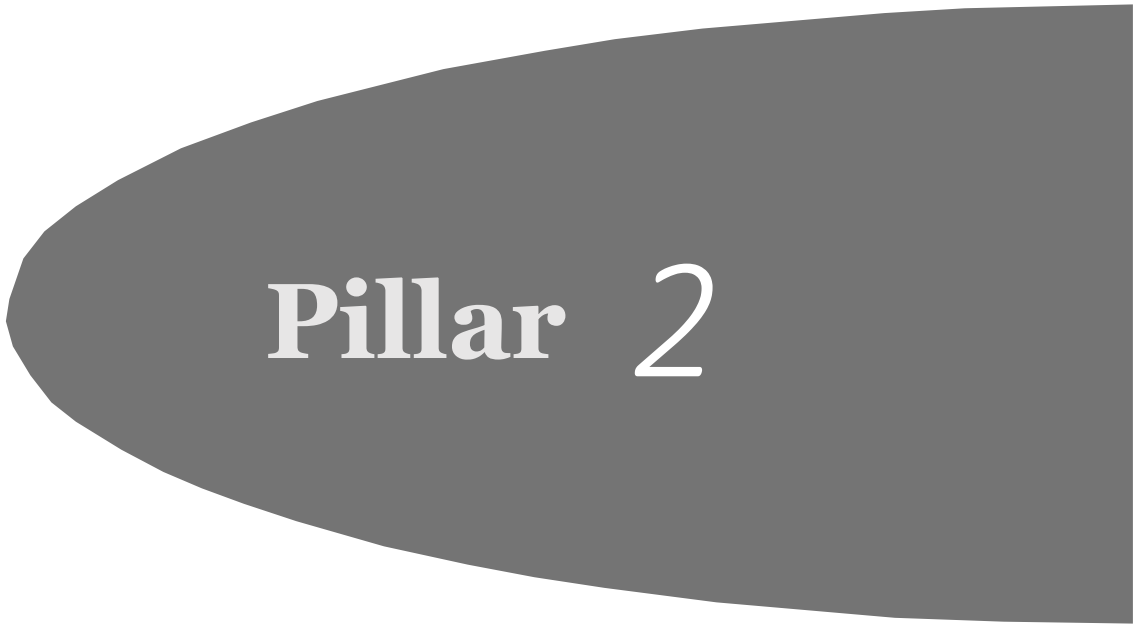
- 75% Fill Rate on all programmes
- # Programmes that commenced
- Each semester confirmation of students attending (Independent)
- On going industry engagement (Regional Skills)
- Retention/ Graduation
- Progression
- Student Testimonials (Independent)

University / Faculty Outcomes

- Application – High level – Conceptual – aligned
- Looked at design of Conversion Programmes
- Reconfigured some programmes to match criteria
- Interdisciplinary approach (Eng, Science, Business and Flexible) (CPODL)
- 60 ECTS Post Grad Diploma + 30 ECTS Thesis
- 60 Credit Higher Diploma
- Successful across all Faculties
- Embedded system change (Design, Marketing, Recruitment – Ongoing)
- For my Faculty
  - MBA – Year 1 – P//D Dip Exec Mgmt, Year 2 MBA
  - P/GD – Quality Yr 1 – Year 2 Masters
  - P/GD – Financial Mgmt Yr 1 - Year 2 Masters
  - P/GD – Prod Innovation and Design – Year 2 Masters

  - Eng – P/G in Eng Mgmt – Year 2 Masters etc.

HCI Pillar 2



Additional Places on Existing Courses

PILLAR 2 EXPANSION OF PLACES ON EXISTING COURSES

Expansion of Places on Existing undergraduate courses NFQ Level 6,7,8

Additional places on courses already being provided by HEIs

Courses in identified skills needs areas relevant to Higher Education provision

PILLAR 2 ELIGIBLE COURSES

Address the identified skills needs areas within the specified ISCEDs

Lead to a recognised award at NFQ levels, 6, 7 or 8

Human Capital Initiative

PILLAR 2 IDENTIFIED SKILLS AREAS

- Environmental Sciences (ISECD 0521)
- Information and Communication Technologies (ISCEDs 0610; 0611; 0612; 0613)
- Engineering (ISCEDs 0710; 0711; 0712; 0713; 0714; 0715)
- Manufacturing (ISCEDs 0720; 0721)
- Construction (ISCEDs 0732)
- Other: (Business Information Systems, Data Analysts, Data Scientists)

PILLAR 2 APPLICATION PROCESS – PART 1

1	**ISCED Area**
2	**Detail the available data on eligible student demand and trends (current/future) for this ISCED area.**
3	**Detail the Industry/enterprise need for the proposed courses to be expanded under this ISCED Area, including reference to national skills development objectives future skills needs, industry needs and industry collaboration**
4	**Provide an overview of institutional capacity to provide additional places in this ISCED area, this should include reference to physical capacity and infrastructure; academic, technical and support staff and industry links.**
5	**Detail the participant recruitment process, including initiatives to attract a diverse cohort of students**
6	**Specify the entry requirements (qualifications, RPL, and/or relevant experience) for the proposed courses**
7	**Specify institutional strategies to maximise retention and graduation of students**
8	**Detail the opportunities for employment for graduates of this course**

PILLAR 2 APPLICATION PROCESS – PART

1	Course title
2	Course code(s) [Internal, and CAO Code if applicable]
3	ISCED code (ONLY options listed on page 3)
4	NFQ level
5	Course Award
6	Is this a new or existing course?
7	Are there collaborative partners for this course provision?
8	Start date of course
9	Course Description: Provide details of the core modules, expected learning outcomes, the skills gained on graduation, and industry exposure or placement.
10	Duration of the course
11	Finish date of course
12	Existing Student Numbers on Course A. Past Student Numbers B. Current Student Numbers
13	Total number of additional places to be created

	Core Evaluation Criteria	Evidence
1	**Alignment with National Skills Needs**	Clear evidence that additional places target priority sectors (e.g. ICT, engineering, construction), supported by labour market data and EGFSN analysis
2	**Institutional Capacity & Deliverability**	Demonstrated ability to **expand existing programmes at scale**, including sufficient staffing, facilities, and infrastructure.
3	**Demand & Recruitment Potential**	Evidence that institutions can **attract sufficient student numbers** to fill the additional places.
4	**Value for Money**	Efficient use of public funding, including **cost per additional student** and use of existing resources.
5	**Impact on Graduate Output**	Likely contribution to **increased numbers of graduates in high-demand disciplines**.

Pillar 2 Evaluation Criteria

Strategic alignment, scalable delivery, proven demand, and efficient expansion of existing programmes to increase graduate supply in priority skills areas.

Criteria No.	Evaluation Criteria
1.	Quality: Institutions must detail the expected course content and learning outcomes of the course, the strategies for graduate retention and opportunities for graduate employment, the relevance of the course for identified skills needs, and collaboration with industry.
2.	Demand and Alignment: Institutions are required to provide evidence of demand for the course provision, this includes i) student demand and ii) industry demand.
3.	Capacity: Institutions must provide evidence of their track record and institutional capacity to deliver on the proposal in line with institutional strategy and existing capital infrastructure.
4.	Recruitment : Institutions must demonstrate recruitment strategies to fill the target places.
	Total

What Pillar 2 Delivered in Practice

1. Increased Undergraduate Capacity (*More students entering* ***high-demand disciplines without needing new programmes*****)**
    1. Funded **extra places on existing Level 6–8 programmes**)
    2. Targeted areas such as:
        1. ICT / computing
        2. Engineering
        3. Construction
        4. Manufacturing
        5. Environmental / sustainability
2. Direct Increase in Graduate Output (*Tangible contribution to* ***national skills supply pipeline*****)**
3. Delivered **over 1,000 additional graduates** in priority sectors
4. Graduates concentrated in:
    1. Computing
    2. Engineering
    3. Robotics
    4. Other STEM-aligned fields

At a System Level

1. Increased volume of traditional graduates in key fields
2. Strengthened the “front-end” pipeline (school leavers → STEM degrees)
3. Complemented Pillar 1’s **reskilling pipeline**

4. Incentivised System Expansion (HEIs received **top-up funding per additional student place** (up to €10,000 per student over programme duration)
    1. Encouraged institutions to:
        1. Expand intake
        2. Use existing infrastructure more intensively
        3. Align provision with **skills forecasts**
5. Rapid Response Using Existing Provision (Immediate response to labour market shortages)
    1. No need to design new programmes
    2. Focus was on **scaling what already works**

OUTCOMES: TUS Midlands

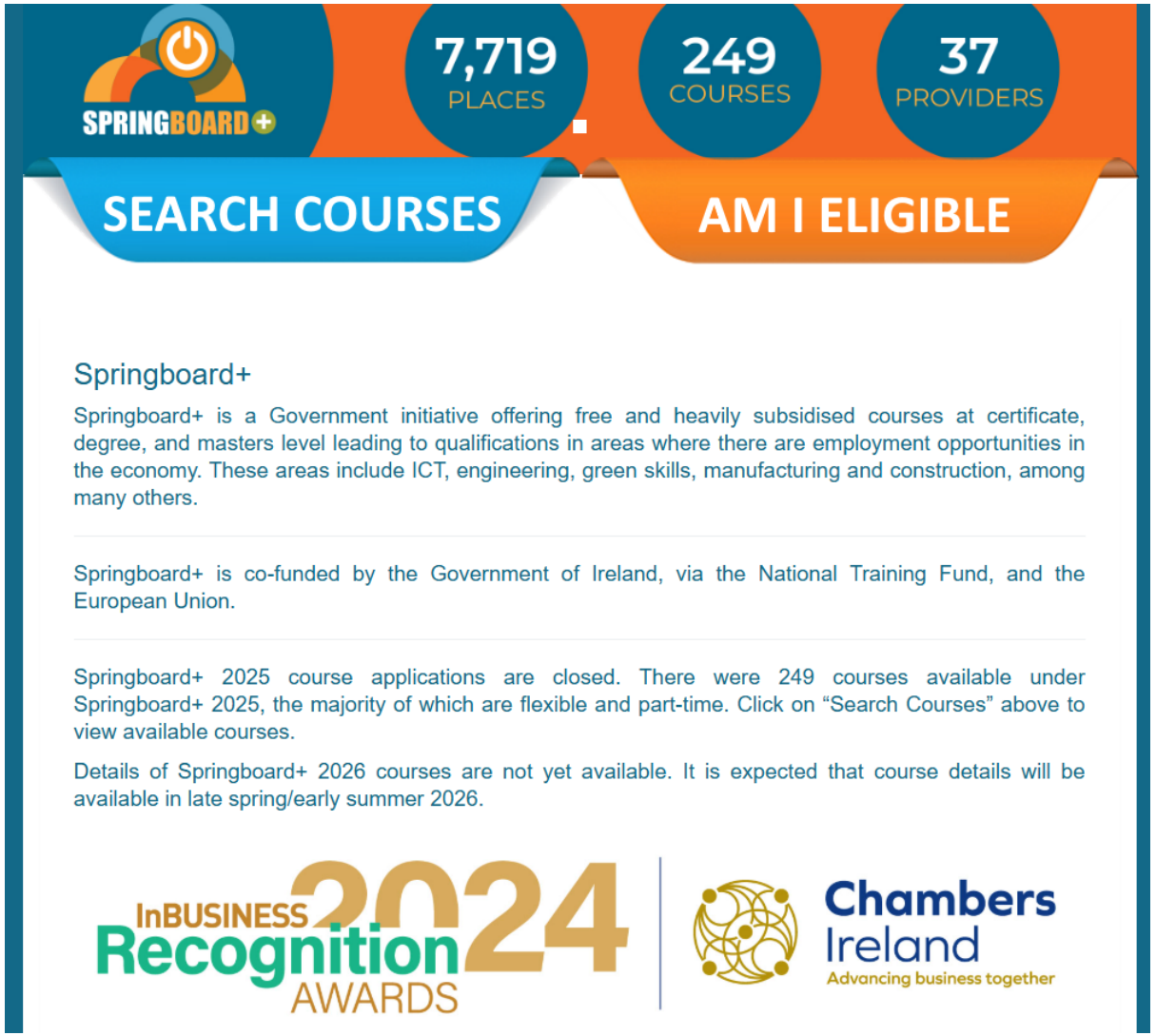
Course Title	CAO Code	Additional Places HEA will fund in 2020	Additional Places the HEA will fund in 2021
Software Design with Artificial Intelligence for Cloud Computing	AL802	12	12
Software Design with Mobile Apps and Connected Devices	AL803	3	3
Software Design with Virtual Reality & Gaming	AL801	12	12
Civil Engineering	AL811	5	5
Design with Product Innovation	AL862	6	6
Quantity Surveying	AL810	4	4
Business Information Systems	AL858	8	8
Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Food Business and Technology	AL856	10	10
Automation & Robotics	AL712	16	16
Total		**76**	**76**

Awarded versus not Awarded

You don't always win!

Course Title	CAO Code
BSc (Hons) Microbiology	AL839
BSc(Hons) Biotechnology	AL838
BSc(Hons) Pharmaceutical Sciences	AL840
Pharmaceutical Sciences (Drug Development and Analysis)	AL734
Applied Science	AL632
Bachelor of Science Biotechnology	AL730
Bioveterinary Science	AL842
Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Digital Marketing	AL857

HEA - Springboard+



€33 - €35m annually (2020 -2025)

Level 6 – 9
Part-time
Flexible
Online

Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)

Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning

Approx 18 – 20% of total annually

Funds approx. 1000+ learners for TUS

Human Capital Initiative

Pillar 3

INNOVATION & AGILITY

3.1 Innovation in modes of Delivery
3.2 Agility

The **Innovation in Delivery stream** focused on promoteing innovative methods of teaching and delivery, so that learners will benefit from improved quality and more engaging ways of learning on enterprise focused courses.

PILLAR 3.1: INNOVATION IN MODES OF DELIVERY

Encourage innovative methods of teaching and delivery

Additional places provided on courses impacted by these projects, which will be funded in line with Pillar 2 provisions

Projects will need to demonstrate

- Collaboration with industry
- Innovative methods of delivery of pedagogical changes/innovative delivery platforms
- Evidence of skills needs

Evidence of collaboration between providers will be desirable

PILLAR 3.1 – PROJECTS IDEAS

- Development of distance and flexible learning methods and learning materials
- Pedagogical developments required for the conversion of standard mainstream courses into provision suitable for distance and flexible learning
- Development of dual learning courses
- Development of "serious games"/virtual or computer simulations
- Development of structures for Recognition of Prior Learning to enable access to higher education for those in the workforce
- Responses to Brexit: including programmes that integrate foreign language provision with core disciplines
- Design thinking and STEAM within course provision
- Credentialing system for transversal skills

The **Agility stream focused on increasing institutions' ongoing capacity to anticipate, understand and respond rapidly to emerging skill needs of enterprise**.

PILLAR 3.2 –AGILITY FUND

Enabled HEIs and students to be in a position **to respond** to future developments in work, technology and society

Supported institutions through the creation of the agility necessary to respond to developments in technology that may not yet be evident, and give students the skills to adapt to a constantly changing world of work

Pillar 3 (Agility) - Examples

HEI develops completely new course in emerging technology	HEI embeds entrepreneurship in learning outcomes for all students on a science course	HEI develops a module on Artificial Intelligence for inclusion on a Computer Science Courses, and commits to additional students on that course

Evaluation Criteria – Bottom Line

"Robust, evidence-based proposals demonstrating innovation, scale, collaboration, and long-term system impact, supported by credible delivery and sustainability plans"

	Core Evaluation Criteria	Evidence
1	**Strategic Alignment & Relevance**	
	Strong alignment with **national skills priorities** (e.g. digital, green economy) and clear evidence of addressing current and future labour market needs.	Clear linkage to **national and regional skills priorities** (e.g. EGFSN reports, Project Ireland 2040); Labour market analysis demonstrating **current and future demand;** Alignment with institutional and sectoral strategies
2	**Level of Innovation & Transformation**	
	The extent to which the proposal introduced **new or significantly enhanced models** of programme design, delivery, or institutional practice (e.g. micro-credentials, modularisation, flexible pathways).	Demonstration of **new or significantly enhanced approaches** (e.g. micro-credentials, modular pathways, flexible delivery models); Clear articulation of how the project represents a **step-change rather than incremental improvement;** Examples or pilots (if available) supporting feasibility
3	**Employer Engagement & Partnership**	
	Depth and quality of **industry collaboration**, including co-design, co-delivery, and clear pathways to employment or upskilling impact.	**Formal partnerships** with industry (e.g. letters of support, MOUs); Evidence of **co-design and/or co-delivery** of programmes; Defined roles for employers in curriculum, assessment, or work-based learning
4	**Scale, Reach & Impact**	
	Potential to deliver **impact at scale**, including learner numbers, cross-institutional reach, and measurable outcomes (e.g. upskilling workforce, addressing skills gaps).	Projected **learner numbers and target cohorts;** Clear KPIs (e.g. enrolments, completions, employment outcomes); Evidence of potential to **address specific skills shortages at scale**

	Core Evaluation Criteria	Evidence
5	**Collaboration & System Benefit**	
	Evidence of **inter-institutional collaboration** and contribution to wider **sectoral or system-level change**, not just institutional benefit.	**Multi-institutional partnerships** or sector-wide initiatives; Mechanisms for **knowledge sharing and transfer;** Evidence of how outcomes will benefit the **wider higher education system**, not just a single institution
6	**Delivery Capacity & Governance**	
	Demonstrated ability to **manage and deliver complex, multi-partner projects**, including governance structures, risk management, and project management capability	Detailed **project plan**, timelines, and milestones; Governance structures (e.g. steering groups, project management frameworks); Evidence of institutional capability and **track record in similar initiatives;** Risk assessment and mitigation strategies
7	**Value for Money & Sustainability**	
	Efficient use of funding, with clear plans for **long-term sustainability and legacy impact** beyond the funding period.	Detailed **budget and cost breakdown;** Justification of expenditure relative to scale and impact; Plans for **sustainability beyond HCI funding** (e.g. embedding in core provision, future revenue models)

Pillar 3 Evaluation Criteria

"Prioritised: Innovative, collaborative, and scalable projects capable of transforming higher education delivery and embedding agile, industry-aligned lifelong learning systems"

Criteria No.	Evaluation Criteria
1.	Enterprise collaboration of benefit to Society the economy and education
2.	Alignment with HCI objectives, national education and enterprise policy strategic objectives, and performance frameworks
3.	Capacity to deliver
4.	Impact and Sustainability
	Total

Outcomes Pillar 3

- Funded **24 large-scale projects across Irish higher education**
- Engaged **~20,000+ learners** (estimated across projects)
- Created **new models of flexible, industry-aligned education**

"It drove system-wide innovation in how higher education designs, delivers, and scales skills provision.

A transformation in how Irish higher education designs and delivers provision—embedding flexibility, industry collaboration, and innovation to support lifelong learning and rapidly evolving skills needs"

List of HCI Projects (24 Projects, 84 Collaborative Partners, and 427 enterprise Partners)
[Human Capital Initiative | Skills and Engagement | Higher Education Authority]

1 | ADVANCE Centre

6 | Cyber Skills

11 | GROWTH hub

2 | AMASE

7 | DASBE

12 | Higher Education 4.0

3 | CIRDAS

8 | DCU Futures

13 | The iEd Hub

4 | CONVENE

9 | Designing Futures

14 | MicroCreds

5 | Creative Futures Academy

10 | Enabling Future Pharma

15 | Next Generation Teaching and Learning

16 | Innovative Materials for Industry 4.0

19 | Sustainable Futures

22 | Virtual Laboratories in higher education

17 | REEdI

20 | The Funds Academy

23 | IKC3

18 | Building Change

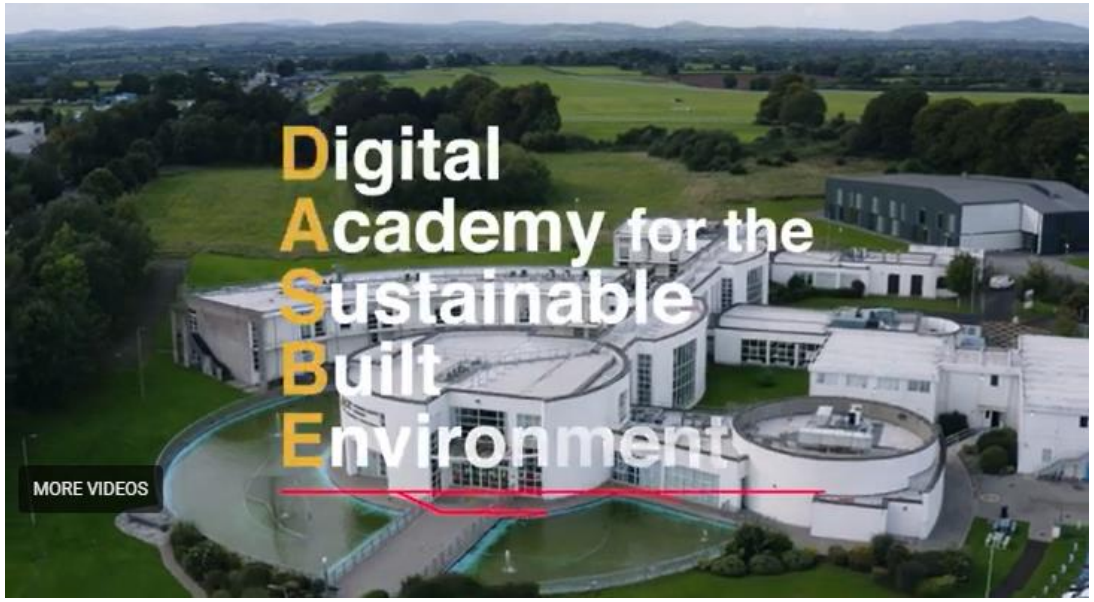
21 | UL@Work

24 | National RPL in Higher Education Project

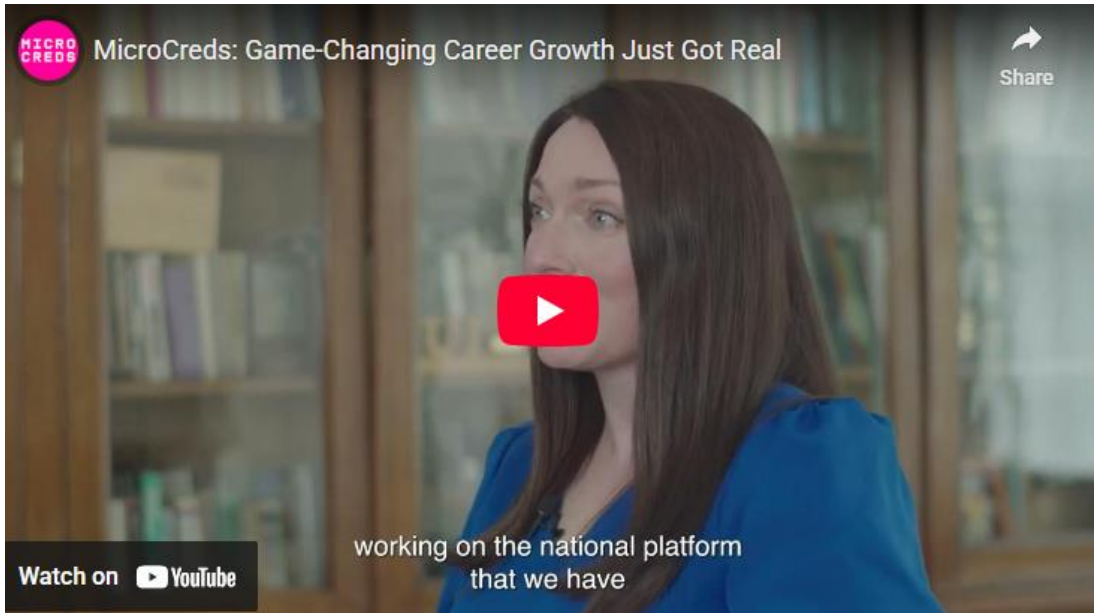
Source: Project websites and submissions

Projects – See HCI Pillar 3 Projects Hub | Skills and Engagement | Higher Education Authority

DASBE: Digital Academy for the Sustainable Built Environment | Skills and Engagement | Higher Education Authority



MicroCreds | Skills and Engagement | Higher Education Authority



HCI Pillar 3 Projects Hub | Skills and Engagement | Higher Education Authority

UL@Work | Skills and Engagement | Higher Education Authority

iEd Hub | Skills and Engagement | Higher Education Authority

Pillar 3: System level Impact

A structural shift in Irish higher education from traditional, programme-led provision to a more flexible, demand-driven and collaborative system

It:

- Embedded **modular, stackable and micro-credential learning models**
- Strengthened **deep, ongoing partnerships with industry**
- Enabled **rapid, agile programme development and delivery**
- Built capacity for **online, blended and lifelong learning at scale**
- Fostered **cross-institutional collaboration and system-wide innovation**

In essence: *"Pillar 3 moved the system beyond simply increasing supply (Pillars 1 & 2) to **transforming how higher education responds to evolving skills needs in a continuous, agile way**".*

Mid-Term Evaluation Report (2023) *Indecon June 23*

KEY OUTPUTS TO DATE OF THE 24 PROJECTS

84 ACADEMIC PARTNERS

427 ENTERPRISE PARTNERS

33,352 NUMBER OF ENGAGEMENTS WITH ENTERPRISE

23,301 NUMBER OF LEARNERS IMPACTED

468 NUMBER OF MODULES DEVELOPED

426 NUMBER OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS DEVELOPED

874 TOTAL NUMBER OF MODULES AND MICRO CREDENTIALS

34 NUMBER OF DISCIPLINES IMPACTED

4,276 ADDITIONAL STUDENT PLACES (with HCI funding)

5 EU PROJECTS ENGAGED

11 INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

Policy Alignment (*Ever Changing Context*)

Housing for All

Climate Action Plan 2021

Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025

International Financial Services Strategy

Enterprise 2025

Impact 2030: Irelands Research and Innovation Strategy

National Access Plan 2022-2028

Ireland's Industry 4.0 Strategy 2020-2025

Overall – Success Pillar 1 - 3

- Alignment with National Strategy
- Directly linked to:
  - Project Ireland 2040
  - National Skills Strategy
  - Digital and green transitions

A comprehensive transformation of Ireland's higher education system to deliver a more responsive, flexible, and skills-aligned talent pipeline.

Pillar	Core Outcome
Pillar 1	Reskilled graduates (conversion)
Pillar 2	Increased volume of traditional graduates in Key Field
Pillar 3	System Innovation

Summary

Together:

*“the pillars shifted the system from a **static, supply-led model** to a **dynamic, demand-driven ecosystem**, capable of addressing immediate skills shortages while building long-term capacity for lifelong learning and economic transformation.”*

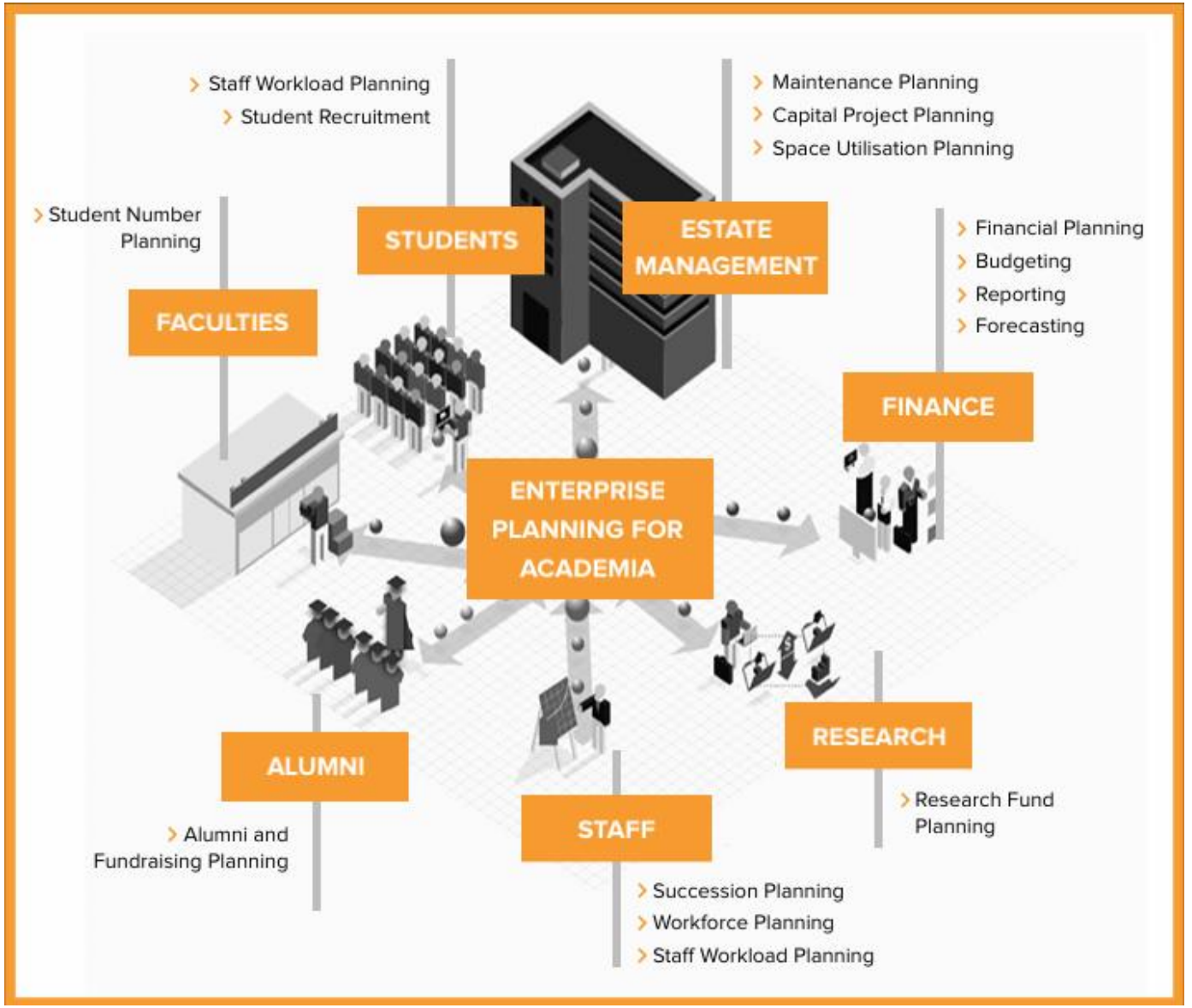
Guiding Principles

Guiding Principle 1	***Demonstrate meaningful collaboration and close partnership with industry***
Guiding Principle 2	***Demonstrate how the proposal aligns with Call objectives***
Guiding Principle 3	***Demonstrate institutional capacity to deliver objectives***
Guiding Principle 4	***Demonstrate clear alignment and fit with national education and enterprise policy***
Guiding Principle 5	***Provide evidence of potential transformative impacts across the institution and the higher education sector***
Guiding Principle 6	***Encompass learner centred design***

Enterprise Planning for Academic

Pillars 1- 3 Required

- University Wide Change (all stakeholders)
- University Wide Change (all engagement Stakeholders – industry)
- University Wide change (Learner and lecture engagement and delivery)
- University Wide Change (Technology/Digital Infrastructure)
- University Collaboration /Learning



All impacting and creating Irish HE System-Wide Change

Thank You/ **Благодаря (**Blagodarya)

Questions/**Въпроси**

(Vaprosi)