ACTION PLAN FOR EDUCATION

2018

Quarter 2 Progress Report

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Introduction

The Action Plan for Education 2016-2019 sets out our Statement of Strategy with a high-level ambition for Ireland's Education and Training system, of becoming the best education and training service in Europe by 2026.

In February this year we published our Action Plan for 2018. Derived from the 2016-2019 strategy and plan, the annual action plan sets out nearly 300 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

The Action Plan for Education 2018 highlights the significant strategic reform programme under way in education and training. It recognises the importance of critical business functions to ensure business continuity and quality of service. The publication of an annual plan within a broader strategic framework enables us to respond in an agile way to the demands of the challenging and complex environment in which we operate while maintaining a strategic focus on sustainable reform.

To ensure an informative and transparent process, our progress during the year will be monitored through published quarterly reports. This is the second such report for 2018. It outlines progress made on actions and subactions due for delivery in the second quarter of 2018 and notes other achievements including advancing the Admissions Bill and the Technological Universities designation process. 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. Where appropriate, measures associated with the performance indicators for each Goal have been included.

Overview

Actions due for delivery by end quarter 2, 2018

The Action Plan for 2018 contained 74 actions and subactions due for delivery by the end of quarter 2, 2018. Of these, 56 actions and subactions have been achieved, giving a completion rate of 76%.

Actions achieved in the second quarter of the Action Plan for Education 2018 include:

Goal 1: Improve the learning experience and success of learners	• The DES Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice has been launched. • Baseline STEM data have been established on participation, attainment, graduate outcomes and STEM related skills needs. • The Report on the Trialling of the Assessment of Practical Work in Leaving Certificate Biology, Chemistry, and Physics has been finalised. • New Leaving Certificate Economics Specification has been published. • A review of work experience at post-primary level has commenced, with a view to increasing access and quality of work experience for students. • Action plans for improvements to 106 primary and 28 post-primary schools participating in the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme have been reviewed and approved. A grant of 1,200 euro each and additional language support hours provided to 134 schools whose action plans for improvement have been approved.

Goal 2: Improve the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs	• A new identification process for all schools using CSO census data and information from POD and PPOD returns. • Applications from 75 clusters of schools were received in Tranche 2 of the Schools Excellence Fund – DEIS and the Inspectorate undertook advisory/challenge visits to support schools participating in Tranche 1. • €5.7 million in funding was allocated to clusters of higher education institutions under the PATH Strand 3 Higher Education Access Fund. • The three year Review of Special Needs Assistants (SNA) allocations has been completed.
Goal 3: Help those delivering education services to continuously improve	• An evaluation of the pilot of the Centre for School Leadership has been published. • A revised guide to Early Years Education focussed inspections was approved and trial inspections completed in 40 Early Years Services.
Goal 4: Build stronger bridges between education and the wider community	The Admissions Bill was passed by the Dáil and is currently proceeding through the Seanad. • New partners were identified for the Skills to Growth initiative across the nine regions to enable skills audits. • A comprehensive and independent review of the National Training Fund has been completed, in order to guide strategic decisions on its structure and future direction.
Goal 5: Improve national planning and support services	• The Department has established a new division to improve strategic policy capability. • A new online system to process payment of examination entry fees has been launched. • A new online Schools Transport Appeals application has been launched. • A Collaborative Working application for cross-departmental working groups has been launched.

Other key developments during quarter 2 include:

- A report and recommendation on the Technological University for Dublin Alliance's application for designation as a Technological University has been received and is being considered by the Minister. This is a major milestone in a significant area of third-level reform and development.
- 150 schools and pre-schools are taking part in a first ever pilot scheme aimed at bringing speech and language therapists and occupational therapists into schools to focus on early intervention and tailored supports for students.
- The National Training Fund Expenditure Report was published showing €415million is being invested in programmes this year to meet the skills needs of the economy including the expansion of the apprenticeship and traineeship schemes, additional investment in Springboard and additional support to increase skills for those in employment through Skillnet Ireland.
- Almost 1,000 additional Special Needs Assistants are being allocated to schools, an increase of 7%.

- Springboard+ 2018 was launched, with over 8,000 free places on 245 courses, an increase of almost 25%.
- Progress has been made on the Private Partnership (PPP) programme for higher education with design work commencing on 11 new buildings. This will facilitate a strong focus on STEM, drive regional development, and provide 8,000 new student places.
- 35 organisations received up to €15,000 each under the non–mainstream Music Bursary Scheme 2018 to provide music education and community initiatives throughout the country.
- EXPLORE, a new and innovative programme aimed at increasing Lifelong Learning participation rates and offering upskilling opportunities, was launched.
- The 2018 Digital Strategy Action Plan, aimed at maximising the potential of digital technology in classrooms throughout the country, has been published with over 80 actions to be achieved in 2018.
- €8 million is being invested in apprenticeship programmes in 10 Institutes of Technology, providing over 6,000 more apprenticeship registration opportunities in 2018.
- The Department announced funding for a wellbeing and mental health self-review survey tool on best practice and initiatives across Higher Education.
- As part of the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme, island post-primary schools in Gaeltacht areas are receiving a package of supports including an additional €15,000 per school and extra teaching resources.
- Contracts have been awarded for the implementation of a new 4 year B.Ed Irish-medium teacher education programme and a part-time Irish-medium M.Ed for practicing teachers to improve Irish-language proficiency.
- The new Online Patronage Process (OPPS) website was launched, allowing parents to express preferences for the patronage of new schools.
- 2,990 purpose built student accommodation bed spaces were created in Q2, in continued progress to addressing student accommodation needs.
- 104 post-primary schools overall are being supported to participate in Phase 1 of Computer Science and Physical Education as Leaving Certificate subjects.

TABLE OF ACTIONS

Goal 1: Improve the learning experience and the 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/ Subaction		Actions/subactions for Quarter 2	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
1		**To foster and promote the Wellbeing of all children and young people in schools by ensuring that Wellbeing is at the core of every schools' ethos.**		
	1.1	Finalise and publish the Department of Education and Skills (DES) Wellbeing Policy Statement for schools.	Achieved	
	1.2	Issue revised circulars, providing more comprehensive and strengthened guidance to schools on the effective use of external programmes and facilitators relating to Wellbeing.	Achieved	
	1.3	Following consultation with relevant partners, finalise and make available the DES Wellbeing Framework for Practice for schools, including indicators of which will be the basis for improvement planning and advice from NEPS and the Inspectorate in their work in schools.	Achieved	
2		**To further the objective that all post primary schools will have effective structures in place to support student Wellbeing, expand the Student Support Team project to Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) post-primary schools.**		

	2.1	Commence the delivery of training to the 20 project DEIS post-primary schools in the development of effective student support teams.	Achieved	
8		**Work with the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) to support learners to manage their educational, training, occupational, personal, social, and life choices so that they reach their full potential, through the implementation of an enhanced Guidance Counselling Framework to maximise the benefits from the restoration of 500 guidance posts.**		
	8.1	Commence the implementation of the DES Programme Recognition Framework - Guidance Counselling (2016).	Achieved	
9		**Compete a review of the Lifeskills Survey and its function, with a view to providing recommendations on future direction.**	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/ Subaction		**Actions/subactions for Quarter 2**	**Achieved/ Not achieved**	**Comment**
11		**Review the structure of, and the time allocation in, the Primary School Curriculum to ensure that the allocation reflects learners' requirements in new foundation skills that they will need for a changing society.**		
	11.1	Initiate a new longitudinal study on children's experience of primary school.	Achieved	
	11.2	Conclude work with a network of primary schools on gathering and sharing examples of good practice in intercultural, religious and ethical education, culminating in an event for stakeholders showcasing the work of schools.	Achieved	
12		**Introduce and implement new subjects and courses on a phased basis to provide learners with greater subject choices.**		
	12.1	Publish examples of teaching and learning in intercultural, religious and ethical education in the junior and senior classes of primary school.	Achieved	
13		**Progress delivery of the STEM Education Policy Statement and Implementation Plan to achieve a step-change improvement in the STEM education experience and outcomes for learners from early years to post-primary.**		
	13.1	Establish baseline STEM data on participation, attainment, attitudes to STEM, graduate outcomes and STEM related skills needs.	Achieved	
	13.3	Develop a policy for the provision of STEM curricular materials for teachers, in consultation with support services and other relevant parties.	Not achieved	Work has commenced on developing a policy for the provision of STEM curricular materials for teachers, this will be completed in Q3.
	13.4	Providers will be encouraged to develop new summer courses in STEM through the approval criteria published by the Department.	Achieved	

	13.5	Conduct an audit of current initiatives both within school and out-of-school to promote STEM subjects and STEM careers in partnership with SFI Smart Futures and publish a guide and audit of what is available.	Not achieved	Work with SFI to initiate this action has been undertaken. It is envisaged that survey questionnaires will be issued to industry/educational institutions in Q3. The expectation is that the analysis will be completed by end Q4 2018.
	13.6	Examples of existing best practice in STEM activities in Transition Year to be posted on Scoilnet.	Achieved	
	13.7	Work with schools to promote the use of the "Other areas of learning" section in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) to recognise the importance of participation in STEM. This will be promoted by the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) support service as part of its engagement with science teachers during 2018 and in the JCPA handbook.	Achieved	
	13.8	Explore the potential of STEM research placements in business and industry to enhance both the student Initial Teacher Education (ITE) experience and STEM teacher learning/professional development.	Not achieved	The potential for STEM research placements in business and industry is due to be explored through collaboration with the Department of Enterprise, Business and Industry and stakeholders later in 2018.
	13.9	Introduce measures to support the supply of STEM teachers, having regard to the outcomes of the baseline data collection, and analysis, and prioritising the immediate gaps identified in certain disciplines.	Achieved	
	13.10	Engage with business and industry and education stakeholders to: agree measures to support implementation of the STEM Education Policy Statement, such as robust and sustainable partnerships between schools and business and industry, with the aim of achieving a 20% increase in extra-curricular activities in STEM by 2026.	Achieved	

Objective 1.3 **Increase subject choice for learners in Senior Cycle to equip them with the skills and knowledge to participate in a changing world**				
Action/ Subaction		**Actions/subactions for Quarter 2**	**Achieved/ Not achieved**	**Comment**
14		**Progress development and implementation of Leaving Certificate subject specifications.**		
	14.1	Complete report on trialling of practical assessment component of Leaving Certificate Science (Biology, Chemistry, and Physics) specifications, to inform decision on introduction of revised Leaving Certificate Sciences to all schools from 2019/20 year.	Achieved	
	14.2	Publish Leaving Certificate Economics specification.	Achieved	
15		**Review senior cycle programmes (including Leaving Certificate Applied) in order to strengthen vocational pathways in senior cycle to create a senior cycle that places the learner at the centre of the educational experience. That experience will enable learners to be resourceful, to be confident, to participate actively in society, and to build an interest in and ability to learn throughout their future lives.**		
	15.2	Commence review of work experience at post-primary level with a view to increasing access and quality of work experience for students.	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/ Subaction		**Actions/subactions for Quarter 2**	**Achieved/ Not achieved**	**Comment**
19		**Implement the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015 - 2020 to realise the potential of digital technologies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment so that Ireland's young people become engaged thinkers, active learners, knowledge constructors and global citizens to participate fully in society and the economy.**		

	19.2	Complete a protocol to guide the development of strategic partnerships with relevant cultural, educational and/or sporting bodies in order to adapt relevant content into useful learning and teaching resources for schools.	Achieved	
22		**Advance language curriculum (Irish and English) developments across primary and post-primary schools.**		
	22.1	Publish Assessment Guidelines for Junior Cycle Gaeilge.	Achieved	
	22.2	Publish review of Junior Cycle English specification.	Achieved	
	22.3	Consult on the draft Primary Language Curriculum/Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile for senior classes.	Achieved	
23		**Implement the Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022 on a phased basis.**		
	23.1	Issue a circular regarding the Gaeltacht Schools Recognition Scheme for 2018/19 outlining additional resources and supports (including additional advisory visits and CPD for schools participating in Scheme in 2018/19).	Achieved	
	23.2	Assess improvement plans for the Gaeltacht Schools Recognition Scheme, issue grants following approval of plans as appropriate and allocate additional teaching resources to schools.	Achieved	

Measures of progress and success for Goal 1 in Quarter 2:

Indicator	Target/indicator (year)	Reading/Measurement as at end Q2 2018
Extend the reach of the Incredible Years programme in DEIS primary schools	Complete the final 3 modules of the 6-module programme with 463 teachers; commence continued delivery of the programme targeting a further 735 teachers (2018)	The final 3 modules of the 6-module programme were completed with 463 teachers. Programme delivery was commenced with an additional 260 teachers, 210 of whom have completed the programme.
Extend the reach of resilience-building programmes in DEIS primary and post-primary schools	Continue the provision of training for teachers in the delivery of resilience-building programmes that reduce anxiety and promote coping skills and school connectedness in learners, targeting 500 teachers in DEIS primary and post-primary schools (2018)	Training in the Friends programme was delivered to 410 teachers to date in 2018.
School clusters work together to promote the teaching and learning of STEM subjects	10 clusters, involving at least 30 schools participating (2018)	Approximately 50 schools across 10 established clusters are now working on innovative projects addressing STEM teaching, learning and assessment.
School clusters use art and creativity to address shared challenges and achieve better learning outcomes	21 clusters are in place, through the network of Teacher Education Centres	Application process is now closed, with applications being handled locally by Education Centres.

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/ Subaction		Actions/subactions for Quarter 2	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
25		**Implement the DEIS Plan in order to close the gap in performance between DEIS and non-DEIS schools, increase retention rates of DEIS students, and increase the progression rates of DEIS students into HE and FET.**		
	25.1	Conduct further analysis to examine other variables known to be strong predictors of educational disadvantage in the context of resource allocation under the DEIS Plan.	Not achieved	The DEIS identification process has been updated and a detailed quality assurance process is underway. The outcome of this work will inform the work programme of the Technical Group, including the examination of variables known to be strong predictors of educational disadvantage, for the development of a Resource Allocation Model.
	25.2	Evaluate the level of teaching resources for schools participating in the SSP, to inform future policy in this area within the overall DEIS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.	Not achieved	Work in this area has been advanced and profiles of overall teaching resources in each DEIS school have been developed. Further work is required by the Class Size Group before the draft report can be prepared.
	25.3	Undertake a new identification process for all schools nationally, taking into account CSO data from Census 2016, combined with updated POD and Post-primary Online Database (PPOD) returns.	Achieved	
26		**Implement the DEIS Strand of the Schools Excellence Fund in participating DEIS schools.**		
	26.2	Undertake advisory/challenge visits from Inspectorate to monitor and support implementation of improvement plans in Tranche 1 schools (to ensure commencement of improvement actions).	Achieved	

	26.3	Invite participation of further clusters of schools in Tranche 2 of the DEIS Strand of the Schools Excellence Fund.	Achieved	
27		**Implement strands of the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education, and oversee the delivery of the targets for HEIs so that Higher Education becomes more representative of the population in general.**		
	27.2	Finalise the development of the Report on a Data Plan to support implementation of the National Access Plan.	Achieved	
	27.3	Allocate funding to higher education institutions for projects under the PATH Strand 3 Higher Education Access Fund which supports Regional and Community Approach to Access.	Achieved	

Objective 2.2 **Target policies and supports for learners with special education needs to support their participation and progression across the continuum of education**				
Action/ Subaction		**Actions/subactions for Quarter 2**	**Achieved/ Not achieved**	**Comment**
32		**Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the SNA scheme to identify the most appropriate form of support options. This will help to enable students with special educational needs to fulfil their potential.**		
	32.2	Complete the Three Year Review of SNA Allocations in accordance with Section 14 of Circular 0030/2014.	Achieved	

Measures of progress and success for Goal 2 in Quarter 2:

Indicator	Target/indicator (year)	Reading/Measurement as at end Q2 2018
Special Education Teaching Posts	Over 13,400 Special Education Teacher posts in place (2018)	13,319 Special Education Teacher posts in place (currently in the 2017/18 school year)
Special Needs Assistants	Up to 15,000 SNAs in place (2018)	14,120 SNA posts in place (currently in the 2017/18 school year)

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/ Subaction		Actions/subactions for Quarter 2	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
36		**Support the implementation of Síolta (the national quality framework) and Aistear (the early childhood curriculum framework) through the implementation of the National Síolta Aistear Initiative, in partnership with DCYA and the NCCA, to improve quality within the Early Years sector.**		
	36.1	Develop a quality roadmap identifying supports available to the early year's sector in conjunction with the Better Start Quality Development service.	Achieved	
37		**Coordinate national, regional and other CPD opportunities for Síolta Aistear Mentors.**		
	37.1	Establish a developmental working group, chaired by the DES, to review and develop the Aistear CPD structure and content as piloted in 2017, to finalise by end Q2.	Achieved	
38		**Support the further enhancement of professional qualifications and standards within the ECCE sector.**		
	38.1	Publish results of Consultation on draft Award Criteria and Guidelines for Initial Professional Education in undergraduate programmes for Early Years Practitioners.	Achieved	
	38.2	Complete review of standards and guidelines for higher education programmes for the Early Years workforce.	Achieved	
39		**Implement a national programme of Early Years Education-focussed inspections to provide advice and to support a progressive improvement in standards, leadership and teaching methodologies.**		
	39.1	Publish revised guide to Early Years Education-focussed Inspections following statutory consultation.	Achieved	
	39.3	Commence expanded range of EYE inspections in larger Early Years (EY) settings.	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/ Subaction		Actions/subactions for Quarter 2	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
40		**Develop a policy on teacher supply to support the availability of relevant teaching resources across the system in the short-medium and long term.**		
	40.2	Develop initiatives to support teacher supply, including consideration of financial supports, with a focus on the immediate gaps in availability in certain disciplines and having regard to the outcomes of a baseline data collection and analysis exercise, and to the STEM Policy Statement and Foreign Languages Strategy.	Achieved	
44		**Continue to expand the range of supports available through the Centre for School Leadership.**		
	44.2	Publish an evaluation of the pilot of Centre for School Leadership.	Achieved	
	44.3	Finalise a continuum of professional learning for leadership which will be populated by quality assured supports and programmes to meet the needs of teachers at all stages of their careers.	Achieved	
46		**Evaluate the impacts of CPD.**		
	46.1	Develop a research based framework for the evaluation of CPD for teachers in the area of student wellbeing.	Not achieved	Proposed Terms of Reference for this evaluation have been prepared and are due to be finalised by a steering committee in Autumn 2018.

Objective 3.3 **Improve quality, promote excellence and innovation, and increase autonomy for schools**				
Action/ Subaction		**Actions/subactions for Quarter 2**	**Achieved/ Not achieved**	**Comment**
52		**Develop and commence implementation on a pilot basis of the Schools Excellence Fund-Step Up project to advance collaborative working between post-primary schools, Inspectorate and JCT support service that will encourage self-evaluation and improvement in teaching and learning in selected priority areas.**		
	52.2	Identify possible schools for inclusion in initial Phase 1 of the Schools Excellence Fund-Step Up pilot project.	Achieved	
53		**Develop and implement a range of inspection arrangements to monitor the compliance of schools with the enhanced child protection and safeguarding requirements of the Department's "Revised Child Protection Guidelines 2017".**		
	53.3	Publish draft arrangements for additional specialised Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections (CPSIs) for initial consultation	Achieved	

Objective 3.4 **Promote high quality learning experiences in Further Education and Training and Higher Education**				
Action/ Subaction		**Actions/subactions for Quarter 2**	**Achieved/ Not achieved**	**Comment**
54		**Initiate review of quality in Higher Education.**		
	54.1	Launch a public consultation process, as the first phase of the review of quality in Higher Education.	Not achieved	Work to initiate the consultation process on the Review of Quality in Higher Education is at an advanced stage. It may be possible to Launch the public consultation process before the end of July.
	54.2	Finalise the Terms of Reference for Review of quality in Higher Education finalised.	Not achieved	Development of the Terms of Reference for the Review of Quality in Higher Education will be

				informed by the outcome of the public consultation process (54.1)
56		**Support HEIs in building capacity in teaching and learning activities.**		
	56.1	Publish review of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education with implementation plan setting out timelines and targets for agreed actions.	Achieved	
	56.2	Make initial TRACE+ Awards recognising higher education disciplines in their commitment to the development of excellence in teaching and learning.	Achieved	
63		**Further develop arrangements for administrative data systems to support the evaluation of outcomes from FET with a priority focus on full time programmes.**	Achieved	

Measures of progress and success for Goal 3 in Quarter 2:

Indicator	**Target/indicator (year)**	**Reading/Measurement as at end Q2 2018**
Support principals through enabling them to access professional coaching	400 principals (2018)	376 principals are engaged with the coaching service currently. 62 principals have also completed the coaching programme to date
Support future school leaders through post-graduate qualifications	200 aspiring school leaders (2018)	243 teachers are continuing on the programme at the end of Q2 (2017/18). The intake for September 2018 has been increased to 300 so will surpass the target/indicator for 2018-2019
Support schools through the annual school inspection programme	3,000 inspections conducted (2018)	718 school inspections as at end of Q2 (and 2,788 probationary teacher inspections conducted in the school year 2017/18
Increase impact of school inspections through publication of inspection reports on the Department's website and regional seminars	1,000 inspection reports published (2018)	655 inspection reports published as at end of Q2
Support schools in implementing the School Self-Evaluation process	800 advisory visits (2018) Commence regional seminars to support school self-evaluation	512 advisory visits conducted and 11 regional seminars (9 primary, 2 post-primary) held as at end Q2. In addition, 55 primary and 7 post-primary SSE action Planning for Improvement visits carried out in schools participating in the Gaeltacht School recognition Scheme in Q2

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

Objective 4.2

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

Action/ Subaction		Actions/subactions for Quarter 2	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
65		**Advance the legislation in relation to school admissions to make enrolment easier for children and parents.**		
	65.1	Support the enactment of the Admissions Bill, subject to the Oireachtas legislative process.	Achieved	
66		**Make progress towards increasing the diversity of school type, in order to offer parents more choice.**		
	66.3	Finalise drafting and consultation on protocols for the Implementation Phase of the Schools Reconfiguration for Diversity process.	Not achieved	Given the focus and detailed work on the Identification Phase and the roll out of the surveys to pre-school parents in particular, it is anticipated that the Implementation Phase actions will be achieved in Q4 rather than Q2 as originally envisaged.
	66.4	Agree detailed arrangements for transfer of patronage of schools, following consultation.	Not achieved	Given the focus and detailed work on the Identification Phase and the roll out of the surveys to pre-school parents in particular, it is anticipated that the Implementation Phase actions will be achieved in Q4 rather than Q2 as originally envisaged.
68		**Develop innovative responses to skills gaps across key priority areas of the economy.**		
	68.1	Complete and publish a national survey of employers to inform policy and programme development.	Not achieved	The national survey of employers is expected to be ready for publication by early September.

	68.2	Identify appropriate new partners for the Skills for Growth initiative and agree protocols to enable increased capacity to carry out nationwide skills audits.	Achieved	

Objective 4.4 **Create a greater diversity of learning opportunities beyond school**				
Action/ Subaction		**Actions/subactions for Quarter 2**	**Achieved/ Not achieved**	**Comment**
72		**Strengthen the apprenticeship and traineeship systems through enhancing the range of programmes and increasing provision.**		
	72.1	Complete review of pathways to participation in apprenticeship.	Not achieved	The research phase of the review carried out by SOLAS is now complete and this will provide the basis to complete the review itself in Q3.
73		**Support the development of an Upskilling Pathways Plan – New Opportunities for Adults which aims to help adults acquire a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital skills.**	Not achieved	An interagency steering group has been formed to guide this work and data on the composition of the cohort of adults with less than an upper secondary qualification has been compiled along with a mapping of existing provision. Communication to all member states issued in early July from the European Commission, which seeks the completion of templates on each relevant intervention in Q3.
76		**Review the National Training Fund in order to guide strategic decisions on its structure and future direction, so as to inform Budget 2019.**		
	76.1	Undertake a comprehensive and independent review of the National Training Fund in order to guide strategic decisions on its structure and future direction, so as to inform Budget 2019.	Achieved	

Objective 4.5 Enhance support for learners to make informed career choices				
Action/ Subaction		**Actions/subactions for Quarter 2**	**Achieved/ Not achieved**	**Comment**
80		**Review existing career guidance tools and career information for post-primary/further education/higher education students and adults, currently in place across the education and training system.**		
	80.1	Complete review of existing career guidance tools and career information for post-primary/further education/higher education students and adults, currently in place across the education and training system.	Not achieved	A stakeholder consultation workshop, which will be opened by Minister Bruton, will be held in Farmleigh on 18th July. The review will be completed by end Q3.

Objective 4.7 Work with enterprise to increase the number of researchers and institute a new programme of funding for Frontiers Research				
Action/ Subaction		**Actions/subactions for Quarter 2**	**Achieved/ Not achieved**	**Comment**
87		**Implement a strategy developed to attract world-leading researchers to Ireland in the context of Brexit. This strategy may include additional awards funded by the Irish Research Council for researches or academics who relocate.**		
	87.1	Publish strategy to attract world-leading researchers to Ireland in the context of Brexit.	Not achieved	The Strategy to attract world-leading researchers to Ireland is being finalised and it is expected that it will be published in Q3.
	87.2	Begin to implement actions flowing from the strategy to attract world-leading researchers to Ireland in the context of Brexit.	Not achieved	This action can only be advanced following the publication of the strategy to attract world-leading researchers to Ireland (87.1)

Measures of progress and success for Goal 4 in Quarter 2:

Indicator	Target/indicator (year)	Reading/Measurement as at end Q2 2018
Increased number of in-employment upskilling, through Skillnets	20% increase, to 55,000 places (2018)	22,700 participants cumulatively in Quarters 1 and 2
Provision of upskilling and reskilling opportunities on Springboard courses, as part of Springboard+	4,476 places (2017/18)	4,867 people participated on Springboard courses during the 2017/18 academic year
Increase ICT skills through the provision of places on ICT skills conversion courses, as part of Springboard+	1,995 places (2017/18)	1,654 people participated on ICT skills conversion courses, during the 2017/18 academic year
Learners avail of the new apprenticeship opportunities	1,500 apprenticeship registrations (2018)	61 registrations on new apprenticeships cumulatively at the end of quarter 2
Increase the number of new registrations on craft apprenticeships	4,697 new registrations by end 2018	2,219 registrations on craft apprenticeships cumulatively at the end of quarter 2
Creative Youth implemented in schools, as part of Creative Ireland	150 primary and post-primary schools take part in the pilot of the Scoileanna Ildánacha/Creative Schools Initiative (2018)	150 schools selected to take part (110 primary and 30 post primary, with schools from every county participating)

Goal 5: Improve national planning and support services

Objective 5.1

Strengthen strategic oversight and focus on delivery for results

Action/ Subaction		Actions/subactions for Quarter 2	Achieved/ Not achieved	Comment
93		**Commence review of the Free Fees scheme (Higher Education) as part of the reformed funding model for higher education.**	Not achieved	Further work is being undertaken on the drafting of the Terms of Reference for this review for submission to the RFAM implementation group in early July. It is anticipated that the review will commence in September at the earliest.
96		**Develop a suite of guidelines and tools to build collaborative working capacity in the Department.**		
	96.1	Launch Collaborative Working application for Cross-Department working groups on the Intranet.	Achieved	
97		**Establish a division within the Department to improve strategic policy capability, evaluation of programmes and policy, governance and programme and project management structures.**		
	97.1	Undertake restructuring to establish a new division to improve strategic policy capability.	Achieved	
	97.2	Agree a work programme for the new division being established within the DES to improve strategic policy capability.	Achieved	
99		Work collaboratively with the DPER as part of the Spending Review process to further enhance the evidence base on expenditure drivers in the education and training sector, including in respect of (a) higher education (b) future teacher requirements and payroll costs, including by developing an updated approach to cost demographic needs at primary and post primary levels. Timing subject to DPER central timetable.	Achieved	

Objective 5.3 Improve the quality of the national support services and shared services				
Action/ Subaction		**Actions/subactions for Quarter 2**	**Achieved/ Not achieved**	**Comment**
110		**Improve the quality of services across the sector through the introduction of shared services.**		
	110.2	Develop detailed mapping and analysis of the current payroll and related HRM processes in the Higher Education sector.	Achieved	
111		**Build capacity within the ETB sector focusing particularly on organisational design and work force planning.**		
	111.1	Complete the data gathering and consultation on the ETB organisation design phase II (Workforce Planning) and agree next steps.	Achieved	
112		**Enhance the Department's ICT capabilities through delivering the Department's ICT Strategy 2015-2019.**		
	112.1	Develop and implement online School Transport Appeals application.	Achieved	
113		**Exploit the potential of ICT to enhance the delivery of the State examinations.**		
	113.1	Implement an online system for the payment of examination entry fees.	Achieved	
116		Manage EU co-financed programmes and exploit co-financing opportunities.		
	116.1	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 AA has commenced its assessment and the ESFMA are finalising the remaining outstanding documentation for the AA. This action will be completed in Q3.
118		**Implement the Civil Service Renewal Plan, in line with DPER requirements.**		
	118.1	Develop an Employee Engagement Action Plan, arising from the results of the Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey carried out within the Department.	Achieved	