

# Professional Higher Education

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# Presentation Overview

1. National Context
  - Mission of Higher Education in Ireland
  - Recent HE system developments
2. Overview of Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)
3. Graduate attributes and labour market requirements
4. Key features of professional higher education in DIT
5. Best practice and issues for consideration



# 1. National context: mission of higher education

‘A new relationship between the state and the 39 publicly funded higher education institutes will be implemented.

This will allow the system to respond in a more coherent way to national priorities set down by the government and provide graduates with the skills and qualifications that are essential for Ireland’s social and economic well-being’.

(Minister for Education 2013)



# National Strategy for Higher Education: mission & objectives

## Mission

- ▶ Excellent teaching and learning
- ▶ Quality in research and knowledge transfer
- ▶ Effective engagement between higher education and society

(Department of Education and Skills 2011)

## Additional Key Objectives

- ▶ Increased participation, equality of access and lifelong learning
- ▶ Quality of student experience
- ▶ Enhanced internationalisation



# National context: recent developments in HE system – Technological University

- ▶ New addition to binary system
- ▶ Mission – a systematic focus on the preparation of graduates for complex professional roles in a changing technological world
- ▶ Some of the criteria: (HEA 2012)
  - Programmes from level 5 to 8 EQF (equivalent)
  - Applied problem-oriented research and discovery
  - Intensive links with business, enterprise and professions
  - 30% lifelong learning students
  - Staff role: teaching, research, engagement & administration
  - Curricula: Generic attributes for employability and citizenship
  - Leadership: strong academic & professional experience



# National context: recent developments in HE system – regional clusters

- ▶ 5 Regional clusters with a mix of Universities, Technological universities and Institutes of Technology within a cluster
  - ▶ Key Objectives of Regional clustering
    - Shared co-ordinated academic programme planning and delivery
    - Co-ordinated approach to transfer and progression
    - Co-ordinated approach to enterprise, community and regional development
    - Shared services and facilities
    - Co-ordinated approach to the presentation and promotion of the region internationally
- (HEA 2013)



# National context: changes

- ▶ Role of HE:  
Driving economic and social development; repositories of cultural and intellectual wealth; pursuit of knowledge is its own reward; holistic development of the individual (HEA 2013)
- ▶ Evidence of familiar lifelong learning themes:  
'economic imperatives created by global competition, technological change and the challenge of the knowledge economy, individual responsibility and self-improvement, employability, flexibility of institutions and individuals, social inclusion and citizenship' (Osborne 2003)
- ▶ Impact of the economic crisis and role of higher education

# 2. Overview of Dublin Institute of Technology

- ▶ Mission: academic quality of a traditional university with career-focussed learning, discovery and the application of knowledge.
- ▶ Higher degree awarding authority
- ▶ Offers a range of programme from EQF-equivalent levels 5–8 (Higher Cert, Degree, Masters, Doctoral degree)
- ▶ 4 colleges: Arts and Tourism; Business; Engineering and Built Environment; Sciences and Health
- ▶ 30% of students through non-standard entry: mature students, further education, access, disability  
[www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie)
- ▶ Competitive entry with entry across the spectrum of academic attainment
- ▶ Together with two other IoTs in Dublin will seek Technological University status: 23,778 students; 2,433 staff; Income 250m; Research income: 20m.





# 3. Graduate Attributes and Labour Market Requirements

- ▶ Balance between discipline-specific and generic graduate recruitment: only 40% graduate employers sought graduates with specific degrees
- ▶ Employers require key, transferable skills. Main shortfall identified by employers is communication skills: 57% (Employer survey 2011 [www.gradireland.com](http://www.gradireland.com))
- ▶ Educating students for international employment
- ▶ Employers group and multinational companies make a significant contribution to public discourse on education and influence education policy



# Graduate Attributes

- ▶ Graduate attributes working group (DIT)
- ▶ Concept of 5 Es
- ▶ **Enquiry:** critical thinking; problem-solving; questioning; curiosity; analytical
- ▶ **Experience:** disciplinary knowledge; experiential learning; self-managers; ethical; leaders; team players
- ▶ **Enterprise:** creative innovators; motivated self-starters; industry experience; decision-makers; resilient
- ▶ **Efficacy:** excellent communication skills; digitally literate
- ▶ **Engaged:** social responsibility; civic-minded; questioning; reflective practitioners; leaders



## 4. Key features of professional higher education to produce graduates with such attributes

- ▶ Relationship between programme and industry/professional bodies
- ▶ Curriculum
- ▶ Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment
- ▶ Research-informed teaching and learning
- ▶ Staff training and development and staff promotion

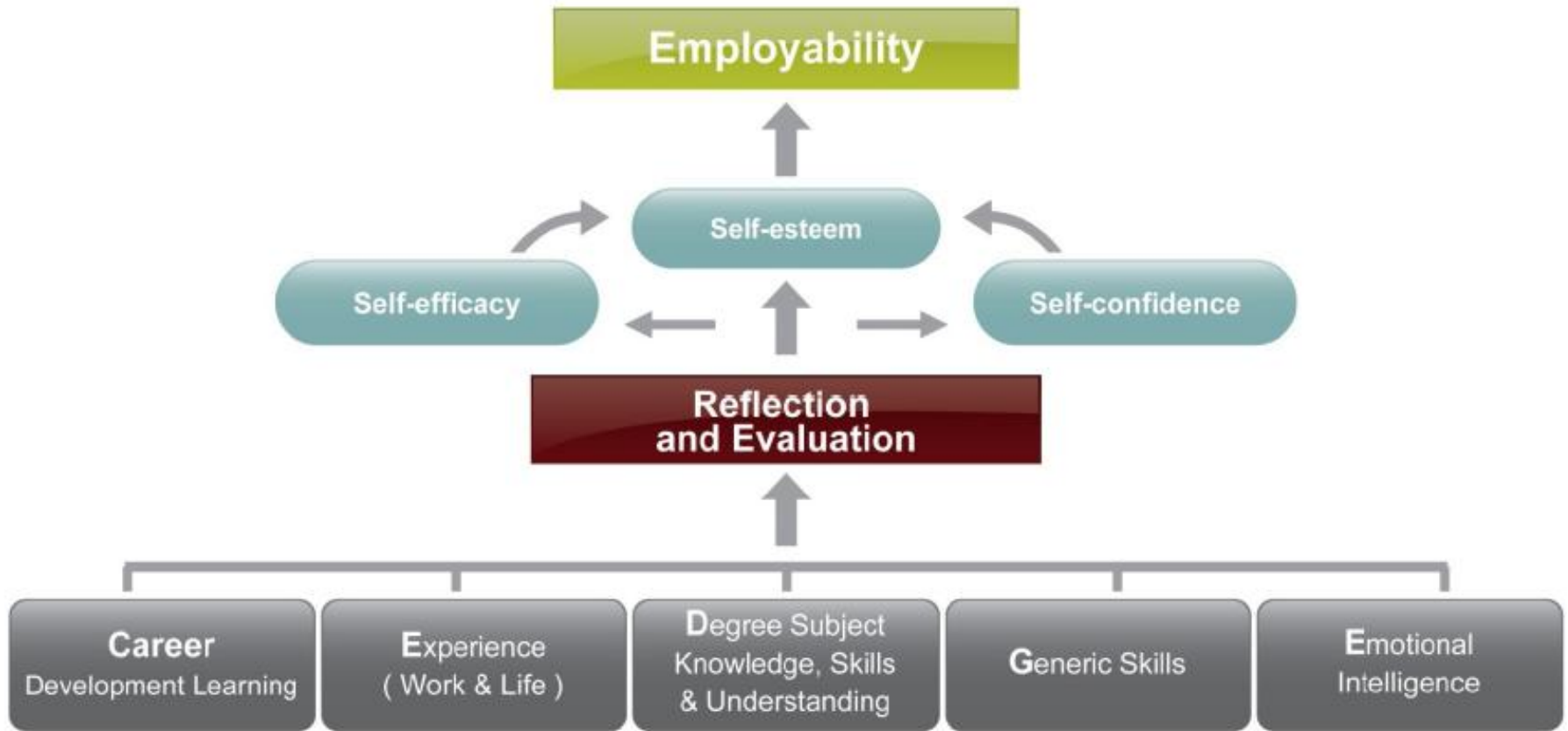
## 4.1 Programme relationships with employers and professional bodies: Example College of Sciences and Health

- ▶ Professions involved in programme development and review
- ▶ Programme accreditation by professional bodies
- ▶ External examiners
- ▶ Acquiring industry and professional certification of modules
- ▶ Work placement and clinical placements
- ▶ Real-world projects in collaboration with employers
- ▶ Showcase of projects for industry & graduate recruitment
- ▶ Industry provision of specialist facilities or equipment
- ▶ Guest lecturers and project supervision
- ▶ Industry or employer-sponsorship of student prize
- ▶ Deliver CPD modules for professionals
- ▶ Employer liaison committee
- ▶ Staff representation on professional bodies

# 4.2 Curriculum

- ▶ Explicit programme aims, structure, module learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment strategies publicly available [www.dit.ie/catalogue/](http://www.dit.ie/catalogue/)
- ▶ Discipline–knowledge modules and generic–skills modules: communications; professional practice; digital literacies; critical analysis = core modules
- ▶ Cross–curricular embedding of student induction and generic skills
- ▶ Move towards broad focus first year programmes
- ▶ Work placement on approx. 50% of programmes
- ▶ Adapting the curriculum to create awareness of and draw on student diversity <http://elearning-events.dit.ie/Diversity/>
- ▶ LEAD module (Lead, Engage, Achieve, Develop) from student extra–curricular and co–curricular achievement
- ▶ Programme–embedded careers education





Dacre Pool & Sewell (2007)

# Programme–embedded careers education: career development learning

- ▶ Self–awareness of skills, aptitudes, personality and interests
- ▶ Decision–making techniques and creating a personal career plan
- ▶ Research into occupational profiles and opportunities
- ▶ Effective written and verbal communications and promotion, e.g. CVs, application forms, interviews and presentations
- ▶ Network effectively
- ▶ Ability to critically evaluate personal progress and adapt a strategic approach to handling changing circumstances
- ▶ Enhance their employability and reach their career potential

[www.dit.ie/careers/](http://www.dit.ie/careers/)



## 4.3 Approaches to teaching, learning and assessment: student-centred

- ▶ Importance of incorporating student transition and induction, quality student experience and retention into programme approach (Thomas 2012)
- ▶ Problem-based learning  
<http://www.dit.ie/physics/research/physicseducationresearchgroup/>
- ▶ Case studies, in-class discussion and role play
- ▶ Team-based projects and presentations
- ▶ Reflective practices and journals
- ▶ Virtual learning environments and lecture capture
- ▶ Classroom response systems (clickers)
- ▶ Assessment of participation/attendance
- ▶ Community-based learning





# Students Learning With Communities



- ▶ Community-based learning and research
- ▶ Staff/students collaborate with underserved community partners for mutual learning
- ▶ Develop real-life, course-based projects within a module
- ▶ 2011/12: 1,300 students, 100+ community partners on 46 DIT programmes
- ▶ Example: Sports for Girls Leisure Management programme
- ▶ Communication skills, understanding of discipline in society and self-reflection



# Community-based Learning: Nutrition & Dietetics with Dublin City Council



- ▶ Professional Practice module, year 2
- ▶ Competency skills for placements
- ▶ With group of older adults from disadvantaged area
- ▶ Describe dietary intake, do nutritional assessment, develop educational resources/presentation, ethics
- ▶ Previously delivered through role-play, case studies
- ▶ Collaboration with Dublin City Council



Students Learning with Communities



# 4.4 Research–informed teaching and learning: some examples

- ▶ 2 Research institutes, 19 research centres and 4 overarching research pillars
- ▶ Research–active staff teaching undergraduate students, including first years
- ▶ Reduction of teaching hours for research–active staff
- ▶ Annual Research and Innovation summer school
- ▶ Undergraduate Research Opportunity Programme
- ▶ Undergraduate teaching award



# 4.5 Staff training and development and staff promotion

- ▶ Learning, teaching and technology centre
- ▶ New staff must have a teaching qualification:  
Postgraduate diploma in learning and teaching
- ▶ Annual teaching and learning theme with workshops and seminars
- ▶ Teaching fellowships
- ▶ Academic promotion criteria include: research and scholarly activity; teaching quality and development; programme development; advising and supervising students; engagement with professional bodies, industry, community.



# 5. Key Learning

- ▶ Separation of three strands of HE mission
- ▶ Engagement as optional add-on
- ▶ Assumption of student awareness of skills
- ▶ Transferable skills as separate activity
- ▶ Separation of learning and student experience
- ▶ Curriculum and approaches based on 10% HE participation with 60% HE participation
- ▶ Integration of 3 strands
- ▶ Embedded Engagement
- ▶ Explicit and accessible learning outcomes
- ▶ Cross-curricular integration of transferable skills and careers education
- ▶ Integration of student and academic experience
- ▶ Curriculum and approaches adapted to student diversity

Practices to avoid

Best Practice



# Broader Issues for consideration

- ▶ Role of higher education in providing re–skilling for unemployed/skills shortages
- ▶ Role of foundation programmes in widening participation for mature learners and SED students
- ▶ Reform of learning outcomes, curriculum content and learning and teaching approaches in HE not replicated in further education and 2<sup>nd</sup> level, with significant transfer and transition difficulties for students: HE as education system leader?

