Policy and Strategy for Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning
2014 – 2018

Access Working Group

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Purpose	The *Policy and Strategy for Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning* promotes and facilitates entry to and participation in the academic programmes and student life of IADT.
Commencement Date	December 2014
Date of Next Review	December 2018
Who needs to know about this document	Executive, Management team, Programme Co-ordinators, Student Services, all staff, all students (*An Executive Summary will also be made available.*)
Revision History	Revision of IADT Equal Access and Participation Strategy Version 2, For Approval by Governing Body
Document Authors	Access Officer/Educational Partnerships & Student Services Manager
Document Owner	Registrar

Policy and Strategy for Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning 2014-2018

1. Background and Context

IADT's *Equal Access and Participation* Strategy (2008 – 2011) was a milestone document for the Institute, formalising in a very transparent manner policy, procedure and an associated set of strategic actions. The document demonstrated the Institute's commitment to values of inclusion and participation for all in higher education. Its implementation has made a valuable contribution to the workings of the Institute, the culture of diversity and the provisions of targeted student supports. It was due for review at the end of 2011, but in light of radical national changes in funding and policy, a full review was delayed for a short period.

Following the development of the *IADT Strategy 2014-2018*, the agreement of a *Mission-Based Performance Compact* with the HEA (June 2014), and the publication of the national consultation paper *Towards the development of a new National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education*, and the publication by the DES and SOLAS of the *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014–2019*, the Institute Access Working Group (AWG) undertook the review of the objectives and implementation of the previous institutional Strategy. This has led to a revised policy, and set of strategic objectives for the period 2014-2018 which has been formulated to take cognizance of the matters set out in these local and national documents. The *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2014 – 2019* has also been a very significant influence on this document, and the *Policy and Strategy for Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014-2018* (PEALL) sits within the Teaching and Learning strategy framework of the Institute. The PEALL document was developed by the AWG following a process of consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

The *Policy and Strategy for Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning 2014-2018* (PEALL) has been informed also by the activities undertaken during the lifetime of the previous plan[1]. Overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy and its strategic objectives lies with all staff, and will be overseen and managed by IADT's Executive and its

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[1] See Appendix One for a summary of activities under the previous plan.

ongoing monitoring is conducted by the Access Working Group which reports to the Registrar.

2. Policy Model

As indicated above, the review of the 2011 document and the identification of successes in its implementation, has led to a revision of the policy and strategic objectives. Equal access and participation initiatives have, to a significant extent, been mainstreamed across the Institute policy and procedure infrastructure over the past five years. Consequently in the review of the 2011 document, a dedicated policy and procedure for access and participation has been replaced by a) a set of policy principles; and b) an overarching policy objective. These align clearly with the revised Institute and national policy and strategic documents and they are complemented by the set of supporting documents listed in section five[2]. Many of the policies and procedures in section five are dedicated to specific aspects of ensuring access to and participation in higher education, and as a whole they encompass a commitment to and understanding of the principles of lifelong learning.

3. Policy Principles[3]

- IADT is committed, both in principle and practice to, the achievement of equity of access, increased participation, improved persistence and progression rates for all our learners and to the promotion of culture of lifelong learning, where persons at any point in their lives have the opportunity to engage with higher education and benefit from it.

- The Institute is committed to quality in teaching and learning, flexible provision, where appropriate, knowledge gain, enhancing social inclusion, raising skills levels and promoting economic regional and cultural development. The Institute aims to help students to reach their potential through the provision of a supportive, vibrant and challenging learning environment.

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[2] Section five is a dynamic list and will change over the lifetime of this document.

[3] These principles draw directly from the text of the *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2014 – 2019* and are informed by the mission set out in that document. This reflects the fact that the PEALL sits within the teaching and learning strategy framework of the Institute.

- All students are valued equally during their learning journey with IADT. Accordingly the curriculum, teaching and learning and assessment at IADT are centred on the student. Specific policies and procedures are pursued in the area of learning and teaching which promote the increasingly international and culturally diverse nature of all studying at IADT.

- IADT intends that its student and staff bodies will reflect the diversity of the new Ireland: a core value identified by IADT is that diversity and inclusion is evident in all campus activities as well as in relationships and interactions with stakeholders and the local community.

4. Overarching Policy Objective

The principles are integral to the thirteen strategic objectives identified in this document and can be encapsulated in an overarching **policy objective**:

To promote and facilitate entry to and participation in our programmes and in student life by mature students, students with disabilities, students from diverse backgrounds and experiences, mature learners and those with needs arising from a health or disability issue, in particular by strengthening links between further and higher education and establishing creative community partnerships which offer lifelong learning opportunities to as many persons as possible.[4]

Five **groups where action will be focused** have been adopted, and specific activities and approaches in respect of each area will be identified. The proposed strategic objectives actions have been informed by a) progress under the 2008-2011 Equal Access and Participation Strategy; b) feedback during the 2014 consultation process and c) national policy documents. The five areas are:

➢ Initiatives with/for adult learners

➢ Initiatives with/for students with disabilities, including students with specific learning difficulties

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[4] This maps directly to Section 5.1.3 of the *IADT Strategy 2014-2018,* Strategic Priority 3, p.26; and *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, p.13.

- ➤ Initiatives with/for socio-disadvantaged communities, including second-level schools

- ➤ Initiatives with/for ethnic minorities/members of the Traveller community

- ➤ Community initiatives[5]

5. Goals and Strategic Objectives to Support Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning

Within *IADT's Strategy 2014-2018* there are ten overarching goals; the IADT-HEA Compact has six areas for targeted performance and the national consultation paper *Towards the development of a new National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education* has four goals. This *Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning Strategy* incorporates the thirteen **strategic objectives** established in these documents and frames them in an integrated way, adding a small number of other objectives.[6]

Mechanisms will be developed to ensure the effective implementation of these goals and will be distributed across the organisation as a whole, though certain core and key services and initiatives will be located in the Access Office, and monitored through the Access Working Group, which reports to the Registrar.

5.1 Promoting access for disadvantaged groups to higher education[7]

To promote access for disadvantaged groups to higher education, IADT will:

a) Be involved in Dublin Regional Higher Education Area (DRHEA) widening participation proposal[8]

b) Promote and facilitate entry to and participation in our programmes and student life by mature students[9]

c) Promote and facilitate entry to and participation into our programmes and student life by students with disabilities[10]

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[5] See Section 5.2, Participation, equal access and lifelong learning, p.13 of *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*

[6] See Appendix Two for a mapping of the various objectives.

[7] Goal 1 from National Consultation document

[8] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Regional clusters: Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 3, p.11

[9] *Ibid*, Participation, equal access and lifelong learning: Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 1, p.15

[10] *Ibid,* Participation, equal access and lifelong learning: Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 2, p.15

d) Ensure a fully engaged campus with a range of engagements with enterprise and the community in place[11]

e) Develop the current range of curricula projects and activities to support student community and civic engagement and put new ones in place as appropriate[12]

5.2 Coherent pathways from second level education, from further education and other non-traditional entry routes to higher education[13]

In order to develop coherent pathways from second level education, from further education and other non-traditional entry routes to higher education, IADT will:

a) Formalise access and progression links between further education colleges and specific IADT programmes[14]

b) Consider the development of a special entry route for learners with disabilities and/or learners from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds

c) Continue the development of seamless access routes to IADT programmes from FETAC providers and via the route of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)[15]

d) Ensure strategic alignment with, and contribution to, the achievement of national economic and social targets including Springboard Labour Market Activation Initiative[16]

5.3 Increasing progression and completion by target groups[17]

In order to increase progression and completion of programmes by students IADT will:

a) Enhance the institutional policy Framework for Teaching and Learning[18]

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[11] *Ibid,* Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange: Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 1, p.29

[12] *Ibid,* Excellent teaching and learning and quality of the student experience: Institution objectives and performance indicators, objective 7, p.22. This objective has been slightly reworded to reflect current work in this area.

[13] Goal 2 from National Consultation document

[14] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning, Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 4, p.16

[15] IADT Recognition of Prior Learning Policy 2013

[16] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Enhanced Engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchanges, Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 3, p.29

[17] Goal 3 from National Consultation document

b) Review and develop programme assessment strategies[19]

c) Target improvements in the persistence of students from year 1 into year 2 on Level 8 and Level 7 programmes[20]

d) Target improvements in the persistence and success rates for Level 7 programmes across the Institute[21]

e) Review and enhance the current systems for identifying and managing the students at risk[22]

5.4 Supporting evidence-based policy formulation: Implementation and Monitoring[23]

In order to establish the effectiveness of the policy and strategy adopted, careful monitoring will be conducted. Broadly IADT will monitor the implementation of this strategy by:

- Clearly allocating responsibility for delivering on tasks (in a detailed action plan)
- Identifying resource requirements, and ensuring their allocation, or where such allocation is not possible due to competing institutional demands, revisions to the strategy will be proposed for consideration by the Executive
- Systematically reporting on progress, which includes reflection on inhibitors to progress, changes required, contingency plans required to adapt to change

Ongoing monitoring will be conducted through the Access Working Group which reports to the Registrar. An annual report of the Access Working Group will provided a status report.

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[18] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience, Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 1, p.19

[19] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience, Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 6, p.21

[20] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Participation, equal access and lifelong learning: Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 3, p.15

[21] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience, Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 5, p.21

[22] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience, Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 8, p.22

[23] Goal 4 from National Consultation document

Mechanisms for Implementation & Monitoring of Associated Required Actions

Strategic Plan 2014- 2018	Mission Based Performance Compact	Access Policy & Strategy-PEALL
➤ Allocate responsibility for delivering on our strategic priorities ➤ Monitor & report on progress ➤ Define timelines for completion ➤ Agree key milestones ➤ Allow for creativity & flexibility ➤ Respond to change ➤ Provide challenge & oversight	➤ Enhance accountability and demonstrate distinctiveness ➤ Provide interim targets or milestones on the path to the final target ➤ Monitor & report on progress ➤ Identify & explain any underperformance against objectives ➤ Provide challenge & oversight	➤ Allocate responsibility for delivering tasks ➤ Identify resource requirements ➤ Monitor & report on progress ➤ Identify inhibitors to progress ➤ Identify changes required ➤ Identify contingency plans to adapt to change ➤ Support redirection if unplanned events occur
Governing Body – Quarterly Update	HEA – Annual Self-Evaluation	Registrar & AWG Quarterly monitoring and Annual Status Report

6   Supporting documents

1) *IADT Strategic Plan 2014-2018*

2) *IADT – HEA Mission-based Performance Compact* 2014

3) Department of Education and Skills (2011) *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*

4) HEA (2014), Consultation Paper - *Towards the development of a new National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education*

5) DES/SOLAS (2014) *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019*

6) IADT *Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy* 2014-2019

7) IADT *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy* 2013

8) IADT Learner Charter

9) IADT Student Handbook (issued annually)

10) IADT Code of Good Practice for Supporting Students with Disabilities, Draft Version 0.1

11) Guideline on Supporting Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Draft Version 0.1

12) IADT Complaints Procedure 2013

13) IADT Library Charter 2009

14) IADT Policy for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities 2014

15) Policy and Procedure on Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP), Draft Version 1.5

7   References

1) AHEAD (2009). *Charter for Inclusive Teaching and Learning,* Dublin, AHEAD.

2) Department of Education and Skills (2011). *National strategy for Higher Education to 2030. Report of the Strategy Group.* [Online]. Available at http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/National-Strategy-for-Higher-Education-2030.pdf.

3) HEA (2014). Consultation Paper - *Towards the development of a new National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education*. [Online]. Available at http://www.hea.ie/node/1291.

4) DES/SOLAS (2014) *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019*. [Online]. Available at http://www.solas.ie/docs/FETStrategy2014-2019.pdf.

5) IADT (2014a) *Institute of Art Technology and Design Dún Laoghaire & HEA Mission-based Performance Compact 2014-2016.* Available from http://www.hea.ie/en/policy/national-strategy/higher-education-system-performance-2014-16.

6) IADT (2014b) *Institute of Art Technology and Design Dún Laoghaire Strategic Plan 2014-2018.* Dun Laoghaire, IADT.

8   Glossary of Terms and Acronyms used in the field of Access

Term	Description
AHEAD	Association for Higher Education Access and Disability
AMA	Access Made Accessible
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
AT	Assistive Technology service at IADT
AWG	Access Working Group
DARE	Disability Access Route to Education
DAWN	Disability Advisors Working Network
DSS	Disability Support Service at IADT
FSD	Fund for Students with Disabilities
FYM	First Year Matters programme at IADT
HEAR	Higher Education Access Route
LTA	Learning, Teaching and Assessment
MABS	Money Advice and Budgeting Service
MSI	Mature Students Ireland
NAO	National Access Office
NDA	National Disability Authority
PAVEE POINT	Traveller and Roma Centre (Dublin)
PEEP	Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan
REASONABLE	This is a means of adapting assessment to enable

ACCOMMODATION	students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes (HETAC, 2009, p. 54).
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAF	Student Assistance Fund
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
UNIVERSAL DESIGN	Universal design refers to the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size or disability. (Disability Act, 2005)
WRSS	Writing and Research Support Service at IADT

Summary of Access-led Initiatives

Considerable progress has been made to integrate and mainstream access practices and initiatives within IADT addressing the organisational commitment to participation in and equal access to higher education, and the promotion of the principle of lifelong learning. Under the guidance of the 2008-2011 plan, and in particular following a successful submission to the Dormant Accounts initiative and an allocation of funding under this scheme, a number of effective outreach activities and access initiatives were made possible. The allocation was central the development of an enhanced and wider support service both pre-entry and post-entry.

The new strategy, integrated as it is with the Institute Strategy, and the HEA Mission-based Performance Contract, and set within the framework of the *Teaching, Learning and Assessment* strategy is built on these strengths and successes. They include:

Pre-entry

- Pre-entry initiatives for second level students from seven local DEIS schools. These included taster classes and other activities and were designed to promote informed decision-making, and to raise academic expectations of prospective students and their parents

- Multimedia projects – IADT's Multimedia programme teamed up with RTÉ, Ballyfermot Senior College, DCU and DIT and respective DEIS schools to encourage students to consider going to college

- Art in Schools projects - twelve 3rd year Visual Arts Practice students from IADT spent time working with and teaching at second level DEIS schools, as well as at other schools around the city.

Post-Entry

- As part of its focus on first year students and in line with the recommendations from the Hunt report, IADT established a First Year Experience Task Force comprising of key personnel from teaching and learning, administration, student support services and academic staff involved in supporting and enhancing the first year experience. This will support IADT in achieving better student progression rates in level 7 and 8 programmes.

- There are a number of on-going supports for all students registered with the Access Office. IADT will continue to support such initiatives. For example, students from local disadvantaged schools, mature students, advanced entry students, students with disabilities and members of ethnic minorities are eligible for inclusion and are offered support including orientation, integration and familiarisation of campus facilities and services.

- IADT promotes and encourage Service Learning in its undergraduate programmes. IADT has 18 full-time undergraduate programmes and 8 programmes which are currently using community engagement as a pedagogical strategy. In some cases community engagement is embedded within specific modules of the programme e.g. the Altruism project in Year 3 Social Psychology module, or the Industry project module in Year 3 Animation and the Professional Practice module in Year 3 Visual Communications.

- The average participation rate of students with disabilities for academic year 2011 – 2012 in Institutes of Technology was 4.7% (up from 4% in 2010/11). IADT had the highest rate of participation at 10.2%. (AHEAD participation rates 2013-14.) There are a number of post-entry initiatives and resources in place for students with specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, ADHD, Asperger's Syndrome and DCD. These initiatives include the early widespread dissemination of information on the supports and entitlements available to students with diagnosed and undiagnosed conditions designed to ensure early disclosure, and to encourage those with concerns to approach the support services with confidence.

- As part of IADT's strategic approach to supporting lifelong learning, IADT has and continues to develop a range of Special Purpose Awards that are taught in the evenings, and provide flexible and lifelong learning opportunities for learners.

- The IADT Access Office continues to work with a range of local partners, including Area-Based Partnerships, to develop and improve social inclusion in local communities. These include further education colleges and a number of community partners such as Adult Education Guidance Services, Social Inclusion Unit, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, County Enterprise Board, Dun Laoghaire Refugee Project and Southside Travellers. For example an on-going projects for the Traveller community, developed in co-operation with Southside Travellers and Bray Traveller Communities for groups of young Traveller school students, Traveller women and men.

Appendix Two

Our vision as an autonomous Institute of Art, Design and Technology with a specialist mission is to support learning, teaching, research and innovation, and to play a leading role in the development of industries focusing on the creative, cultural and digital technologies sectors.

Our mission is to continue to specialise in creativity and innovation as expressed in the arts, technology and entrepreneurship and to work with learners and stakeholders as partners to develop graduates who are innovative, creative, entrepreneurial and adaptable, and who are ready to meet the challenges of the digital age.

Ten Strategic Objectives : IADT Strategy 2014-2018	Six Areas for Targeted Performance: IADT/HEA Mission-based Performance Compact	Four National Goals for Participation, equal access and lifelong learning	Fifteen Strategic Objectives for Participation, equal access and lifelong learning
Students & Programmes 1. Teaching and Learning 2. 'The Student Experience and Campus Life 3. Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning	1. Regional Clusters 2. Participation, equal access and lifelong learning 3. Excellent Teaching and	1. Promoting access for disadvantaged groups to higher education 2. Coherent pathways from second level education, from	1. Be involved in Dublin Regional Higher Education Area (DRHEA) widening participation proposal[24] 2. Promote and facilitate entry to and participation in our programmes and student life by mature students[25] 3. Promote and facilitate entry to and participation into our programmes and student life by students with disabilities[26] 4. Ensure a fully engaged campus with a range of engagements with enterprise and the community in place[27]

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[24] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Regional clusters: Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 3, p.11

[25] *Ibid*, Participation, equal access and lifelong learning: Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 1, p.15

[26] *Ibid,* Participation, equal access and lifelong learning: Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 2, p.15

4. The National Film School Knowledge Generation & Transfer 1. Research and Innovation Collaboration & Engagement 1. Engagement with Enterprise and the Community 2. Partnerships and Collaboration 3. The International Agenda Culture & Communications 1. Enhancing	Learning and the Quality of the Student Experience 4. High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation 5. Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange 6. Enhanced internationalisation	further education and other non-traditional entry routes to higher education 3. Increasing progression and completion by target groups 4. Supporting evidence-based policy formulation: Implementation and Monitoring	5. Put in place a range of curricula projects and activities to support student community and civic engagement[28] 6. Formalise access and progression links between further education colleges and specific IADT programmes.[29] 7. Consider the development of a special entry route for learners with disabilities and/or learners from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. 8. Continue the development of seamless access routes to IADT programmes from FETAC providers and via the route of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). 9. Ensure strategic alignment with, and contribution to, the achievement of national economic and social targets including Springboard Labour Market Activation Initiative. 10. Enhance the institutional policy Framework for Teaching and Learning.[30] 11. Review and development of programme assessment strategies.[31] 12. Target improvements in the persistence of students from year 1 into year 2 on Level 8 and Level 7 programmes.[32]

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[27] *Ibid,* Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange: Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 1, p.29

[28] *Ibid,* Excellent teaching and learning and quality of the student experience: Institution objectives and performance indicators, objective 7, p.22

[29] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Participation, Equal Access and Lifelong Learning, Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 4, p.16

[30] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience, Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 1, p.19

[31] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience, Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 6, p.21

Communications
2. Valuing Staff
			13. Target improvements in the persistence and success rates for Level 7 programmes across the Institute.[33]
			14. Review and enhance the current systems for identifying and managing the students at risk.[34]
			15. Monitor the implementation by :
			    a. Clearly allocating responsibility for delivering tasks
			    b. Identifying resource requirements and allocating resources
			    c. Systematically reporting on progress, which includes reflection on inhibitors to progress, changes required, contingency plans required to adapt to change

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[32] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Participation, equal access and lifelong learning: Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 3, p.15

[33] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience, Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 5, p.21

[34] *IADT-HEA Mission-based Performance Compact*, Excellent Teaching and Learning and Quality of the Student Experience, Institution objectives and performance indicators, Objective 8, p.22