



South East Technological University Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Structures in Support of Strategic Planning

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Contents

Introduction	3
Steering Group: Terms of Reference	4
Working Group: Terms of Reference	5
Appendix 1: Vision and Mission	6
Appendix 2: List of Working Groups with Executive Chairs	9
Appendix 3: Indicative Content for Working Group Report	10

Introduction

South East Technological University is currently engaged in the development of its first Strategic Plan. This plan will direct the activities of the university in the coming period and will help define, develop and strengthen the university as a key change agent for the South East region and as a significant new presence in the Irish higher education landscape.

To assist and advise the President in the preparation of the Strategic Plan, a Strategic Plan Steering Group has been convened, chaired by the President and comprising members of the Executive Management Team. The Steering Group is supported by the Project Management Office.

A number of Working Groups have been created as the principal vehicle through which the key themes for the Plan will be examined and reported on. The Working Groups will comprise experts from across the university in these thematic areas. The Working Groups will also include student membership. The Leads of the Working Groups will populate the Steering Group.

SETU has committed to engaging in a deep, detailed consultation in support of its planning and expects that the Working Groups will assist in consultation with the SETU community and with external stakeholders. A comprehensive consultation programme is also in place (see Appendix 1).

The Strategic Plan will be data-informed and evidence-based. Data in support of the planning process will be made available through the Office for Strategic Planning working with the key university data owners.

Steering Group: Terms of Reference

Purpose:

The Strategic Planning Steering Group is established to assist the President in the development of the university's Strategic Plan.

Function:

The Steering Group will:

- Agree the overall approach to developing the Strategic Plan;
- Agree the project plan and monitor its implementation, reviewing reports from the project support team regularly during the course of the Plan's development;
- Consolidate and articulate the university's mission, vision and values (see Appendix 1);
- Identify future strategic objectives, based on
 - An evaluation of the outputs of the various Working Groups;
 - An evaluation of inputs arising from the consultation process;
 - The university's vision, mission and values;
 - The university's current performance and capacity, benchmarked against national and international comparators;
 - The policy context;
 - The economic, social and cultural environment, especially within the region;
- Articulate a range of strategies designed to reach these objectives and make recommendations on the strategies to be pursued;
- Agree the financial plan to ensure these strategies are adequately resourced;
- Develop performance measures that can be tracked into the future to determine the success or otherwise of the university in reaching its objectives;
- Make recommendations regarding the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Plan;
- Report to the Executive Management Team on a regular basis through the planning process.

Membership:

The Steering Group will be Chaired by the President. Executive Lead will be the VP for Strategic Planning. The Executive Leads for the Working Groups will populate the Group. The Group will also include representatives from the university's strategy consultants and will also include student representatives. The Group may, from time to time, invite other members to attend meeting and contribute as the need arises for specialist input. The group will be supported by the SETU PMO.

Frequency:

The Steering Group will meet no less than fortnightly until the publication of the Strategic Plan.

Reporting:

The Steering Group will report through the President to the EMT at each of its meetings until the publication of the Strategic Plan.

Working Group: Terms of Reference

Purpose:

The Strategic Planning Working Groups are established to develop content on key thematic areas for the university's first Strategic Plan.

Function:

The Steering Group will:

- Gather information and reflections from expert individuals (including students) within the university relevant to the Working Group theme and, where relevant, consult with external experts;
- Identify and assess key policy and other external pressures in the thematic area that will likely guide and direct development in this area in the coming years;
- Describe, in the light of its vision and mission, some high level ambitions for the university in this domain for the coming five years;
- Describe the current position in the domain, organisational capacity, and the challenges to be overcome in reaching five-year ambitions;
- Establish some key performance indicators that will help the university describe, monitor, and evaluate progress in this area;
- Determine a range of national and international benchmarks and suggest some targets for the university in the light of these;
- Describe any relevant risks to the university in the domain;
- Identify key organisational changes (eg structures, policies, resources) that will enable the achievement of university targets in this domain;
- Report at each Steering Group meeting on progress;
- Publish a Working Group report on the domain by December 2022 on the template provided below (Appendix 3).

Membership:

The Working Groups will be Chaired by Executive members. Executive Leads have been nominated from the EMT. The Group should ensure gender balance in its membership and strive towards being as diverse and inclusive as possible. Students should be included as members and all Groups should contain management, academic and PMSS staff. The Groups may, from time to time, invite other members to attend meeting and contribute as the need arises for specialist input.

Frequency:

The Working Groups should meet no less than fortnightly until the publication of the Strategic Plan.

Reporting:

The Working Groups will report through their Leads to the Strategic Planning Steering Group at each of its meetings until the publication of the Strategic Plan.

Appendix 1: Vision and Mission

The creation of Technological Universities (TUs) in Ireland from existing Institutes of Technology was first mooted in the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (January 2011) as both a consolidation and evolution of existing institutions that would preserve the diversity of educational provision in the Irish landscape while allowing for greater institutional impact and growth. The legal basis for the creation of TUs followed in the form of the Technological Universities Act 2018. The Act describes in very broad terms the key attributes and functions of the university (see Appendix 1 below). The Department of Education and Skills established the Technological University Research Network (TURN) in 2019 “to examine and report on how TUs could most effectively achieve their sectoral and national objectives and the supports that would be required for them to do this”. The report of TURN (October 2019) highlights the “rootedness in regional and local communities and economies” of Irish TUs, and points to the potential for TUs “to add substantial value to Government human capital and global innovation policies and strategies.” TURN notes that the TUs represent “a substantial enhancement to the overall capacity and potential of the Irish HE system.” As such, TUs involve a significant “step change” in institutional performance, capacity, range of activity, connectedness and impact.

In making its application for university designation, SETU set out its vision and mission, reflecting the ambitions for the organisation established in legislation and further conceptualised and developed by TURN. The vision of the organisation is that

South East Technological University will be a leading European Technological University recognised for regional connectedness and global impact with a student-centred philosophy transforming lives and achieving excellence through collaborative approaches

In support of that vision, SETU describes its mission in a series of commitments. These are to:

1. Provide a **broad range of learning opportunities at levels 6-10** of the National Framework Qualifications (NFQ) informed by regional and national needs and exhibiting distinctiveness through an interdisciplinary approach.
2. Deliver a strongly **student centred experience**, which focuses on equality of opportunity in relation to diversity and inclusion.
3. Develop and implement **smart specialisation strategies that closely align research centres of excellence with regional and national priorities** and the goals of international research and innovation programmes.
4. Create and optimise a **multi-campus learning environment**, with a presence in the major regional population centres, delivering a quality student experience aligned to guiding values and principles.
5. **Educate and prepare graduates** to the highest level who are work-ready, lifelong learners with an international outlook and the skillset necessary to navigate the global workplace.
6. Prioritise the **co-creation** of knowledge; recognising the strength of partnership working and putting in place mechanisms to support stakeholder engagement.
7. Optimise the use of **technology** in redefining the student experience, increasing accessibility and generating and disseminating knowledge to provide regional, national and international impact.
8. Commit to **driving regional growth** and prosperity through creating an organisation of international reputation that provides recognised expertise and learning to meet the needs of society and industry at regional and national level.
9. Embed opportunities for international academic/research experiences for students and staff to develop **global citizenship** and highlight SETU as a destination of choice for international staff/students.
10. Cultivate the personal and professional goals and aspirations of our students and staff through the provision of a **working environment that supports creativity and collaboration** and provides opportunities for professional development.

Together these vision and mission statements describe the “step change” from the Institutes of Technology to the new university that aligns closely with the expectations of the SETU community as well as many regional, national and international stakeholders.

The vision and mission will inform the development of the university’s strategic plan. The starting point for the body of questions and considerations below is the “step change” described in our vision and mission and required by government and the region’s communities.

The Vision and Mission take account also of the functions of a Technological University described in the Technological Universities Act, 2018. The following is an extract from the Act.

9. (1) The functions of a technological university, having particular regard to the needs of the region in which the campuses of the technological university are located, shall be to—
- (a) provide teaching and facilitate learning that—
 - (i) is informed by research, and
 - (ii) promotes excellence at all levels of higher education within the Framework,
 - (b) provide programmes of education and training that reflect the needs of individuals, business, enterprise, the professions, the community, local interests and other stakeholders in the region in which the campuses of the technological university are located and facilitate learning by flexible means,
 - (c) provide for the broad education, intellectual and personal development of students, for the purpose of enabling them, as graduates, to excel in their chosen careers and to contribute responsibly to social, civic and economic life in innovative and adaptable ways,
 - (d) provide opportunities for staff and students—
 - (i) of the technological university to teach, learn or conduct research at institutions that provide higher education outside the State, or to obtain relevant work experience outside the State, and
 - (ii) of institutions that provide higher education outside the State to teach, learn or conduct research at the technological university,
 - (e) collaborate with institutions that provide higher education inside and outside the State, including on joint research projects and provision of programmes of education and training,
 - (f) support a body of research that includes research relevant at regional, national and international levels and pursue excellence in the conduct of that research,
 - (g) support entrepreneurship, enterprise development and innovation in business, enterprise and the professions through teaching and the conduct of research and through effective transfer to those and other sectors of knowledge arising from that research,
 - (h) collaborate with business, enterprise, the professions, the community, local interests and related stakeholders in the region in which the campuses of the technological university are located—
 - (i) to promote the involvement of those stakeholders in the design and delivery of programmes of education and training, and
 - (ii) to ensure that, in so far as possible, innovation activity and research undertaken by the technological university reflects the needs of those stakeholders,
 - (i) support the development of a skilled labour force including, where appropriate, engaging in the education and training of apprentices in accordance with policy relating to that education and training for the time being communicated to the technological university by An tÚdarás, the Government or any Minister of the Government,
 - (j) support the mobility of staff and students of the technological university into and out of the labour force through collaboration with business, enterprise, the professions and related stakeholders in the region in which the campuses of the technological university are located,
 - (k) serve the community and public interest by—
 - (i) developing and promoting strong social and cultural links, and links supporting creativity, between the technological university and the community in the region in which the campuses of the technological university are located,
 - (ii) supporting (without prejudice to the generality of *subsection (4)*) the delivery of policies or objectives of the Government or any Minister of the Government, for the time being communicated to the technological university by An tÚdarás, the Government or any Minister of the Government, in relation to development of business and enterprise at a local, regional or national level,
 - (iii) fostering close and effective relationships with—
 - (I) a statutory body whose functions relate to regional development in the region in which the campuses of the technological university are located,
 - (II) a local authority or local authorities in whose local authority area or areas the campuses of the technological university are located,
 - (III) the education and training board or boards in whose education and training board area or areas the campuses of the technological university are located,
 - (IV) a provider of further education and training in the region in which the campuses of the technological university are located, and
 - (V) organisations representing the social, creative and cultural interests of the community in the region in which the campuses of the technological university are located,
 - (iv) in so far as possible in the performance of its functions—
 - (I) contributing to the promotion of the economic, cultural, social, scientific and technological development of the State,

- (II) respecting the diversity of values, beliefs and traditions in Irish society,
 - (III) promoting critical and free enquiry, informed intellectual discourse and public debate within the technological university and in wider society, and
 - (IV) promoting an entrepreneurial ethos,
- (l) promote access to the technological university and the education it provides, by economically or socially disadvantaged persons, by persons who have a disability and by persons from sections of society in the region in which the campuses of the technological university are located who are significantly under-represented in its student body,
- (m) undertake assessment of students, and award degrees and other qualifications,
- (n) make best use of its expertise and resources, whether or not on a commercial basis, for the purposes of its functions under this Act,
- (o) provide directly, or in collaboration with other providers of programmes of education and training, facilities for all levels of higher education within the Framework, including technological and professional education, and for research,
- (p) collaborate with persons or bodies inside and outside the State for the purpose of its functions under this Act, and
- (q) promote the attainment of gender balance and equality of opportunity among the students and staff of the technological university.

Appendix 2: List of Working Groups with Executive Chairs

The following are the Working Groups along with the nominated Executive lead:

- WG1: People (Chair: Elaine Sheridan)
- WG2: Teaching and Learning (Chair: Dr Derek O'Byrne)
- WG3: Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (Chair: Dr Mark White)
- WG4: Student Experience (Chair: David Denieffe)
- WG5: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Chair: Dr Allison Kenneally)
- WG6: Internationalisation (Chair: Dr Patricia Mulcahy)
- WG7: Engagement (Chair: Kathryn Kiely)
- WG8: Sustainability (Chair: Dr Frances Hardiman)
- WG9: Enablers (Chair: Cormac O'Toole)

Appendix 3: Indicative Content for Working Group Report

The report developed by the Working Group should address the following key question:

In the light of the vision and mission of the University, where do you see SETU in five years' time, specifically with reference to the domain of the working group?

The following must be addressed in the Working Group report:

- A. Specific to the domain of the working group, what are the relevant international, national and regional policy developments that will likely guide and direct the development of the university in the coming years?
- B. Are there other pressures—such as industry trends, demographic changes, for instance—that are likely to impact on developments in the domain in the coming period? What actions would the university need to take to mitigate against these changes or to realise the opportunities they create?
- C. Describe the “step change” between the existing position with regard to this domain and the position by the end of Strategic Plan. What would the optimum position look like and to what extent is that optimum realisable in five years? Can this optimum be expressed both quantitatively and qualitatively?
- D. How will you describe success? What will be the key indicators of progress in the domain in the coming period? How can SETU’s performance be benchmarked nationally and internationally?
- E. Describe current organizational capacity with respect to facilitating progress towards this kind of success. Describe the capacity needed to realise the optimum position described above.
- F. What are the necessary changes in the organisation—if any—to facilitate this success and to support the progress you see as possible? These changes might include policy changes, organisational structural changes, resourcing, training and skills. In each case be as specific as possible.

Key questions that SETU wishes to address through this Strategic Plan are set out in a Strategic Plan Issues Paper published separately. Amongst the key questions to be addressed by Working Groups are the following, offered here as indicative of the kinds of topics that are expected to be investigated. The list is not exhaustive.

<p>WG1: People</p>	<p>Statement of SETU’s ambition for its staff What is required for SETU to be an exemplar employer? The SETU culture (aligned to our values) Staff training & development (see also WG 3) The Future of Work in SETU context Recruitment, induction & retention of talent Priorities for next 5 years (org structures; policies; IT systems) and timelines</p>
<p>WG2: Teaching and Learning</p>	<p>Statement of SETU graduate attributes How do we embed digital, sustainability, EDI into the curricula? The SETU programme portfolio (approach to this over duration of this Plan) Future skills needs Co-creation (see also WG 7) Implementing the Programme Charter Potential new areas for focus across UG and PGT (will need this group to engage with all schools/faculties) Development of our Apprenticeships Progression and links to FE Technology-enhanced learning Supporting student learning Embedding entrepreneurship</p>

WG3: Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship	<p>Priority research themes, linking to SETU expertise and regional opportunities</p> <p>SETU in a European research context</p> <p>Supporting our research community (research skills, time for research, funding)</p> <p>Developing an entrepreneurial culture</p>
WG4: Student Experience	<p>How does SETU support an excellent student experience?</p> <p>Aspiration re student accommodation (see also WG 9)</p>
WG5: EDI	<p>Statement of SETU's commitment to EDI</p> <p>How to we embed EDI within SETU at all levels?</p> <p>Raising visibility of EDI; learning from international best practise</p> <p>Opportunities for SETU?</p> <p>What are the training requirements?</p> <p>Priorities for next 5 years</p>
WG6: Internationalization	<p>Statement of our commitment to global relations</p> <p>International partners (where will we focus; what do we bring; benefits to SETU and region)</p> <p>Staff and student mobility – how do we support this?</p> <p>Growth in international students to inform KPIs</p> <p>Enablers to support internationalization</p> <p>What do we aim to achieve over next 5 years?</p>
WG7: Engagement	<p>Statement of our commitment to Engagement across sectors</p> <p>Staff and student mobility in context of engagement (placements, research)</p> <p>How do we deepen relationships to become transformational instead of solely transactional?</p> <p>Enablers to support Engagement</p>
WG8: Sustainability	<p>Statement of SETU's commitment to sustainability</p> <p>Sustainability in context of infrastructure, green procurement and operations (green labs) - KPIs</p> <p>Embedding sustainability across the curricula and new opportunities</p> <p>SETU research on sustainability (audit and opportunities?)</p> <p>Governance structures for sustainability</p>
WG9: Enablers	<p>What new infrastructure is required, including student accommodation (capital programme)?</p> <p>IT system investment (priorities for next 5 years)</p> <p>This group will work on the financial underpinning to support the Plan</p>