



Waterford Institute *of* Technology  
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA PHORT LÁIRGE

# **Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan 2007 – 2010**

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## *Statement from the Director*

The Institute is a knowledge-leading organisation. For us to lead we must continually reflect, develop, and renew our practice at all levels. The Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan provides the framework for us to do this. It is set in the context of the Institute's Strategy Plan 2007-2010 and our goal of becoming the University of and for the South East.

Since the 2004 Staff Development Plan we have seen a lot of changes in the national and international higher education landscape and over the lifetime of the next plan we are likely to see more. Without a firm commitment to development and training we would be unable to meet these challenges.

Our Institute has been an innovator in higher education staff training and development. It has taken a positive and proactive approach to supporting staff self-reflection and learning. Perhaps it might be appropriate to pay tribute to that record in introducing this ambitious new Strategy and Plan. I am very proud of the record set by many individuals and pay tribute to their contributions.

The Institute appreciates the work of the Training and Development Committee in putting together this new Strategy and Plan and encourages all our units to make this plan a reality by translating it into specific action plans in your area.

Prof. Kieran R. Byrne  
Director.

## *Statement from the Training & Development Committee*

The Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan 2007-2010 represents a large part of the Committee's work over the past year. The Committee would like to thank those who contributed both as individuals and to the group sessions.

The development of the Strategy and Plan was facilitated by Professor George Gordon, emeritus Director, Centre for Academic Practice, University of Strathclyde. His experience and knowledge guided us through the process and set the strategy and plan in an international context but also assured us that what we are doing and continue to do is at the better practice end of what is happening internationally.

Since this strategy review process has begun, the Institute has appointed a full time Training and Development Coordinator to help us achieve our Institution-wide goals and facilitate departments and functions in achieving theirs. However, most staff development and training must be planned and delivered locally and the Committee encourages the development and implementation of unit plans based on the strategy.

The Strategy and Plan has been framed in an inclusive manner encompassing all who work in the Institute. The ideas and commitment shown by individuals and groups during the process has been great. It has been a privilege for the Committee to work on and deliver this strategy and plan with everyone who works at the Institute.

Dr. Thomas O'Toole,  
Chair, Training and Development Committee.

# ***1. Introduction to Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan 2007-2010***

## **1.1 Commissioning**

Early in 2006, the Executive asked Dr O'Toole, as Chair of the Training and Development Committee to initiate discussion which would lead to the articulation of a new Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan. The terms of reference of the Training and Development Committee and its membership is set out in appendix A.

**1.2** Several factors influenced the timing including the impending review of the Strategic Plan for the Institute, the application to designate the Institute as the University of the South East, related developments and changes which had impacted upon training and development needs in the period since the previous plan was formulated and feedback which the Committee had received about the operation, appropriateness and continued effectiveness of some aspects of the existing plan.

**1.3** The decision was taken to engage a consultant to guide deliberations. Professor George Gordon, former Director, Centre for Academic Practice, University of Strathclyde, was appointed to that role. His remit included drawing upon his international experience as well as seeking views from staff of the Institute. The vital latter part of the remit was enabled through a series of focus groups held in June and October 2006 and February 2007. Additionally staff unable to attend were invited to submit comments, an option which several exercised. Discussions were also held with the Director and senior managers, and with Ms Roisin Shanahan, the Training and Development Co-ordinator, who formally took up that role in January 2007. Additionally two meetings were held with the Training and Development Committee. The second of these in February 2007 discussed a paper from Professor Gordon which outlined potential key features of the proposed Strategy and Plan. All of these discussions influenced this document. Whilst an individual contributor on reading the Strategy and Plan, might feel that their point has not been captured precisely as they hoped, considerable effort has been made to capture the complex and sophisticated nature of the discussions in the phrasing and nuances of the Strategy and Plan.

## ***2. Review of the 2004 Plan***

### **2.1 Aims and Objectives of 2004 Plan**

In overall terms the 2004 plan was a success. The development of a new plan is built on solid foundations. In addition, it has been prepared with the benefit of an external consultant which adds an international dimension to the best practice aims of the current plan.

Six aims and objectives were specified in the 2004 plan namely:

- clear communication of the strategy of the Institute to enable staff to align personal plans;
- an entitlement for all staff to identify their training needs and annually agree actions with their manager;

- assisting staff to identify career and progression routes and professional opportunities;
- financial assistance in progressing developmental activities, through for example, agreed study time and workload adjustments, and/or free adult and continuing education provision;
- the establishment of a central training resource to co-ordinate provision within the Institute
- an annual Training and Development Plan with a quarterly operational plan.

These aims and objectives were largely met and the Institute can be satisfied that it has been a leader and innovator in staff training and development albeit with a limited resource pool.

## **2.2 Resourcing of 2004 plan**

The aspirational budget benchmark for training and development was set at 3% of payroll costs.

Funding would be devolved to Schools and other organisational units to facilitate training and development. A proportion would also be used centrally to address Institute-wide initiatives and needs.

The percentage of budget allocated to training and development has been rising (2.8% of pay budget in 2006-2007) and the devolved funding model put in place.

## **2.3 Oversight of 2004 plan**

This was vested with the Training and Development Committee.

The preparation of the new plan was also vested with the Training and Development Committee which is a committee of the Executive Board.

## **2.4 Partnerships in 2004 plan**

In effect the Plan embraced at least two forms of partnership. Most prominently were those directly linked to Partnership 2000 i.e. workplace partnerships between management, staff, staff representatives (and, indeed, students). The key objectives here were listed as:

- *“Facing the challenges and the demands for change*
- *Developing a willingness to respond rapidly to the changing needs and preference for the Institute’s customers.....*
- *Creating an organisational climate conducive to better job satisfaction, motivation and the commitment of staff.”*

The other implicit partnerships were those, largely unspecified, between “providers” of developmental opportunities and training and those benefiting from such activities.

## 2.5 The Definition of Training and Development

Training and Development was scoped under six headings in the 2004 plan:

- induction (including mentoring);
- training to address specific job related needs or changes;
- Institute-wide initiatives such as those required by legislation or pan-Institute initiatives and changes;
- personal and professional development such as further qualifications, skills acquisition, sabbaticals or exchanges, conference attendance, workshop attendance;
- self-directed learning activities not covered by the foregoing;
- group or cascade training.

As in the 2004 Plan the intention is to continue to adopt a broadly-based definition of development and training. The clear intention is that all of the potential activities are valued. Comments at the Focus Groups indicated that some staff sense that some activities are deemed less important than others. It appeared that the basis for the interpretation was either the apparent volume of resource expended upon the specific development or emphasis on new activities. The support cost for someone obtaining a PhD will inevitably be appreciably greater than the cost of a place at an internal workshop. Yet development and training to maintain performance in a changing environment is important as are new initiatives and endeavours - equal but different goals.

The central thrust of the Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan 2007-2010 is that all agreed development and training is valued.

## 3. *The Changing Global Context of Higher Education: Key Trends*

### 3.1 Institutional Change – the local context

The following statement is made in the application for University designation:

“Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) is an internationally recognised higher education institution based in the South East of Ireland. It has, over its thirty-five years of evolution, consistently positioned itself as an outstanding regional provider of higher education, informed by and adaptive to changes in the national and international environment.”

That should mean that the Institute and its staff are accustomed to addressing change. That, however, does not necessarily mean that every individual is comfortable either with each new facet of change or with the overall pace, or some of the implications of particular dimensions or directions of change.

The Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan will be sensitive to issues of identity, and to perceptions of balance and involvement. Mostly these can be addressed through effective and empowering approaches to communication and consultation and

by visible and serious commitment to the philosophy, goals, priorities and practices of the Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan. An important component is that senior and middle managers are seen, to use the jargon, “to walk the talk” and are committed to supporting delivery of the Strategy, and that members of staff visibly and demonstrably “buy-in” to the ethos and seize the responsibilities, freedoms and opportunities which the Strategy offers. On the basis of discussions at the Focus Groups and email communications from some staff who wished to attend but were unable to do so, there are sound grounds for believing that there is a powerful positive groundswell amongst staff which will translate into the level of commitment needed to create a robust engaged developmental culture within the institution.

Everyone can be proud of how the Institute has grown and developed. That successful track record provides firm evidence of a broadly-based capability and willingness to evolve and develop, individually and collectively. The Strategy and Plan 2007-2010 prioritises further development, sharpening and some refocusing of practices and activities. If University status is achieved within the timescale of the Strategy and Plan that is likely to trigger, over time, further possible challenges over for example, identities, roles, expectations, networks, benchmarks, and career progression.

### **3.2 The global context**

Here attention will focus on seven key trends, namely:

- a) changes in knowledge production and dissemination
- b) widening participation
- c) accountability
- d) quality assurance and quality enhancement
- e) globalisation and internationalisation
- f) changing concepts of excellence
- g) changing approaches to learning and teaching
- h) implications of roles, identities and cultures in HE

3.2(a) Not only is there a prodigious explosion of knowledge, which brings with it very real challenges in terms of updating, synthesizing, evaluating and distilling, but it has been persuasively argued that changes are taking place to the mode of knowledge generation. Put simply an increasing amount of new knowledge is generated on the boundaries of disciplines, in new fields emerging at the interstices between disciplines, and/or from multi-disciplinary research. In some fields quite a lot of the research does not happen within institutions of higher education. The latter can pose particular challenges in terms of public access to some of that knowledge.

Increasingly new knowledge is available and sought electronically. Both trends are profoundly affecting the behaviours of publishers, librarians and readers, albeit the degree of impact is mediated by the quality and capabilities of information technology infrastructure and the skills of individual readers.

3.2(b) Generally governments world wide are promoting higher rates of participation in higher education. In most developed countries that means progressing towards mass higher education. Consequences including: the implications for the funding of higher education; a larger and, often, more diverse study body, often with a wider range of entry qualification and experiences. Quickly the

trend also promotes a related expansion of extended higher education studies, notably taught Masters programmes.

Widening participation tends to be fuelled by two strategic priorities, the production of a larger proportion of graduates to meet the expected needs of knowledge-based societies and economies, and enabling social inclusion and widespread opportunities for personal progression and development. Whilst voices from within the academy argue strenuously for the continued importance of other, and in their view more fundamental, purposes of higher education, the influences of these trends are increasingly making an impact, at various levels, upon policies, procedures and practices.

- 3.2(c) Many governments have moved over the past decade or so, towards greater, albeit carefully defined, devolution of responsibility to institutions of higher education. A correlate has been an increased expectation of accountability for performance of such devolved powers, alongside a retention of the capacity for central steering through mechanisms such as discussions over institutional strategic plans and, indeed, direction on what these should contain and, more generally, national policy priorities which must be addressed.

The detailed requirements of accountability vary inter-governmentally but ultimately all revolve around interpretations of accountability to government as a key stakeholder and representative of the electorate, and thus more generally of the population of that country. Strategic and operational management fall within the purview of accountability. Both trends have presented challenges for higher education institutions where staff tended to see themselves as members of predominantly collegial communities rather than managed corporate enterprises.

Whilst there have been concessions from governments about the need to pay attention to the burden of accountability, there is less evidence significant reduction in the scope or shift in guiding philosophy. League tables can be viewed as indirect another manifestation of accountability.

- 3.2(d) Externally directed procedures and policies to promote good practice in quality assurance and quality enhancement are directly linked to the more widespread demands for accountability. Here the focus is increasingly centred on the quality and standard of the student experience, with students viewed as key stakeholders. Most countries now operate cyclical systems of evaluating quality assurance and enhancement of the student experience in each higher education institution. In many countries such reports are published and are readily accessed via dedicated website.
- 3.2(e) From the standpoint of institutions of higher education the most significant consequences of globalisation are probably the continuing shifts in the pace and nature of communications (and therefore knowledge accessibility, generation and transfer) and the geographical scale of competition (for reputation, recognition, project collaborations and partners, staff and students). These overlap with the key dimensions of internationalisation. Both trends bring opportunities and challenges, not least those of operating contemporaneously at

different geographical scales i.e. local/regional and international. Four specific aspects of internationalisation demand particular attention: the implications of the Bologna process; selecting, assessing and effectively operating international ventures and partnerships; ensuring that international students receive a high quality enhancing experience which respects their cultural background and aspirations; considering and enacting how internationalisation should be reflected in the experience of all students.

- 3.2(f) The higher education system in the USA recognises different forms of institutional excellence. That approach has been echoed in Australia where the annual league tables now distinguish excellence by institutional type/mission.

Greater specification of learning outcomes and matched assessment strategies has also promoted articulation of different dimensions of excellence in student performance.

Further complexity has been added as the arguments of governments, employers and others exercise influence on debates about excellence (and more broadly standards).

- 3.2(g) Progressively the trend over the last decade or so has been towards active, collaborative learning and away from didactic teaching. E-learning/blended learning can enrich the learning experience through access to a vast array of resources and via e-dialogues and also allow greater flexibility (asynchronous learning). It can readily provide continual constructive feedback on learning via careful designed tests.

A wide range of learning experiences now characterise curricula including placements/internships, team projects, research-based projects, presentations etc). Increasingly employers expect students to draw from all of their learning as integral components of their higher education experience.

- 3.2(h) All of the foregoing has implications for the roles, identities and cultures of individuals and groups of staff within higher education. To date research suggests that individuals accommodate such changes whilst retaining core dimensions of identities. However in more recent research there are clear indications both of blurring of roles and of boundaries. (For example there has been some erosion of staff distinctions as supporting learning replaces formal teaching as an operational paradigm. Likewise in some research teams there are sometimes commonalities of qualifications and experience between research technicians and junior research staff). To date these complications are sub-themes within an existing prevailing paradigm. That may remain so for some time but there is little evidence that blurring will diminish or that the trend toward new specialist roles will abate. Thus there are dynamics operating within the structure of the workforce of higher education institutions, as well as in relation to their organisation and management.

## **4. WIT Strategic Plan 2007-2010**

- 4.1** In the Introduction to the Institute's Strategic Plan 2003-2006 reference was made to the pace of change and specifically to the increase in the proportion of degree provision, the expansion of research activities and the transformative physical developments. These developments and priority below have created major staff development and training needs and have informed the 2007-2010 Strategy and Plan.

The 11 key priority areas of the 2003-2006 Strategic Plan were:

- holistic student centred quality teaching/learning environments
- recruitment, retention and progression of students at all levels
- renewal of the academic portfolio
- modularisation and semesterisation
- graduate studies
- the research and development profile
- industry collaboration and linkages
- lifelong learning through career pathways and continuing professional development
- internationalisation
- uptake and creative use of technology
- competition

### **4.2 Vital Role of Staff as part of the Institute's Strategic Plan**

In the Strategic Plan 2007-2010 reference is made to staff being the foundation for the achievements of the Institute, which is described as a challenging and rewarding place to work, with staff encouraged and supported in their personal and professional development.

### **4.3 Application for University Status**

In 2006 the Institute submitted an application for designation as the University of the south East under Section 9 of the Universities Act, 1997. The application envisaged a distinctive kind of University, one of the region which would be capable of competing in the global context.

It is likely that success of the application would lead to many opportunities and developmental challenges including those related to staff development and training. Articulation of these, followed by means of addressing them, should be a major medium term strategic priority for the Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan.

### **4.4 Other local contextual factors**

The list could be substantial but attention will focus on a small number of important dimensions, namely:

- a) the key priorities of the 2007-2010 Strategic Plan
- b) legislative and related requirements

- c) achieving widespread engagement for a Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan which is closely aligned to the Strategic Plan and which addresses institutional, sectional and individual/job specific needs timeously, effectively and meaningfully.

**4.5(a)**The Strategic Plan 2007-2010 has five major themes:

- building a regional focus through internationalisation;
- structuring for a new era;
- enhancing knowledge generation and knowledge transfer;
- maintaining the cycle of strategic improvement;
- empowering a distinctive learner.

The themes form the basis of five key strategic goals:

- developing an internationally relevant and vibrant knowledge region that fosters an international exchange of ideas, technology and people;
- developing appropriate governance and operating structures in line with best international practice to ensure delivery of the strategic aims;
- creating new knowledge in partnership with the region and helping it to use new knowledge to the benefit of economic, social and cultural development;
- placing quality improvement at the centre of all activities in an open transparent manner and continually reviewing and enhancing operations;
- creating a learner of distinction recognised by the unique characteristics of our graduates and empowering them to develop through life long learning.

**4.5(b)**Legislation, formal directions and regulations, national and local agreements and various contractual or less formal understandings and undertakings are all increasingly part of the operational context. Institutional managers will recognise the importance and influences of these factors. Reaching corresponding understanding amongst staff, especially in terms of consequential development and training needs, is often a challenging task for a higher education institution.

**4.5(c)**In an ideal world motivation is simple; individuals recognise what is needed and want to do it. In reality many things can complicate the situation, not least differing perceptions of priorities and needs and of appropriate ways of addressing issues surrounding development and training. The Institute has an established commitment to developing staff and providing appropriate training and developmental support.

At the Focus Groups there was enthusiastic support from that ethos albeit with some questioning voices. The latter appear primarily to revolve around issues of priorities, means and workloads. Yet global and local changes suggest that every member of staff should expect to be actively engaged in appropriate training and/or level optional activities.

A significant number of participants in the Focus Groups identified specific training and development needs, such as the creation of procedural manuals, enhanced computing skills, other skills updating, safety training, pedagogical debates and development, disability training, more comprehensive induction, and a programme of management development. Many participants recognised that changes to policies, procedures, practice, provision or equipment were likely to have consequences for

training and development and favoured early involvement in discussions. Many were also willing to train colleagues on new procedures etc.

## **5. *Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan 2007-2010***

### **5.0 Ethos and Values**

Put simply the Strategy and Plan applies to every member of staff, all grades, including to Academic, Administration and Library, Management, Support and Technical. This impact on each grade is explored in the following sections.

In the relevant section of the Strategic Plan of the Institute reference is made to several staff development goals such as equipping individuals (and groups of staff) for the roles they play, aiding and supporting them to update knowledge and skills, preparing them for new roles and offering opportunities for personal growth and self-fulfilment. Key underpinning values are inclusiveness, respect and a desire to ensure that staff are provided with a supportive environment to enable them to exercise and achieve their professional and personal responsibilities and aspirations. These values remain at the heart of the Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan 2007-2010.

In line with trends affecting higher education institutions and sectors worldwide there is heightened attention in the 2007-2010 Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan to dimensions such as strategic alignment, understandings of responsibilities, clarification of definitions and of forms of support, the use of feedback and evaluation to inform review of the progress of the Strategy and Plan, ways of engaging individuals, groups and key postholders, ways and means of organising support and resourcing, articulation of different spheres of provision (central, work unit, peer to peer, individual), and connectivity to procedures and policies, e.g. mostly by teams and individuals.

### **5.1 Aims and Objectives of the Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan**

- expecting that each member of staff will engage in appropriate agreed development and training which is aligned to the furtherance of the key priorities and objectives of the relevant Strategic Plan of the Institute (initially the 2007-2010 Plan)
- providing support through financial assistance, free adult and continuing education, part-time course provision, agreed study time and adjustments to workloads and, on occasion, to specific work patterns, to facilitate time for development and training
- ensuring the core aspects of induction are provided on a coherent and comprehensive basis, including role-specific as well as broader Institute-wide dimensions
- fostering a broad positive supportive environment through programmes of management development and the promotion of staff wellbeing
- offering expertise and co-ordination through the good offices of the Training and Development Co-ordinator in partnership with the network of internal providers (and where necessary external providers), line managers and the Training and Development Committee

- clearly communicating that structure and evolving provision to staff
- progressing creation of electronic and other materials to support various dimensions of the development and training agenda
- ensuring that line managers address development and training needs in their development and operational plans
- developing an insightful approach to the evaluation of development and training in order to gauge what has been achieved, what worked and to identify the key areas for further improvement

## 5.2 Key Priorities

Based upon the Focus Groups and the key elements of the Strategic Plan (2007-2010), the principal centrally co-ordinated aspects of the Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan will be:

- a) In the case of new academic staff there will be an expectation that, unless they have already undertaken an equivalent elsewhere, they should follow an appropriate programme of induction into teaching, learning and assessment in higher education, and that they should also be supported through a mentoring process.
- b) to reinforce and extend the developmental programmes for senior managers
- c) to ensure that middle managers benefit from a structured developmental programme
- d) to ensure that all staff receive initial briefing, and when necessary, updating, on statutory matters such as health and safety, disability, and equal opportunities
- e) to discuss and agree ways of enhancing continuing development of staff in the various roles represented in the Institute. Such enhancements should be operational not later than summer 2008
- f) to ensure that regular updating briefings are held for staff (by work unit/staff category) on new rules, procedures and policies, and that opportunities also are in place for discussions of consequential implications of changes and how these will be addressed
- g) to ensure that extensive provision of IT tailored courses is made available on planned basis. If internal resources are used, arrangements will need to be made to ensure that staff involved in the provision can commit in advance to a pattern of times and dates
- h) in partnership with the relevant offices and other parties to discuss and arrange programmes to support various aspects of research training, entrepreneurial activities, business/industry consultancies and partnerships and internationalisation
- i) to introduce programmes on quality assurance and quality improvement, perhaps initially targeted at managers, but with elements incorporated both into the induction of new staff and into the provision for the continuing development of experienced staff
- j) to design and implement workshops on communications (written, oral, email) to address issues identified in a recent internal operational audit. The oral communications workshops could also address interviewing and telephone skills
- k) to foster, through dialogues with line managers and staff, greater and more explicit use of mentoring, peer-to-peer development and group development initiatives

- l) to discuss with line managers how more flexible approaches to development could be enabled and to pilot some in 2008
- m) to move speedily to implement PMDS so that the team and individual aspects are available to inform the identification of needs and the planning of provision
- n) to initiate dialogues on probable developmental and training needs which would follow from University designation, including considering how it might impact upon identities, roles and priorities
- o) to revise the operation of the Professional Development week in order to attract greater involvement. Likely developments will include a Learning and Teaching Conference, management development events, and other targeted workshops and seminars. Each work unit will be expected to hold at least a half-day devoted to development and training
- p) to have further discussions to investigate the feasibility of developing ways of accrediting development and training, for those who wish that to happen.
- q) to foster teaching and learning and administration approaches that are friendly to all learner types

In addition to these priorities, there will be a wide range of localised and individualised development and training needs and activities. It is anticipated that many of these will be self-directed or addressed at the level of the work unit, although some may require further centrally co-ordinated provision. The latter should be discussed with the Training and Development Coordinator, who will liaise with line managers. The Coordinator will either hold discussions with the various providers (internal and external) or agree that the matter will be progressed by the Head of School or other line manager.

### **5.3 Action on key priorities**

To consolidate the link between the key priorities outlined and the Institute's strategy plan some example of new training and development initiatives may be useful. The following list serves to introduce new areas of focus and items that need to be supported from the last Institutional strategic plan into the current one.

- Induction of all new members of staff – extending the support programme provided to new staff
- Women in Leadership – supporting women to take on managerial roles
- Technology Transfer – linking knowledge to communities in the region
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, for example, encouraging all academic staff to be involved in subject groups to share information and research on a peer to peer basis
- Senior Management Training – further enhancing senior management capability at the Institute
- Heads of Departments and Function Development Programme – supporting managers and capacity building
- Modularisation – moving to gain flexibility from the modular approach to build new specialisms
- Computer Literacy – base line computer literacy among all staff of the Institute
- Quality – process training and further underpinning of quality culture at all stages of student interaction and support

- Ongoing qualifications building - for all groups of staff, the Institute is committed to supporting advanced qualifications from Higher Cert to Doctorate qualifications, short terms skills training and attendance at seminars and conferences.

It would be expected that staff would participate annually in a number of continuing professional activities.

## **5.6 Ways and Means**

The Institute will support training and development by various means for example by providing fee support, study and exam leave. Please refer to *Appendix B* (Regulations for the Reimbursement of Tuition Fees and Expenses) for further information.

Budgets are devolved to each Department/School/Function. For conference, seminar, symposium and various workshop attendance, budget approval should be sought from your Head of Department/School/Function. The Institute provides a centralised support for Institute-wide development plans and can assist in specific initiatives of schools and functions with prior approval.

### **5.6.1 Responsibilities**

The Plan intends to operate a hybrid model or multi-centred model of development and training. It follows that responsibility for a Plan will be shared between individual members of staff, their line managers, the Training and Development Co-ordinator, the Training and Development Committee and the providers of various programmes and activities. In essence, these responsibilities were articulated in an earlier section. All that needs to be stressed here is that each party has an active part and vital role to play in the delivery of the Plan. Each must want to ensure that appropriate development and training occurs that such activities contribute to performance maintenance and enhancement, personal growth and fulfilment and job satisfaction and collectively create the intended developmental culture.

This strategy and plan provides the Institutional framework but every area is encouraged to develop its own plan based on the framework set out here.

### **5.6.2 Resourcing**

The 2004 Plan set a benchmark of 3% of payroll costs being devoted to development and training uses the definitions in Section 2 of that Plan. In 2006 some 2.8% of payroll costs were expended on development and training. Therefore it seems realistic to propose that the 3% benchmark remains in force at least until 2009-2010. Thereafter there is a case for increasing the benchmark with the aim of reaching around 3.3% in 2012.

### **5.6.3 Allocation of Resources**

A proportion of the resource will be expended centrally to meet the cost of the post of the Training and Development Co-ordinator, to finance central aspects of provision and to meet other costs attributed centrally.

As before an element of funding will be devolved to Schools, Departments and functions. That is intended to empower work units to have a considerable degree of responsibility for localised development and training needs. As previously these devolved powers include (subject to prevailing rules, See Appendix A):

- course tuition fees for in-house and external courses
- travel and subsistence costs relating to attendance at external courses
- other costs directly related to the provision of training and development activities
- membership fees to professional bodies provided the Institute is the primary beneficiary. Where membership of a professional body is a requirement of appointment the fee is not eligible for consideration.

On occasion satisfying specialised needs may tax the distributed model. An illustration would be a situation where there is a cluster of specialised staff and an absence or paucity of readily accessible resources for self-directed learning. Thus on occasion a work unit should be allowed to make a special case for additional developmental resourcing. An analogous situation could entail an occasional need for collective training or development in a particular work unit. In such cases the articulation and agreement of annual staff development and training plans would provide a simple regular mechanism for dialogue and negotiation as well as summarised reporting and planning.

#### **5.6.4 The Post of Training and Development Co-ordinator**

This is a new and important role. Considerable responsibilities are associated with it in terms of co-ordinating central provision, liaising with line managers and maintaining effective open lines of communication with staff. The Training and Development Committee will keep the associated workload under close review. It may prove necessary to supplement the central provision through additional support. Indeed that is quite probable. If that situation arises the Training and Development Co-ordinator and her line manager will be invited to present proposals about the nature and role of any additional support. Other views would also be sought.

#### **5.6.5 In-house Providers of Development and Training**

Valuable in-house expertise exists and has been used. The feedback from the Focus Groups suggested unmet demand in some areas of need. That matter should be resolved through discussion between the Co-ordinator and the appropriate line manager(s), although on occasion other solutions may need to be pursued.

#### **5.6.6 Specialised Needs**

The Institute will support the various staff groups for achievement in:

Management - advanced qualifications, scholarship of teaching and learning, leadership development and people management

Academic Staff – advanced qualifications, scholarship of teaching and learning, postgraduate supervision, academic conferences, peer review, subject group support

Administration and Library Staff – advanced qualifications, supervisory skills, computer literacy, customer service, team building

Support Staff – advanced qualifications, supervisory skills, computer literacy, customer service, team building

Technical Staff – advanced qualifications, supervisory skills, computer literacy, customer service, systems-specific support, team building

## **5.7 Procedures and Communications**

Wherever possible the Plan will use existing procedures, although some additional ones may be required. The detailed rules are listed in Appendix B. The Training and Development Co-ordinator is progressing communication and conversations with staff, line managers and providers. As the Strategy and Plan are adopted and implemented there will be regular communications covering events and activities, as well as seeking inputs and feedback. Attention will be paid to ways of ensuring that all staff have as clear a picture as possible about the Strategy and Plan, what it means for them and the sources of provision.

Many of the points aired in the Focus Groups revolved around the importance of effective communications.

There are many strands to that topic, including:

- early dialogue and engagement over possible needs, priorities and how these will be achieved;
- making best use of the expertise of staff to effect enhancement, e.g. over the training implications of purchases of equipment, or changes to practices and procedures;
- using agreed procedures for needs identification effectively, for example through the full implementation of PMDS (at team and individual levels);
- having development and training as a regular, perhaps annual, agenda item in work unit discussions;
- raising the profile of staff development and training in institution-wide and sectional communications;
- using websites to communicate activities and events and to act as a “help desk” for questions.

## **6. Evaluation**

Every centrally planned activity will be the subject of an evaluation, in line with current practice. The Training and Development Committee will review progress and feedback annually. Additionally in 2009/10 it will stock take on the effectiveness of the Strategy and Plan and the continuing relevance of the key priorities. That may lead to some

revision for the final phase of the 2007-2010 Plan. In 2007/08 the Committee will investigate key criteria for, and indicators of, success in relation to the Strategy and Plan.

Within higher education views range widely about Development and Training. Most staff welcome it enthusiastically but a minority believe that they can detect negative connotations, such as implications of a 'deficit' model, intrusions into their freedoms and goodwill or potential for additional burdens and/or bureaucracy. There can also be criticisms of the effectiveness and/or appropriateness of specific events. It would be foolhardy to presume that such reservations do not exist within the community of the Institute, even if the predominant tenor of conversations at the Focus Groups was strongly in favour of greater support for appropriate development and training. Quality assurance of provision will be given even greater attention in the Staff Development and Training Strategy and Plan 2007-2010. Appropriateness will be addressed via widespread discussions with staff about what should occur and how priorities should be addressed. Actions will include at least annual cycles of Focus Groups, occasional electronic consultations, and an open and ongoing invitation for individuals and groups to submit suggestions to the Training and Development Co-ordinator. Such consultations will be inclusive and messages from them will be distilled, discussed by the Training and Development Committee, and shared within the staff community of the Institute. Sometimes overall workload may be an issue for individuals but the conversations at the Focus Groups overwhelmingly suggested that the principal potential obstacle was one of specific adjustments to time schedules to enable development and training to take place. The clear message here is that agreed development and training is a priority and everyone involved should make every effort to ensure that it can be facilitated. Cumulatively these and other actions will nurture the further growth of a developmental culture.

## **7. *Networks***

It is the intention of the Plan that the best possible developmental use is made of various networks, within and beyond Ireland. Considerable benefits can accrue from sharing experiences and resources. Development will also be fostered through inter-institutional and other alliances.

## **8. *Recognition***

Whilst studies in higher education have recurrently shown that staff rate intrinsic rewards highly, the Training and Development Committee will explore the possibility of developing a scheme for recognising various forms of excellence in relation to development and training i.e. development and training awards.

## Appendix A

### Waterford Institute of Technology Training and Development Committee Terms of Reference

#### Overview

The WIT Training and Development Committee reports to the Institute's Executive Board to co-ordinate, promote, provide support and leadership to staff training and development programmes for the Institute.

#### Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Committee include:

- a) Develop a comprehensive training and development plan for approval by the Executive Board in line with the Institute's Strategic Plan
- b) Promote and encourage the development of, and attendance at, training courses for Institute staff.
- c) Facilitate staff training and development requirements in conjunction with Heads of Schools, Departments, Functions, and the Training and Development Coordinator.
- d) Develop appropriate policies and procedures to address the administrative and operational implications of managing a staff training and development programme, which will be applicable to all staff in the Institute. Procedures to include the monitoring of course attendance and successful completion.
- e) To support graduate and postgraduate programmes that are relevant to the needs of staff
- f) Agree an annual central budget as part of the annual budgetary process, to be apportioned on the basis of the various training and development initiatives the Institute wishes to pursue.
- g) Develop appropriate procedures for the approval of staff applications to undertake advanced qualifications and to attend relevant courses, seminars, conferences etc. including arrangements for the reimbursement of tuition fees, travel and subsistence and other expenses.
- h) Provide support to the linking of organisational units across the Institute to share knowledge and learning resources and to tap into appropriate expertise in particular those of the School of Education and Professional Development

- i) Promote specific initiatives as requested by the Institute's Executive including Institute-wide training and development needs arising from reviews of staff needs or during specific times.
- j) Provide support and policy direction to training and development staff

### **Membership**

The members of the Training and Development Committee are:

- Dr. Tom O'Toole, Head of School of Business – Chair (nominated by Executive Board)
- Mr. Paddy Downey, Registrar
- Mr. Denis Moran, Head of School of Engineering, Representing Heads of School
- Ms. Dolores Gilhooly, Head of School of Education and Professional Development
- Mr. Neil O'Sullivan, Human Resource Manager
- Ms. Geraldine Molloy, Technician representative
- Two members of Academic Council - Dr. Fionnuala Kennedy and Mr. James Redmond
- Dr. Anne Jordan, School of Education and Professional Development representative
- Head of Department's representative – Dr. Michael Howlett
- Ms. Fiona Murphy, Administration Staff Representative
- Training and Development Coordinator – Ms. Roisin Shanahan
- Support Staff Representative – Mr. Derek Sheridan

### **Meetings**

The Committee meets once per term.

### **Term of Office:**

As decided by the Institute's Executive except in the case of Academic Council.

## Appendix B

### Regulations for the reimbursement of Tuition Fees and Expenses

The following procedures have been approved by the Institute's Executive Board for the reimbursement of tuition fees for external courses:

<u>Type/Level of Course</u>	<u>Total fee limit over programme duration</u>
1. Research Ph. D. (and Master/Ph.D. combination)	All fees fully paid. Up to €750 expenses per annum for a maximum of four years <u>subject to the regulations</u> below.
2. Masters	All fees fully paid. Up to €750 expenses per annum for a maximum of 2 years <u>subject to the regulations</u> below.
3. Professional/Taught Doctorate	Up to a maximum of €20,000 for fees. Up to €750 expenses per annum for 4 years <u>subject to the regulations</u> below.
4. Postgraduate Diploma (Level 9)	Full fee
5. Primary Degree (Hons)(Level 8)	Full fee
6. Primary Degree (Level 7)	Full fee
7. Higher Certificate (Level 6)	Full fee
8. Minor and special purpose awards (all levels)	Full Fee

#### Rules:

- a. **Fees and expenses are payable subject to budget availability in the relevant department/function.** Fee payment and expenses for the duration of the programme, subject to the limits above, should be cleared from the outset.
- b. Expenses: Travel and Subsistence and Materials can be reimbursed at the discretion of the relevant department/function head at rates agreed at department/function level subject to the limits in the above fee schedule and receipts.
- c. The reimbursement of all such fees shall be approved by the relevant department/function head. **The original fee payment receipt should accompany all claims to the Finance Department, for reimbursement.**
- d. Eligibility: All staff including academic, support, technical and administration. This rule is subject to WIT being the main source of income for the staff member.
- e. Fees may not be paid where course is not deemed relevant to the department/school/function's research strategy or general policy.
- f. Expenses for non-WIT postgraduate diplomas, primary degrees, higher certificates and minor and special purpose awards can be considered by the relevant head of department/function based on the limits set in categories 1-3.

The above approval limits will apply from the 1<sup>st</sup>. January, 2006 and will be adjusted for inflation annually until the next review by the Training and Development Committee. Where staff members have already commenced courses the previous rules will continue to apply for the reimbursement of fees in respect of periods prior to the 1<sup>st</sup>. January, 2006. In such

instances, the new rules will result in an apportionment, based on the number of years remaining to complete the relevant course.