

North West Gateway Strategic Alliance

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Collaborative Proposal

North West Gateway Strategic Alliance

Collaboration between Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT) and University of Ulster (Ulster)



Strategic Context

National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013:

A significant upgrading of higher education capacity in the North West and the border region through strategic alliances between the educational institutions, North and South.

Integrated Planning

North West Gateway Strategic Alliance

- a complete specification for the delivery of additional higher education capacity for the Gateway.

LYIT Profile

- Established 1971
- 2,500 full-time students
- Two campuses Letterkenny & Killybegs
- Four schools: Business, Engineering, Science and Tourism
- Delegated authority to Level 9 (taught masters)
- Semesterised and Modularised September 2007

University of Ulster Profile

- Formed 1984 with individual campus origins from 1890
- 27,000 students
- Four campuses Belfast, Coleraine, Jordanstown, Magee (Derry) and online Campus One
- Six faculties: Art, Design and the Built Environment; Arts; Ulster Business School; Computing & Engineering; Life & Health Sciences; Social Sciences
- Each Faculty has Undergraduate Schools, a Research Graduate School and Research Institutes

LYIT Mission

“To continuously develop as an academic institution of international repute, serving regional and national needs and pursuing, in a collaborative fashion, an ambitious progressive agenda that delivers on the aspirations of its vibrant Institute population and its external stakeholders.”

University of Ulster Vision

“To be a university with a national and international reputation for excellence, innovation and regional engagement”.

Campus Locations



Existing Collaboration

- MSc in Innovation Management in the Public Sector
- Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice (PgCHEP)
- EpiCentre (Electronics, Production & Innovation Centre)
- North West Workforce Development Forum
- North West Science and Technology Partnership
- Gateway Innovation Fund

Project Costs

- Project Cost €1.86 M
- SIF 2 Funding Awarded €893,000
- Matching Funding €963,000 from LYIT and UU
- Additional Matching Funding from the Centre for Cross Border Studies €70,000

Stages in the LYIT – Ulster project

Scoping Study – to end 2008:

- Demographic and socio-economic data analysis; HE operating environments in NI and ROI; institutional profiles and capacity for development; survey of employers, students and prospective students, staff; international exemplars

Recommendations on future opportunities for collaborative development

Stages in the LYIT – Ulster project

Stage 2 – to end 2009

A blueprint for inter-institutional collaboration to realise the opportunities suggested by the Scoping Study

Emerging Headline Findings

- **The population of the NW region grew by 3.3% in 2002 – 06 while the Greater Belfast area reduced by 0.6%. Letterkenny is the fastest growing town with an Institute of Technology**
- **Projection of significant growth in the age 25+ population**
- **In 2006 the number of HE places per 1000 population was 23 in the NW against 57 in Greater Belfast and 54 in Dublin area**
- **HE graduates comprise a lower fraction of the working age population of the NW region than the average for NI or RoI. (In NI, 17% against 23% average)**
- **The proportion of employees without any qualification is highest in the NW region**
- **Business and employers in the NW strongly advocate greater emphasis on collaboration among HE providers focussing on the skills needed for employment**
- **Currently both LYIT and Ulster provide direct support for start-up businesses**

Preliminary Indications

- Work so far indicates that there is considerable opportunity to develop the HE capacity of the NW region. Having two HE institutions with elements of similarity in their mission is a great asset that can be augmented through collaboration.
- A focus on lifelong learning rather than on school-leavers may achieve greater impact
- This would include provision for people already in employment
- Collaborative provision of education and skills for higher value employment, including R&D, would be possible
- Collaboration would also enhance the provision of direct services to businesses, e.g. via mentoring support or consultancy