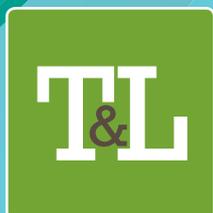




# BUILDING DIGITAL CAPACITY IN IRISH HIGHER EDUCATION 2013–18

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND KEY PERSPECTIVES



**NATIONAL FORUM**  
FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING  
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## **Building Digital Capacity in Irish Higher Education 2013–18** **National Developments and Key Perspectives**

This report was informed by an interim review of building digital capacity, conducted by Dr Catherine Deegan from September 2016 to June 2017, by consultations with senior managers across Irish higher education, conducted by Dr Jim Devine in 2017 and by the work of the National Forum team during 2018.

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## INTRODUCTION

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 outlined the importance of ensuring the centrality of teaching and learning in Irish higher education. The announcement of the establishment of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in 2012 represented the beginning of a new era for Irish higher education. The National Forum was charged with working in partnership with students, staff, higher education institutions (HEIs) and policy partners to lead the advancement of national priorities for teaching and learning across the sector.

Partnership with those who learn, teach and shape policy and practice in Irish higher education has been crucial to the National Forum's progress towards ensuring teaching and learning is at the centre of sectoral enhancement and innovation. The Union of Students in Ireland (USI), and the body of students it represents, have been active, engaged partners in all Forum work. Staff across the sector have been represented and engaged through the National Forum Associates, who are teaching and learning experts and middle managers from all higher education institutions. Senior managers across the sector have also been essential partners, sharing their leadership perspectives and insights. The work of the National Forum is also supported and informed by close collaboration with policy partners, bodies representing higher education institutions, and other key partner organisations across all levels of education.

A key focus of the work of the Forum has been building digital capacity through fostering engagement with innovative pedagogies, and the technologies which support these, and encouraging a culture of open access with regard to teaching and learning resources and practices in Irish higher education. This digital focus was interwoven through the other dimensions of enhancement, including professional development, scholarship of teaching and learning, rewarding and celebrating teaching excellence, and developing strong partnership and collaboration.

### Focus of this Report

This report gives an overview of the work completed by the National Forum, in collaboration with its partners and stakeholders, on building digital capacity in Irish higher education during the period 2013–18. The report aims to:

- provide a record of recent developments in building digital capacity in Irish higher education<sup>1</sup>
- share perspectives of those who influence and shape teaching and learning in Irish higher education regarding digital developments in recent years
- allow work undertaken to date, and the perspectives of those involved, to inform future developments related to the digital dimension of teaching and learning in Irish higher education

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<sup>1</sup> This report does not attempt to encompass all developments in building digital capacity in Irish higher education since 2013, only those related to the work of the National Forum. Similarly, the report does not encompass all National Forum work, only those key aspects which relate to building digital capacity.

## Policy Context

At the time of the establishment of the National Forum, the policy landscape related to teaching and learning in general, and its engagement with technology in particular, was reaching a key stage. The 2014 Report to the European Commission on New Modes of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education emphasised the importance of those who educate in higher education being well versed in relevant digital technologies and pedagogies. Similarly, the 2015 Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area included guidelines focused on ensuring different modes of delivery, flexibly using a variety of pedagogical methods, and encouraging innovation in teaching methods and use of new technologies. Meanwhile, at national level, the National Digital Learning Resources (NDLR) service, which was an open-access platform supporting excellence in teaching and learning from 2006–2012, had demonstrated the value and importance of enabling those who teach and support learning to share teaching and learning resources and approaches. Ireland’s ICT Action Plan 2014–18 identified the enhancement of ICT capacity and awareness in the education system as one of its three strategic priorities, while the National Skills Strategy 2025 highlighted the importance of technology as a key driver of change and digital skills as vital to Ireland’s future. The Internationalisation Strategy for Ireland 2016-20 promoted the internationalisation of curricula across Irish HEIs, anticipating that this would be enabled through the enhancement of the digital capacity of the sector, inclusive of the development of the capacity of staff for the delivery of technology-enhanced learning. The education action plans and system performance frameworks from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) have also become increasingly explicit in recent years about how the digital dimension of teaching and learning in Irish higher education can and should be enhanced.

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN BUILDING DIGITAL CAPACITY 2013–18

### Consulting Across the Sector and Outlining a Vision

Taking an open and inclusive approach, the National Forum conducted a sectoral consultation throughout 2014, which involved a nationwide survey, focus groups and individual interviews with those who teach and students across the country, and consultations with senior managers and international experts in higher education. This consultation focused on four interlinked themes (digital pedagogy, digital literacy, technical infrastructure, and system and policy infrastructure) and resulted in the publication of the Roadmap for Enhancement in a Digital World<sup>2</sup>. The Digital Roadmap sought to support, connect, and enhance efforts at local or regional levels, and help to point to the collective ways in which the sector could work to build digital capacity to enhance the learning experience for students in Irish higher education.

Ireland has been cited at international level as an exemplar for building digital capacity across a higher education system.

The vision set out in the Digital Roadmap, agreed by the sector in 2014, was as follows:

The Irish higher education sector will be characterised by providing a higher education learning experience and environment in which:

- There is a culture that fully embraces digital learning and digital innovation and its contribution to realising transformative goals articulated in the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030
- Digital platforms, resources and tools are utilised to enhance teaching, learning and assessment, to connect teachers and students, and to increase the level and quality of learning-related communication
- Digital literacy and digital skills for teaching and learning are developed, supported and fully embedded
- Students will have access to a range of technological supports and resources to enhance their learning in a manner that enables them to become lifelong learners in the digital world
- Teachers will be fully enabled to use digital technologies/resources where appropriate, in order to enhance student learning within their disciplines
- Institutions collaborate with each other, and with the schools and further education sectors in order to build digital capacity for teaching and learning, with students as key partners in the process
- Institutions collaborate effectively at the international level in both research and practice relating to technology-enhanced learning, for example through the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 initiatives, enabling Irish higher education institutions to partner in a global landscape, building connections and developing a reputation internationally for innovation, digital fluency and cooperation

<sup>2</sup> All National Forum reviews and research reports mentioned in this report can be found at [www.teachingandlearning.ie/publications](http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/publications)

Arising from this vision, four high-level recommendations were identified to inform and guide those who learn, teach and lead across Irish higher education as they navigate and shape digital developments:

**Recommendation 1:** Prioritise the strategic development of digital capacity in institutional and national policy and quality frameworks in a way that supports innovation for impact

**Recommendation 2:** Strengthen and support collaboration within and between institutions, and with different parts of the higher education sector; develop shared policies and infrastructure that reflect the complexity of an increasingly digital world

**Recommendation 3:** Develop a consistent, seamless and coherent digital experience for students in Irish higher education and actively engage with students and teachers to develop their digital skills and knowledge

**Recommendation 4:** Develop a strong evidence base for enhanced pedagogy

Some aspects of the recommendations needed to be considered at the level of national policy, driven by the Department of Education and Skills and other policy partners systemically over the longer term. However, as intended, the National Forum also led the sector and its institutions in taking immediate ownership of many aspects of the recommendations and this provided a strong foundation for building digital capacity in higher education since 2014.

## Bettering our Understanding of the Digital Landscape

A key step in laying a foundation for building digital capacity was to gain a clearer understanding of the digital landscape across Irish higher education. There was a need to review the current landscape with respect to key topics deemed to be of strategic national importance (technological infrastructure, policies for digital teaching and learning, and the use of data to support student learning), while simultaneously building a broad research evidence base to enhance teaching and learning.

### Review of Ireland's higher education technological infrastructure

A national review of Ireland's higher education technological infrastructure was conducted in 2016 in collaboration with chief information officers and IT managers across 25 HEIs. Thanks to this review, for the first time it became possible for institutions to situate their technological infrastructure within a national context and for institutional and national policies and strategies to be informed by an accurate picture of the hardware, software and technical capability underpinning endeavours to enhance digital teaching and learning. The review created the opportunity for institutions to benchmark more meaningfully on issues to do with investment, capability, and the greater potential for shared service provision. The process of conducting the review also allowed information, data, and expert opinion related to technological infrastructure to be shared across the sector.

During consultations, senior managers across the sector indicated that adequate planning, design and funding of technological infrastructure is a key priority for the future.

### Review of the policy landscape of digital teaching and learning

In 2017, a national review was conducted exploring existing perspectives and practices regarding policies for digital teaching and learning across Irish higher education and mapping the policy landscape for digital teaching and learning across HEIs in Ireland. The review recognised that the impact of digital technology has created a new set of policy-related opportunities, challenges and considerations to which those involved in policy development must attend. Further, it provided a breakdown of the degree to which existing policies across the sector reflected the priorities of HEIs, were implementable, and were situated in the practice of those for whom they were developed. In doing so, the review was designed to inform, guide and support all those responsible for the development of key policies in teaching and learning throughout Irish higher education. As will be explained in a subsequent section, a guide has been developed to assist HEIs in developing such policies at institutional level.

The Higher Education System Performance Framework 2018–20 recommends that all HEIs have policies for digital teaching and learning put in place by 2019.

### Review of the learning analytics landscape in Ireland and internationally

Consultations that informed the development of the Digital Roadmap and later face-to-face consultations with senior managers across the country indicated that optimising the use of data, such as learning analytics, to foster the success of all students was emerging as a key consideration for the future. In this context, a review was published by the National Forum in 2017 which mapped the learning analytics landscape in Ireland and internationally. The review served to provide a contextual overview for those new to learning analytics in Irish higher education and to explore the potential that exists in the use of data to enable student success. The review also informed subsequent developments in establishing resources and support mechanisms to guide institutions and staff in their use of data to support student success, which will be detailed in a later section of this report.

During consultations, HEI senior managers across the sector indicated that optimising the use of data, such as learning analytics, to foster the success of all students is a key consideration for the future.

### Scholarship of teaching and learning

As part of the collaborative partnership and engagement between the National Forum and sectoral partners in developing a shared common purpose for evidence-based enhancement activities, a series of focused research projects were funded across nine HEIs in 2015. Among these was a research project which examined how open educational resources could be utilised, developed and shared in order to enhance teaching and learning in Irish higher education. Another study in the series involved the first ever national mapping of all research related to teaching and learning in Ireland. It covered the period 1990 to 2015 and included all research related to technology-enhanced learning. A subsequent development stemming from this literature review was the generation of a comprehensive, searchable database of Irish teaching and learning research publications (2275 entries) drawn from the national review of literature. This national scholarship database, housed on the National Forum website, is available to be accessed and added to on an ongoing basis<sup>3</sup>.

Through the National Forum, Ireland now has a national online database for scholarship of teaching and learning.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://eprints.teachingandlearning.ie/>

Through partnership with the Irish Research Council, the National Forum also funded five postgraduate research scholarships in 2014 and 2015. Research topics investigated by the selected scholars included data analytics, blended learning, and mathematics education. Further, in 2017, the National Forum partnered with the Irish Research Council to fund an exploration of the evidence related to staff engagement with technology-enhanced assessment in higher education. This study provided key evidence to inform the National Forum's Assessment of/for/as Learning Enhancement Theme 2016-18.

In 2014, the National Forum also established a partnership with the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE). In collaboration with ISSE, the National Forum provided annual workshops, from 2014 to 2017, to staff across the sector to assist them in engaging with data collected through the ISSE. The workshops provided advice on how institutions could optimise their engagement with ISSE data to enhance teaching and learning structures and practices. In addition, National Forum Insights were published to summarise and share findings and prompt engagement with the survey data and the National Forum provided input into the content of ISSE annual reports.

Other research projects conducted by the National Forum which contributed to the evidence base for digital teaching and learning included a study exploring the professional identities, professional development needs and work roles of learning technologists in Irish higher education, and a national survey on staff use of technology to enhance teaching and learning in higher education.

### **National Seminar Series**

Established in 2014, the National Seminar Series aims to provide space, in local contexts, for connections to be established between colleagues in higher education around shared research and practice interests. National and international experts are also invited to share insights on topics of particular interest. In its first five years, the National Seminar Series saw 234 seminars organised across Irish HEIs. Broad themes under which seminars were funded included teaching for transitions, assessment of/for/as learning, and the professional development of those who teach. Approximately one in five seminars focused explicitly on the digital aspect of the given theme, with seminars exploring such topics as digital resources to support transitions, policies for digital teaching and learning, technology-enhanced assessment, and online professional development support. These seminars have allowed students, staff, institutional leaders and international experts to take active roles in discussion and real-time exploration of knowledge related to research and practice in the area of digital teaching and learning.

## Establishing Structures and Guidance Frameworks for Building Digital Capacity

While evidence was being gathered to enhance our understanding of the digital teaching and learning landscape, a number of structures and guidance frameworks were also put in place to ensure that digital developments at institutional level were supported and aligned at a national level.

### Establishing a funding mechanism to support the building of digital capacity

The establishment of the National Forum's Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund in 2013 was key to the National Forum's ability to support digital innovation across the sector. In addition to funding the National Seminar Series, a mechanism was established under the Fund to support larger collaborative teaching and learning enhancement projects within and between institutions. This funding structure allows project teams to submit proposals under specified themes. The project applications are reviewed by an international panel of experts, including a student representative, through a two-phase process. The implementation of the projects is then monitored by the panel every six months, via a series of open-forum presentations. This process ensures transparency, project support, collaboration, sharing of expertise, and accountability for the achievement of project outcomes. An overarching area of focus in selecting and monitoring project progress is the potential to impact positively on student learning. Through the Fund, 32 collaborative projects were funded across 25 HEIs from 2014 to 2018. These projects are summarised in a subsequent section of this report.

The importance of sharing, discussing, promoting and, where possible, scaling up innovative practice has been highlighted in national and international policies.

### Establishing a process for scoping nationally-co-ordinated projects

In order to initiate a number of national-level reviews and projects such as the review of technological infrastructure, the review of digital policies, and the review of learning analytics, a project scoping process was put in place to ensure that sector-level projects were: informed by a wide range of relevant expertise, focused on topics of real interest, and planned in a manner that allowed them to reach their objectives through efficient and optimal methodologies. The scoping process involves the establishment of a scoping group, chaired by an external expert and comprised of members who each have experience and knowledge relevant to the project topic, including students in higher education. A background document containing relevant research and context is circulated and three scoping group meetings take place, culminating in the production of Terms of Reference, including the final project scope, work packages, suggested methodology and anticipated outcomes. The three scoping group meetings begin with 'blue-sky thinking' regarding the possibilities of the project and gradually narrow their focus, with the third meeting centring on reaching agreement on the project focus, and the compilation of Terms of Reference to guide the realisation of the project aims. This project scoping process has since been adopted by other policy partners at national level as an effective way of ensuring appropriate use of national project funding.

The National Forum has always ensured that its work is consultative and informed by relevant expertise.



conceptualisation of the variety of digital skills people might need to support enhanced teaching and learning, the categories the skills fall into, and how various digital skills relate to each other.

All Aboard aims to empower learners, teachers, and anyone who uses technology to support their work, their study, or other aspects of living in a digital age. All online resources developed within All Aboard are openly licensed and the framework is supplemented by a collection of open digital badges, each associated with a particular digital skill. The National Digital Skills Framework, along with its digital badges, has attracted attention in other levels of education and in other sectors of society, both in Ireland and internationally. It has also informed, and been used as a foundation for, various other funded projects, as will be detailed in a later section.

### Devising a process for the development of enabling policies for digital teaching and learning

Accompanying the review of policies for digital teaching and learning across Irish higher education, published in 2018, a guide was developed to assist HEIs in examining their existing and upcoming policies and in reflecting on whether they address appropriately the digital dimension of teaching and learning.

The guide focuses on policies for technology-enabled assessment, copyright and intellectual property rights, curriculum design, managing artefacts on a virtual learning environment, and student digital footprint and digital wellbeing. The guide breaks down the policy development process into eight steps to support those developing policies to do so in a way that is mindful of both what is important to the HEI and what is achievable in practice. Examples are given in the guide of how particular issues related to digital teaching and learning have been addressed through existing policies in Ireland and internationally<sup>5</sup>.

Consultation across the sector in late 2018 pointed to the development of digital policies as an important future focus at national and institutional levels.

### Establishing a structure for guiding institutional approaches to the use of data for enabling student success

The Data-Enabled Student Success Initiative (DESSI), launched by the National Forum in October 2017, aims to guide Irish HEIs as they develop or begin to explore institutional strategies for using data to underpin effective, sustainable student success.

DESSI is led by the National Forum in partnership with the DES, the Higher Education Authority, Quality and Qualifications Ireland, ISSE, the Irish Universities Association, the Technological Higher Education Association, the Higher Education Colleges Association, HEAnet and EduCampus. To date, 19 HEIs have participated in DESSI. In 2018, the initiative involved 31 site visits with over 700 participating institutional staff and students, institutional strategy workshops hosted in 14 HEIs, the development of two open-access professional development short courses focused on learning analytics practice and strategy development, a national learning analytics symposium, and the development of a learning analytics platform guide to inform decisions about purchasing or developing analytics platforms at institutional level. The Online Resource for Learning Analytics (ORLA), launched by the Minister for Higher Education in 2017, supports DESSI. ORLA was developed in partnership with stakeholders across the sector. It is an open-access collection of guides and case studies for developing an evidence-based approach for using data to enable student success.

The Higher Education System Performance Framework 2018–20 recommends that all HEIs have a Student Success Strategy in place by 2020.

<sup>5</sup> See [www.teachingandlearning.ie/EnablingPolicies](http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/EnablingPolicies)

## Fostering Collaboration in Building Digital Capacity

A shared recognition of the importance of collaboration was central to efforts to build digital capacity in recent years. As mentioned, a number of consultations and scoping groups took place during 2013–18, allowing for national developments, frameworks, reviews and structures to be collaboratively realised. Inter- and intra-institutional collaboration was fostered through the various collaborative research projects conducted as part of the two enhancement themes of the National Forum between 2013 and 2018. In addition, collaboration between networks and between disciplines has been an important feature in building digital capacity across the sector. National and local initiatives and projects have also been supported to nurture a strong interconnectivity between all levels of education and fostered innovation within and across institutions.

### Network and disciplinary collaboration

Networks and discipline groups are key partners of the National Forum and represent important channels through which those involved in teaching and learning can collaborate to effect positive change. The National Forum provided networks and disciplines with online collaborative spaces to allow them to share teaching and learning resources and approaches and to collaborate online.

Funding was also provided to these groups in 2014 and 2016 to support their teaching and learning enhancement activities and examples of good practice were showcased on the National Forum website.

Teaching and Learning Enhancement Within and Across Disciplines is one of four key priorities in the National Forum's Strategic Plan 2019–21.

### All Aboard 2017: Collaboration across levels of education

In April 2017, the National Forum worked in partnership with 16 HEIs across Ireland to organise All Aboard 2017, a week-long series of national and regional public events designed to build confidence in Ireland's digital skills for learning. Institutions were supported to plan events in collaboration with local schools,

community organisations and businesses. This resulted in high levels of engagement and awareness of both the planned events and the involved partners. In all, 322 events took place across higher education, post-primary, primary, community and business sectors. Participant feedback indicated an increase in confidence in digital skills and increased awareness of the importance of digital skills and availability of related resources. Through engagement with international and national experts, with event partners and with the wider community, organising teams reported having learned a lot both about the digital aspect of teaching and learning and about the organisation of events within and beyond the institution. The initiative also prompted conversations regarding digital practices and areas for improvement at institutional level.

All Aboard 2017 was the first national initiative to focus on digital skills for learning across all levels of education.

### Collaboration across and between institutions through enhancement projects

The 32 projects funded in the 2014, 2015 and 2016 phases of the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund resulted in extensive collaboration being fostered between and within institutions. The map on pages 14 and 15 illustrates the breadth of such collaboration. Among core required criteria for selecting successful applicant projects was strong evidence of a

coherent partnership approach across the regional cluster or collaboration along with evidence of good intra-institutional collaboration. Evidence of collaboration and partnership with students was also sought both at application and project review stages.

## Enhancing the Digital Literacy, Skills and Experiences of Those Who Teach and Learn

Enhancing the digital literacy, skills and experiences of those who teach and learn is fundamental to realising the vision of a consistent, seamless and coherent digital experience for students in Irish higher education. The consultations, reviews, research, supports, guidance frameworks, and local and national seminars and events that have taken place since 2013 have contributed to this aim. All have also involved the active participation of students and teachers. In addition to these developments, a National Professional Development Framework has been established, supported by a suite of open-access short courses and a number of funded enhancement projects.

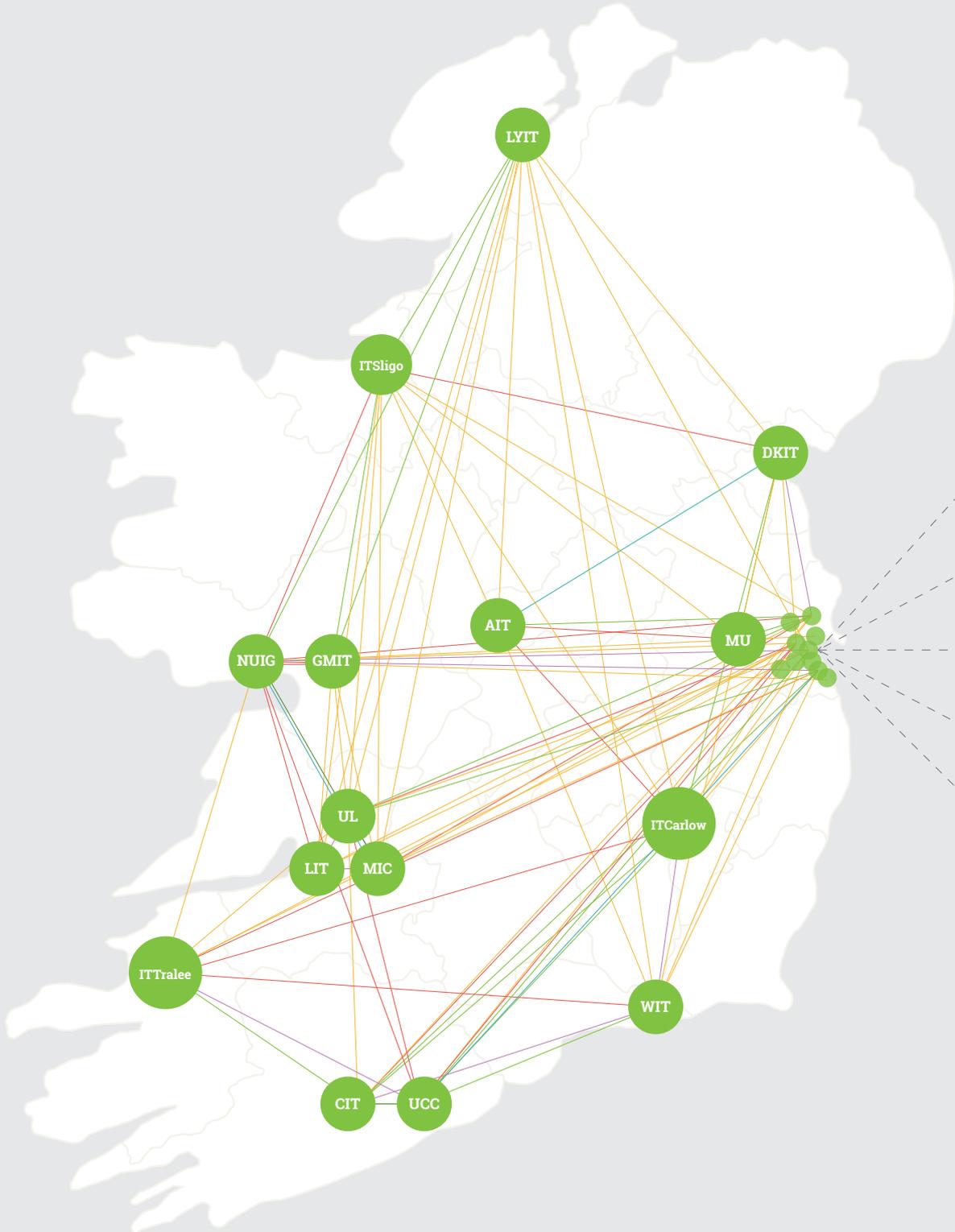
### Developing a National Framework for Professional Development

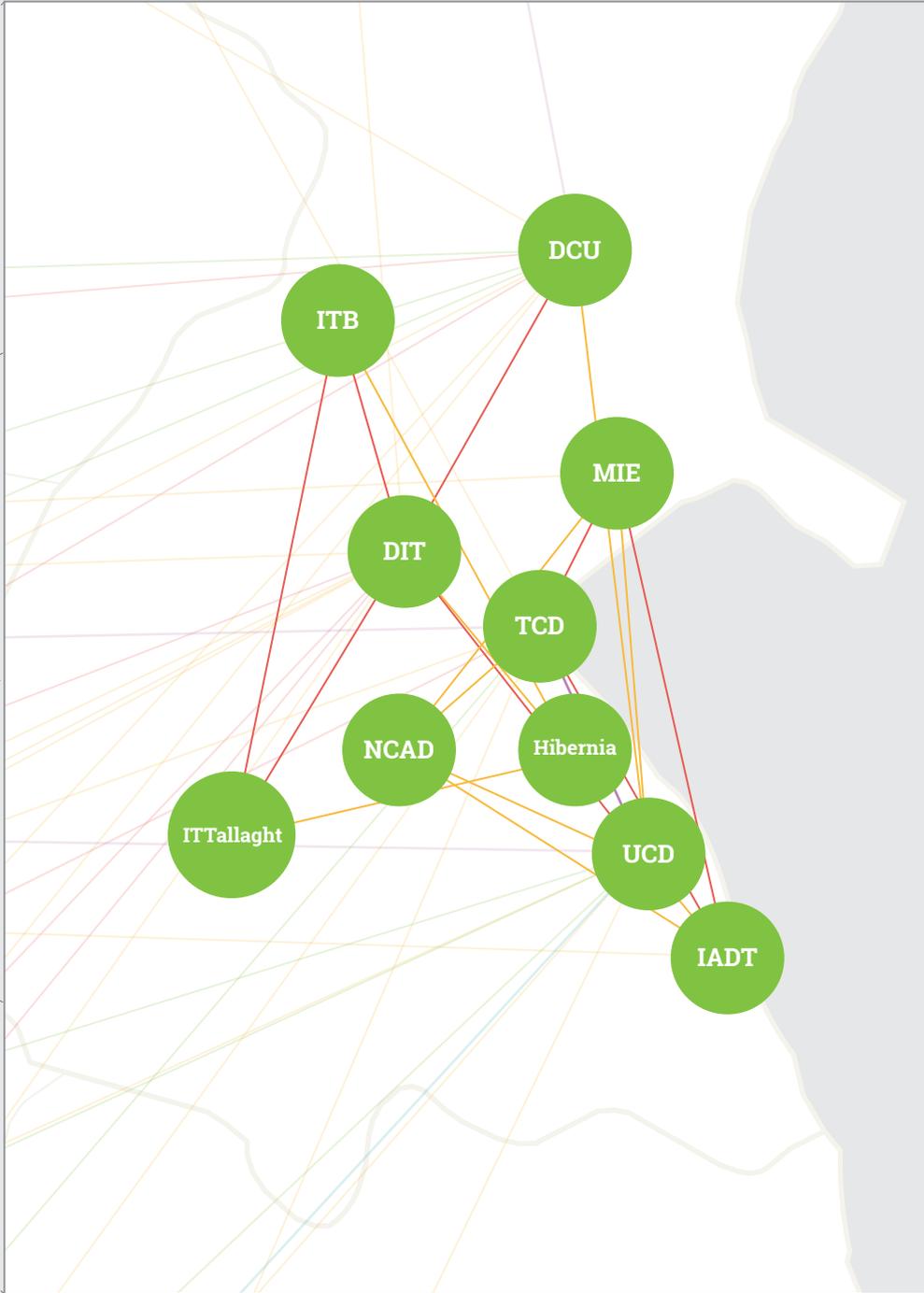
In 2013, the National Forum began working with the sector to develop a national professional development framework for Irish higher education that was meaningful, motivating, engaging and impactful. The Framework, to be successful, needed to recognise diverse professional development needs, depending on stage of development, context and discipline. Following extensive consultation and the publication of a number of mapping documents, the National Professional Development Framework for All Staff Who Teach in Irish Higher Education was published in 2016. The purpose of the Framework is to assist and empower staff in developing, planning and engaging in professional development activities. The Framework is flexible and inclusive and can be used by all those who teach in higher education across a broad range of professional identities.

The Higher Education System Performance Framework 2018–20 recommends that all HEIs implement the PD Framework from 2018.

One of the key aspects of the Framework is the nationally-agreed description of different forms of professional development. It is underpinned by a number of identified values and domains that help to guide individual staff on their professional development journeys, and may also be used by academic departments and institutions to recognise, inform, enhance and sustain professional development. Among the domains of professional development staff are prompted to engage with, one emphasises the importance of personal and professional digital capacity and the application of digital skills and knowledge to professional practice. When the Framework was piloted among 230 staff across the sector in 2017, participants explained that engagement with the Framework caused them to feel more empowered to take risks in the classroom, to engage with technology, and to use teaching tools (such as blogs and videos) that they may previously have overlooked.

Institutional Collaborations Through Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund Projects 2014, 2015, 2016





### **Open-access professional development short courses for those who teach**

A suite of 17 open-access professional development short courses, each leading to a National Forum digital badge, were collaboratively designed by experts across the sector. These professional development opportunities support the nationwide implementation of the National Professional Development Framework. They provide accessible routes for staff to engage in professional development that can be tailored to individual context and that supports employment mobility across the sector. Each short course focuses on a particular aspect of staff professional development, such as programme-focused assessment, digital policy development, and getting started with online learning. The courses are offered as non-accredited professional development opportunities for all who teach in Irish higher education.

### **Embedding the National Professional Development Framework through funded projects**

Among the 32 funded Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund projects, a number focused specifically on supporting the implementation of the National Professional Development Framework, including its focus on personal and professional digital capacity.

#### ***Enhancing the professional development and digital capability of those in middle/senior-management roles***

Two projects aimed to build leadership capacity at institutional level through work with those in middle/senior management roles:

The 'Crannóg' project worked with those in senior leadership positions in HEIs, such as Heads of School/Department and Deans, to build capacity in leadership in relation to teaching, learning, and building digital capacity and capability. To support this, the project developed a range of digital resources, all of which were classified according to the key topic headings proposed by the project participants. In addition to networking lunches, workshops, meetings, and bespoke resources and communications, the project saw middle managers being mentored by students in the use of new technologies to support learning and in the priorities of students in the digital age. See more here: [www.crannog-he.ie](http://www.crannog-he.ie)

#### **Lead institution: NUIG**

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The 'Teaching and Learning Champions' project enhanced the capacity of middle and senior managers for leadership in digitally-engaged teaching and learning. It did so through the establishment of a Teaching and Learning Champions Forum for Senior Managers across four HEIs and the development of a Special Purpose Award in Mentoring of Leadership in Teaching and Learning. The Award was supported by the creation of bespoke digital resources aligned to the National Professional Development Framework and an online mentoring platform for academic and professional services managers.

#### **Lead institution: LYIT**

The implementation of the National Professional Development Framework was also supported through a number of other funded projects:

The 'L2L' (Librarians Learning to Support Learners Learning) project focused on recognising and supporting the professional development of librarians as teachers who offer interventions embedded in discipline modules, co-teach with academics, solo teach to prescribed learning outcomes, and offer e-learning programmes via VLEs. The project looked at the National Professional Development Framework through the lens of library staff with a view to embedding and championing the Framework among librarians across the country. The project website contains extensive digital resources including videos, animations, and advice on setting up ePortfolios. In addition, the book produced as one output of the project contains a chapter dedicated to supporting the development of digital competencies for library staff. Participants in the project noted an increase in their digital capacity and literacy as a result of being involved. See more here: [www.l2l.ie](http://www.l2l.ie)

**Lead institution: Dundalk IT**

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The 'ATLAS' (Aligning Teaching and Learning across the Technological Sector) project sought to interpret the National Professional Development Framework within the context of existing accredited provision across the technological sector to examine and address specific professional development needs. The accredited Learning Innovation Network Flexible Pathway, used across institutes of technology, was mapped against the Framework resulting in a digital mapping tool which has proven effective and is now available for use by any interested HEI, along with guidelines and consultation mapping packs.

**Lead institution: Athlone IT**

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Focusing on the professional development needs of graduate teaching assistants, the 'Alignment and Development of an Online Programme for Graduate Teaching Assistants' project developed an online module for graduate teaching assistants that can be used by any institution as an independent 5-ECTs online professional qualification in teaching and learning for graduate teaching assistants or as five discrete areas of professional development, with accompanying workshop packages including templates and multimedia content.

**Lead Institution: TCD**

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The 'Aligning Maynooth University's Accredited T&L Programmes with the National PD Framework' project set out to benchmark Maynooth University's Professional Certificate in Teaching and Learning for Tutors and Demonstrators and its Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education with the National Professional Development Framework, and redesign both programmes to align with the Framework. The project resulted in a PD Framework Alignment Toolkit which is now available for use by other HEIs across the sector. The toolkit provides templates and guidance to HEIs who wish to map and redesign existing offerings in line with the Framework and supports individuals to map existing and planned accredited formal and non-formal professional development to the Framework.

**Lead institution: MU**

The 'Professional Development Capacity Building in the Shannon Consortium' project saw a recently developed UL Graduate Diploma/MA in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship in Higher Education programme being enhanced and aligned to the needs of the three partner institutions in the Shannon Consortium. In particular, in enhancing the module offerings on the Graduate Diploma, the project developed appropriate guidelines on recognised prior learning for participants on the programme, ensuring that recognition of prior learning is clear, consistent and in line with the values of the National Professional Development Framework.

**Lead institution: UL**

### ***Leveraging and uncovering the potential of digital for those who teach and learn***

A number of projects enhanced the digital literacy, skills and experiences of those who teach and learn in general and specified ways. Such projects focused on teaching and learning in general and on topics such as student transitions, the internationalisation of the curriculum, and teaching and learning and staff professional development within disciplines.

### ***General support for the enhancement of teaching and learning***

Projects which took a general approach to enhanced digital teaching and learning, with a focus on those who teach and learn, centred on online courses and tools, the organisation of events and campaigns, and the recruitment of those who teach and learn as ambassadors for the optimal use of technology in teaching and learning:

The 'TEL Tools' project involved the development of a collection of online micro-learning courses designed to help those who teach to optimise their use of technology to enhance teaching and learning. TELU (technology-enhanced learning for you), the project's online platform, features over 150 openly-licensed courses, each designed by experienced educators and designers and curated into easy-to-use, meaningful channels. TELU is built around real, on-the-ground experiences and case studies from practicing teachers. See more here: [www.telu.me](http://www.telu.me)

**Lead institution: CIT**

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The 'ePortfolio Strategy to Enhance Student Learning, Assessment and Staff Professional Development' project aimed to foster new ways to encourage academic staff to reap the benefits that ePortfolios can bring to academic programmes of the future by encouraging them to re-think their curricula in light of the possibilities offered by digital technologies. In addition to building evidence regarding ePortfolio use and facilitating national and international conversations regarding the potential of ePortfolios for teaching and learning, the project resulted in the establishment of an online 'ePortfolio Hub', which offers a one-stop-shop for anyone interested in incorporating ePortfolios into their teaching or creating their own ePortfolio, including how-tos, templates, guides, presentations, videos and research findings. See more here: [www.eportfoliohub.ie](http://www.eportfoliohub.ie)

**Lead institution: DIT (Now TU Dublin)**

At the core of the ‘Transformation through Collaboration’ project was the recruitment and training of staff as Digital Champions in each partner institution. 45 staff became champions for the improvement of digital literacy and digital skills within their academic disciplines, their departments and ultimately across the regional cluster. Events and blogs allowed the champions to share their learning and examples of best practice in the use of digital in teaching and learning. See more here: [www.digitalchampions.ie](http://www.digitalchampions.ie)

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**Lead institution: UCC**

The ‘Digital Skills in Action’ project focused on embedding digital skills into everyday teaching and learning practice. The project worked with members of academic communities in the creation of digital case studies and e-practicums which were shared with the student, academic and leadership communities in all partner institutions through technology-enhanced learning events. Through these events and the sharing of related digital resources, the project supported innovation and promoted continuous professional development in digital skills.

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**Lead institution: IADT**

The ‘What Works and Why’ project aimed to build digital literacy and engagement for students and teachers. The basic premise was there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to the effective use of new digital technologies for teaching and learning. Staff and student digital literacy was enhanced through workshops, seminars, drop-in clinics, small-scale innovation projects, and peer-mentoring groups, which resulted in a collection of guides and resources that shared lessons on what works and why with respect to the digital dimension of teaching and learning.

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**Lead institution: DCU**

The ‘Take 1 Step’ project encouraged staff and students to take one step in engaging with digital literacy. The campaign built on the National Digital Skills Framework, thereby embedding its skills framework and resources systematically across the regional cluster, and contributing back to it through open educational resource development and curation. The project involved five technology-enhanced learning ‘roadshows’, each organised in partnership with student digital ambassadors across the partner institutions, and the subsequent production of 30 open educational resources, all of which are available on the project website. See more here: [www.t1step.ie](http://www.t1step.ie)

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**Lead institution: UL**

### ***Supporting student transitions through digital***

National Forum research into transitions and non-completion in Irish higher education provided clarity on the importance of supporting and enhancing underlying skills, such as mathematics, during the early stages of studies, in order to increase the potential of students succeeding in later stages, especially in key fields such as computing and STEM subjects. With a particular focus on assessment, as a key driver of learning, two funded projects centred on enhancing teaching and learning in undergraduate mathematics through the use of digital technologies:

The 'TEAME' (Transitioning to E-assessment in Mathematics Education) project leveraged the potential of NUMBAS (an online assessment tool originating at the University of Newcastle) to construct localised formative e-assessment for first year mathematics and statistics courses. The project focused on the implementation and evaluation of this mathematics e-assessment tool and the development and publication of an implementation guide for policy makers and practitioners. See more here: [www.teame.ie](http://www.teame.ie)

**Lead institution: CIT**

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The 'Assessment for Learning Resources for First Year Undergraduate Mathematics Modules' project involved the development of formative assessment tools for use in the classroom, including UniDoodle, an app-based student response system for use in the engineering classroom to support student engagement and to provide immediate, ongoing and high-quality feedback to students. The project also involved the provision of new online resources and the development of interactive tasks which could be used by students to monitor their own progress and support this progress with the identification of relevant existing e-learning material. See more here: [www.unidoodle.com](http://www.unidoodle.com)

**Lead institution: MU**

A number of other projects took a more general approach to enhancing student transitions through the use of technology:

The 'Get Ready Education – A Learning Journey' project centred on the development of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) designed to address the needs of students making the transition from post-primary education to higher education. The MOOC combines online content with optional teacher-led classroom activities, online forums and quizzes. It provided a bridge between post-primary and higher education for students and involved collaboration between career guidance staff, schools, and higher education institutions. Participants in the MOOC are awarded a digital badge upon completion. See more here: [www.getready.education](http://www.getready.education)

**Lead institution: Sligo IT**

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The 'Y1Feedback' (Supporting Transition: Enhancing Feedback in First Year Using Digital Technologies) project conducted a study of feedback practice and experience across partner institutions and a synthesis of the feedback-related literature. Building on this evidence, the project then sought to address challenges associated with feedback in the first year of higher education and to leverage the potential of digital technologies to support and enhance feedback approaches. This was done through the collection and dissemination of case studies, and through seminars, workshops and a national symposium. See more here: [www.y1feedback.ie](http://www.y1feedback.ie)

**Lead institution: MU**

The 'Student Success Toolbox' project produced a suite of digital readiness tools to support positive transitions, with a specific focus on flexible learners entering higher education. The project aimed to widen access to higher education by providing flexible learners with the tools they need to help them to assess their own readiness for higher education, by providing support to them at key transitions in the early stages of the study lifecycle, thereby laying the foundation for successful programme completion. See more here: [www.studentsuccess.ie](http://www.studentsuccess.ie)

**Lead institution: DCU**

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The 'My Experience' project launched the My Experience RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) Assessment Toolkit. The toolkit includes an information website and an online RPL application tool for candidates looking for access or advanced entry to a higher education programme. In addition, an online course has been developed for higher education staff seeking professional development in RPL assessment skills and in supporting RPL applicants effectively. See more here: [www.myexperience.ie](http://www.myexperience.ie)

**Lead institution: GMIT**

### ***Supporting the internationalisation of higher education through digital***

The internationalisation of curricula in Irish higher education is a key national policy priority outlined in the Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, as well as the subsequent International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016–20. The National Forum has assisted in ensuring progress towards this objective in broad terms through its roll-out of the National Professional Development Framework and through ongoing developments in enhancing teaching and learning within and across disciplines and in enhancing the capacity of staff and institutions to harness effectively the potential of technology for teaching and learning. Two projects focused specifically on leveraging digital technology to progress the internationalisation of Irish higher education:

Building on the expertise of a project team that included international officers, education managers, researchers, instructional designers and academics, the 'Live and Learn in Ireland' project produced open-source digital resources to assist the transition to Ireland of international students. Informed by a survey of 573 international students across five HEIs, an online portal was developed including digital open educational resources to assist both international students and the higher education staff who support their learning. See more here: [www.liveandlearninireland](http://www.liveandlearninireland)

**Lead institution: IT Tralee**

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Within the context of a drive for increased participation in language courses and the need for more flexible support for language learners during various transition periods, the 'Digilanguages' project developed a national framework for digital literacies for language learning and teaching in the Irish higher education context. To facilitate the integration of the digital literacies framework into language programmes, including language teacher education programmes, the project created and curated a wide range of open educational resources, accessible via an online portal. See more here: [www.digilanguages.ie](http://www.digilanguages.ie)

**Lead institution: UL**

## ***Using digital to enhance teaching and learning and staff professional development within disciplines***

Recognising that disciplines are a key unit of change in higher education, the National Forum has centred much of its work on disciplinary excellence in learning, teaching and assessment (DELTA) as a framework to drive enhancement within and across disciplines. The framework provides a structure which can be used by institutions, disciplinary groups or staff to plan and prioritise their efforts to enrich understandings and practices within and across disciplinary contexts. It focuses on strategy and capacity building, design of learning, teaching and learning practice, assessment of/for/as learning, and evidence-based approaches. A number of funded projects took a disciplinary angle, resulting in enhanced engagement with digital in one or other of these enhancement areas:

### *Health and Welfare*

Three funded projects focused on the health and welfare field of study, leveraging digital technology to enhance transitions into, and teaching and learning within, the health and welfare professions:

The 'ePrePP' project was designed to enhance student learning in practical/clinical placements to ease the transition from student to professional. The project was led by a group representing medicine, nursing, pharmacy and pedagogy and has applications for not only health disciplines but also the wider student body. A web platform created through the project incorporates shared competencies, digital resources, and ePortfolios with the aim of enriching learning on clinical placement and nurturing inter-professional collaboration. See more here: [www.eprepp.ie](http://www.eprepp.ie)

#### **Lead institution: UCC**

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'Using Digital Technology to Enhance Inter-Professional Education' (IPE) was another project which focused on professions learning with, from and about one another to foster collaborative practice. This project implemented and evaluated the impact of an online IPE programme designed to promote collaborative practice within undergraduate health care disciplines. The project resulted in recognition at institutional level of the potential of digital technology for the enhancement of inter-professional learning.

#### **Lead institution: NUIG**

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A third project, the 'TEAM' project (Technology Enhanced Assessment Methods (TEAM) in Science and Health Practical Settings), developed a framework for applying the principles of good assessment and feedback to practical assessment, and piloted and evaluated technology-enhanced assessment practices across 45 programmes in four HEIs under identified priority themes. All developed assessment technologies are available through the project website. See more here: [www.TEAMshp.ie](http://www.TEAMshp.ie)

#### **Lead institution: Dundalk IT**

*Engineering*

Two funded projects focused on engineering, endeavouring to maximise the potential of digital technology to enhance curriculum design and staff professional development within this subject:

For chemical engineering, one of the cornerstones of the curriculum is the 'Design Project', which encompasses *ab initio* process development, design, scale-up and optimisation. The 'ChemE' project focused on the development of novel, shared, vertically-structured sets of digital learning objects and tools, integrating theory, experiment and simulation, across different core modules of the undergraduate chemical engineering curriculum across partner institutions. All learning tools and objects are housed on an online platform. See more here: [www.cheme.ie](http://www.cheme.ie)

**Lead institution: UCD**

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The 'Levitus' project focused on promoting, acknowledging and evidencing teaching and learning professional development activities for staff at a disciplinary level (engineering) within an institute of technology. Specifically, it considered how the National Professional Development Framework could complement professional development requirements described by professional bodies.

**Lead institution: DIT (now TU Dublin)**

*Psychology/Social Science*

Within the field of social sciences, two projects aimed to enhance the professional development and digital skills of those who teach:

The 'DSTEP' (Developing Staff To Enhance Programmes) project, situated in the psychology programme of one university, used focus groups to inform a number of workshops and events and the creation of a suite of over 40 open educational resources that may be used to empower staff across programmes and institutions to engage in meaningful and creative professional development through structured peer dialogue and support. The professional development resources created through the project were aligned with the National Professional Development Framework.

**Lead institution: DCU**

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The 'SPEEDS' (Social Policy Education Enhancing Digital Skills) project sought to expand social policy educators' digital capacities and improve their confidence in integrating digital skills into curricula. Social policy educators were partnered with learning technologists within each of the partner institutions as they implemented the National Professional Development Framework, with a particular focus on enhancing digital skills. A spiky profile tool was developed to map the digital skills of participating educators, and group and individual training was provided as needed. Educators were transformed into 'Digital Champions' whose journeys were documented throughout the process. This provided a map for others who wish to follow in their footsteps. See more here: [www.speeds.ie](http://www.speeds.ie)

**Lead institution: UCC**

### *Geosciences*

One project focused on design of learning within geosciences by enriching the available digital resources available to students:

The 'GeoLab' project was designed to deliver teaching and learning resources to improve the development of essential petrological skills at the four national higher education geoscience units across Ireland. The project involved the collaborative development of a range of shared teaching and learning resources agreed by all partners, with the ability of each partner to utilise the resources in their own teaching programmes. Key project outputs included the consolidation and digitisation of rock samples across the country and the creation of online tutorials and manuals for use by staff in tandem with the Open University's Virtual Microscope. The complete GeoLab collection has been compiled and donated for use with the Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI). See more here: [www.geolab.ie](http://www.geolab.ie)

**Lead institution: UCC**

### *Law*

A project centred in the field of law brought together higher education and post-primary education, enhancing the learning of students in both levels of education:

The 'Street Law' project involves teaching practical law to grassroots audiences using interactive teaching methodologies. The trainers (law students) develop professional and other transferable skills, while post-primary students are introduced to legal information in an engaging and interactive way. The introduction of the Street Law module, grounded in digital resources, represented a new departure in undergraduate legal pedagogy in Ireland and simultaneously created the space for collaboration between higher education institutions and their communities. A digital platform was developed to support learning and an interactive blog, including discussion forum, was created by learners to facilitate reflective and enhanced learning. Delivery on a national scale was facilitated by the development of digital resources to support the implementation of the programme. See more here: [www.streetlaw.ie](http://www.streetlaw.ie)

**Lead institution: LYIT**

### *Teacher Education*

One project used digital technology to bridge the gap between academic and professional practice within teacher education, with a specific focus on research.

The 'REX' project brought together three higher education institutions involved in initial teacher education to build a digital bridge between academic and professional practice through the creation of a web-based portal, the Research Expertise Exchange (REX), to nurture digital skills for research and meet a real-world demand for expertise. The REX project offered training for teaching staff in all institutions to enhance their digital skills and encourage them to engage in technology-enhanced learning using the REX platform. Members who have joined the platform include those from higher education institutions, primary and secondary schools, as well as professional bodies. REX has also been included within the Teaching Council's newly-established Research Support Framework. See more here: [www.researchexpertiseexchange.com](http://www.researchexpertiseexchange.com)

**Lead institution: MIC**

# LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES

## Perspectives of Senior Managers Across Irish Higher Education

In May 2014, individual structured interviews were held with senior managers across 24 HEIs to gather their insights on building digital capacity in Irish higher education. The findings of these interviews were reported in 'Strategic and Leadership Perspectives on Digital Capacity in Irish Higher Education'<sup>6</sup>. These perspectives informed the recommendations and action items of the subsequent Digital Roadmap. In April 2017, senior managers from 30 HEIs took part in follow-up individual structured interviews to share their perspectives on developments between 2014 and 2017 and their views on how digital could and should be shaped in the future. 10 of the 24 senior managers interviewed in 2014 were again interviewed in 2017; this provided a degree of continuity while also allowing new voices to be heard. The interviews provided a rich picture of how digital learning and the infrastructure to support it has been evolving in recent years.

Interviews with senior managers in 2017 revealed an increased understanding of the complexity of the digital landscape and an appetite for setting ambitious targets for the future. They reported progress in building digital capacity in Irish HEIs since 2014. 26 of 30 senior managers indicated that 'digital capacity' permeates discussion of strategy and planning in their respective institutions, with many providing examples. Further, all senior managers indicated progress in at least one of the following aspects of change since 2014:

- embedding of digital practices more deeply where they were already established
- extending the reach of existing practices to encompass a greater number of staff, students and modules
- scaling up of online course provision to meet flexible learning needs and to open up access to a wider range of programmes, at either undergraduate or postgraduate level

Two challenges identified by senior managers in 2014 were considered to warrant continued attention:

- adequately planning, designing and funding ICT infrastructure
- scaling up digital initiatives in the face of ongoing system rigidities

Senior managers also pointed to evolving and new themes related to digital to be considered in the coming years. In light of developments since the publication of the Digital Roadmap, the importance of re-articulating a national vision for digital teaching and learning was highlighted, to gain a clearer understanding of what might be achieved by fully embedding digital in teaching and learning. It was further stressed that such a vision would need to be grounded within individual HEIs through leadership and implementation targets that permeate through institutional units. New themes identified by senior managers in looking beyond 2017 included:

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<sup>6</sup> See [www.teachingandlearning.ie/publications](http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/publications)

- supporting the professional development of those who teach, including the centrality of digital capability, shifting the focus from technology to the people who engage with it
- optimising the use of data, such as learning analytics, to foster the success of all students
- supporting staff and students to engage with technology-enhanced assessment
- a focus on learning design, including innovative design, digital learning experiences and delivery models

The interviews indicated that thinking about ‘digital capacity’ has evolved in the direction of organisational transformation and towards embedding digital experiences in all facets of academic work and students’ engagement with a wide range of administrative and learning support services. As such, understanding and managing organisational change with regard to digital was considered an area that deserves focused attention.

Since 2014, thinking about digital capacity has evolved in the direction of organisational transformation and towards embedding digital experiences in all facets of academic work and students’ engagement.

## Perspectives of Those Who Lead Teaching and Learning in Irish Higher Education Institutions

The National Forum Associates are teaching and learning experts and middle managers representing all Irish HEIs. This group meets twice each year to discuss key developments and inform decision-making at national level within the realm of teaching and learning, helping to ensure that staff across all institutions have the opportunity to become involved in and benefit from the work of the Forum.

In March 2017, insights were gathered from National Forum Associates at their bi-annual meeting regarding progress in building digital capacity since the publication of the Digital Roadmap. The Associates pointed to much progress, including the following:

- increased intra- and inter-institutional collaboration in the enhancement of digital teaching and learning
- increased showcasing of, and advocacy for, informed use of digital technology in teaching and learning
- longer-term contracts and better structures in place to support the work of learning technologists
- an increase in flexible professional development support which allows staff to focus on areas of interest in spaces and times convenient to them
- an increased evidence base, allowing for informed choices with regard to platforms and access options for digital teaching and learning

However, persistent differences within and between institutions were also evident. For some, significant progress was only noted in some areas. Looking to the future, their aspirations centred on improving supports for those who support digital teaching and learning, increasing the flexibility of professional development support, and increasing the emphasis placed on digital teaching and learning within their institutions. For those who have noted much progress, their focus has shifted to taking stock, reflecting on what has been learned, devising policies to support digital teaching and learning, and considering where it is best to concentrate efforts in the coming years.

# PERSPECTIVES OF THOSE WHO TEACH AND LEARN

## Perspectives of Those Who Teach

A national consultation conducted in October and November 2018, to inform the National Forum Strategy 2019-21, included a specific section on the digital aspect of teaching and learning. 230 staff (including those who teach, lead and support learning) shared perspectives through an online consultation. In indicating where they would like to see attention focused in the coming years, many teaching staff echoed the perspectives of senior managers and teaching and learning leaders. They pointed to a need to focus on policy to support digital teaching and learning, a wish to explore the use of student data to support learning, and the importance of addressing differences between and within institutions with regard to digital infrastructure and supports. Other areas of focus mentioned by those who teach included:

- the importance of critical engagement with digital technologies and the enhancement of staff and student digital literacies
- the importance of continuing to build an evidence base regarding how students and staff engage with technology and the supports needed for them to optimise their engagement
- the need to ensure time and space for those who teach to meaningfully engage with the digital aspects of teaching and learning
- a commitment to open practices, open access, and creating and sharing open educational resources to enhance digital teaching and learning

## Perspectives of Those Who Learn

As part of the National Forum's nationwide strategy consultation, a concurrent student consultation was conducted. Over 1,100 students across the sector, including undergraduate, postgraduate, full-time, part-time and international students, were consulted through focus groups, an online consultation, and large-group discussions at key events. The consultation exercise was led by the National Forum's Student Associate Interns, who are employed through a partnership with the USI to ensure students are active partners in all Forum work.

Areas of priority noted by students for the coming years included:

- ensuring adequate digital infrastructures in all HEIs, from reliable and consistent wi-fi to modern and digitally-enabled learning spaces
- ensuring that structures and supports are in place to assist students and staff in building and developing their digital literacies and confidence
- further progress towards embedding digital technologies meaningfully within curricula and pedagogies
- consideration of how all students can be supported to succeed in a digital age, irrespective of ability, socioeconomic status, or other factors

## TOWARDS 2021

This report has detailed a vast array of developments in supporting and optimising the use of technology in teaching and learning in Irish higher education. From national frameworks to individual teaching and learning contexts, much has been done to interrogate myths, build evidence, enhance practice, skills and understandings, and foster collaboration and coherent strategies and policies. The impact of developments to date is becoming visible. Over the coming months and years this impact will be captured and communicated on a continual basis with a view to sharing lessons regarding how learning impact has been and can be achieved. The key focus over the coming years is to move further towards ensuring that approaches to teaching and learning in an open digital world are responsive, collective and connected at institutional and national levels.

The 2018 EU Digital Action Plan outlines three priorities for the future: the better use of digital technology for teaching and learning; developing relevant digital competences and skills for digital transformation; and improving education through better data analysis and foresight. Through the work of the National Forum and its sectoral partners, Ireland is now well positioned to respond to these international policy imperatives. The three priorities set out by the European Commission strongly echo the recommendations in the Digital Roadmap, which has guided the digital aspect of teaching and learning in Irish higher education since 2014. Indeed, at the 2018 Digital Higher Education Summit in Utrecht, the European Commission's Director General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, highlighted the work of the National Forum as a perfect example of how HEIs can be supported with respect to increasing digital capacity. Existing pockets of excellent innovation have been built upon as Ireland has moved closer to supported, shared frameworks of excellence. It is now important to continue to set an international example by demonstrating how initial efforts within and between institutions can be consolidated and further developed at a national level.

Responding to the call from senior managers and teaching and learning leaders for a re-articulation of a national vision for digital teaching and learning which is collaborative, responsive, and adaptable to institutional contexts, the National Forum, during its 2019-21 strategy phase, will advise on and inform the National Digital Transformation Framework currently being developed by the Higher Education Authority. In doing so, the aim will be to consolidate and continue to lead ongoing efforts to enhance the digital skills, confidence and competence of all those who teach and learn in Irish higher education. As a first step, a national survey will be conducted to gain a picture of the digital experiences of students in Irish higher education. This evidence will be gathered in partnership with students and will inform evolving digital teaching and learning policy and practice across HEIs. The recently launched Charter for Irish Universities represents a consensus among Ireland's seven universities for a sustainable Irish university system. The Charter prioritises the development of a coherent national programme for digital learning in order to build on the quality of student experience in a digital age. Meeting the challenges and leveraging the opportunities of the digital revolution is also highlighted as a central concern in the recently launched strategy of the Technological Higher Education Association. The National Forum will support and guide the work of all institutions and their representative bodies to ensure that it is informed by the evidence, frameworks, projects and innovations highlighted in this report.

As highlighted in the Digital Roadmap, embracing the full potential of digital technology poses a challenge to many of the basic structures, assumptions, policies and procedures within higher education, not least regarding beliefs and attitudes about the role and nature of higher education itself. This is a long-term national effort. The foundation has been laid, but existing momentum must be built upon.



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