HEA | An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas
The Higher Education Authority

T&L NATIONAL FORUM
FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

HEA Strategy for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

December 2025

1 Lead

2 Fund

3 Recognise

4 Collaborate

5 Consult

6 Develop

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About this edition

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1. Introduction

Under the Higher Education Authority Act 2022, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) has a responsibility to "promote the attainment and maintenance of excellence in teaching, learning, and research in a high-quality higher education system". Within its Corporate Strategic Plan 2023–2026, the HEA identifies the commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, and student development as an area under its "Develop" strategic priority. This includes a strategic objective of enhancing and rewarding teaching and learning at higher education institution (HEI) level. One of the key performance measures identified is to review and renew the strategy for the enhancement of teaching and learning.

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education was established under the auspices of the HEA in 2022. In July 2023, the HEA Student Engagement and Teaching and Learning (SETL) Committee agreed that the HEA should continue to focus on the strategic priorities previously identified by the National Forum, with a view to reviewing and renewing this strategy once the Forum had been consolidated within the HEA and was fully resourced. Following the appointment of new staff members in 2024, a consultation process on a new HEA Strategy for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education was launched in November 2024.

The strategy is informed by the wider context of teaching and learning in higher education, where the interplay of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment is fundamental in shaping the quality of the learning experience, alongside the broader institutional and disciplinary conditions in which this work takes place.

2. Consultation

58
submissions to the online consultation

46
stakeholders attended the strategy event

28
institutions and organisations represented

This consultation process involved an online consultation and an in-person strategy consultation day. 58 submissions were received from stakeholders across the sector as part of the online consultation, while 46 stakeholders attended the strategy event, representing 28 different institutions and organisations (see appendix for further details). An overview of stakeholder feedback has been published and is available at:

hub.teachingandlearning.ie/hea-teaching-and-learning-strategy-consultation-2025

3. Emergent Focus Areas

Four emergent focus areas for the future HEA Strategy for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education arose as part of this consultation process:

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

The need for strategic leadership at a national level in relation to teaching and learning policy in higher education emerged as a strong focus area in feedback provided by stakeholders.

FUNDING

The importance of teaching and learning funding and the continuation and enhancement of Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) funding was also highlighted as a central priority.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RECOGNITION

The enhancement focus of the National Forum was identified as a key strength of the Forum's previous strategic approach and this was borne out in submissions and discussions that regarded the reinvigoration of the National Professional Development Framework and the development of a National Professional Recognition Framework as urgent priorities for the system.

COLLABORATION

Cross-institution and sectoral collaboration emerged as an overarching focus area, which permeated consultation submissions and group discussions at the strategy day.

In terms of the previous focus areas prioritised by the National Forum, teaching and learning in a digital world, digital transformation and student success remain areas of strategic importance for stakeholders. There was also significant interest in seeing a return of data-led initiatives in the vein of the Irish National Digital Experience (INDEx) survey, the Online Resource for Learning Analytics (ORLA) and the Data-Enabled Student Success Initiative (DESSI). The ongoing importance of Open Education, in the form of Open Courses and Open Educational Resources being available on the National Resource Hub, was also clear.

Many new initiatives were suggested as part of the consultation process, and these can be roughly grouped under the following themes:

Inclusion and Equity **Research and Recognition** **Digital and Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Collaboration and Networks

4. Strategic Priorities

Following consultation with the HEA Student Engagement and Teaching and Learning Committee, the HEA has now developed a strategy to guide the development and implementation of HEA policy in the area of teaching and learning. This Strategy for Teaching and Learning identifies six strategic priorities for the HEA over the next 3–5 years. In turn, these priorities are underpinned by strategic objectives and high-level strategic actions.

The strategic priorities align to the following themes:

1
Lead

Provide strategic leadership to the sector to promote teaching and learning excellence in higher education.

2
Fund

Oversee funding to ensure strategic alignment of teaching and learning enhancement initiatives at system level.

3
Recognise

Raise the profile of teaching and learning in higher education to ensure parity of esteem with research.

4
Collaborate

Foster collaboration between higher education institutions to share best practice across the sector.

5
Consult

Consult with stakeholders to inform teaching and learning policy development that responds to the strategic needs of the Irish higher education system.

6
Develop

Drive an innovative higher education system that is at the cutting edge of international teaching and learning in higher education.

1 Lead

Provide strategic leadership to the sector to promote teaching and learning excellence in higher education.

Strategic Objectives

1.1 Identification of national strategic goals for teaching and learning in higher education.

1.2 Inclusion of teaching and learning as a strategic priority in both national higher education policy and HEI strategies.

High-Level Actions

- Develop and publish national policy guidance on teaching and learning in higher education.
- Drive a shared vision for teaching excellence across the sector and identify initiatives and supports needed to strengthen the system.
- Advise the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) on teaching and learning and ensure it is embedded as a core objective in national higher education policy.
- Engage with senior HEI leadership to ensure strategic prioritisation of teaching and learning excellence.

2 Fund

Oversee funding to ensure strategic alignment of teaching and learning enhancement initiatives at system level.

Strategic Objectives

2.1 Identify funding priorities that support institutional and sectoral innovation in teaching and learning.

2.2 Expansion of funding for the enhancement of teaching and learning in Irish higher education.

High-Level Actions

- Continue SATLE funding and ensure thematic alignment with evolving system priorities.
- Identify and fund strategically relevant national projects.
- Identify and fund the roll out of scalable, value for money teaching and learning innovations.
- Advise DFHERIS on strategic funding needs to support teaching and learning excellence in higher education.

3 Recognise

Raise the profile of teaching and learning in higher education to ensure parity of esteem with research.

Strategic Objectives

3.1 Establishment of an overarching framework for the professional development and professional recognition of teaching and learning in higher education.

3.2 Promotion of teaching and learning excellence and innovation in Irish higher education.

High-Level Actions

- Develop a national professional recognition framework for teaching and learning in higher education aligned with international best practice.
- Support HEIs to align institutional promotion and progression pathways with the professional recognition framework.
- Update the National Professional Development Framework.
- Recognise excellence in teaching and learning through national awards and events.
- Develop and implement a communications strategy to promote teaching and learning excellence and innovation.

4 Collaborate

Foster collaboration between higher education institutions to share best practice across the sector.

Strategic Objectives

4.1 Development of sustainable structures to strengthen sectoral collaboration in teaching and learning.

4.2 Promotion of open education as a strategic enabler for collaboration, innovation sharing, and inclusive access to high quality teaching and learning resources.

High-Level Actions

- Convene national stakeholder meetings to facilitate the sharing of good practice, joint initiatives, and co-operation between HEIs.
- Develop national platforms for knowledge sharing.
- Host teaching and learning events such as an annual conference and webinars/webinar series to share innovation and best practice.
- Support the establishment of thematic and disciplinary national communities of practice/networks.
- Maintain and expand the National Resource Hub for Open Educational Resources.
- Develop a national policy statement on Open Education.
- Support HEIs in developing open education policies, open licensing and sharing materials.

5 Consult

Consult with stakeholders to inform teaching and learning policy development that responds to the strategic needs of the Irish higher education system.

Strategic Objectives

5.1 Inclusion of stakeholder and student voice in shaping national teaching and learning policy.

5.2 Establishment of ongoing consultation and co-creation mechanisms across the system.

High-Level Actions

- Work with the SETL Committee to develop evidence-based policy advice, strategic options and targeted initiatives for teaching and learning in higher education.
- Continue to consult key higher education stakeholders to inform policy development.
- Develop mechanisms for student partnership and participation in policy development.
- Establish a structured policy consultation and co-creation framework for engagement with HEIs, students, representative bodies, and other key stakeholders.
- Engage external stakeholders to provide expert advice on national policy development.

6 Develop

Drive an innovative higher education system that is at the cutting edge of international teaching and learning in higher education.

Strategic Objectives

6.1 Development of a research-informed evidence base that leverages innovation, research and international best practice to future-proof the system.

6.2 Recognition of Ireland as a global leader in teaching and learning research, policy and practice.

High-Level Actions

- Establish data-led initiatives to inform development of key performance indicators to measure the impact of teaching and learning policy and practice.
- Appoint seconded experts to produce research-informed policy advice and guidance on thematic areas of strategic importance.
- Commission future-focused research on teaching and learning in higher education in consultation with the HEA SETL Committee.
- Participate in international fora, collaborate on international projects and networks, and host international events to promote teaching and learning excellence in Irish higher education.

Appendix: Consultation Participants

Online consultation

There were 29 individual submissions and 29 group submissions. Group submissions were received from the following stakeholders:

- Advance HE
- AHEAD
- Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn (AMLÉ)
- Atlantic Technological University – LTA Enhancement Team
- CCT College Dublin
- Consortium of National & University Libraries (CONUL)
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Educational Developers in Ireland Network (EDIN)
- Health Service Executive, Health Promotion and Improvement Department
- Munster Technological University, Department of Sport Leisure & Childhood Studies DELTA Team
- Munster Technological University
- National Disability Authority
- N-TUTORR Programme Management Office
- Office for Students & Learning, Maynooth University
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland
- RCSI – Royal College of Surgeons Ireland
- South East Technological University
- Student Volunteer Ireland – University of Limerick (Lead), University College Dublin, University College Cork, University of Galway, Technological University Dublin
- Support Animal Free Research Ireland
- Teaching Enhancement Unit, Dublin City University
- Technological Higher Education Association (THEA)
- Technological University Dublin
- Technological University of the Shannon
- The Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA)
- Trinity College Dublin
- University College Cork, Academic Council Learning and Teaching Committee
- University College Cork, Office of the Vice President of Learning and Teaching
- University College Dublin, Academic Affairs
- University of Limerick

Strategy consultation event

46 stakeholders were in attendance on the day, representing 28 different institutions and organisations. These included:

- Advance HE
- AHEAD
- Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn (AMLÉ)
- Atlantic Technological University
- CCT College Dublin
- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- Dublin City University
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Educational Developers in Ireland Network (EDIN)
- Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA)
- IICP College
- Institute of Art Design and Technology Dún Laoghaire
- Irish Universities Association (IUA)
- Mary Immaculate College
- Maynooth University
- Munster Technological University
- National College of Art and Design
- National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- South East Technological University
- Technological University Dublin
- Technological University of the Shannon
- Trinity College Dublin
- University College Cork
- University College Dublin
- University College Dublin Students' Union
- University of Galway
- University of Limerick

Read the strategy online

hub.teachingandlearning.ie/hea-strategy-for-teaching-and-learning-in-higher-education

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