



Ollscoil na hÉireann
National University of Ireland

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND

Strategic Plan 2023-2027



Deep roots, new horizons



NUI Constituent Universities

Na Comh-Ollscoileanna



University College Dublin

An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath

www.ucd.ie



University College Cork

Coláiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh

www.ucc.ie



Recognised Colleges OF NUI

Coláistí Aitheanta Ollscoil na hÉireann



Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

Coláiste Ríoga na Máinleá in Éirinn

www.rcsi.ie



Institute of Public Administration

An Foras Riaracháin

www.ipa.ie





Maynooth University
Ollscoil Mhá Nuad
www.maynoothuniversity.ie



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

University of Galway
Ollscoil na Gaillimhe
www.universityofgalway.ie
** including Shannon College of Hotel Management*



Colleges Linked With Constituent Universities

Coláistí ceangailte leis na Comh-Ollscoileanna



Burren College of Art
Coláiste Ealaíne na Boirne
www.burrencollege.ie



Institute of Banking
An Institiúid Baincéireachta
www.iob.ie

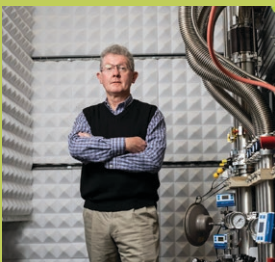


National College of Art and Design
Coláiste Náisiúnta Ealaíne is Deartha
www.ncad.ie



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND

Strategic Plan 2023-2027





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Deep roots, new horizons



We are delighted to present the National University of Ireland Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Over the past five years, NUI has made great strides with its previous plan. A summary of the progress made is appended to this document. Undoubtedly, the latter years of the previous plan were impacted by COVID-19. Despite the unprecedented turbulence of the pandemic, NUI managed to conduct a Seanad Éireann election, facilitate a new working model for staff and continue to provide critical services to our member institutions. This resilience and ingenuity will serve NUI well during the lifetime of this plan.

We were heartened by the level of engagement and interest from all stakeholders throughout the process of preparing our strategic plan for 2023-27. NUI would particularly like to acknowledge the support, knowledge and expertise provided by the external members of our Strategic Plan Advisory Board who supported the process of developing this plan prior to its approval by NUI Senate in January 2023.

This plan presents a new view of what NUI can achieve. NUI has always had statutory and support roles for our member institutions, as well as a vibrant global footprint through NUI graduates, and will continue to do so. NUI plays an important part in the cultural and social fabric of Ireland. Through its work, NUI advances ideas and stimulates debates in education, social justice, equality and many other important areas. This plan commits us to on-going excellence in the discharge of our current duties whilst also signalling an appetite to embrace new ideas and opportunities. The plan recognises that NUI can and will demonstrate leadership in other areas.



This Strategic plan commits NUI to

- ▶ embedding the UN Sustainable Development Goals in everything we do
- ▶ consciously and deliberately moving more into the social justice space
- ▶ supporting our member institutions in their strategic priorities
- ▶ renewing our policies relating to Human Rights issues for Universities covering local and international projects
- ▶ enhancing our contact with students to ensure we are aware of issues affecting them so we can be supportive in any way we can

NUI is a unique institution of long standing with defined roles. Our position presents an opportunity as we take the required long-term objective view to plan beyond the normal horizons for higher education institutions. During this plan, NUI, alongside our member institutions, national and governmental bodies and international partners, will host events and publish reports on the long-term future of higher education, with this plan as a long-term blueprint. The purpose of this programme will be to anticipate and perhaps influence the future of higher education beyond the predictable incremental changes. From 2023 to 2027, we will build on our roots and explore new horizons.

Dr Maurice Manning
CHANCELLOR



Dr Patrick O'Leary
REGISTRAR



Context for Strategic Plan 2023-2027



In developing the strategic plan, the current context and environment was examined. Some important contextual changes have occurred since the time when the last Strategy was formulated. They include:

- ▶ The continuing and lasting effects of the global pandemic on NUI and its member institutions.
- ▶ The new Government Department (Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science) focused on FE/HE and the accompanying senior Minister. In tandem with this, Higher Education Authority Act 2022 as it relates to new governance arrangements for our member institutions. This is to be embedded during the lifetime of the next Strategy. NUI will need to remain alert to potential implications and give thought to how it may need to adapt.
- ▶ Expansion of the number of universities. This makes it all the more important for each institution, including NUI, to maintain its distinctiveness. There has also been a noticeable pivot to a focus on further and higher education and the interaction of both.
- ▶ The ongoing teaching and learning developments with increased emphasis on digital transformation.
- ▶ Significant changes in NUI staff. These presented a challenge and an opportunity: to maintain the high standard and strong continuity in services and values of NUI and its distinctiveness, while also having the benefit of a new lens under which to examine and evaluate these.



It is important to acknowledge the likely impact of changing economic circumstances on NUI's financial position and on the ambitions in this plan, especially as NUI's income is largely fixed. This plan identifies the pillars and objectives, and delivery will be monitored and evaluated through operational planning that aligns with our strategic pillars.



Strategic Plan Advisory Group

NUI would particularly like to acknowledge the support, guidance and input provided by the membership of the Strategic Plan Advisory Group who assisted the development process for the Strategy. Their input and expertise was invaluable at all stages of the process.

Membership of the Strategic Plan Advisory Group

NAME	ORGANISATION
Dr Patrick O'Leary	NUI
Dr Tony Carey	University College Dublin
Dr Niamh Ní Shiadhail	Maynooth University
Dr Ronán Ó Dubhghaill	University College Cork
Ms Caroline Loughnane	University of Galway
Professor Jim Walsh	NUI Senate
Professor Imelda Maher	NUI Senate
Dr Dermot O'Mahoney	NUI Investment Advisory Committee
Mr Lewis Purser	Irish Universities Association
Mr Kevin Egan	NUI Audit & Risk Committee
Mr George Burke	Institute of Public Administration Student
Dr Shana Cohen	TASC
Ms Helen Brophy	Institute of Public Administration
Dr Marian O'Sullivan	Institute of Public Administration

Mission

NUI **connects and promotes** its member institutions and their strategic priorities

NUI is here to help, support and benefit constituent universities and recognised colleges as they deliver in their missions to educate, research and develop.

NUI is **dedicated** to its students and graduates

NUI supports students throughout their higher education journey, including matriculation, graduation, post-graduation record maintenance and validation of qualifications. It supports students in claiming their vote on the Seanad Éireann electoral register. NUI Awards support and celebrate student achievement. NUI promotes quality processes throughout the federation.

NUI **advances** the civic good

NUI celebrates and promotes the Irish language, culture, society, education and civil discourse through its own work and in conjunction with academic colleagues from our member institutions. NUI advances Ireland as a European country with a global reach and home to quality education providers.

Values

Excellence

NUI strives for excellence through a culture of continuous review and improvement in its quality processes and services and through the dedication and innovation of its team.

Empathy

NUI accepts and celebrates difference, it always acts with integrity and it seeks to benefit society and the environment in all it does. It is responsive to its community and will enhance inclusion in this strategic cycle.

Realising and recognising potential

NUI wants every student, researcher, academic and member of support staff to maximise their potential. NUI promotes this through a range of awards that support and celebrate all achievement.

Collaboration

NUI collaborates inside and outside its federation. It actively seeks collaborations that advance NUI values and goals or benefits higher education in Ireland or civic society. Partnership will be a key focus in this strategic cycle.



Strategic Plan 2023-2027: Deep roots, new horizons

OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

1. Education & Research
2. People & Culture
3. Engagement & Partnership
4. Sustainability

STRATEGIC PILLAR 1

Education & Research

1

OBJECTIVES

1. Present NUI institutions as research intensive universities embracing the best of research informed teaching
2. Enhance student voice within NUI
3. Support students to reach their potential at all levels
4. Ensure that quality assurance policies are appropriate and quality enhancement continues to be a priority
5. Proactively engage with processes around Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Micro credentials and so called 'stacking' of minor awards into a major award to ensure NUI advances the views of member institutions
6. Financially support ambitious research of exceptional quality and celebrate and publicise research in member institutions
7. Develop its supports for students from underrepresented communities and groups in higher education

STRATEGIC PILLAR 2

People & Culture

2

OBJECTIVES

1. Attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre
2. Increase diversity of NUI staffing profile
3. Support staff in personal and professional development
4. Develop capacity to promote and support the Irish language and culture



STRATEGIC PILLAR 3

Engagement & Partnership 3

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a comprehensive communications strategy. Aim to improve internal and external reputation, improve knowledge of what NUI does and increase its impact
2. Position NUI to develop long-term term visions for Irish higher education through engagement across the sector nationally and internationally
3. Maximise the international reputation of the NUI brand, its research-intensive universities, and Irish higher education through engagement, partnership and collaboration
4. Increase the impact of Senate and review its working to ensure that it is optimised
5. Provide quality services to NUI members in the provision of degree parchment, document services, meeting rooms and archival support
6. Engage with NUI degree, honorary degree, higher degree and award alumni to capitalise on their expertise to advance the NUI mission and impact
7. Lead on humanitarian issues and become a leader in social justice and sustainability
8. Increase interaction with external organisations and be an active ambassador for our institutions and Irish higher education internationally.
9. To advocate for Seanad Éireann electoral reform and to facilitate it

STRATEGIC PILLAR 4

Sustainability 4

OBJECTIVES

1. Lower NUI's environmental impact on energy and waste while conserving our historic built environment and improving our space utilisation
2. Embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) in all processes and policies
3. Manage financial resources to ensure the University's long-term sustainability
4. Sustain investment in information technology capability while streamlining administrative processes
5. Modernise internal and Seanad Éireann election processes

Strategic Enablers

The following strategic enablers are essential supports that will help NUI to achieve its strategic aims over the next five years.



1. People

NUI's biggest asset is its people, who embody the NUI commitment to quality and the highest standards in everything it does. Its communities of staff, committees and stakeholders are the bedrock of the organisation. NUI will continue to develop as an organisation, emphasising inclusion, collaboration and respect, with the aim of inspiring all to achieve greater things.

2. Financial Health

NUI maintains its financial health with prudent management of resources and ensures that it gives value for money in the services it provides. NUI will proactively seek opportunities, but never at the expense of its long-term viability.

3. Good Governance

NUI has robust and leading governance structures which align with all codes of practice. The Senate is supported by a committee structure. NUI will review committee terms of reference and memberships to maintain the committees' important role and to adapt to new requirements as they emerge.

4. Infrastructure and Technology

NUI's buildings and its location are a huge asset. Given the constraints of working in a listed building, NUI will seek to maximise the impact of its location on its work, while minimising the impact of its work on the environment. Technology will enable much of the efficiencies and sustainability in this plan, as well as much of NUI's compliance work.





What will NUI be at the end of this plan?

NUI has worked diligently to maintain its reputation as an organisation that carries out its roles with dedication and great professionalism. This is accomplished through the work of its staff and the assistance of its Senate. Those who interact with its services and roles in the higher education landscape hold NUI in high regard. NUI celebrates Irish higher education in all its activities. Through its awards, it celebrates excellence and supports leading research. NUI, through its activities and through supporting its member institutions, advances scholarship in Ireland and globally. Its events and publications cultivate and honour Irish culture and history. NUI's Seanad Éireann roles are also well-known throughout Ireland.

At the end of this strategic plan, NUI will be more outward-looking. NUI's profile within its member institutions and externally will have increased and what it does will be better understood by a wider audience. NUI will be regarded as a federation of research-active Universities that drive innovation and make a positive contribution to Ireland's economic and cultural development. NUI will be established as an institution which leads in planning the long-term future of higher education. It will also lead on issues of human rights and social justice across the sector. It will provide quality services to its members. We will provide quality services to our members. NUI will be on its journey towards sustainability. It will have progressed inclusion and have a greater student voice. It will have broadened its award portfolio while maintaining support for excellent research. From 2023 to 2027, NUI will build on its roots and explore new horizons. At the end of this plan, NUI will be well-positioned to be more impactful for its community.

Appendix 1: About NUI

Background

Founded in 1908, The Universities Act, 1997 (hereafter 'the 1997 Act') redefined the nature and role of the National University of Ireland. It reconstituted the Senate, which is the governing body of the University, with a membership of thirty-eight. The 1997 Act also reconstituted the three Constituent Colleges of the National University of Ireland, and the Recognised College, St Patrick's College, Maynooth as Constituent Universities.

The NUI currently comprises four constituent universities, two recognised colleges and five colleges of a constituent university. Each institution within the NUI federation has its own governing authority. The overall governing authority of the University is NUI Senate and is headed by the Chancellor.

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (hereafter 'the 2012 Act') defines the University as a Designated Awarding Body (DAB). As such, the 2012 Act requires the University to establish quality assurance arrangements in respect of 'linked providers' that deliver educational programmes leading to awards of the University.

Under the 1997 Act, the Senate of the National University of Ireland has functions and responsibilities in relation to the following:

- ▶ determining basic matriculation requirements
- ▶ reviewing the content and teaching of courses
- ▶ appointing external examiners
- ▶ awarding degrees and other qualifications

NUI has further statutory functions relating to Seanad Éireann elections – Bunreacht na hÉireann, Article 18(4) and the Seanad Electoral (University Members) Acts, 1937- 2015, as amended, identify NUI as a constituency for Seanad Éireann. Every person who is a citizen of Ireland and has received a degree (other than an honorary degree) from the National University of Ireland is entitled to be registered as an elector in the NUI register of electors. NUI maintains and publishes this register. NUI has long advocated for the implementation of the 7th amendment of the Irish Constitution (1972) but this has not yet happened, and the status quo remains. NUI has responsibility for sustaining the funding and maintaining the standards and integrity of its academic prizes and scholarships and a special responsibility to support publication through the Irish language.



Resources and daily roles and responsibilities

NUI is based in Merrion Square at No.49.

NUI has 20 staff led by the Registrar. In addition to its statutory duties, it also fulfils the following roles:

- ▶ Provides all parchments for graduations on NUI awards (>40,000 per annum)
- ▶ Provides extensive post-graduation document services to graduates (>4000 per annum)
- ▶ Manages matriculation rules for all institutions and deals with exemption queries (>3000 per annum)
- ▶ Has an extensive awards portfolio for undergraduate, postgraduate and ECA awards
- ▶ Has an active academic publishing section
- ▶ Complies with all codes applicable to Irish Universities
- ▶ Abides by all financial rules for Irish Universities answering to external auditors and the Comptroller & Auditor General and Public Accounts Committee
- ▶ Has a large investment portfolio that funds much of its awards activity
- ▶ Has large public engagement and events activity
- ▶ Provides city centre meeting rooms and workspaces for our institutions and other academic organisations
- ▶ Contributes to discussions in Irish Universities Association, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Quality and Qualifications Ireland and other bodies
- ▶ Appoints experts who assist and advise the State Examinations Commission on the development of exam papers
- ▶ Provides quality assurance services to current recognised colleges (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland [graduates circa 2,000 per annum] and Institute of Public Administration)
- ▶ Monitors quality assurance in the Institute of Public Administration for which NUI is the designated awarding body

Appendix 2:

Progress Against Previous Strategic Plan

NUI set five goals for the 2018-22 period:

1. Add demonstrable value to NUI's constituent universities, recognised colleges associated institutions
2. Support Irish higher education and advocate for its advancement at home and abroad
3. Develop and capitalise on the NUI brand nationally and internationally, for the benefit of members and the wider sector
4. Make a meaningful contribution to Irish civic society
5. Enhance NUI's skills-base and its enabling support structures

The obvious proviso on this section and on the progress of the five-year plan in general is the inevitable disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. From March 2020 to February 2022, the priority within NUI had to be adjustment to working during the Global pandemic. Constant adaption to changing health advice and mandates requiring working from home and social distancing in NUI Merrion Square represented a huge undertaking. The successful running of a Seanad Éireann election, preparation of parchments (outwardly as normal) and pivoting to online academic events are just a few high-level examples of the lengths staff went to adapt.

Other exemplar undertakings during the course of the previous Strategic Plan are identified below.

-
- 1. Add demonstrable value to NUI's constituent universities, recognised colleges associated institutions**
 - ▶ Continued provision of document services (parchment production and duplicates for our member institutions)
 - ▶ On-going operation of matriculation system ensuring a consistent and responsive approach
 - ▶ Major refurbishment of meeting rooms and facilities which re-opened post pandemic for use by NUI member institutions



2. Support Irish Higher Education and advocate for its advancement at home and abroad

- ▶ NUI made its first application for Erasmus+ Charter accreditation. While this application was unfortunately unsuccessful, NUI will reapply in future, with a more developed proposal for internationalisation and collaboration strategies
- ▶ Education & Society Seminar Series
 - 2020: On Good Authority: Perspectives on Institutional Governance in Irish Higher Education: HE Governance (in partnership with IUA)
 - 2021: Irish University Education and the Public Good

3. Develop and capitalise on the NUI brand nationally and internationally, for the benefit of members and the wider sector

- ▶ On-going review and update of academic policies and guidelines
- ▶ Institutional review of the Institute of Public Administration completed and published

4. Make a meaningful contribution to Irish civic society

- ▶ Successful delivery of a Seanad Éireann election
- ▶ Continued publication of *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies*, volumes XL and XLI
- ▶ Delivery of a programme of conferences and publications to mark the Decade of Commemorations
- ▶ Conference and publication to mark the Foundation of the International Labour Organization in collaboration with Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation
- ▶ Delivery of Garret FitzGerald Lectures, Edward Phelan Lectures, as well as the introduction of the Hyde Lecture and Irish Historical Research Prize Lecture series

5. Enhance NUI's skills-base and its enabling support structures

- ▶ Transition to a cloud-based ICT system
- ▶ Hybrid working models developed
- ▶ Gap analysis and subsequent declaration of compliance with the Code of Governance for Irish Universities







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