

ACTION PLAN FOR EDUCATION

2017

Quarter 3 Progress Report



Introduction

The Action Plan for Education 2016-2019 sets out our Statement of Strategy with a high-level ambition for Ireland to become the best provider of education and training services in Europe by 2026.

In February this year we published our Action Plan for Education 2017. Derived from the 2016-2019 strategy and plan, the annual Action Plan sets out over 400 actions specifically targeted to achieve our goals to:

1. Improve the learning experience and the success of learners
2. Improve the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs
3. Help those delivering education services to continually improve
4. Build stronger bridges between education and the wider community
5. Improve national planning and support services

Action Plan for Education 2017 represents the significant strategic reform programme under way in education and training, and recognises the importance of critical business functions to ensure business continuity and quality of service to all our stakeholders. We operate in a challenging and complex environment, shaped in particular by economic, social, technological, cultural and demographic changes. We are committed to a consultative approach to the development and implementation of our policies. The actions reflect these influences and the complexity and diversity of education and training systems in Ireland, and the challenges and issues associated with the different sectors such as early years, primary and post-primary school, and further and higher education and training. The Action Plan includes a series of indicators and targets to monitor progress towards the achievement of the goals and outcomes. Work is progressing on further development of appropriate indicators and measures to monitor impact and achievement.

This is the third progress report on the Action Plan for Education 2017. It outlines progress made on actions and sub-actions due for delivery in the third quarter of 2017, and follows on from the publication in July of the second progress report for 2017. While providing details on the achievements made during this period, the report also provides an update on actions where significant progress has been made, but where it has been necessary to adjust the target date beyond quarter 3.

Overview

Actions due for delivery by end quarter 3 2017

The Action Plan for Education 2017 contained 74 actions and sub-actions due for delivery by the end of quarter 3 (including some carried over from quarters 1 and 2). Overall, of the 74 actions and sub-actions due for delivery in quarter 3, 53 have been achieved, giving a completion rate of 71.6%.

Actions achieved under the Action Plan for Education 2017 during quarter 3 include:

Goal 1: Improve learning experience and success of learners

- Wellbeing Programme introduced in all schools at Junior Cycle to actively support and develop wellbeing initiatives to promote the development of mental resilience and personal wellbeing in schools
- Extension of the Incredible Years Teacher Programme and the FRIENDS Programme to DEIS schools. These programmes work to reduce behavioural difficulties, strengthen social and emotional competence, and promote coping, resilience and school connectedness in children and young people

- New Junior Cycle specifications for Irish, for Modern Languages (French, German, Spanish, Italian) and for Visual Art commenced in September 2017
- Improvements in resource provision in relation to Whole School Guidance. Guidance Plans to include specified time allocation for guidance counsellors to be available for one-to-one guidance counselling and time allocation for the role in supporting the organisation and work of the Student Support Team
- New Leaving Certificate Grading System and Common Points scale came into effect in 2017. Over 58,000 students sat the Leaving Certificate Examinations in 2017 and were marked under the new 8 band grading scale. The 80,345 applicants to the CAO in 2017 were scored using the new Common Points Scale
- Rollout of the reading/writing strand of the new Primary Language Curriculum (Irish and English) for Junior Infants to 2nd Class commenced in September 2017
- New schools being phased into Delivering Equality Of Opportunity In Schools (DEIS) in September 2017 and additional supports provided to DEIS schools
- First tranche of DEIS schools to participate in initial Schools Excellence Fund trial have been identified, with applicants in the trial outlining the innovative and creative approaches that the schools will adopt in seeking to improve learner outcomes
- Independent Review to identify the supports and barriers for lone parents in accessing higher education published, with €16.5m announced to support new initiatives to widen access to higher education over the next three years, with a strong focus on Lone Parents and Disadvantaged Groups
- Maintenance grants for the most disadvantaged post-graduate students reintroduced through the Student Grant Scheme & Regulations for 2017/18
- Review of Youthreach Programme commissioned and evaluation commenced
- Changes to Minimum Entry Requirements for Primary Teacher Training Programmes have been announced to ensure that primary teachers have the capacity to lead learning in the vital areas of Maths, English and Irish
- Mentoring Programme available to all newly appointed school principals, in primary and post-primary, strengthening leadership through enhanced support for Principals
- A new postgraduate qualification for aspiring school leaders commenced with 253 participants accepting a place on the Post Graduate Diploma in School Leadership course
- Guidelines for the use of school buildings out of school hours published
- New curricula for 12 existing craft trades validated by Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- 5 new Skillnets training networks commenced activity in areas of Medtech, Hospitality, Design, Beauty and Tourism sectors
- Roll-out of Springboard+ is ongoing in higher education institutions across the country, providing for over 6,400 places on 198 courses
- 9 new Music Education Partnerships have been selected to participate in Music Generation Phase 2, a project co-funded by US/the Ireland Fund and the DES

Goal 2: Improve the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs

Goal 3: Help those delivering education services to continuously improve

Goal 4: Build stronger bridges between education and the wider community

Goal 5: Improve national planning and support services

- Implementation of Pillar 1 of the Creative Ireland Initiative on Arts Rich Schools Initiative (ARIS) has commenced
- A plan to manage and coordinate Department participation in Government-led data initiatives, e.g. Open Data, ICT Strategy, CSO National Data Infrastructure, CSR Action 24, has been developed
- The Financial Services Support Unit (FSSU) at primary level has commenced, providing an advice and support service for the schools on all aspects of financial management and control
- Phased implementation of Payroll Shared Service for Education and Training Boards (ETBs) has commenced with the location of the Education Shared Business Services Centre confirmed

Other key developments during quarter 3 include:

- Over 2,000 new teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) announced as part of the largest ever Education budget
- An additional €16.5m being provided to increase 3rd level access, supporting over 2,000 students, including 200 lone parents
- Over 540 people supported to upskill and retrain, with the successful completion of two European Globalisation Fund programmes
- Official opening of one of the largest Irish-medium post-primary schools in the country in Galway, and over 20 classrooms in 4 other schools in Galway, a total announcement of over €17 million investment which will benefit approximately 2,100 pupils in the county
- Capital funding of just over €8 million announced for 10 Institutes of Technology, to support the delivery of new and existing apprenticeship programmes
- €200 million investment in new Builds for Institutes of Technology announced
- New Digital Learning Framework tool launched to provide a roadmap to help schools manage the transformation of teaching and learning as a result of new digital technologies
- Higher Education Institutions delivered the largest ever number of ICT Camp places (3,800) to Second Level Students as a result of additional funding provided in Budget 2017
- Government approval to progress Technological Universities Bill secured
- Joint Stakeholder Dialogue event on *Enterprise Skills Needs and Brexit* held in the Aviva, upskilling workers for the Brexit challenge
- 4,500 learners taking part in over 208 free third level courses at certificate, degree and masters level, as part of Springboard+ 2017
- New fund of €500,000 made available through the new International Academic Mobility Programme to fund activities that lead to collaborative activity between Irish universities and global institutions in high potential markets
- Over 61,000 students received their Junior certificate/cycle results and over 58,500 learners received their Leaving Certificate results

TABLE OF ACTIONS

Goal 1: Improve the learning experience and success of learners

Objective 1.1

Improve services and resources to promote wellbeing in our school communities to support success in school and life

Action/ Sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
2	Implement the new Junior Cycle area of learning entitled Wellbeing which will build on work to date in post-primary schools to support students' wellbeing.		
2.1	Commence provision of a Wellbeing programme to all students in the first year of Junior Cycle.	Achieved	
4	Roll-out of the Incredible Years Teacher Programme and the Friends programmes to all DEIS schools.		
4.1	Commence the extension of the Incredible Years Teacher Programme to all DEIS primary schools. This is an evidence-based programme for teachers, partnering with parents, which reduces behavioural difficulties and strengthens social and emotional competence in the early primary school-age children. Specifically deliver the first three modules of the 6-module Incredible Years Teacher Programme to 500 teachers in DEIS primary schools.	Achieved	
4.2	Commence the extension of the FRIENDS programmes to all DEIS schools. These programmes reduce anxiety and promote coping, resilience and school-connectedness in children and young people from 4-18 years. Specifically deliver Friends training to 400 teachers in DEIS primary and post-primary schools.	Achieved	
6	Further develop school Student Support Teams through a series of actions.		
6.1	Provide a final report on the Student Support Team Project and make recommendations informed by the learning.	Achieved	
6.2	Oversee the development of a training programme and set of resources in relation to the implementation of Student Support Teams in Schools.	Achieved	
7	NEPS to commence the delivery of training to all post-primary schools on the revised <i>NEPS Critical Incidents: Guidelines and Resources for Schools</i>, starting with 50 schools in 2017.	Achieved	
9	Enhance guidance counselling at second level by allocating 100 additional guidance posts from September 2017, which, together with the 300 guidance posts restored under Budget 2016, will be		

		allocated separately outside of the general allocation.		
	9.1	Circular to be issued to schools will include requirement for schools' guidance plans to include specified time allocation for guidance counsellors to be available for one to one guidance counselling for students and time allocation for the role in supporting the Student Support Team.	Achieved	
14		Implement quality assurance of wellbeing provision in schools.		
	14.1	In post-primary schools, commence whole-school evaluations and subject evaluations in SPHE, PE, and CSPE, which will reflect the need for schools to engage with the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme, and will signpost supports that are regarded as appropriate and necessary.	Achieved	

Objective 1.2

Deliver a "Step-Change" in the development of critical skills, knowledge and competences to provide the foundations for participation in work and society

Action/ Sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
18	Introduce and implement new subjects and short courses on a phased basis.		
	18.5 Implement new Junior Cycle subject specifications for Irish, from September 2017	Achieved	
	18.6 Implement new Junior Cycle subject specification for Modern Languages (French, German, Spanish, Italian), from September 2017	Achieved	
	18.7 Implement new Junior Cycle subject specification for Visual Art, from September 2017	Achieved	
	18.8 Develop guidelines for Level 1 (NFQ) Learning Programmes (and their Priority Learning Units) at Junior Cycle, to complement the Level 2 Learning Programmes already introduced and have them available to schools to address the learning needs of students in the low moderate and severe and profound range of general learning disabilities.	Achieved	
20	Finalise and implement new specifications for Leaving Certificate subjects: Economics, Art, Applied Maths, Agricultural Science, and Physical Education.		
	20.2 Finalise draft specification for Leaving Certificate Economics	Achieved	
	20.3 Commence consultation on draft specification for Leaving Certificate Applied Mathematics	Not achieved	The specification for Leaving Certificate Applied Mathematics is at advanced draft stage, with consultation to commence in late November.

22		Following November 2016 publication of report of STEM Education Review Group, progress development of a strategy to increase competence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) and set targets for take-up.		
	22.4	Produce an integrated national STEM Education Policy Statement with input from, and relevance to, all stakeholders across the continuum of education in Ireland (primary, secondary and third level).	Not achieved	National STEM Education Policy Statement is at advanced draft stage. The Statement will be finalised shortly.
	22.5	Produce a detailed implementation plan for the National STEM Education Policy Statement with responsibilities and timelines clearly outlined.	Not achieved	Detailed Implementation Plan is being progressed in line with the National STEM Education Policy Statement and is at advanced draft stage.
	22.7	Conduct scoping exercise to establish the opportunities for validating the participation of students in informal (extra-curricular) STEM events and activities.	Not achieved	Work on this action will commence following completion of the National STEM Education Policy Statement and Implementation Plan.
	22.8	Review existing research base on barriers to the uptake of STEM careers by females including subject uptake at post primary level.	Not achieved	Work on this action will commence following completion of the National STEM Education Policy Statement and Implementation Plan.

Objective 1.4

Improve the transition of learners at critical stages in the education and training system

Action/ Sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
26	Implement reforms to improve transitions and remove barriers to progression to the levels of the education and training system. The Systems Performance Framework for HE will be reviewed and a revised framework developed- it is intended that this will address the issue of broadening undergraduate entry, as part of this next Systems Performance Framework which will be put in place for Higher Education Institutions later this year.		
26.1	Introduce a new grading system and new common point's scheme for Leaving Certificate.	Achieved	

Objective 1.5

Increase the use of ICT in teaching, learning and assessment so that learners are equipped with the necessary skills to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing learning environment

Action/ Sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
29	Implement the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015 - 2020 to enhance teaching, learning & assessment and develop annual implementation plans to ensure that our services in this area can continually respond to best practice and changing technologies. The Strategy aims to realise the potential of digital technologies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment to help students become engaged thinkers, active learners, knowledge constructors and global citizens to participate fully in society and the economy.		
29.4	Commence updating the eLearning Planning resource for schools to ensure it reflects the localised ICT Competency Framework and technological and educational developments since 2009. This resource provides a step-by-step guide to the development of the school's e-Learning Plan.	Achieved	
29.5	Develop a strategic partnership(s) with relevant cultural, educational and/or sporting bodies in order to adapt relevant content into useful learning and teaching resources for schools.	Not achieved	Protocol to be confirmed with Digital Strategy Support Services planning group to guide this process. First partnership to be identified and activated in Q4.
29.6	Scope a proposal to incentivise and facilitate schools in innovation, clustering approaches (enabling schools to collaborate on curriculum and related matters using technology), to maximise the impact of ICT in teaching and learning.	Achieved	

Objective 1.6

Enable learners communicate effectively and improve their standards of competence in languages

Action/ Sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
33	Roll out Primary Language Curriculum (Irish and English) across all primary schools		
33.1	Commence the roll out of the reading/writing strand of the new Primary Language Curriculum (Irish and English) to Junior Infants to 2nd Class	Achieved	
34	Implement the Gaeltacht Education Strategy on a phased basis		
34.3	Commence support/advice to schools	Achieved	

35		A new Framework for Modern Foreign Languages at Junior Cycle will be available to schools to increase the range and quality of languages which can be taught. See sub-action 18.6 for further details of actions to be implemented in 2017.	Achieved	
36		Implement the Foreign Languages in Education Strategy and report on progress		
	36.1	Publish the Foreign Languages in Education Strategy.	Not achieved	A draft of the Foreign Languages in Education Strategy is at an advanced stage. A final draft will be submitted to the Minister shortly.
	36.2	Explore the potential for the greater use of CLIL (content and language integrated learning) to increase the use of language skills and increase confidence in language learning.	Achieved	

Goal 2: Improve the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs

Objective 2.1

Improve the learning experience and learning outcomes for learners impacted by disadvantage

Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
37	Publish a new Action Plan for Educational Inclusion which will include a new Assessment Framework for the identification of schools and allocation of resources under a new School Support Programme. This will be subject to a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework and will include improved support for school leadership, creating networks and clusters for teachers and schools, better integration between the work of schools and local community supports, and greater use of the Home School Community Liaison programme.		
37.3	Commence the phased implementation of the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, with new schools being phased into DEIS in Q3 2017; additional supports added to the DEIS School Support Programme from September 2017; pilot projects to support innovation and creativity in Q3 2017; monitoring and evaluation framework and additional Inspectorate resources in place in Q3 2017	Achieved	
39	Develop proposals for a Schools' Excellence Fund		
39.1	Identify first tranche of DEIS schools to participate in initial trial	Achieved	
40	Implement strands of the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education, so that higher education becomes more representative of the population in general.		
40.3	Develop 1916 Centenary Bursary Scheme for 2017/18 academic year.	Achieved	
41	Issue call for measures to engage directly with disadvantaged communities, to promote the benefits of higher education		
41.1	Initiate projects for HEIs to engage directly with 'disadvantaged' communities to promote the benefits of higher education	Not achieved	It is expected that the funding allocation process to HEIs will be completed in Q4. Successful HEIs will then proceed with the initiation of projects.
42	Prepare a report on the barriers to lone parents accessing higher education, and publish the report's recommendations in advance of Budget 2017		
42.1	Publish report on the barriers to lone parents accessing higher education	Achieved	

43		Reintroduce maintenance grant for the most disadvantaged post graduate students	Achieved	
46		Commission a review of the Youthreach Programme.		
	46.2	Award contract and commence evaluation fieldwork	Achieved	

Objective 2.1

Target policies and supports for learners with special education needs to support their participation and progression across the continuum of education

Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
48	Introduce the new model for the allocation of teachers in mainstream schools to support children with Special Educational needs		
	48.3 Introduce emergency allocation provision associated with the new allocation model to support children with Special Education needs.	Achieved	
50	Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the SNA scheme to identify the most appropriate form of support options to provide better outcomes for students with special educational needs.		
	50.1 Complete comprehensive assessment of the SNA scheme	Not achieved	The Working Group on the Comprehensive Assessment of the SNA Scheme has met on a number of occasions. Draft recommendations are currently under consideration. The review is now expected to be completed by Q1 2018.
	50.2 Publish outcomes of the assessment of the SNA scheme	Not achieved	Publication of the outcomes of the assessment of the SNA scheme has been revised in line with action 50.1 above.
51	Work with relevant Government Departments and agencies to introduce a new in-school speech and language service creating stronger linkages between parents, teachers and Speech and Language Therapists.		
	51.2 Findings of a HSE review of speech and language therapy services considered by cross-sectoral group and proposals developed for further consideration	Achieved	
52	Commence revision of the SEN (Special Educational Needs) model of inspection for post-primary schools.		
	52.1 Develop SEN model of inspection for post-primary schools for consultation and trial use in Q1 and Q2 2018.	Achieved	
53	Establish an Inclusion Support Service, under NCSE, to assist schools in the provision of education to children with special education needs		

	53.1	Publish a plan for service delivery by the newly established Inclusion Support Service, under NCSE, for 2017/2018.	Achieved	
--	-------------	--	----------	--

Goal 3: Help those delivering education services to continuously improve

Objective 3.1

Increase the quality of Early Years to deliver a better learning experience for young children

Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
54	Support the Implementation of Síolta the National Quality Framework and Aistear, the early years curriculum framework		
54.4	Review process for allocation of Síolta Validators and recruit and train additional validators	Achieved	

Objective 3.2

Develop the continuum of teacher education to equip teachers with the right skills for 21st century teaching and learning and improve school leadership

Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
59	Continue the reform of initial teacher education (ITE) and teacher induction:		
59.1	Publish revised entry criteria for initial teacher education programmes.	Achieved	
60	Strengthen leadership through enhanced support for principals		
60.2	Complete rollout of mentoring programme for newly appointed school principals	Achieved	
61	Develop and introduce a new postgraduate qualification for aspiring school leaders		
61.1	Commence course for new postgraduate qualifications for aspiring school leaders facilitating 200 participants annually.	Achieved	
63	Further develop our CPD programmes and their organisation		
63.1	Outline a programme of actions for the further development of our CPD programmes and their organisation, having regard to: The options regarding the legal model and potential functions of a centre of excellence to have oversight of the supports for school improvement and professional development of teachers, including research, identifying international best practice. The potential and capacity of ETBs to be regional hubs for the funding and delivery of national programmes and services for CPD teachers, including curricular change and supports for schools. The redefinition of the core remit of education support centres to be the providers of professional development opportunities in a local, innovative and creative way.	Not achieved	Workshop with stakeholders and international speakers took place in early October. The Minister will outline the broad parameters of our approach to the organisation and development of CPD programmes shortly.

Objective 3.4**Promote high quality learning experiences in Further Education and Training and Higher Education**

Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
75	Initiate review of quality in Higher Education.		
	75.1 Launch a public consultation process, as the first phase of the review of quality in Higher Education	Not achieved	A public consultation paper is currently being finalised in order to initiate the first phase of the review of quality in Higher Education. The public consultation paper is expected to issue in Q4.
77	Build capacity within the ETB sector to achieve the delivery of the FET Strategy goals, focussing particularly on Organisational Design, Change Management and Quality Assurance. See also Actions 133 and 134.		
	77.1 Development of a new Sectoral QA Governance Model	Achieved	
79	Improve the impact of PLC, VTOS and BTEI schemes, by reviewing each programme, publishing the review, and setting out time-bound implementation plans.		
	79.1 Publish outcomes and recommendations from Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) evaluation	Not achieved	Report on Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) evaluation is under consideration. It is expected that the Report will be published with recommendations in Q4.
	79.2 Commence a review of the VTOS Programme	Not achieved	The evaluation of VTOS, Specific Skills and Traineeship as a single exercise will commence in Q4 with a draft tender specification developed for consultation.
	79.3 Publish tender specification for VTOS Evaluation	Not achieved	Draft tender specification developed for consultation in Q4.

Goal 4: Build stronger bridges between education and the wider community

Objective 4.1

Increase opportunities for schools to support their local communities through the utilisation of school buildings and facilities out of hours

Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
83	Develop and publish guidelines for the use of school buildings out of hours, and engage with property owners and school authorities with a view to facilitating increased use of school buildings where feasible.	Achieved	

Objective 4.2

Strengthen the role of parents and students, and deliver progress in providing greater school choice

Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
84	Introduce a stronger complaints procedure and charter for parents and students.		
84.1	General scheme of the Education (Parent and Student Charter) Bill 2016 has been submitted to the Oireachtas for pre-legislative scrutiny. The date for completion of pre-legislative scrutiny is dependent on the Oireachtas Committee schedule. It is hoped that the scrutiny will be completed in the first half of the year to allow the approval of the Government to be sought for the drafting of the Bill.	Not achieved	The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills will publish its report following its next meeting.
86	Advance the legislation in relation to school admissions to make enrolment easier for children and parents.		
86.2	The Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2016 has been published with a view to enactment by Q3 2017. Date for completion is subject to the Oireachtas legislative process.	Not achieved	The Department is continuing to work with the Attorney General's Office on amendments for Report Stage. Date for enactment of Bill is subject to outcome of work with AGO and Oireachtas legislative process.
87	Establish 400 multi-/ non- denominational schools		
87.7	Agree engagement process for patrons on the transfer of schools in relation to consultation with school communities and prospective patron bodies	Not achieved	An initial meeting of the working group will be convened in Q4 to advance protocols.

Objective 4.3			
Enhance our capacity to meet national and regional skills needs			
Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
91	Establish the National Skills Council, which will use data on skills requirements to proactively address emerging skills gaps, and develop a revised mandate for the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs.		
91.5	Hold national forum for Stakeholders to input into work programme of National Skills Council	Achieved	

Objective 4.4			
Create a greater diversity of learning opportunities beyond school			
Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
98	Strengthen the apprenticeship and traineeship systems through enhancing the range of courses and increasing student places; achieve Government targets of over 100 apprenticeship schemes, and a cumulative target of 50,000 apprenticeship and traineeship registrations to 2020. This is a total of 31,000 apprenticeship registrations and 19,000 traineeships over the period to 2020. This would involve an annual average of 6,000 apprenticeships and 4,000 traineeships.		
98.4	Complete approval of new curricula in 14 further craft trades	Achieved	
99	Continue to work with Skillnets to deliver enterprise-led training and continue to develop the model in accordance with the Skillnets Statement of Strategy 2016-2019. The Strategy has been developed to be closely aligned to the National Skills Strategy (NSS) and the needs of enterprise. Skillnets will establish five new networks in 2017 in addition to the existing 63 networks reaching 43,000 employees up from the 40,000 reached in 2016. Skillnets will complement the development of the new networks by working with the existing networks to enhance their capacity.		
99.2	Commence the operation of newly funded training Networks that have strong enterprise support and demonstrate compelling training requirements. Skillnets will establish five new networks in 2017. Skillnets will undertake a significant promotional campaign to encourage enterprise engagement.	Achieved	
99.3	Establish a first-class talent programme for the Skillnets Network Manager community to assist in the growth of their Human Resource Development competence. Skillnets will establish a talent programme to develop the capacity of the existing 63 network managers. The Programme, which will include mentoring and project work, will be delivered centrally by Skillnets.	Achieved	

100		Publish the FET policy framework for Employee Development to support skills development for those in employment, in consultation with partners, aligning with the National Skills Strategy.		
	100.1	Publish the FET policy framework for Employee Development and associated implementation plan. The aim of the framework is to guide ETB activity undertaken in the FET sector to support employee development in Ireland and to contribute to the objectives for workforce development and lifelong learning as set out in the National Skills Strategy 2025. This includes the target to increase the level of participation by those aged 25-64 in lifelong learning (LLL) to 10% by 2020.	Not achieved	The FET Policy Framework for Employee Development has been drafted by SOLAS, in consultation with stakeholders, for agreement with DES. Further consideration is being given to the overall scope and focus of such a framework.
101		Create a greater diversity of learning opportunities beyond school through competitive calls for Springboard+ courses		
	101.2	Roll-out of Springboard+ 2017	Achieved	

Objective 4.5

Enhance support for learners to make informed career choices

Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
104	Review guidance services, tools and careers information for students and adults and recommend changes to improve services.		
	104.2	Commence review of guidance services	Achieved

Objective 4.6

Create a stronger focus on Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation

Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
108	Implement the Arts in Education Charter, subject to the drawdown of Dormant Account Funding		
	108.3	Commence the first new Music Education Partnerships (MEPs), to expand MEPs, under the remit of Music Generation, up to 9 extra areas of the country, a project co-funded by US/ The Ireland Fund and the DES.	Achieved
	108.4	Implement Pillar 1 of 'Creative Ireland' Initiative on Arts Rich Schools Initiative, ARIS.	Achieved

Objective 4.7:

Increase the number of researchers, establish a new competitive programme of funding for Frontiers Research to enable the next generation of researchers transition to Principal Investigator status and develop initiatives to attract world-leading researchers, particularly in the context of Brexit

Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
111	IRC Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme (CAROLINE – Collaborative Research Fellowships for a Responsive and Innovative Europe) will provide 50 researchers (over two calls) with an opportunity to obtain research mobility and career development Fellowships.		
	111.2 Issue 2nd call for applications for the Caroline Scheme, with closing date Q4 2017	Achieved	

Goal 5: Improve national planning and support services

Objective 5.1

Strengthen strategic oversight and focus on delivery for results

Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
115	Monitor the implementation of the "Action Plan for Education and Skills 2016- 2019", assessing the challenges to be faced on the road to becoming the best education and training service in Europe		
115.4	Publish Q2 progress report on implementation of the "Action Plan for Education 2017"	Achieved	
117	Provide greater strategic direction in the Department's governance, management and use of data.		
117.4	Develop a plan to manage and coordinate Department participation in Government-led data initiatives - e.g. Open Data, ICT Strategy, CSO National Data Infrastructure, CSR Action 24.	Achieved	
124	Develop a standardised approach to governance and accountability across the education sector to ensured consistent application across the education sector of corporate governance compliance requirements.		
124.2	Roll out a compliance questionnaire on the capacity of relevant DES State agencies to adhere to the stipulations of DPER's 2016 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Agencies, and to ensure a consistent approach to Departmental considerations of derogations from the 2016 Code	Achieved	

Objective 5.3

Improve the quality of the national support services and shared services

Action/ sub-action	Actions/sub-actions for Quarter 3	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
129	Strengthen DES management systems through shared services.		
129.2	Continue "shared service ready" projects encompassing plan for retained finance functions	Achieved	
132	Support the rollout of the Financial Services Support Unit to the primary schools sector		
132.3	Commence the Financial Services Support Unit (FSSU) service at primary level (Circular issued to primary schools).	Achieved	
134	Begin the phased implementation of shared services for ETBs.		
134.2	Begin the phased implementation of Payroll shared service for ETBs.	Achieved	
141	Implement the Civil Service Renewal Plan, in line with D/PER requirements		

	141.1	Conduct Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey within the DES	Achieved	
142		Improve business processes using the Business Process Improvement (BPI) Lean Six Sigma methodology		
	142.3	Complete Phase 1 of Special Education - Home Tuition BPI project and commence Phase 2	Achieved	
143		Manage EU co-financed programmes and exploit co-financing opportunities		
	143.3	Designate the Managing and Certifying Authorities for the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020 (PEIL) co-financed by the EU through the ESF and the YEI.	Not achieved	The European Social Fund Managing Authority and European Social Fund Certifying Authority are engaging with the Auditing Authority on queries raised in relation to the material submitted. It is expected that the designation will be achieved during Q4.
145		Enhance the standard of customer services within the Department		
	145.2	Commence pilot of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) eCorrespondence application which aims to improve the tracking and management of incoming correspondence and outgoing responses.	Not achieved	Bi-lateral meeting held with the Office of the Government Chief Information Office (OGCIO) in September re roll-out of eCorrespondence in DES. Plan to roll-out eCorrespondence following full implementation of eSubmissions across the Department.