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AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

Higher Education System
Innovation and Transformation Call 2018

Enabling Change: Enhancing Digital Capacity in Teaching and Learning in Irish Universities

Irish Universities Association

Project Overview

Institutional Strategy

Overall objectives
This project has two overall objectives:
- Enhance the digital attributes of all Irish university graduates;
- Enhance the educational experiences of all Irish university students through the mainstreamed and integrated use of digital technologies, including social media where appropriate, as part of the teaching and learning process.

In order to achieve these two objectives, a third is also necessary:
- Enhance the digital skills of those who teach in Irish universities.

Irish policy context
The government has set a target to make the Irish education system the best in Europe by 2026. Irish universities share that ambition and the Charter for Irish Universities, launched on 17 September 2018, sets out what is needed in order to achieve it.

Included as the first of the six Charter points for a sustainable Irish university system is the need to build on the quality of the student experience in a digital age. Universities recognise the need to embrace and act as leaders in the new teaching and learning environment. Opportunities to innovate in teaching and learning methods and practices will increase further in the coming decade. If Ireland wants to compete with the best in Europe, there is a need for a sector-wide programme to drive digital transformation in teaching and learning methods and processes across all related university activities. Essential resources are needed to unlock the potential for teaching staff, and therefore students and graduates, to access new digital technologies and to build digital capacity. In the Charter, the universities commit to developing a coherent national programme in digital learning, in partnership with Government. In order to deliver on this, the necessary systems and infrastructure are required, including enhancing the required skills of those who teach in the increasingly digital teaching and learning environments of Irish universities. This project represents the start of this commitment.

This sectoral project is underpinned by national policy objectives and social and economic needs. In its analysis of the future skills needs of Irish graduates for the 21st century, the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 highlights the need for increased attention to the effective use of information technology in the increasingly complex demands of the global economy.

While the National HE Strategy notes that there is considerable enthusiasm among teachers in higher education to innovate and excel in teaching and learning, it also states that "we now need to capitalise on that by providing system-wide investment to ensure the availability of appropriate technological infrastructure and pedagogical support", and that traditional teaching methods should increasingly be accompanied by e-learning and blended learning opportunities. As the Strategy points out, "it is not sufficient for academics to be experts in their disciplinary area,

they also need to know how best to teach that discipline". Digital skills are central to this.

The National Strategy for Higher Education recommends that:
- "in the coming decades, the delivery of higher education in Ireland must be characterised by flexibility and innovation";
- "undergraduate and postgraduate education should explicitly address the generic skills required for effective engagement in society and in the workplace";
- "higher education students of the future should have an excellent teaching and learning experience … with state-of-the-art learning resources, such as libraries, laboratories, and e-learning facilities";
- "all higher education institutions must ensure that all teaching staff are both qualified and competent in teaching and learning, and should support ongoing development and improvement of their skills".

As is further elaborated in the National Skills Strategy 2025, "technology is one of the key drivers of change and improved digital skills will be vital for Ireland's future, both in higher-end dedicated ICT jobs and, more widely, as a basic core competence". In affirming the objective that "the quality of teaching and learning at all stages of education will be continually enhanced and evaluated", the Strategy indicates that high quality initial and continuing education for staff involved in direct provision of education and training is key to fostering better learner outcomes.

This sectoral project will also address the need to increase the contribution of the higher education experience to students acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills. The results from the 2018 Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) show that 23.9% of students said that their experience at their higher education institution contributed to this "very much" and 22.4% of students said that they had improved knowledge and skills that will contribute to their employability "very often".

The Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 aims to improve the use of ICT in teaching and learning with supporting objectives including teacher professional development. Furthermore, the Digital Learning Framework, available to all primary and post primary schools and teachers, provides a roadmap to help manage the transformation of teaching and learning as a result of new digital technologies, giving practical support to help plan how to upskill.

This is important in higher education institutions also. Teaching staff in Irish universities must be equipped with the necessary educator-specific digital skills and competences to help shape and build on the quality of the student experience in a digital age, and to harness the potential of digital technologies for enhancing teaching and learning. Indeed, the Action Plan for Education 2018, with policy emphasis on using digital technologies to enhance teaching and learning across the continuum of education, includes the target that all teachers have upskilled and embed digital technologies in their teaching practice. Only by accomplishing this can

students and graduates be primed with the digital attributes they need to achieve their potential and to participate fully in society and the economy.

European policy context
This sectoral project is further underpinned by European policy developments. The enhancement of digital capacity has become a major policy objective at European level, as a key driver of economic competitiveness but also of social cohesion and equality of opportunity. The EU's Skills Agenda emphasises the importance of digital literacy across occupations and calls on Member States to improve the quality of skills and their relevance for the labour market. The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015) encourage higher education institutions to create a supportive environment that allows teaching staff to carry out their work effectively, including one that offers opportunities for and promotes professional development and encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.

The EU Digital Education Action Plan (2018) is centred on three priorities:
- Making better use of digital technology for teaching and learning;
- Developing relevant digital competences and skills for the digital transformation;
- Improving education through better data analysis and foresight.

Key components of the Digital Education Action Plan include empowering and connecting educators to enhance innovation in education, and ensuring a significant focus on developing digital skills and competences throughout the education experience in order to enhance life skills and professional opportunities. Specifically, Action 4 is the creation of an EU-wide online platform to support higher education institutions in using digital technologies, providing and exchanging material and best practice. Such platforms can already be found on a national level in other EU Member States, and the Action aims to scale-up these to European level. If we are to work towards the government's target of making the Irish education system the best in Europe by 2026, we must ensure that those who teach in Irish universities have the necessary digital competences to take advantage of such opportunities.

The Report of the High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education, chaired by Mary McAleese, on new modes of learning and teaching in higher education (2014) was clear in recommending that "All staff teaching in higher education institutions should receive training in relevant digital technologies and pedagogies as part of initial training and continuous professional development". This is necessary in order to not be left behind in this wave of innovation "as other parts of the world act more nimbly in garnering the benefits of technology – including by resourcing the teachers on whom successful adoption of technology depends".

The EU's European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu) describes what it means for educators to be digitally competent in order to detail how digital technologies can be used to enhance and innovate education at all levels. As it states, "the teaching professions face rapidly changing

demands, which require a new, broader and more sophisticated set of competences than before. The ubiquity of digital devices and applications, in particular, requires educators to develop their digital skills in order to help students develop their own." This Framework sits alongside the wider Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp 2.1) and the European Framework for Digitally-Competent Educational Organisations (DigCompOrg, 2015). On the basis of DigCompOrg, nine Irish schools took part in the EU SELFIE (Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering Innovation through Educational Technologies) pilot initiative in 2017. These approaches are needed in higher education also in order to build on the quality of the student experience in a digital age.

Ireland ranks 6th in the EU's 2018 Digital Economy and Society Index. The summary of the scorecard notes that while Ireland continues to rank very highly when it comes to the integration of digital technologies by businesses, more than half of the population still lacks basic digital skills. Despite a marginal improvement since 2017, this is still one of the highest levels throughout the EU and constitutes Ireland's main challenge in this area. As Ireland continues to suffer from a significant ICT skills shortage, the universities obviously have a major role to play in addressing this and can do so most effectively through a sectoral approach such as this project.

National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning
The NFETL has produced a series of important studies and reports as part of its thematic focus on building digital capacity. These are:
- Teaching and Learning in Irish Higher Education: A Roadmap for Enhancement in a Digital World 2015-2017;
- Strategic and Leadership Perspectives on Digital Capacity in Irish Higher Education (2015);
- Ireland's Higher Education Technical Infrastructure: A review of current context, with implications for teaching and learning enhancement (2017);
- A Review of the Existing Higher Education Policy Landscape for Digital Teaching and Learning in Ireland (2018);
- Learning Analytics (LA) and Educational Data Mining (EDM) project (current);

In addition, the NFETL has built upon the All Aboard Digital Skills Framework funded through the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund 2014 (see www.allaboardhe.ie). The Framework focuses on six key areas for digital skills development (tools and technologies; find and use; communicate and collaborate; teach and learn; create and innovate; identity and well-being). The need to improve on these key areas across the Irish university sector, and to support universities to implement the Framework by 2020, underpins this sectoral project.

The TELU Open Online Resources for Teaching with Technology project (see www.telu.me), also funded by the NFETL, makes available a collection of 150 free online micro-learning courses ("micro-lessons") designed to help educators use technology to support their teaching and learning.

The NFETL has another thematic focus on professional development. One of the overarching domains in the broad National Professional Development Framework for All Staff Who Teach in Higher Education (2016) is Personal and Professional Digital Capacity (Domain 5), which is built on the All Aboard Digital Skills Framework. This project aims to position the proposed staff development activities within this NPDF which provides guidance and direction for planning, developing and engaging in professional development activities. Pilot research done by the NFETL showed that 93% of respondents said that engaging with the NPDF increased their confidence in their professional role, with 87% saying it supported the development of their teaching and learning skills and 85% saying it enhanced their teaching and learning practices. 93% of respondents said that the NPDF has the potential to positively impact student learning in the long-term.

The NFETL has created professional development open-access programmes, which issue 'digital badges' to successful participants. Programmes include Digital Policy Development in Teaching and Learning and Getting Started with Online Teaching.

The SPEEDS project is built on partnerships developed through previous NFETL-funded projects. Its aim is to expand digital capacities in teaching and learning contexts specifically for social policy educators across the participating institutions (both universities and ITs).

The extremely important and useful background and exploratory work of the NFETL has set out a vision for the development of digital capacity in Irish higher education and made recommendations regarding how to achieve this. It has examined the existing technical infrastructure and the overall policy landscape to facilitate digital teaching and learning, as well as the strategic perspectives of higher education leaders regarding the development of digital capacity.

Based on the essential groundwork done by the NFETL, and the clear national and European policy drivers, the time is now ripe to scale up the development of digital capacity across the Irish university sector, bringing together and building on the experience developed in this area in recent years.

Project partners
Irish Universities Association (IUA)
The IUA is the representative body for Ireland's seven universities. Through consultation and collaborative projects, it develops strategy and policy to advance third and fourth level education and research. Its shared aim is to ensure that the universities' contribution to Ireland's social, cultural and economic well-being is maximised.

The recently launched Charter for Irish Universities (2018) includes as the first of its six Charter points for a sustainable Irish university system, the need to build on the quality of the student experience in a digital age. As part of this, the universities commit to developing a coherent national programme in digital learning, in partnership with Government. This project represents the start of this commitment.

The IUA will be the lead project institution, under the responsibility of the IUA Director for Learning & Teaching and Academic Affairs. The IUA Registrars group will retain overall governance oversight of the project.

The IUA is well placed to successfully manage this project, given its effective network structure across all seven universities, its close policy cooperation with all higher education actors (HEA, THEA, USI, NFETL, etc.), and its successful track record in similarly ambitious sector-wide multi-strand projects over time (e.g. DARE and HEAR, the Doctoral Studies network, and Campus Engage – all initially funded through the HEA Strategic Innovation Fund). The IUA also has a range of efficient in-house project supports, in areas such as administration, financial management, policy, reporting and communications.

Ireland's seven universities
All seven of Ireland's universities are partners in this project, and each will play an integral role in achieving the project's overall objectives. The project is designed to support a number of Key System Objectives for the 2018-2020 HEA System Performance Framework, in particular Objectives 1, 4 and 5. These objectives are reflected in each of the Compacts which the universities are currently finalising with the HEA, which respond to the particular profile, strengths and ambitions of that university. This project is designed to be able to support all universities in these, building on their existing achievements in the use of digital teaching and learning, learning from each other, and developing and rolling out significant training and staff development programmes, building on existing suites of resources in most of the individual institutions, in order to achieve a significant step change across the university sector in this crucial area.

The universities will each contribute to and participate in this project through their various relevant internal structures: academic, staff development, teaching and learning supports, and IT services.

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning
The role of the Forum is to enhance the teaching and learning for all students in higher education. Engaging with leaders, managers, teachers and students, the Forum mobilises expertise and inputs from across the entire sector to extend and shape best practice in all institutions of higher education in Ireland. As outlined above, the Forum has undertaken a significant body of work to assist the Irish HE sector prepare for building digital capacity.

While these NFETL studies and projects have prepared the ground over the last couple of years, there has as yet been limited uptake in the university sector of these resources, for a variety of reasons (awareness and visibility, resources, institutional priorities, etc.). This project will address this directly, building on these important NFTEL outputs, and linking them with broader institutional, national and European developments.

In order to ensure that the project continues to be guided by and is complementary to the work of the NFETL, its Director will join the project Steering Committee. All project outputs, such as training and staff development materials, good practice guides, etc., will likewise be made available through Open Access arrangements to the NFETL and more broadly for further use across the wider higher education sector.

Section 2: Proposal for Funding

Objectives

Given this policy, institutional and strategic context, the Irish universities wish to develop a joined-up sector-wide approach to enable students to compete and thrive in a digital world, by immersing them in a world class digital experience while at university. This implies a similarly coherent approach to ensuring that academic staff across the university sector can facilitate and support this experience, effectively integrating it into their own pedagogies, teaching and learning, and assessment practices.

As a result of strategic investments by HEAnet and individual universities in recent years, the capacity and technical infrastructure necessary for such significant digital engagement by students and staff on and off campus is now largely in place.

However, the current reality is that students entering universities in Ireland too often face a "digital downgrade", which falls short of the digital world expectations they bring to university and the digital world demands they will be faced with afterwards.

While ensuring that the existing programme of technical investment and development is maintained, the universities now wish to focus on solving this problem by ensuring that the potential of this infrastructure is realised, with the two overall objectives:
- Enhance the digital attributes of all Irish university graduates;
- Enhance the educational experiences of all Irish university students through the mainstreamed and integrated use of digital technologies, including social media where appropriate, as part of the teaching and learning process.

While full-time students will be the main beneficiaries – in terms of overall numbers – of these enhanced educational experiences, the increased and enhanced use of digital technologies will enable significant additional gains for part-time and remote students, in particular those seeking to engage with higher education in flexible ways. The project will therefore also help universities deliver on these elements under Key System Objective 4 for the Higher Education System 2018-2020. The other aligned Key System Objectives are detailed below in Section 5: Impact Statement.

In order for these overall objectives to be achieved, the universities now wish, and need, to ensure that those who teach in Irish universities are suitably equipped with the relevant digital skills and competences to identify the best ways these technologies can enhance their own work, across the full range of disciplines and fields of study, and to integrate them into their own teaching and other practices. In doing so, it is important to build on the lessons learned and ongoing resources in the sector so far, in order to engage those staff who have not yet become assured or regular users of these technologies. As emphasised in the NFETL Teaching and Learning in Irish Higher Education: A Roadmap for Enhancement in a Digital World

2015-2017, engagement at the level of the disciplines is key for meaningful change to the practices of individuals and to have an impact on learning.

Main activities
Building on the work already undertaken at national and institutional levels, this project will develop and implement the following:

- Develop a Digital Teaching and Learning staff development programme to enhance the knowledge, skills, competences and confidence of academic staff in using available and suitable technologies, including social media where appropriate, and devices to deliver the project's objectives.
- Pilot and review this programme across a selected range of disciplines.
- Develop, pilot and review a train the trainers programme to ensure a significant multiplier, sustaining and mainstreaming effect.
- Roll out of the train the trainers programme across all university campuses.
- Roll out of the Digital Teaching and Learning staff development programme across all universities.
- Ongoing support for the adoption of digital initiatives across the Irish university sector, through the provision of support to staff for initiatives that use digital technology in new and innovative ways.

The project seeks to empower academic staff to become the drivers and key enablers of change themselves, by equipping them with the digital skills, competences and confidence to effect the transformation of teaching and learning in Irish universities, and to deliver on the project's two main objectives for our students and graduates.

Workplan
Summary of proposed work packages and timelines:

	Workpackage	Jan-June 2019	July-Dec 2019	Jan-June 2020	July-Dec 2020	Jan-June 2021	July-Dec 2021
1	Project governance and management						
2	Develop a Digital Learning and Teaching staff development programme						
3	Pilot and review staff development programme						
4	Develop and pilot train the trainers programme						
5	Review train the trainers programme						
6	Roll out train the trainers programme						
7	Roll out staff development programme						
8	Final project review						
9	Ongoing support						

Key risks and contingencies
Risk 1: The support shown for this proposal at a senior university management level will not translate into effective engagement with the project by key services within each university.
Contingency: The overall ownership of the project by university Registrars ensures the commitment of each university to the project objectives and workplan. The project Steering Committee is composed of heads of key internal stakeholders from across the university sector (VPs/Deans of Teaching and Learning, Heads of Teaching and Learning Centres, Heads of IT Learning Services, etc.), resulting in engagement and expertise at these levels also. Each university will also benefit from a full-time programme support – an academic staff member provided by the project to act as

the project lead and academic coordinator within that university – thus providing additional resources to enable and support the change process.

Risk 2: Despite high-level institutional support, the universities do not build the need for enhanced digital teaching and learning competences into their own internal academic staff recruitment, promotion and other incentive structures.
Contingency: The need for enhanced digital teaching and learning competences across the university sector are central to the recently launched Charter for Irish Universities (IUA, 2018), the HEA's System Performance Framework, the work of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, and the EU Digital Competence Framework. Most universities have already included the need for teaching development as part of existing internal reward structures. This broad policy framework will ensure that enhanced digital teaching and learning competences are likewise further integrated and mainstreamed into each university's internal processes.

Risk 3: The train the trainers programme does not attract enough trainers.
Contingency: Using the internal structures of each university and the existing inter-institutional disciplinary networks, and building on the project's sector-wide scope and visibility, the project will encourage and support the emergence of a critical mass of trainers across the sector, adding value to the existing and ongoing work of each university.

Risk 4: The staff development programme does not attract enough academic staff.
Contingency: Research undertaken by the NFETL during the pilot of its Professional Development Framework (see above in Section 2: Institutional Strategy) indicated very high levels of agreement among staff regarding the positive impacts of this professional development on their teaching and learning confidence, skills, and practices. Academic staff who successfully complete the staff development programme will be awarded a post-graduate award in Digital Teaching and Learning, either stand alone or a recognised component of a broader Teaching and Learning development qualification. The award / award component will be made by each university and recognised by all other universities for the purposes of staff recruitment, promotion and other internal processes. The project will also ensure effective communication across the sector and across a range of academic disciplines to raise awareness of the benefits this staff development programme universities will provide.

Risk 5: The increased use of digital technology drives inappropriate pedagogy at disciplinary levels in Irish universities.
Contingency: Using technology for its own sake is not the aim of this project. Both the train the trainers and the staff development programme elements of this project will ensure that participants are aware of the potential risks linked to the use of inappropriate technologies in the teaching process, and are equipped to choose relevant and suitable tools to achieve the particular learning objectives and outcomes required.

Impact

The project expects to deliver the following in terms of direct impact:

- Approx. 120 trained trainers across the universities in a ready position to mainstream and integrate use of digital technologies, including social media where appropriate, as part of the teaching and learning process;
- Approx. 90 of same with experience of training trainers as part of the project, ensuring a critical mass of change agents;
- Approx. 1,000 academic staff across the universities with enhanced digital teaching and learning confidence, skills and competences;
- Agreed and reviewed training programmes for ongoing use by the universities and other HEIs;
- Open access materials for the train the trainer programme and the staff development programme. These materials will be available through the IUA, universities and NFETL websites.

The key impact of this project will be the development of critical mass and a shared service approach to enhancing digital capacity across the university sector. Work undertaken so far within individual universities and disciplines, while important to build on, has not been sufficiently resourced to ensure this critical mass and has in some cases suffered from a lack of visibility and recognition. This project, covering all universities and bringing in the other key HE players, including the NFETL, will ensure that the work already undertaken at institutional and national levels can be much greater than the sum of all the individual parts, thus adding value across the HE system.

Budget justification and rational

Proposed budget costs are detailed as required in the tables below.

The main costs associated with this project would be academic staff costs. This includes the provision of one full-time programme support in each university – an academic staff member to act as the project lead and academic coordinator within that university – across the three year period (work packages 2-8). In consultation with the universities, this one FTE was identified as the required staffing needs in order to realise the ambition and scale of the project. The average of the top three points on the post-1995 lecturer salary scale has been selected as an appropriate project contribution to these costs to allow each university to recruit the most suitable candidate for the role.

Academic staff costs increase year-on-year across the three year period of the project. This is due to the roll out of the train the trainers programme in 2020 and the increase of same in 2021. Standard honorariums are costed for the approx. 120 trained trainers (work packages 3, 4, 6) and, as such, these are concentrated in year three of the project. It is proposed that the universities carry the costs of any travel of these trainers.

An honorarium, plus travel costs, for a designated international expert member of the steering committee (work package 1) is also included in academic staff costs.

This is done in order to ensure that Irish universities can benefit from lessons learned in other higher education systems, to ensure that similar mistakes are avoided and relevant good practice is adapted for use here.

Support staff costs remain constant over the three year period with one full-time project manager to be employed for the duration of the project by the IUA (work packages 1, 8, 9), working under the IUA Director for Learning & Teaching and Academic Affairs. Like the university programme supports, the average of the top three points on the post-1995 lecturer salary scale has been selected as an appropriate cost. Travel costs are foreseen for the project manager, as are the sole equipment costs. IUA staff costs are included in support staff costs as the project will benefit from the range of efficient in-house project supports in areas such as administration, financial management, policy, reporting and communications (work packages 1, 8, 9). The IUA is well placed to successfully manage this project, given its effective network structure across all seven universities, its close policy cooperation with all higher education actors (HEA, THEA, USI, NFETL, etc.), and its successful track record in similarly ambitious sector-wide multi-strand projects over time (e.g. DARE and HEAR, the Doctoral Studies network, and Campus Engage – all initially funded through the HEA Strategic Innovation Fund).

Open access materials for the train the trainer programme and the staff development programme as costed to be produced and distributed mostly online (work packages 2-7). Promotional and regular communication materials are also costed to be produced and distributed in order to activate and build interest and support (e.g. website, newsletter, social media, progress reports, online repositories, analysis – work packages 2-7). This will enable the project to achieve the potential scale of real change across the sector. Soft infrastructure costs are foreseen in order to allow investment in policies, ideas and concepts at sectoral and local level which will enable the delivery of staff development and train the trainers programmes central to the project.

2a: Project Objectives and Implementation Plan

	(a) Work package(s)	(b) Short description	(c) Timescale	(d) Outcomes / targets	(e) Key milestones
1	Project governance and management. This work package will ensure the effective governance and management of the project from inception to close.	Under the overall governance of the IUA Registrars group, a project Steering Committee (see lead contact persons for each partner institution, as well as Section 1: Project Team, i.e. NFETL, HEA, THEA, USI and a designated international expert) will be responsible for project design and implementation. A Project Manager, working under the IUA Director for Learning & Teaching and Academic Affairs, will be employed for the duration of the project.	Jan 2019 – Dec 2021	Successful project implementation and completion	Recruit project manager; Project steering committee meetings, 6x yearly; Reports to IUA Registrars, 4x yearly; Bi-annual reports and final report to HEA.
2	Develop a Digital Teaching and Learning staff development programme. The module-based programme will facilitate academics to participate in the training programme on	This work package will bring together the main players in each university (Teaching and Learning Centres, Staff Development Services, and IT Learning Services) to review existing modules and develop the structure and content of a programme that can	Jan 2019 – June 2019	Draft staff development programme ready for pilot and review; At least five disciplines identified and agreed for pilot phase.	Identification and scoping of relevant existing resources across universities and NFETL; Assembly of coherent suites of modules relevant to different staff development needs

a regular basis, with minimum disruption to their ongoing existing commitments. Depending on the number of credits to be assigned to the programme, it is anticipated that the programme would run over one or two semesters. There are significant existing resources across the university system, as well as through the NFETL including the National Professional Development Framework, which can be brought together and federated to build this programme, and to ensure it can be used across a range of different academic disciplines and can respond effectively to different levels of staff development needs.	incorporate new and existing material from across the university sector and the NFETL. The full-time IUA Project Manager and the full-time programme supports – academic staff members provided by the project within each university – will play key roles in bringing this together at local level and across the sector. The project will be module-based and incorporate the NFETL TELU (Technology Enhanced Learning for You) and All Aboard initiatives. These modules – including discipline-specific resources across the selected range of disciplines – will be shared across universities, both online and in a more traditional setting, so that the modules and programme can be delivered on all campuses. The programme will be designed so that staff can identify – with appropriate guidance where suitable – the modules most		(experience, discipline, etc.); Draft staff development programme ready for pilot and review.

		suited to their own training needs, within an agreed development framework, and linked to the NFETL National Professional Development Framework. The concept of 'digital badges' for individual modules, as already used within the All Aboard and other NFETL initiatives, will be explored as part of this.			
3	Pilot and review staff development programme. The programme will be piloted and reviewed across at least five diverse disciplines, to be identified based on demand and need.	The piloting will be undertaken by experienced staff across the sector. It will take place within individual universities and also between campuses, bringing academics in the same discipline together from several universities, supporting network development and sharing of best practice.	July 2019 – March 2020	A tested and accepted staff development programme in place to enhance digital capacity in teaching and learning across the Irish university system.	Staff development programme piloted; Staff development programme reviewed.
4	Develop and pilot a train the trainers programme. Based on the emerging outcomes of the pilot and	It is anticipated that approx. 30 identified trainers from the university sector will participate in this phase, with a range of profiles including academic staff	Jan 2020 – June 2020	Draft train the trainers programme for piloting; approx. 30 trained trainers across the universities and from a range of profiles.	Train the trainers programme developed; Train the trainers programme piloted.

	review phase, a train the trainers programme will be developed, building on the academic disciplines already tested but expanding into additional areas of demand.	developers, technical services, and academic digital champions, all already employed by the universities. This work will be led by the university Teaching and Learning Centres and Staff Development Services, and the resulting programme will likewise be piloted.			
5	Review train the trainers programme.	The draft train the trainers programme will be reviewed prior to full implementation.	Jun 2020 – Sep 2020	Agreed train the trainers programme for implementation.	Train the trainers programme is reviewed.
6	Rollout of train the trainers programme.	Following review of the pilot train the trainers programme, the programme will be rolled out to provide regular subsequent training of trainers at six-monthly intervals throughout the course of the remainder of project. This will provide opportunities for more trainers to be identified and recruited to join the pool. The aim is to ensure a critical mass of change agents are in place across each university and sector-wide by the close of the project.	Oct 2020 – Dec 2021	Approx. 30 trainers per programme trained, over 3 additional programmes; leading to approx. 120 trained trainers across the university sector.	Approx. three additional training programmes completed.

| 7 | Rollout of staff development programme. The aim of the programme will be that academic staff who successfully complete the programme will be awarded a post-graduate award in Digital Teaching and Learning, either stand alone or a recognised component of a broader Teaching and Learning development qualification. This award / award component will be at Level 9 on the Irish NFQ, with credit size to be determined as part of this work package. The award / award component will be made by each university and recognised by all other universities for the purposes of staff recruitment, promotion and other internal processes. The award / award component | Using the emerging pool of trained trainers across each university and system-wide, the Digital Teaching and Learning Staff Development Programme developed under the previous work packages will be rolled out locally across the initial five broad disciplinary areas and then also across additional areas as they are developed. The aim is to ensure significant enhancement of digital teaching and learning capacities and competences within these disciplines and schools in each university, with direct impact on the student educational experience and on graduate attributes. This programme will be effectively marketed and communicated at local and system level, from both teaching and learning enhancement and HR staff development perspectives, to ensure that it can be made both attractive and | Jan 2021 – Dec 2021 | On the basis that each programme would run over one or two semesters, that a number of programmes would run concurrently in each university and across the sector, and that each programme would attract approx. 30 participants, it is anticipated that by the end of the project approx. 1,000 academic staff will have significantly enhanced their digital teaching and learning skills, competences and confidence. | Approx. 36 staff development training programmes delivered. |

	will likewise be referenced to the NFETL's NFPD and to relevant international and European frameworks.	accessible to those academic staff who may naturally be less attracted to participate.			
8	Final project review	A final review will take place during the last three months of the programme, to ensure that all lessons are captured so that this programme can be successfully mainstreamed into the normal work of each university and of the system as a whole.	Oct 2021 – Dec 2021	The train the trainers programme will be available for continued post-project expansion and development. A tested and reviewed academic staff development programme to enhance digital capacity will be in place across the university sector.	Project review completed.
9	Ongoing project support and facilitation The project will provide ongoing support for the adoption of digital initiatives across the Irish university sector, from the pilot and review phase through the system-wide roll out.	This ongoing support will be both structural (policies and frameworks) as well as ad hoc (support to staff for initiatives to use digital technology in new and innovative ways). This strand of ongoing support will be important in developing confidence in the new staff development programme, in	July 2019 – Dec 2021	This ongoing support will include regular communication regarding the programme to activate interest and support, as well as regular summary progress reports and the outcomes and analysis of each phase of review, to enable ongoing	

		learning lessons along the way, and in integrating the new ideas which will inevitably arise once innovative forces are unleashed within each university as part of this overall programme.		learning and enhancements during the course of the programme.	

Section 3: Sustainability and Mainstreaming Plan

This project has sustainability at its heart. The direct involvement of all key actors from the university sector, at institutional and sectoral levels, is one measure of this. The project's approach to bring senior management, IT services, staff development services, and university centres for teaching and learning development together, as part of a three-year sectoral project, to build on what is already available across the universities and develop a shared programme for staff development and a shared train the trainers programme, is aimed at ensuring the mainstreaming of the project's outputs into each university's ongoing staff development and teaching and learning enhancement processes.

The involvement of an international expert in the steering committee is likewise designed to ensure that Irish universities can benefit from lessons learned in other higher education systems, to ensure that similar mistakes are avoided and relevant good practice is adapted for use here.

The current policy environment is also conducive to ensuring project sustainability. The HE System Performance Framework, within the overarching National HE Strategy, provides a clear rationale for the ongoing and long-term necessity for this activity. The collective approach taken by the universities through the Charter for Irish Universities (IUA, 2018), with its clear references to the need to build on the quality of the student experience in a digital age, is likewise evidence of the importance with which the universities view this matter.

The scale of the project will allow considerable momentum to be developed over the three-year project lifespan. Following the project, this momentum will allow the universities to build further on the main project deliverables (trained trainers and ongoing delivery of staff development) by continuing to train additional trainers across a broader range of academic fields, and by continuing to deliver staff development programmes with a focus on enhancing digital capacity. The resources required for this will be provided through the universities' own internal structures. The project will have ensured that approx. 120 trained trainers are ready to assist with this, and with mainstreaming and integrating the use of digital technologies, including social media where appropriate, as part of the teaching and learning process, with approx. 90 of same having had direct training experience in the context of the project. The significant multiplier effect of the train the trainers programme will ensure a sustaining effect beyond the three-year period of the project.

Given its long-term policy significance, the IUA will continue to take a collective approach to this topic.

Section 4: Impact Statement

The project expects to deliver the following in terms of direct impact:
- Approx. 120 trained trainers across the universities in a ready position to mainstream and integrate use of digital technologies, including social media where appropriate, as part of the teaching and learning process;
- Approx. 90 of same with experience of training trainers as part of the project, ensuring a critical mass of change agents;
- Approx. 1,000 academic staff across the universities with enhanced digital teaching and learning confidence, skills and competences;
- Agreed and reviewed training programmes for ongoing use by the universities and other HEIs;
- Open access materials for the train the trainer programme and the staff development programme. These materials will be available through the IUA, universities and NFETL websites.

The key impact of this project will be the development of critical mass and a shared service approach to enhancing digital capacity across the university sector. Work undertaken so far within individual universities and disciplines, while important to build on, has not been sufficiently resourced to ensure this critical mass and has in some cases suffered from a lack of visibility and recognition. This project, covering all universities and bringing in the other key HE players, including the NFETL, will ensure that the work already undertaken at institutional and national levels can be much greater than the sum of all the individual parts, thus adding value across the HE system.

This is the first time that a proposal of this scale and ambition has been made to enhance the digital skills of those who teach in Irish universities. The significant critical mass this proposal will achieve will have a lasting impact on improving the digital attributes and experiences of Irish university students and graduates.

If approved and funded, this sectoral proposal, with all seven universities collaborating at a senior management level, will support real momentum and transformation across the university sector at institutional and national levels. Shared approaches, as contained in the proposal, will generate efficiencies while adding significant value and critical mass to the initiatives and capabilities already in place in the respective institutions. Moreover, working closely with the NFETL and building on its essential groundwork, as proposed, will lead to benefits for the whole higher education system.

The proposal aligns with Key System Objective 1 for the Higher Education System 2018-2020: "Providing a strong talent pipeline combining knowledge, skills & employability which responds effectively to the needs of our enterprise, public service and community sectors, both nationally and regionally, and maintains Irish leadership in Europe for skill availability". Enhancing the digital attributes of all Irish university graduates is key to this in order attract foreign direct investment, drive the success of our indigenous enterprise base, and deliver high quality public

services. This responds to the EU's Skills Agenda as well with its emphasis on the importance of digital literacy across occupations and call on Member States to improve the quality of skills and their relevance for the labour market. As is outlined as part of Key System Objective 1 for the Higher Education System 2018-2020, "higher education institutions need to continually develop and enhance their approaches to learning and teaching to incorporate a … student-centred approach that includes … digital technologies". The proposal aims to scale up the development of digital capacity across the Irish university sector in order to achieve this.

The proposal also aligns with Key System Objective 5 for the Higher Education System 2018-2020: "Demonstrates consistent improvement in the quality of the learning environment with a close eye to international best practice through a strong focus on quality & academic excellence". Enhancing the educational experiences of all Irish university students through the mainstreamed and integrated use of digital technologies, including social media where appropriate, as part of the teaching and learning process is key to ensuring that graduates have the right skills, competences and experience in order to contribute fully to future economic, social and cultural development. The sectoral, holistic approach proposed will facilitate sharing and learning from best practice across the universities, with a work package specifically designed to support this. Enhancing the digital skills of those who teach in Irish universities will ensure they are supported and motivated to drive quality of the learning environment.

As outlined above, the increased and enhanced use of digital technologies will enable significant additional gains for part-time and remote students, in particular those seeking to engage with higher education in flexible ways. The project will therefore also help universities deliver on these elements under Key System Objective 4 for the Higher Education System 2018-2020: "Significantly improve the equality of opportunity through education and training and recruits a student body that reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population". Part-time/flexible learners are one of the key target groups identified in the National Access Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019 with the aim to increase participation rates.