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# The Role and Response of Irish Universities

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## How do universities influence policies in doctoral education and research ?

- Know & understand the policy drivers
- Get organised & engage proactively as an identifiable significant stakeholder

## How do universities implement those policies ?

- **Reacting to policy stimuli** (i.e. funding calls),
- **Developing underpinning agreements, systems and processes**
- **Delivering on new, normalised expectations.**
- Accommodating the real, and not the imagined PhD student



**DCU  
Graduate  
Studies**

**2005**



## Universities becoming organised

### Internally

- Established structures designed to enhance the delivery of doctoral education (Deans, Graduate Schools, GSOs).
- Revised administrative procedures, regulations and supports.

### Collectively

- Established the 4<sup>th</sup> Level Network of Deans of Graduate Studies and senior administrators of graduate education in 2007.



# DCU Graduate Studies



2004

- **OECD Review of Higher Education in Ireland**  
*“a much greater investment in postgraduate support with the aim of more than doubling the number of doctoral candidates by 2010”.*

2005

- **Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Universities (IUQB)**

2006

- **Salzburg Principles for Doctoral Training (EUA)**
- **Irish Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (DETE)**

2008

- **IUA PhD Graduate Skills Statement**

2009

- **Role of PhDs in the Smart Economy (Forfás)**
- **Good Practice in the Organisation of Ph.D. Programmes in Higher Education**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (IUQB)
- **Establishment of the DRHEA** [Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance]

2010

- **Salzburg II Recommendations (EUA)**

2011

- **National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 [Hunt Report] (DoES)**
- **IUA Inter-Institutional Agreement on Collaborative Graduate Programmes**
- **Principles of Innovative Doctoral Training (EC)**

# DCU Graduate Studies

2012

- Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape (HEA)
- A reinforced European Research Area partnership for excellence and growth (EC)
- **1st cross institutional Graduate School** (DCU-DKIT Strategic Partnership)

2013

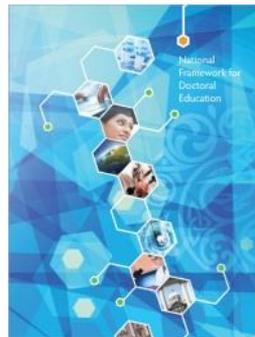
- Completing the Landscape Process (HEA)

2014

- System Performance Framework and Mission-based Performance Compacts (HEA)

2015

- **National Framework for Doctoral Education** (HEA/QQI)
- QQI Quality Assurance Review and Enhancement of Research degree programmes (QQI)
- IUA PhD Graduate Skills Statement - revised (IUA)



DCU

# Developing underpinning agreements, systems and processes



## **Inter-Institutional Collaborative Memorandum of Understanding**

**For the purpose of enabling module delivery, student mobility and credit exchange in thematic collaborative graduate programmes formally agreed across Universities in the Republic of Ireland**

**Between**

**University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin City University, NUI, Maynooth, NUI, Galway, University College Cork and University of Limerick**

## 2005 -2010

# DCU Graduate Studies

**Analysis points out new need & mismatch with PhD education**

**Universities challenged to address these issues, with funding put in place to drive transformation**

**Universities engaged in policy development & created a new model of PhD (mainly flagship models)**



# DCU Graduate Studies



**Molecular and Cellular Mechanisms  
Underlying inflammatory processes**  
Structured PRTL I PhD Programme



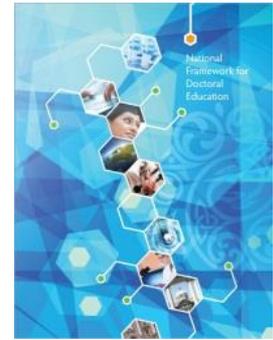
digital arts & humanities PhD



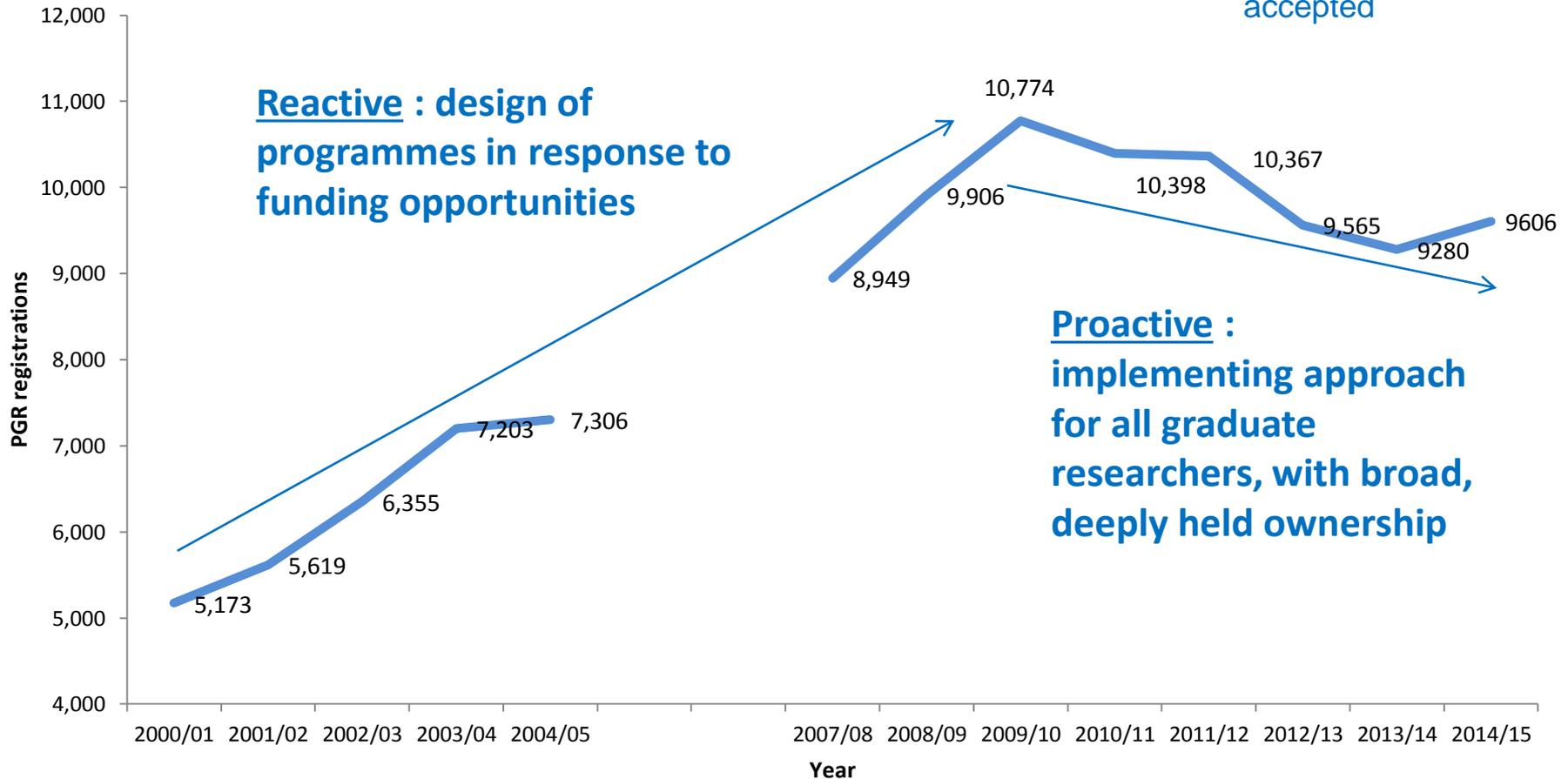
Co-Funded by  
Irish Research Council Marine Institute  
Established 2011



# Context revisited



New model of Doctoral Education broadly accepted



**2011 -2016**

**from 'flagship',  
to building 'a new normal'**

**Policy still points  
to a changed  
expectation**

**Universities  
challenged to  
address this,  
with no specific  
funding put in  
place.**

**Universities  
trying to sustain  
the new model  
of PhD, and  
deliver across all  
disciplines**



# DCU's journey

## 1. Review in Context

### Policy context

- Review of EU & national policy, qualification frameworks, QA, funding, employer surveys
- Review of university strategic priorities, internal funding drivers

### Culture & attitudinal context

- Test with discussion papers and specific proposals via formal committees and informal discussion groups
- leverage student exit surveys

## **2. Build Institutional Consensus**

**Agree  
Outcomes**

**Decide on Principles**

**Establish Constraints**

**Doctoral  
Framework  
Design**



## 1. Agree Outcomes

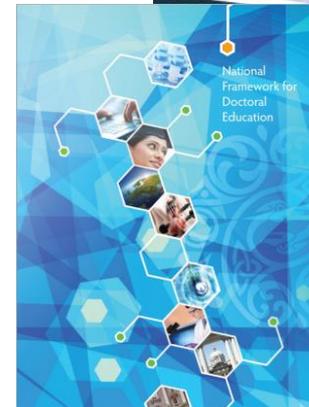
**Disciplines:** reference international disciplinary norms & the research product with specific technical / analytical skills

**Candidates:** reference competitiveness for academic careers & answering a niggling or niche question

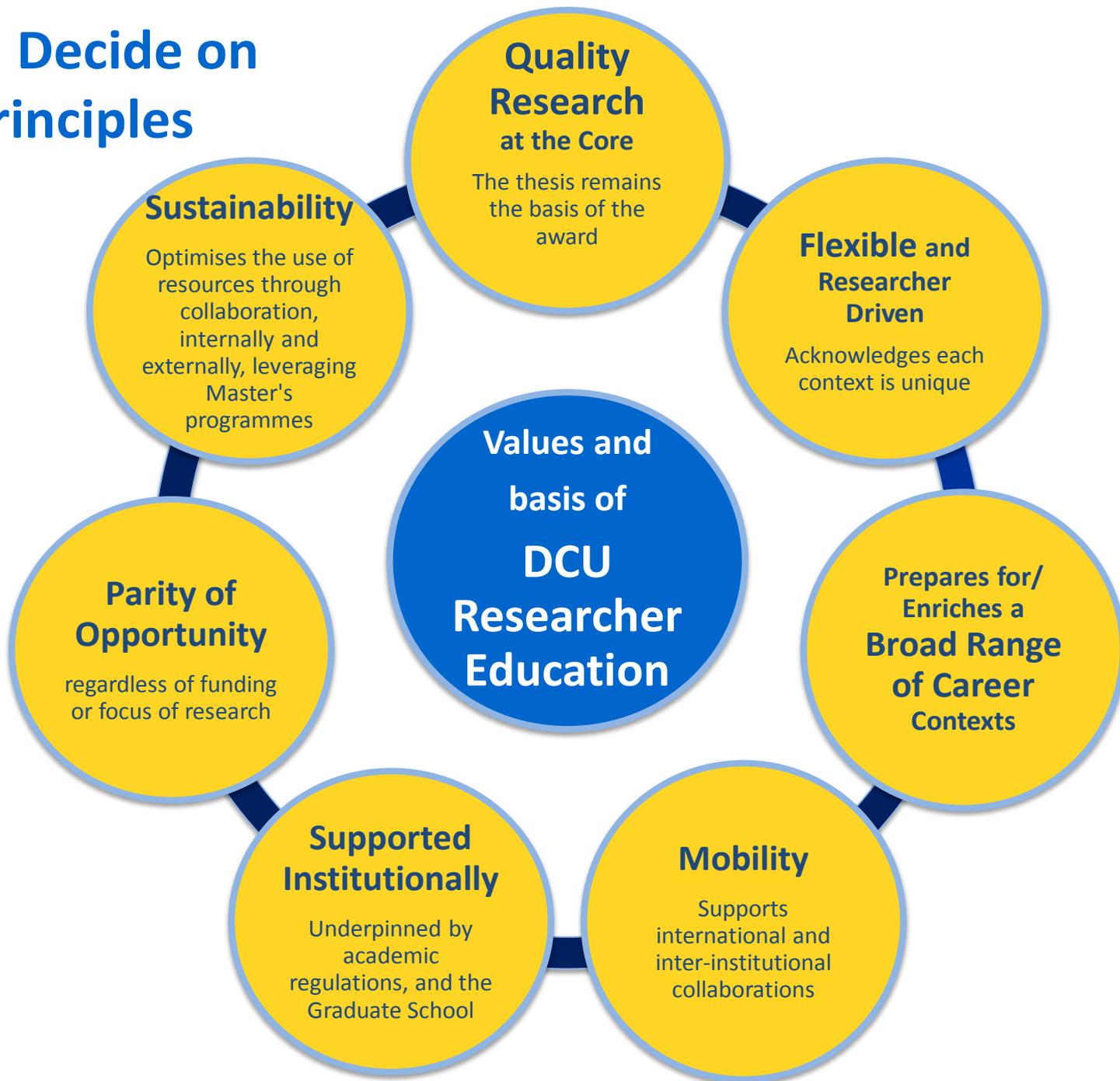
**Strengthen (not diminish) outcomes delivered by traditional model  
but also  
add new types of outcomes**



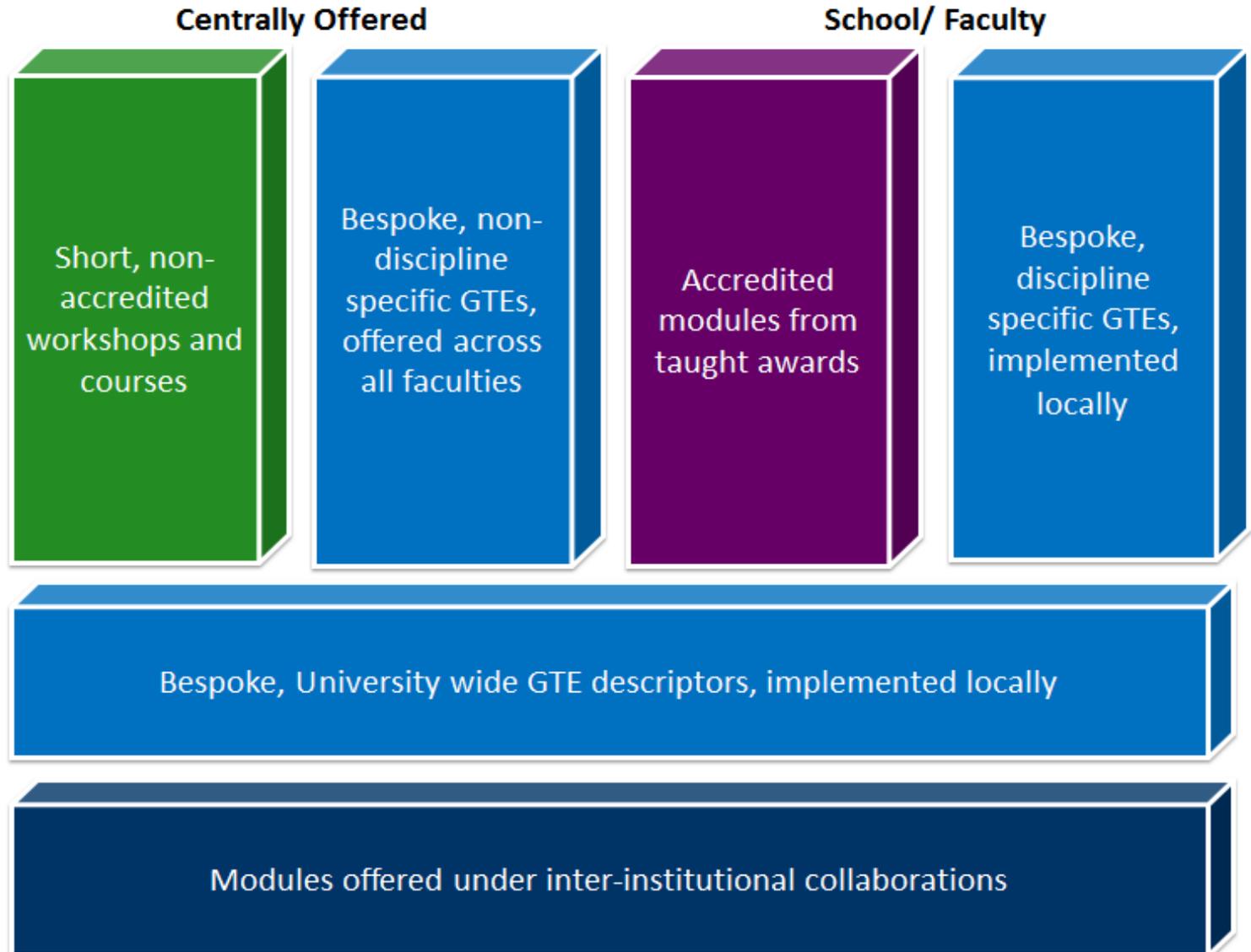
Policy



## 2. Decide on Principles



### 3. Implement within constraints



## 4. Test against important criteria eg. accommodating emphasis



A way for candidates to identify, target, and obtain the skills required for work in a wide variety of settings

Discipline Specific

School Pathway

Structured Doctoral Pathway

Core  
Discipline-  
Specific  
Modules

Core  
Transferable  
Skills  
Modules

Elective  
Modules

Non-accredited  
training,  
workshops and  
masterclasses

# The Role and Response of Universities

## How do universities influence policies in doctoral education and research ?

- Know & understand the policy drivers
- Get **organised & engage proactively** as an identifiable significant stakeholder

## How do universities implement those policies ?

Well, but it helps a lot if:

- policy, institutional and discipline culture and expectations of all stakeholders align,
- resources are put in place, and funding instruments are well designed.
- People take the time to talk to one another.





# NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DOCTORAL EDUCATION

**HEA** | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY  
AN tSúgaras um Ard-Oideachas

**QQI**  
Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Oibríocht Calálachta agus Oideachais Éireann

**IUA** IRISH  
UNIVERSITIES  
ASSOCIATION

**IOTI**  
Institutes of Technology Ireland

**IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL**  
An Chomhairle um Thaispeán in Éirinn

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
AND SKILLS**

**An Roinn Post, Fiontar agus Náláilochta**  
Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

**sfi**

**RIA**

**HRB**  
Health Research Board

**ENTERPRISE  
IRELAND**  
Where Innovation Meets Business

**COGASC**  
Association For Doctoral Studies