Chapter 6

Organisational Development of the Institute under the DIT Act 1992

The Dublin Institute of Technology Act 1992 established a statutory basis for the Institute to function as an autonomous higher education institution. The DIT Act was to have wide-ranging effects on the structure, operation and identity of the Institute, and these continue to unfold. This chapter examines and documents these unfolding effects.

Establishment of the Institute on a Statutory Basis

The Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) was duly established on a formal basis with effect from 1 January 1993, constituted from the six third-level colleges in central Dublin which had been operating under the aegis of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC). Mr Michael O'Donnell, who had filled the post of director of the Institute for over a decade since 1982 in an ad hoc, part-time capacity in addition to being principal of the College of Technology Bolton Street, was appointed as acting president of the Institute. The principals of the other five colleges were appointed first directors of the Institute in accordance with the provisions of the DIT Act. The Institute entered into arrangements with its former parent body, the CDVEC, to have it continue to provide administrative services relating to personnel, payroll and payment of creditors on an interim basis.

The key co-ordinating committee within the Institute, the Executive Council, had been functioning since the Institute was informally established in 1978. It had consisted of the principals of the six constituent colleges, with the chairperson selected from among them acting also as the informal director. With the implementation of the DIT Act in 1993 the

Executive Council became the Directorate, comprising the president and directors and chaired by the president, it took on an enhanced role.

**Institute of Public Administration Consultation on Structures 1992–1993**

In late 1992, before the Institute was formally established, the Department of Education engaged the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) as consultants to review the operations of the Institute. The IPA was asked to “make recommendations as to its reorganisation and rationalisation on the basis of consistent faculties or schools, and the appropriate campus placement of such faculties or schools.” The Department of Education also asked the IPA to recommend “the appropriate senior management structure for the Institute below the level of president”. It was asked to recommend other structures, including “reporting arrangements and related staffing of central services for the Institute answerable to senior management, to include financial and accounting services, admissions, personnel management, information technology (including central library services), facilities management, external services (including industrial liaison), student counselling, careers and appointments, medical and other student welfare services”. Finally the IPA was also asked to recommend the numbers of administrative staff and their grades which should transfer from the CDVEC, recognising that some of them were already engaged in providing services to the colleges and their staffs in relation to accounting, personnel and other areas which would in future be the responsibility of the Institute itself.

The IPA consultants engaged in wide discussions with the staff of the colleges, particularly those at senior levels, as well as with the Chief Executive Officer of the CDVEC and some of its other senior officers. They also held discussions with senior representatives of three Irish universities, University College Cork, Dublin City University and the University of Limerick and two UK universities, Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of North London.

The IPA consultants produced two reports. The first of these related specifically to the transition from the aegis of the CDVEC to the new independent situation and in particular the transfer of administrative staff from CDVEC to the Institute. It recommended that sixteen such staff, mainly in junior administrative grades, should be transferred to the DIT.

The second report, published in April 1993, was more extensive and addressed the main terms of reference given to the consultants. It pre-
sent a detailed set of recommendations relating to proposed administrative structures for the new autonomous Institute.

**Administrative structures recommended for the Institute**

The core recommendation in the second report was that the DIT should be reorganised on the basis of six broad discipline-based faculties, each of which would be headed by a director. There would be four other senior Institute posts at director level which would encompass an Institute secretary, a finance director, a director of academic affairs and a director of external affairs. This would entail a fundamental change from the previous interdisciplinary college structure to a new faculty structure, but it had been heralded in the Governing Body review of the DIT in 1983 and widely discussed across the Institute in the intervening years. The consultants analysed many of the issues facing the Institute in making this change and achieving a cohesive and integrated structure. They endeavoured to formulate recommendations which were likely to find wide acceptance, by retaining the better features and practices of the previous situation. At the same time they sought to provide the Institute with an appropriate administrative structure to serve the needs of a large, comprehensive and modern university level institution. In the report they drew attention to some of the difficulties that might be encountered in implementing the new structure and some of the problems of change that would face the existing staff.

**Initial response of Governing Body to the report**

The Governing Body broadly accepted the report but recognised that one of its first tasks was to provide the Institute with an appropriate management and operational structure that would have the broad support of staff. It was realised that the key person in the detailed formulation and implementation of the new structure would be the president and chief officer of the Institute. Therefore the Governing Body postponed detailed decisions on the IPA report and its recommendations until this appointment was made.

DEVELOPING THE CENTRAL OFFICES

Over the first six months the DIT held interviews for the appointment of the president, the post having been advertised in October 1992. The Institute’s first budget and operational programme were prepared and submitted in accordance with the provisions of the DIT Act. Discussions in relation to staff structures and the transfer of some administrative staff from the CDVEC head office, following negotiations in that regard between CDVEC and the Department of Education, also took place. Arrangements were made during this period to rent Fitzwilliam House, 30 Upper Pembroke Street, as a central office building for the new Institute. It was projected that there would be a central office staff of about sixty people, including the office of the president and other key administrative and service offices.

The Governing Body, at its June 1993 meeting, appointed Dr Brendan Goldsmith, who had been vice-principal of the College of Technology, Kevin Street, as president of the Institute. He took up duty in the post from 1 September 1993 on a ten-year contract.

GOVERNING BODY’S CONSULTATIVE GROUP TO REVIEW THE APPLICATION OF THE IPA REPORT PROPOSALS

In accordance with the DIT Act, the Governing Body, in association with the president, had responsibility for determining and implementing the most appropriate administrative structure for the Institute, subject to guidelines and regulations issued by the Minister for Education. After extensive discussions on the IPA report, the Governing Body established a consultative group, which included the president and was chaired by a member of the Governing Body.

This consultative group was required to carry out an extensive consultation process with staff at various levels in relation to the proposals in the IPA report. The aim was to draw out the implications of the proposals, remove ambiguities and enhance the understanding and general acceptability of the changes proposed. On behalf of the consultative group, the Institute secretary and another senior officer attended meetings with the staff of each school and department and also met with other interest groups, including trade union representatives. In addition the IPA consultants were engaged by the Institute to interact with a wide cross-section of Institute staff through a series of workshops to obtain feedback on their reactions to and concerns about the recommendations of the report. This consulta-
tion process extended over a period of several months. During that time seventy written submissions were received from staff members.

**Approval of the report of the consultative group**

The consultative group finally presented its report on the consultation process to the Governing Body in late 1994. This report, in broad terms, endorsed the recommendations in the original IPA report, while modifying or clarifying some of the recommendations and dealing more closely with the actual situation in some schools. At a special meeting in October 1994, the Governing Body accepted and endorsed the consultative group’s report, with some further modifications.

A copy of the report as approved was forwarded to the Minister for Education for information. It was recognised that its implementation had significant additional funding implications, estimated to be in excess of £1 million per annum.

The report was prepared in the absence of an institutional mission statement or, more significantly, a strategic plan. There was no provision in the report for rotation of senior posts in the Institute, and while this may have been dictated by the provisions of the DIT Act and by contractual obligations to structured members of staff, the issue had historically been a source of contention among lecturing staff. Some sections of staff were uneasy with aspects of the structures proposed in the report because they felt that their views, expressed in the consultation process, were not taken into account. The titles chosen for some of the faculties and their constituent schools caused concern, particularly among staff members directly affected by changes proposed.

**Faculty Structure for the Institute**

**Basic structure proposed**

In accordance with this report, approved by the Governing Body, the Institute would be reorganised into six broad subject or discipline based faculties. The proposed titles of the faculties underwent some modification to become as follows, with the schools to be allocated to each faculty given after the titles of the faculties:

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3. *Faculty Structures in Dublin Institute of Technology* (Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology), 1994.
• applied arts — art and design, media and communications, modern languages, music and drama, social and legal studies
• built environment — architecture, construction studies, environmental technology, property studies
• business — accountancy, distribution, management, marketing
• engineering — civil and building services, control and electrical, electronic and communications, mechanical
• science — biological sciences, chemistry, mathematics and informatics, physics
• tourism and food — food operations, food science and technology, tourism services.

Each school might have a number of component departments. The apprenticeship or trade area associated with each faculty or discipline (if any) would be integrated with or placed under the aegis of the appropriate school.

The faculty director appointed for each faculty would represent the views of that faculty at the Directorate. She/he would also be responsible for managing and co-ordinating the implementation of the policies of the Institute on budgetary, academic quality assurance and other matters at faculty level, as well as managing the business of the faculty. The senior management of each faculty would consist of the faculty director, the heads of school in the faculty, the heads of departments within the schools, other structured post-holders and the faculty administrator. Within each faculty there would be two organisational arms, a faculty executive and a faculty board.

The faculty executive, consisting of the director, the heads of school and the faculty administrator, would be the management team for the faculty and have particular responsibility for the budget and resources of the faculty.

The faculty board, consisting of the director, the heads of school, the chairpersons of all its course committees, at least two students and up to two co-opted members, would have general responsibility for the implementation of academic quality assurance procedures and other academic policies within the faculty.

Each faculty would be supported by an administrative structure headed by a faculty administrator who would have responsibilities relating to faculty accounts, registration, records and examinations. Each school would have its own secretarial support.

The Directorate of the Institute would comprise the president, the six
faculty directors and the other four central directors with institutional functions (secretary, academic affairs, finance and external affairs).

The president’s functions, set out in the third schedule of the DIT Act, were “subject to the provisions of the Act, (to) control and direct the staff of the Institute in the implementation of such activities and be responsible to the Governing Body therefor and for the efficient and proper management of the Institute . . . be a member of the Governing Body . . . be a member of the Academic Council . . .”

It would be the responsibility of the director of finance to supply and develop advanced financial management systems. Financial planning, budgetary policy, systems development and financial control would all fall within the remit.

The secretary would be responsible for the Governing Body secretariat, the operation of the Institute’s personnel policies, its buildings and maintenance services and for support to the teaching services of the Institute.

The director of academic affairs would have institutional responsibility for academic affairs, working with senior academic staff in promoting the academic quality, relevance and development of the full range of the Institute’s courses and programmes. This director would be responsible for assembling and evaluating information relating to curricular developments, for putting appropriate academic and administrative systems in place and for monitoring their operation.

The director of external affairs would have responsibility for the development of the Institute’s links with industry and the community, for the promotion and exploitation of applied research and consultancy and for other associated services, including fund-raising. The remit would embrace the more commercially and industrially oriented activities of the Institute and its enterprises.

**Appointment of the Directors**

In September 1993, the Governing Body decided that one of the first directors, Robert Lawlor, who had been principal of the College of Catering in Cathal Brugha Street, would take up the post of Institute Secretary. He and his colleagues Frank Brennan, James Hickey and Frank Heneghan, who had been principals of the College of Technology, Kevin Street, the College of Commerce, Rathmines, and the College of Music, Adelaide Road/Chatham Row respectively, became first directors of the Institute with the implementation of the DIT Act. At that time the post of director
of finance of the Institute was advertised and in due course filled by Margaret Davin in 1994. Some ad hoc arrangements were made, with the approval of the Governing Body and the Department of Education, to fill vacant director posts through acting appointments.

In 1995 approval was received from the Department of Education to fill the other posts at director level, including the faculty directors and the directors of academic affairs and external affairs. These posts were filled during 1996. Frank Brennan was appointed as director of the faculty of engineering and after the other permanent director appointments had been made, the following were the directors at the start of academic year 1996/1997:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applied arts</th>
<th>Dr Ellen Hazelkorn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Built environment</td>
<td>Mr John Ratcliffe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Mr Paul O'Sullivan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Mr Frank Brennan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Dr Matthew Hussey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism and food</td>
<td>Mr Michael Mulvey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Mr Robert Lawlor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Mr Ray Wills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External affairs</td>
<td>Dr Declan Glynn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic affairs</td>
<td>Dr David Gillingham</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

In accordance with the DIT Act, the Institute has a statutory Academic Council appointed by the Governing Body. The Academic Council assists the Governing Body in the planning, co-ordinating, developing and overseeing of the educational work of the Institute and in protecting, maintaining and developing the academic standards of the courses and other activities of the Institute.

**Membership**

The Governing Body decided that the DIT Academic Council would have the following membership (fifty-four in total) and composition: four ex officio members (president, directors of academic affairs and external affairs, chief librarian), thirty-four faculty representatives, thirteen elected staff representatives and three student representatives.

The Academic Council would be required to meet three or four times
per annum. Its meetings would be chaired by the president, the director of academic affairs, or the president’s nominee.

However, pending the implementation of the complete faculty structures, it was agreed to retain the existing pre-1992 Academic Council structure. At the time of writing in March 2000, this remains the situation.

INTERIM ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTITUTE

The colleges had developed different internal committee structures, as previously outlined, and some of these were continued in the new DIT. However following the adoption of the first edition of the quality assurance handbook by the Academic Council in March 1995 and pending the implementation of the complete faculty structures, each college site established a college Academic Board to perform the academic and quality assurance functions envisaged for a Faculty Board, in relation to the courses in the college. Each college also had a college Executive Board consisting of the director, senior academic staff (mostly at senior lecturer II level) and a secretary/registrar (re-titled as faculty administrator in 1997) to advise the director and assist in the general management of the college.

DEVELOPMENT OF A MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE INSTITUTE

The general functions of the Institute are specified in the DIT Act. However, the Governing Body discussed and reviewed its general mission, aims and goals and in 1994 adopted the following as the Institute’s brief statement of mission, derived from the Act:

The Dublin Institute of Technology is a comprehensive higher educational institution, fulfilling a national and international role in providing full-time and part-time educational programmes across the whole spectrum of higher education. It aims to achieve this in an innovative, responsive, caring and flexible learning environment. It is committed to providing access to students of all ages and backgrounds, and to achieving quality and excellence in all aspects of its work. This commitment extends to the provision of research, product development and consultancy services for industry and society,

while continuing to have regard to the technological, commercial, social and cultural needs of the community it serves.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT LEADING TO THE AUTHORITY TO CONFER DEGREES**

The Dublin Institute of Technology Act 1992 made provision for a ministerial order from the Minister for Education for the DIT to be given the power to make degree awards. Indeed, in 1992 when the legislation was being moved through the Oireachtas, the Minister for Education anticipated that this power might well be given to the Institute within twelve months, when progress in integrating the six colleges into the Institute and in developing academic quality assurance procedures had been achieved. In 1995, in order to assist the then Minister, Niamh Bhreathnach TD, to reach a determination on granting this power to the Institute, she requested the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to carry out an institutional and systems review or audit of the quality assurance procedures in place in the Institute and the effectiveness of their operation.

This quality audit, preceded by a thorough institutional self-evaluation, was carried out during academic year 1995/1996 and is described in some detail in Chapter 11. The outcome of the process was the ministerial order of May 1997 granting degree awarding power to the highest postgraduate level to the DIT. This was the highest level of academic recognition and accreditation achieved by the autonomous DIT and was a major boost to the morale of staff throughout the Institute.


An important aspect of the definition of a university is the power to award degrees at primary and postgraduate levels. A dictionary definition of a university is “an institution of higher education that provides facilities for full-time teaching and research and is authorised to grant academic degrees”\(^5\). However, the Universities Act 1997 declared that an educational institution in Ireland, other than one designated under the Act, in future might not use the title “university” without the approval of the Minister for Education. Section 9 of the same Act provided that a new university

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could be established by order of the Government, after the advice of a body of experts and the HEA has been considered.

The Governing Body of the DIT, with the agreement of the Academic Council, determined in 1996 to seek designation as a university under the Universities Bill, then being processed through the Oireachtas. This course of action followed logically from the developments in the Institute over the previous thirty years. The developments under the partnership with the University of Dublin, the terms of the DIT Act, the consolidation of six colleges into a unified Institute and the institutional quality assurance audit leading to degree-awarding powers were all clear indicators of achievement and success along the way. Furthermore, the review team’s report recommended that “the relevant authorities should consider whether key features of the (university) legislation should be extended to the DIT and its legislation . . . amended in the light” of this. In particular, the review team noted that “the current conditions attached to funding and operation of the Institute impose significant constraints on the freedom of the Institute to manage its day to day operations. In terms of promoting quality improvement, for example, these constraints are particularly obvious in relation to the deployment and development of staff.”6 The terms of the Universities Act would provide the autonomy required by the Institute to overcome these constraints.

The definition of a university does not preclude there being a range of programmes leading to non-degree awards in a university. Such programmes are widespread in universities in Ireland and internationally. In seeking designation as a university, the Governing Body was committed to maintaining the multi-level character of the Institute – catering for apprenticeship programmes, certificate and diploma courses, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes and providing opportunities for students to transfer by clear academic ladders between these different levels.

Appointment and work of the review group

The Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreathnach TD, agreed in May 1997 to the appointment of a review group by the HEA, to investigate and advise on whether the DIT should be designated as a university.

The review group was appointed by Micheál Martin TD, the new Minister for Education and Science, in July 1997, in accordance with Section 6.

9 of the Universities Act. The membership of the group is given below. While the review group was being formed, acting on the invitation of the HEA, the Institute submitted a document providing an introductory outline of the Institute and its recent development.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chairperson</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dermot Nally, former Secretary to the Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Members</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Máire Mulcahy, University College Cork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Eda Sagarra, University of Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Malcolm Skilbeck, formerly Deputy Director, OECD (previously Vice-Chancellor, Deakin University, Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr J. K. M. Gevers, President, University of Amsterdam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Finan, Managing Director, Wilson Hartnell Public Relations Ltd (immediate past President, Dublin Chamber of Commerce)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Sweeney, Chairperson, Siemens (Ireland) Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secretary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Kerr, HEA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Terms of reference**

The terms of reference given to the group required it, in consultation with the Institute:

- to establish a schedule for the review process, to include the timing for submission of material by the Institute and the timing and anticipated duration of visits to the Institute
- to establish such criteria as it considered appropriate as the basis for its review and assessment, to be notified to the Institute for any comments the Institute might wish to offer
- to establish such material and information as the group might require the Institute to furnish to facilitate its review and assessment
- while otherwise determining its own working procedures, to ensure that its advice should be of the form of a report which should, *inter alia*, detail the extent to which the Institute, as constituted and functioning, discharged the various objects and functions of a university in accordance with sections 12 and 13 of the Universities Act.
Deliberations of the group

In preparation for the first meeting of the review group in September 1997, the chairperson invited the Institute to submit a second document outlining the ways in which the Institute already functioned as a university and the main reasons why it sought to be designated as a university under the Act.

Subsequently the group notified the Institute of the criteria it intended to use in the assessment. It also requested that the main documentation (third submission) from the Institute, setting out how it already fulfilled these criteria or would fulfil them over time, be submitted in October 1997.

The review group would then visit the Institute in November 1997 before drafting its report.

The review group established the following criteria for the review and assessment of the Institute’s application, within the overall context of the objects and functions of a university in sections 12 and 13 of the Universities Act:

• commitment to the advancement of knowledge through teaching, scholarship and research and an appropriate balance between each of the three activities
• provision of high quality programmes up to doctoral level, which are recognised both nationally and internationally and by the relevant professional bodies, as appropriate
• provision of an academic staff which has appropriate high level qualifications and professional standing in the community and among their peers
• provision of resources, both physical and financial, at a sufficiently high level to sustain the Institute’s teaching and research activities on a continuing basis (in particular, the laboratory, library, information technology and lecturing facilities should be comparable to those in universities generally)
• a track record of producing graduates with high employability
• a demonstrated capacity to interact and collaborate with the various external communities and to thereby support and contribute to national economic and social development
• a mission statement and an ongoing strategic planning process to further advance the Institute’s aims and objectives, including development plans that might enable it to meet all the criteria fully within a reasonable time.
The review group requested of the Institute that, in responding to each of the criteria set out, it incorporate the following specific information, with executive summaries provided where appropriate:

- a progress report on the implementation of the specific findings and recommendations of the 1996 report of the audit of quality assurance procedures in the Institute
- student numbers by faculty and course at each level, including validations by professional bodies
- graduate employment statistics by course
- numbers of academic and technical staff by grade and faculty
- academic qualifications, experience and scholarly and research interests of each academic staff member involved in third level work, by faculty, with details
- details of academic staff teaching hours per annum per student, length of academic year and the impact on the development of research
- staff training and development priorities and plans
- proposals for postgraduate programmes and research
- the multi-level nature of the DIT, its internal management and administration and plans for the non-third-level section of its activities
- liaison with business and industry and other external bodies
- physical facilities, existing provision and proposals for the future
- steps to reflect a university ethos, draft Charter and other measures.

**Documentation submitted by the Institute**

**First submission to the review group**

The first document submitted introduced in a preliminary way the core issue for the members of the review group. It presented the Institute’s mission statement and a broad historical perspective of the Institute, including the partnership with the University of Dublin and the provisions of the DIT Act. It provided details on numbers of registered students and graduates at the different levels for the previous three academic years. It outlined the popularity of Institute courses on the Central Applications Office (CAO) system and the development of postgraduate research in the Institute, particularly since its formal establishment in 1993. It described the improving cohesion in the structures and practices across the Institute. It also summarised the institutional audit of quality assurance procedures carried out in the previous academic year, which led to the achievement of
degree-awarding power. The document concluded by describing the con­straints which the DIT Act placed on the Institute’s flexibility in manag­ing its day-to-day operations and the advantages of the greater autonomy which designation under the Universities Act would confer in this regard.

**Second submission**

At the request of the chairperson of the review group, the Institute submit­ted a second document in August 1997, detailing its case for designation as a university. In this document the main strands of the academic develop­ment of the Institute were repeated, the case was made that the Institute already functioned as a university, albeit as a multi-level one, and the general reasons for seeking designation as a university were set out. A further range of quantitative data about the Institute was also supplied in this submission.

In the general context of the Irish higher education system, the DIT had functioned effectively as a significant university level institution for up to twenty-five years. Under the partnership agreement with the Uni­versity of Dublin, primary degree awards of the university became avail­able to DIT graduates in nearly thirty diverse specialisms, leading to the award of 976 primary degrees in 1996.

The entry level of students on the Institute’s degree courses compares favourably with a number of Irish universities and is significantly above that of the Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs), which are now regional Institutes of Technology (ITs). The range of minimum or cut-off points in the CAO system for entry into degree programmes for academic year 1996–1997, given in Table 6.1 for courses in the DIT and the other Irish institu­tions, indicates this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cut-off Points Range</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>330 - 340</td>
<td>RTCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370 - 380</td>
<td>Maynooth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 - 410</td>
<td>UL, DIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>410 - 420</td>
<td>UCG, DCU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420 - 430</td>
<td>UCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430 +</td>
<td>TCD, UCD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a substantial and growing involvement by all faculties of the Institute in programmes leading to primary degrees of the University of
Dublin. Table 8.2 gives the historical numbers of such graduates from the Institute, under the partnership agreement, each year since 1975.

Table 6.2 compares the Institute’s output of primary degree graduates with those of the Irish universities for the six years 1993 to 1998.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>UCD</th>
<th>UCC</th>
<th>UCG</th>
<th>Maynooth</th>
<th>TCD*</th>
<th>DCU</th>
<th>UL</th>
<th>DIT</th>
<th>NCEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>1,566</td>
<td>1,251</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>1,560</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>729</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2,876</td>
<td>1,590</td>
<td>1,152</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>1,913</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>1,009</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>1,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>2,798</td>
<td>1,796</td>
<td>1,302</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>1,798</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>991</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>1,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3,121</td>
<td>2,095</td>
<td>1,268</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>2,014</td>
<td>1,448</td>
<td>1,264</td>
<td>933</td>
<td>2,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2,724</td>
<td>2,162</td>
<td>1,248</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>2,063</td>
<td>1,628</td>
<td>1,352</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>2,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>3,343</td>
<td>2,075</td>
<td>1,378</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>2,195</td>
<td>1,754</td>
<td>1,666</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>3,140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*Not including DIT graduates)

Since 1994 there had been substantial development of taught postgraduate (postgraduate diploma and master’s degree) programmes following the inclusion of the Institute within the nationally funded Advanced Technical Skills scheme. Until 1994 this scheme had applied to the universities only. The number of programmes sanctioned for the DIT within this scheme rose from one in 1994 to thirteen in 1997–98. The number of students graduating with taught postgraduate diplomas increased from forty in 1994–95 to 106 in 1995–96.

At the undergraduate level the Institute has a wide range of non-degree provision at certificate and diploma levels. Tables 8.3 and 8.4 list these programmes for all the faculty areas and as shown in Table 8.5, they produce over 2,000 graduates each year.

Demand for places on the Institute’s degree courses is high with 6.6 per cent of all degree applicants making a DIT degree course their first choice in 1996 and 12.6 per cent doing so in 1999. Demand for non-degree courses in the Institute is very high with 39 per cent of the total first preferences within the CAO system being made to the DIT in 1996 and 25.6 per cent doing so in 1999.

The Institute’s vision is that it will develop as a multi-level institution incorporating the best features of its educational past and enhancing the
Organisational Development of Institute

diversity now recognised as being vital in higher education. It will thus cater for all levels in higher education from apprentice to doctoral level. Given the technological emphasis of the Institute, it is important and appropriate that the ways in which the different levels are complementary to each other should be exploited. The changes occurring within apprenticeship in the recent past and the changes in many crafts due to developments in information and related technologies mean that the demarcation between craft-based technological and higher level activity will possibly converge in the years ahead. The Institute’s policy of integrating craft activity into departments within its schools is likely to play a positive role in this regard.

The range of qualifications held by the staff of the Institute reflects its multi-level nature. In 1998 it had 687 academic staff working in its third level sector. Of these, ninety-five had doctorates, 227 master’s degrees, 161 honours primary degrees and 204 other qualifications (mostly membership of professional bodies, which are all broadly equivalent to an honours primary degree). Some areas in the Institute, such as the faculty of science, have academic profiles more comparable with that of a traditional university. In other areas some 15 per cent of the staff have trade qualifications appropriate for teaching craft and apprentice courses.

The Institute has a strong commitment to the provision of opportunities for continuing staff development via funding for conferences and support for pursuing higher degrees through research and courses. It has devoted substantial and increasing funding to this activity in recent years — £0.5 million in 1995, £0.7 million in 1996 and £0.8 million in 1997.

The DIT has a strong and well-founded orientation to postgraduate research, as outlined in Chapter 9.

A multi-level higher education institution needs a suitable physical, social and intellectual environment in which students feel that they are at the centre of the community. It is widely acknowledged that the DIT provides high quality services that support students in their development in a caring environment, encouraging them to freely interact with staff. Students are involved in the decision-making processes at all levels in the Institute. The major weakness in the facilities of the DIT is undoubtedly its limited physical accommodation, situated on just over four hectares in total. Chapter 10 reviews this aspect of the Institute’s profile and shows that in this respect the Institute is greatly under-resourced. However the hope is that the implementation of the Physical Development Plan, outlined in that chapter, will lead to very substantial developments in the coming years.

The courses and other programmes of the Institute have an applied
emphasis, featuring extensive laboratory, studio and workshop activities and integrative project work, as well as study of the theoretical foundations. This educational philosophy has developed over many years of concerted quality improvement processes. The Institute is committed to developing this ethos.

A number of broad reasons were put forward as to why the Institute should be formally designated as a university.

In its academic work the Institute has to compete on many fronts with the universities and must provide courses, teaching, research and external collaborations of a quality and status comparable to those of the universities. It should not be constrained in its operating conditions in comparison to those given to the universities for comparable work, to enable it to attract good students and highly qualified staff in the years ahead. Designation as a university would enable DIT to engage on equal terms with universities to make more favourable contact with philanthropists and industrialists with a view to fundraising. This would in turn confirm the autonomy of the Institute and allow it to provide better services to students, graduates, staff and society in general.

Many of the reasons relating to institutional autonomy were articulated during the Oireachtas debates on the Universities Act. Mícheál Martin TD, Minister for Education and Science from 1997 to 2000, was opposition spokesperson on education when he said in Dáil Éireann on 12 March 1997,

... The existing DIT Act has outlived its usefulness — it is far too restrictive on the DIT’s capacity to grow and develop. It only allows for the appointment of staff subject to the approval of the Minister for Education with the concurrence of the Minister for Finance; the selection procedures for staff are determined by the Minister and the DIT; the appointment of research fellows, research assistants, etc. is subject to regulations laid down by the Minister for Education, again with the concurrence of the Minister for Finance; it can only charge fees for lectures, examinations and exhibitions subject to such conditions as may be specified by the Minister; it may only acquire land subject to the approval of the Minister; and so on. These provisions are not applicable to the universities. ...

The Universities Act empowers a designated institution to manage its own affairs. It provides it with a suitable framework that allows for appropriate external representation on the governing body and a suitable level of institutional democracy and at the same time satisfying the State that there
would be a proper balance between institutional autonomy and the needs of public policy and accountability.

**Third submission**

The main documentation (third submission) was submitted in late October 1997, after the review group had specified the criteria it intended to use in evaluating the Institute relative to Sections 12 and 13 of the Universities Act, and some additional quantitative data it required. The structure of this document followed closely the criteria set out by the review group. While much of the material in it had been covered in one or other of the earlier submissions, a number of significant additions were included.

The Institute provides a wide range of high quality programmes up to doctoral level and through its predecessor colleges, had demonstrated over a century of commitment to the advancement of knowledge.

The contract for lecturers stipulates a maximum of 560 timetabled hours per annum or an average of sixteen timetabled hours per week for thirty-five weeks. Teaching actually takes place over twenty-eight weeks a year, allowing some freedom for research activities in the rest of the year. Timetables can include a time allowance for the supervision of postgraduate students on the basis of two hours per week per student up to a four-hour maximum. Other allowances are also made.

While staff members have opportunities to become involved in research, nevertheless these opportunities need to be improved, particularly by creating an ethos which will encourage staff members to engage in research and providing better accommodation and facilities as well as increased time allocation.

The Institute had approximately 700 permanent or contract academic staff in 1997 involved in teaching at third level, 47 per cent of whom possessed master's degrees or doctoral qualifications.

In recent years the Institute provided substantial resources for staff development. Some thirty-two staff were studying for doctorates, seventy-eight for master's qualifications and twenty-seven for honours primary degrees.

The policy of the Institute in relation to recruitment has been, in practice, that new staff are only appointed if they possess a higher degree. Increasingly the higher qualification required (especially in certain discipline areas) is becoming a doctorate. By this means and through staff development there will soon be a significant enhancement of the academic profile, with over 25 per cent of staff members teaching on higher level programmes having PhDs and 50 per cent having master's degrees in the
near future.

The complement of technical support staff within the Institute is lower than that pertaining in most universities. There are currently about 110 technical support staff distributed across the faculties. The deficiency in this area has been identified by the Institute in the Governing Body Report on Faculty Structures of May 1997 and a proposal has been put to the Department of Education for an additional eighty specialist technicians and laboratory aides.\(^7\)

There are serious limitations on many of the Institute’s facilities, including staff accommodation, space and resources for research and student social and sporting facilities, when the very large student population pursuing programmes of a diverse nature is considered. Nevertheless, the DIT has a long and distinguished record of producing graduates who have little difficulty in finding good employment in industry and the service sectors. It has developed myriad links to the outside world, both nationally and internationally. The most important links include those to the enterprise sector (mainly Irish-based), academic institutions, research centres at home and abroad and European Union (EU) programmes and projects. Included in the links to the enterprise sector are direct links to industries, professional bodies and institutions of state, including the semi-state sector. The international dimension of the Institute’s activities includes participation in EU-funded projects together with partners from industry, European universities and state and professional bodies.

The first major strategic planning exercise in the newly independent Institute commenced in 1993 and focused on developing academic and management structures for the integrated Institute. The initial process, which led to the first faculty structure proposal in October 1994, revealed that a very substantial majority of staff felt it appropriate that the Institute should move towards a university-type structure while retaining the multi-level nature of the Institute. This transformation process is gradually underway.

The strategic planning process culminated in 1998 in the production by the Directorate of a discussion document on strategic issues, which includes a vision statement and aims for each key area of DIT activity. This document is undergoing extensive review by each faculty and the Governing Body. Arising from this review, the strategic plan for the Institute to the year 2010 will be formulated.

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\(^7\) Faculty, School and Departmental Structures for the Dublin Institute of Technology (Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology), 1997.
Consultations of the review group

The review group visited the Institute in November 1997, met the Directorate, and toured a number of the research areas.

The group also consulted a wide number of relevant organisations and individuals — principally professional and educational — in coming to its conclusions. Twenty-four organisations responded, either in writing or orally. In early 1998, further views were solicited through advertisement in the national press and there were fourteen further respondents.

Most generally the feedback was favourable to the record of the Institute and to its designation as a university, provided this did not damage the Institute’s ability to maintain and enhance its technician (diploma, certificate and apprenticeship) courses, i.e. its multi-level nature. The main educational respondents stressed the danger of mission drift in the Institute, possibly resulting in the depletion of technician level courses on which industry strongly depends.

In November 1997 the review group sought further clarifications on a number of issues. These included the question of mission or academic drift, the problems arising from the staff contract defining 20 June as the end of the academic year, alternative ways of improving the autonomy of the Institute and the development plans for the Academic Council, faculty structure, accommodation and academic profile of staff over the next five years or so. It also sought a brief historical review of the key stages in the academic evolution of the Institute.

Fourth submission

The fourth submission provided statements from the Institute on each of the issues raised in a letter from the review group. Most of these arguments had been put forward in various contexts in the earlier submissions.

This document reaffirmed the Institute’s determination to develop its multi-level nature, firmly rooted in applied technological areas, and providing programmes leading to awards from apprentice level through certificate, diploma, primary degree and the highest postgraduate degrees.

It indicated how the staff contract is interpreted as flexibly as possible but how its basic structure is still determined by national agreements between the trade unions, the Department of Education and Science and the institutions.

It emphasised that the Academic Council remains the academic authority of the Institute under the DIT Act. In particular the Council is responsible for academic quality assurance and improvement at all levels.
The detailed plans for the faculty (and school) structure, agreed by Governing Body for the Institute, are now the subject of negotiations with the teachers' unions and the Department of Education and Science. In relation to physical developments, the second phase of the Aungier Street building was expected to begin soon and would eventually allow the consolidation of the faculty of business on that site, as part of the south city campus. The main physical developments hinge on the development of the Grangegorman site, which will allow the implementation of the Physical Development Plan over time. In relation to underpinning and helping to develop the research effort and, in turn, the academic profile in all faculties, it has been the plan to appoint senior research fellows in all faculties before 2000.

Comments on the approach of the review group

The conduct of the review was unsatisfactory in a number of ways, possibly reflecting the fact that it was the first time the process was carried out. The requests for submissions were in a piecemeal fashion as initially the HEA and later, the review group, felt their way through the process. Consequently there was an unnecessary amount of repetition in the documentary submissions from the Institute, a factor that possibly detracted from their impact. Also the interaction sought by the review group with the DIT was, in the main, through the president and a sub-group of the Directorate. The process differed quite considerably from the audit of quality assurance procedures two years previously (see Chapter 11). There was no broad participation or involvement within the Institute in the preparation and formulation of the documents submitted or in the overall review process. This is possibly one reason for an apparent lack of broad support among staff generally for the Institute’s campaign for designation as a university. The process did not strongly relate or contribute to the development of team spirit or morale in the Institute. Indeed as a high level and generally opaque process, it may have been somewhat detrimental to institutional morale.

General comment on the Institute’s application

As well as there being no internal explanatory campaign within the Institute during the immediate review process, it must also be acknowledged that there had been no documentation on the philosophical basis and values underpinning the operation and development of the Institute, in the academic press or in the Institute, in the years before the review. Histori-
cally the DIT and its predecessor colleges have tended to play a peripheral role in the educational debates in Ireland. Possibly conditioned by being under the aegis of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee and more recently under the direct control of the Department of Education and Science, this failure to engage in the more general processes of education has been a weakness in an institution as diverse as the DIT. Some individual staff members have participated in the debates down the years, but the Institute has not.

Consequently, neither the application for designation as a university, while a logical outcome of earlier developments and the emergence of the universities legislation, nor the arguments supporting that application, were well understood within the Institute or in the broad public arena.

REPORT OF THE REVIEW GROUP AND THE RESPONSE OF THE HEA

The report of the review group in 1998 located the Institute within the higher education sector in Ireland. It reviewed the historical development and made a range of observations, academic evaluations and comments about the Institute and its operation. It also made a number of recommendations, many of which strongly echoed those of the review team two years before.

Specifically the report recommended that the DIT should be established as a university if and when a set of conditions is met. It set out the required conditions which referred to academic structures, collaboration with TCD, staff academic profile, quality assurance systems, development of non-degree courses, lifelong learning provision and the Institute's commitment to the preservation and development of its multi-level nature.

The review group further suggested that "detailed and costed plans with definitive targets for implementation should be drawn up by the DIT and agreed with the HEA" and that the "progress of the Institute towards these targets should be kept under ongoing review by the HEA in order to allow the Authority, when appropriate, to make its recommendations to Government in relation to the granting of university status to the Institute".

The HEA considered the report of the review group and, in forwarding

it to the Minister for Education and Science in March 1999, commented on aspects of the report and added a number of further recommendations.  

The HEA accepted the advice of the group that the DIT should not be immediately established as a university. It considered as substantial the conditions set by the review group, of achieving adequate maturity and cohesiveness, appropriate staff and research profiles and academic structures. These challenges had indeed been highlighted in the report of the earlier review team in 1996.

The HEA made no comment on the report’s evaluation of the DIT under the broad subjective and non-quantitative criteria derived from the Universities Act. However, the HEA took issue with the recommendation of the review group that the HEA itself would judge when the Institute had met the specified conditions to be established as a university and that these might reasonably be met within three to five years. Its view was that this envisaged a mentoring role for the HEA vis-à-vis the DIT and would require the DIT to be designated under the HEA Act in the near future and would also require a further review of the DIT after the three to five year period.

The HEA considered that the proposed mentoring role would constitute a confusion of its responsibilities. Such a role would be viewed as predetermining the final outcome. It could undermine the HEA’s objectivity in relation to its final recommendation on the application of the DIT for designation as a university. It might erode the procedures set out in Section 9 of the Universities Act and diminish the standing of any institution successfully passing through these procedures for designation as a university. It is quite surprising that the review group should make recommendations that the HEA would find outside its remit. The HEA was represented on the review group and its report was available in draft to the HEA long before its publication.

In relation to the DIT being designated under the HEA Act, the HEA noted that any such designation would be under the provisions of the DIT Act, and that therefore it could not apply to the DIT “the same controls as it applies to institutions at present under its aegis”. For instance issues of staffing and financial control for the DIT would continue as now and would not change to those set out in the Universities Act. The HEA was particularly concerned that such designation might be misinterpreted as an irrevocable stepping-stone to university designation. Again this was a sur-

prising concern, given that the proposal that DIT be designated under the HEA had first been made in the 1987 report on technological education of the International Study Group\textsuperscript{10} and was announced as government policy in the 1995 White Paper.\textsuperscript{11} Indeed in spring 2000, the Department of Education and Science is progressing the transfer of the DIT (and the other ITs) to the remit of the HEA.

In its other considerations, the HEA articulated the government’s policy on maintaining the binary system in higher education. This was not a criterion set down for the Institute by the review group and it was not articulated in the relevant sections of the Universities Act.

The HEA decided that in the light of the three to five year period of development required by the DIT before it might be considered again for designation as a university, coupled with the significance of the conditions to be met by the Institute, a further review of the DIT would be required at that stage. The report of the HEA indicated that it would be inappropriate for the HEA itself to carry out this review, just as it would be inappropriate for it to mentor the Institute through the development and maturation process. Essentially the DIT would have to apply again to the Minister for Education and Science at the appropriate time for designation as a university under Section 9 of the Universities Act and the government would then decide whether to proceed with that process or not.

**SUMMARY**

The DIT was already a major higher education institution with an impressive history when it was statutorily established in 1993. There followed a number of years of internal self-evaluation, planning and reorganisation. Initial steps in developing the management and administration for the new Institute were taken. The Academic Council was reorganised and quality assurance procedures were developed, systematised and implemented for undergraduate and postgraduate courses and postgraduate research work. The enhancement of the quality assurance procedures represented a deep institutional commitment to continuing improvement of standards and was based on devolving considerable autonomy to course committees and individual staff members.

This was generally a welcome change of culture across the Institute.

\textsuperscript{10}. Technological Education, Report of the International Study Group to the Minister for Education, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{11}. Charting our Education Future, op. cit.
However, change is not always congenial and the changes in the Institute occasionally led to concerns, uncertainty and disquiet. More than anything else it led to considerable intellectual ferment and possibly to an improved focussing on key academic issues and the interests of the students.

Not all the planned changes have yet been implemented. In particular the faculty structures are not in place and the challenge to relieve the shortage of physical accommodation still faces the Institute and its leadership. Thus the Institute is in a lengthy phase of change and is confronting the problems associated with the management of change.

The result of the quality audit of the Institute in 1996 was the gaining of degree-awarding power, the highest academic recognition ever achieved by the Institute.

In 1999, the outcome of the authoritative Section 9 evaluation of the Institute’s case that it already fulfilled the objects and functions of a university as set out in the Universities Act, was that with a recommended process of improvement, the Institute could achieve designation as a university in three to five years. The report of the international review group of experts contained a considerable number of helpful and constructive suggestions for the elements of the strategic plan for the Institute to achieve such designation as a university within that time-frame.

However the HEA, in its response to this report, indicated that it could not mentor and monitor the process of improvement suggested by the review group. In that this Section 9 process was therefore completed, the HEA suggested that the Institute would need to undergo a new Section 9 process three to five years later.